Technology

What's ahead for Technology: Key Policy Issues

The Trump administration and Republicans in Congress will view technology policy through the lens of U.S. national security and strategic competitiveness. There will be anticipated shifts in policy around artificial intelligence (AI), privacy, online content and cybersecurity that will require tech firms to remain engaged as they push for a more fluid regulatory environment that favors innovation over regulation.

Key Leadership in Congress and Trump Administration

119th Congress

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) is set to be the next chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, with Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA) serving as the ranking member. Incoming Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) will also seek to shape the Senate's tech agenda. On the House side, Republican leadership considers China to be the biggest geopolitical threat, which will inform activities across a number of committees. Reps. Brett Guthrie (R-KY) and Bob Latta (R-OH) are competing to serve as chair of the House Energy & Commerce Committee, with Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) as ranking member.

Trump Administration

Vice President-elect JD Vance considers himself a tech entrepreneur and will seek to influence policy. Leading tech and private equity CEOs are also positioning themselves to influence U.S. tech policy, with Elon Musk weighing in on AI, electric vehicles and space policy, for example. Trump's nominee to lead the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Brendan Carr, has been charged with going after tech companies for censoring free speech on the internet. Howard Lutnick, the financial services CEO who co-chairs the Trump Transition, has been nominated for Secretary of Commerce.

The Trump Administration's Priorities

President-elect Donald Trump is proposing tariffs on U.S. imports, which would impact technology inputs and goods. Trump will continue, and possibly expand, U.S. export controls on advanced semiconductors, quantum computing and other dual-use technology products to China. Trump favors tariffs on semiconductor imports – rather than grants from the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 – as a means of urging foreign firms to move their production to the United States. The incoming administration says it will deploy "all tools" to protect essential assets and infrastructure, signaling a commitment to strengthening cyber defenses against hostile state and non-state actors.

Spotlight: Artificial Intelligence

Trump says he will rescind President Biden's executive order on AI but has yet to detail how his administration will regulate it. Tech firms are expecting a more favorable AI regulatory approach toward safety and standards – one designed to unleash U.S. innovation, improve productivity and ensure U.S. global leadership. Congress will take up AI regulation though it is unclear if the proposals of the Bipartisan Senate AI Working Group will be adopted by the Republican-led Senate. Tech firms are hoping for a more business-friendly approach to AI and tech-related antitrust policy and M&A activity.