

Google's Schmidt warns regulators against killing innovation

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Google CEO Eric Schmidt gives a press conference in Barcelona on the second day of the Mobile World Congress. Schmidt urged regulators to allow technology to develop its own solutions amid privacy concerns, warning that drawing up specific laws could stifle innovation.

Google chief Eric Schmidt on Tuesday urged regulators to allow technology to develop its own solutions amid privacy concerns, warning that drawing up specific laws could stifle innovation.

"If you have to regulate, try to regulate the outcome not the technology. If there's an outcome that you don't like, don't specify in law a technical solution because technology moves forward," he told regulators during a keynote address at the world's biggest mobile fair.

"There're so many new technologies that help protect privacy ... that you

hope the privacy regulator will never restrict that," he said, pointing out that the "unintended cost of regulation is often the loss of innovation."

Google has come under pressure in several jurisdictions, including [South Korea](#) and France, over its new privacy policy which allows it to regroup data from several different services that were previously separate.

On Tuesday, France demanded that the [Internet giant](#) postpone rolling out the policy due to come into effect Thursday as it appears to break European Union data protection rules.

While Schmidt did not refer to the specific issue, he pointed to Europe's "strong commitment to privacy" but said that "if you look at recent initiatives, they are well intentioned but harder to define."

The [European Commission](#) launched in January a bid to make companies including Internet giants such as Google or Facebook give people more control of their [personal data](#) or face big fines.

The proposal championed by EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding would force all companies to get explicit consent from customers to collect their data, explain how it will be used, and allow users to totally erase their information.

Schmidt also made a strong call for the web to remain restricted.

He highlighted the role that the Internet had played in the Arab Spring, pointing out that "decisions that are being made by [technology companies](#) are in fact quite consequential."

"The fact that information is hard to block has implications for the Arab Spring. So there's a lot of reasons that have a political consequence, they don't have a political goal but a political consequence," he said.

"They tend to have a pro-democracy, pro-communication, pro-freedom of expression bias. It's one of the best exports out of our industry," he added.

Nevertheless, for all the calls of access freedoms, Schmidt admitted that there are limits.

Asked by an Iranian member of the audience if [Google](#) will stop blocking Android or Chrome downloads in his country, Schmidt said that the ban was due to US sanctions on Iran and that "we can't violate US law."

"I'm with you, but prison, it's like, there's no bandwidth!" he said.

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