



# U.S. Presidential Election Scenarios: Implications for Technology

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Whether the White House is occupied by Donald Trump or Kamala Harris, leaders in the tech sector must be prepared for policy and regulatory shifts. Both administrations are expected to introduce or modify technology policies that could affect operations, compliance, and innovation.

To successfully navigate these changes, businesses must develop communication strategies in advance. Effective communication with internal and external stakeholders – including employees, boards, investors, customers, media, and regulators – will be essential for maintaining trust and ensuring smooth transitions during periods of policy change.

The following breakdown of the expected approaches by each candidate will help executives be ready from day one of either administration.

	Harris	Trump
Technology	Focus on key tech policy issues including AI, privacy, and kids' safety. Likely to adopt a friendly stance to Silicon Valley.	Concern about content moderation and perceived bias against conservatives with less engagement on overall sector.

There will be a continued critical focus on the tech sector no matter how the election unfolds. Both Harris and Trump have stressed the importance of reining in Big Tech—albeit for different reasons.

- If Trump wins reelection, his focus is likely to be on content moderation issues, given claims from the right that tech companies censor conservative voices. Trump has also sporadically raised antitrust concerns, which appear to be driven by perceived censorship versus monopolistic behavior or privacy issues. Trump's choice of Vance as his running mate reinforces the notion that he would be tough on Big Tech since Vance has been vocal in supporting robust antitrust enforcement. On the other hand, Vance's experience working closely with VCs suggests he may cultivate a friendlier environment for small companies in technologies like blockchain and defense.
- Harris would be expected to push for regulation and enforcement, while stressing the importance of innovation, especially in the technology race against China. The Biden administration has tried to balance collaboration with tech companies – especially around AI and other emerging technologies – and using U.S. federal agencies to curb Big Tech's power, particularly on privacy and antitrust concerns. Harris runs the executive branch's AI task force and would likely continue close collaboration with leading AI companies while also pushing for stricter measures to hold some of those companies accountable for harmful online content and other safety concerns.

# Content

A growing focus on content policy is likely, given that it encompasses a wide range of topics reflecting the complex interplay between technology, information dissemination, and societal values.

- Harris has supported the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) and may continue to press Congress to remove protections for operators of online platforms, although she may not be vocal given her ties to Silicon Valley.
- Trump's focus would likely be on the topic of censorship. While he may raise children's safety issues to score points with some elements of his base, he has not indicated this is a priority.

# Artificial intelligence

AI continues to dominate conversations in Washington and overlaps with most other key tech policy issues. Copyright, disinformation, and national security concerns, as well as questions about AI on energy demand and further consolidation of incumbent power, will dictate the discussions beyond election day.

- A Harris administration would likely increase oversight and regulation of AI to ensure ethical use and prevent misuse.
- A Trump administration would be expected to favor a lighter regulatory touch, promoting innovation and reducing regulatory burdens on AI and other emerging technologies.

# China and national security

National security concerns – especially around Chinese acquisition of U.S. data and IP – have become a large part of tech policy discussions. These conversations are focused mainly on export controls, technology transfer, data protection, cybersecurity, supply chain security, 5G and emerging technologies, and regulation of foreign tech companies.

- Trump would likely take an aggressive approach. He took an isolationist stance during his term in office, essentially adopting an “all-encompassing decoupling” policy.
- Harris would likely seek to protect U.S. technology and security interests while maintaining ties with Beijing. Export controls and supply chain would be focal points.

# Privacy and data governance

Privacy remains the most frequently debated issue in data governance, encompassing data collection, use, sharing, and storage. Harris and Trump prioritize security, localization, access and sharing, transparency, and accountability in their policy agendas.

- Trump would seek to ease business burdens and promote market-driven solutions. His policies often intersect with data governance through trade and security measures.
- Harris is anticipated to advocate for stronger privacy laws to safeguard consumer information and enhanced user controls over personal data usage by companies.

## Implications for businesses

The tech industry appears poised to thrive regardless of the election outcome. With her ties to California's tech sector, Kamala Harris is expected to maintain an overall supportive stance. Donald Trump would likely continue his laissez-faire approach, except when he objects to content moderation decisions.

Ongoing uncertainty around crucial policy issues necessitates vigilant messaging and close monitoring of Congressional and state-level developments. Even without specific legislative movements, critical tech concerns – such as privacy and content moderation – will persist in attracting media scrutiny and consumer attention, occasionally provoking backlash.

## To continue the conversation

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