



Kaboom! Switzerland Halts 5G Rollout Over Health Concerns

It's a gloomy day for Technocrats in Switzerland, which has imposed a nationwide ban on new 5G installation while demanding a thorough study on the health effects of millimeter waves on humans. Until produced, the ban will not be lifted. □ TN Editor

Switzerland, one of the world's leaders in the rollout of 5G mobile technology, has placed an indefinite moratorium on the use of its new network because of health concerns.

The move comes as countries elsewhere around Europe race to upgrade their networks to 5G standards amid a furious rearguard diplomatic campaign by the US to stop them using Chinese technology provided by Huawei. Washington says the company, which is fundamental to most European networks' upgrade plans, presents a grave security risk.

Switzerland is relatively advanced in Europe in adopting 5G. The wealthy alpine country has built more than 2,000 antennas to upgrade its network in the last year alone, and its telecoms providers have been promising their customers' imminent 5G coverage for most of the past

year.

However, a letter sent by the Swiss environment agency, Bafu, to the country's cantonal governments at the end of January, has now in effect called time on the use of all new 5G towers, officials who have seen the letter told the Financial Times.

The agency is responsible for providing the cantons with safety criteria against which telecoms operators' radiation emissions can be judged. Under Switzerland's highly federalised structure, telecoms infrastructure is monitored for compliance and licensed by cantonal authorities, but Bern is responsible for setting the framework.

Bafu has said it cannot yet provide universal criteria without further testing of the impact of 5G radiation.

The agency said it was "not aware of any standard worldwide" that could be used to benchmark recommendations. "Therefore Bafu will examine exposure through adaptive [5G] antennas in depth, if possible in real-world operational conditions. This work will take some time," it said.

Without the criteria, cantons are left with little option but to license 5G infrastructure according to existing guidelines on radiation exposure, which all but preclude the use of 5G except in a tiny minority of cases.

Several cantons have already imposed their own voluntary moratoria because of uncertainty over health risks.

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Medical Association Sues Rep. Adam Schiff For Censorship

American Association of Physicians & Surgeons is suing **Rep. Adam Schiff** over demanding that Twitter remove the vaccine movies *Vaxxed* and *Shoot 'Em Up: The Truth About Vaccines*. Twitter 'obeyed' Schiff and removed the videos. Schiff's actions are patently unconstitutional and the lawsuit intends to hold him accountable. □ TN Editor

AAPS Press Release - The internet is supposed to provide open access to information to people of different opinions, and algorithms for search engines such as Google were originally designed to rank entries on the basis of traffic to a site. It was democratic in the sense that people voted with their mouse clicks.

Freedom of communication is a threat to oppressors. Communist China has erected the Great Firewall (tinyurl.com/y7allgtb). Google's secret Project Dragonfly would collect data about people's searches that could be used for facilitating human-rights abuses, and would purge links to websites prohibited in China (<https://tinyurl.com/y9ujjy3g>). Because of political pressure, it has reportedly been terminated—for now (tinyurl.com/yatvngmo)—although a shareholder resolution to stop it failed (<https://tinyurl.com/y5jz6j8u>).

In the U.S., online service providers have broad protections from legal liability for content created by the users of their services, under the Communications Decency Act of 1996 (CDA), which added Section 230 to the Communications Act of 1934. This permits entities like Facebook, Twitter, and Google to publish others' content without reviewing it for criminality or other potential legal issues. There are concerns that it protects pornography and sex-trafficking.

On Jun 13, 2019, the House Intelligence Committee chaired by Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) held a hearing on technology that allows the creation of "fake" videos. At the outset, Schiff challenged the CDA immunity enjoyed by interactive computer services, apparently intending to pressure services such as Google, Facebook, Amazon, and Twitter to comply with his position on access to information he deems inappropriate for public access.

In early 2019, Schiff contacted leading interactive computer services, including Google, Facebook, and Amazon, to encourage them to de-platform or discredit what Schiff asserted to be inaccurate information on vaccines. He then posted the letters and press release on the House.gov website.

Information Is Blocked; AAPS Sues

In response to Schiff's letter, Amazon removed the popular videos *Vaxxed* and *Shoot 'Em Up: the Truth About Vaccines* from its platform for streaming videos, depriving members of the public of convenient access.

Under a policy announced in May 2019, Twitter includes a pro-government disclaimer placed above search results for an AAPS article on vaccine mandates: "Know the Facts. To make sure you get the best information on vaccination, resources are available from the US Department of Health and Human Services." The implication is that if information is not on a government website, then it is somehow less credible. On Facebook, a search for an AAPS article on vaccines, which previously would lead directly to the AAPS article, now produces search results containing links to the World Health Organization (WHO), the

National Institutes of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Visits to the AAPS website have declined significantly since March 2019, both in absolute terms and relative to the decline that would result from a story's losing its recency.

On Aug 9, 2019, Amazon suddenly announced the termination of AAPS, after 10 years' participation, from the Amazon Associates Program, which by its own description is one of the largest affiliate networks in the world to enable website owners to earn commissions based on their traffic.

AAPS is not "anti-vaccine," but rather supports informed consent, based on an understanding of the full range of medical, legal, and economic considerations relevant to vaccination and any other medical intervention, which inevitably involves risks as well as benefits. For two decades, AAPS has published informative articles pertaining to vaccination, which continue to draw visitors, even years later.

Schiff creates an arbitrary binary divide, simplistically labeling all speech on vaccinations as either "pro-vaccination" or "anti-vaccination," with the latter taken to mean "anti-science" or unintelligent and uneducated and thus unworthy of public access.

WHO has declared "vaccine hesitancy" to be a major public-health concern. Thus, any information, however valid scientifically, that might influence a person to decline a vaccine, could be labeled a public-health threat and censored.

AAPS notes efforts by the AMA and others to declare that many controversial issues are public health threats—such as "gun violence," "climate change," or lack of convenient and affordable access to abortion or "sex-change" surgery. A precedent to censor speech on vaccine adverse events has broad implications.

AAPS and Katarina Verrelli, on behalf of herself and others who seek access to vaccine information, have filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Plaintiffs allege that Defendant Adam Schiff has abused government power and infringed on their free-speech rights (tinyurl.com/st2wdbr).

“The First Amendment protects the rights of free speech and association. Included within the right of free speech is a right to receive information from willing speakers. Under the First Amendment, Americans have the right to hear all sides of every issue and to make their own judgments about those issues without government interference or limitations,” Plaintiffs argue. “Content-based restrictions on speech are presumptively unconstitutional, and courts analyze such restrictions under strict scrutiny.”

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The Future Of Farming Is... Robots?

Advanced technology is rapidly taking over agriculture, which will eventually deliver the entire food chain into the hands of error-prone Technocrats who will only say “Oops!” when a system fails while people starve. □ TN Editor

In a research field off Highway 54 last autumn, corn stalks shimmered in

rows 40-feet deep. Girish Chowdhary, an agricultural engineer at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, bent to place a small white robot at the edge of a row marked 103. The robot, named TerraSentia, resembled a souped up version of a lawn mower, with all-terrain wheels and a high-resolution camera on each side.

In much the same way that self-driving cars “see” their surroundings, TerraSentia navigates a field by sending out thousands of laser pulses to scan its environment. A few clicks on a tablet were all that were needed to orient the robot at the start of the row before it took off, squeaking slightly as it drove over ruts in the field.

“It’s going to measure the height of each plant,” Dr. Chowdhary said.

It would do that and more. The robot is designed to generate the most detailed portrait possible of a field, from the size and health of the plants, to the number and quality of ears each corn plant will produce by the end of the season, so that agronomists can breed even better crops in the future. In addition to plant height, TerraSentia can measure stem diameter, leaf-area index and “stand count” — the number of live grain- or fruit-producing plants — or all of those traits at once. And Dr. Chowdhary is working on adding even more traits, or [phenotypes](#), to the list with the help of colleagues at EarthSense, a spinoff company that he created to manufacture more robots.

Traditionally, plant breeders have measured these phenotypes by hand, and used them to select plants with the very best characteristics for creating hybrids. The advent of DNA sequencing has helped, enabling breeders to isolate genes for some desirable traits, but it still takes a human to assess whether the genes isolated from the previous generation actually led to improvements in the next one.

A blossoming of bots

“The idea is that robots can automate the phenotyping process and make these measurements more reliable,” Dr. Chowdhary said. In doing so, the TerraSentia and others like it can help optimize the yield of farms far beyond what humans alone have been able to accomplish.

Automation has always been a big part of agriculture, from the first seed drills to modern combine harvesters. Farm equipment is now regularly outfitted with sensors that use machine learning and robotics to [identify weeds and calculate the amount of herbicide](#) that needs to be sprayed, for instance, or to learn to [detect and pick strawberries](#).

Lately, smaller, more dexterous robots have emerged in droves. In 2014, the French company Naïo released 10 prototypes of a robot named Oz that is just three feet long and weighs roughly 300 pounds. It assembles phenotypes of vegetable crops even as it gobbles up weeds. EcoRobotix, based in Switzerland, makes a solar-powered robot that rapidly identifies crops and weeds; the device resembles an end table on wheels. The household appliance-maker Bosch has also tested a robot called BoniRob for analyzing soil and plants.

“All of a sudden, people are starting to realize that data collection and analysis tools developed during the 90s technology boom can be applied to agriculture,” said George A. Kantor, a senior systems scientist at Carnegie Mellon University, who is using his own research to develop tools for estimating crop yields.

The TerraSentia is among the smallest of the farmbots available today. At 12.5 inches wide and roughly the same height, the 30-pound robot fits well between rows of various crops. It also focuses on gathering data from much earlier in the agricultural pipeline: The research plots where plant breeders select the varieties that ultimately make it to market.

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