



Digital Services Terms and Conditions Database

User guide

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1 Introduction to the Digital Services Terms and Conditions Database

In order to support regulators and citizens navigating the various Terms of References of companies and service providers, DG CONNECT have created a repository of Terms & Conditions (T&C) in various languages. The repository is historical, listing the different versions and updates of the T&C across time. For example, users will be able to see recent changes made by online platforms and to retrieve past versions.

1.1 Why this database?

Online terms and conditions can be a source of confusion and frustration. They're sometimes untransparent or unspecific, and prone to frequent changes, leaving users and businesses in the dark about their rights and obligations. This database leverages obligations for digital services to make their contracts available in an easily accessible and machine-readable format (cf. Article 14 of Regulation 2022/2065) and obligations of online platforms, including social media, app stores and market places, to publish clear and complete contracts both for professional users (cf. Article 3 of Regulation 2019/1150) as well as for end users (cf. Article 14 Regulation 2022/2065). By automatically indexing the contracts, the database offers insights into the often-elusive world of digital agreements.

The database uses open source software developed by Open Terms Archive, a French initiative under the political sponsorship of France's ambassador for digital affairs, with support from the Commission's Next-generation Internet programme.

1.2 Scope

At the time of launch, the database encompassed 790 terms and conditions from more than 400 services provided by over 290 distinct service providers such as Apple, Meta, Microsoft and more. These entries include a variety of documents like Commercial Terms, Developer Terms, Live Policy, Terms of Service, Privacy Policy, and more, offering a comprehensive view of the digital legal landscape. Through crowdsourcing with verified users, these numbers will continue to rise, ensuring an ever-expanding resource at your fingertips.

The database's automated system promises continuous updates. It reviews the contracts in its repository multiple times per day across the web and automatically highlights new changes, enabling users to keep up with the evolving digital landscape effortlessly.

1.3 What can you use the database for?

This initiative is a one-stop resource and offers benefits to a broad spectrum of users:

- Regulators: Our database can assist you in tracking updates to digital services' contracts, and in implementing different legal requirements (e.g., on online platforms providing advance notice of changes under Regulation 2019/1150).
- Researchers: Stay up to date with real-time updates on terms and conditions, allowing you to keep your finger on the pulse of digital legal landscape.

- Empowered Users: As a private or professional user of digital services, you have a resource to keep track of the many terms you may be subject to, helping you regain control of your online presence and digital rights.

2 Access the Database's repositories

You can access the Database in the webpage: <https://platform-contracts.digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/index.html> .

The repository can be used without registering and there is no need for a EU Login account, except if you want to do a request. The code and the data are openly accessible.

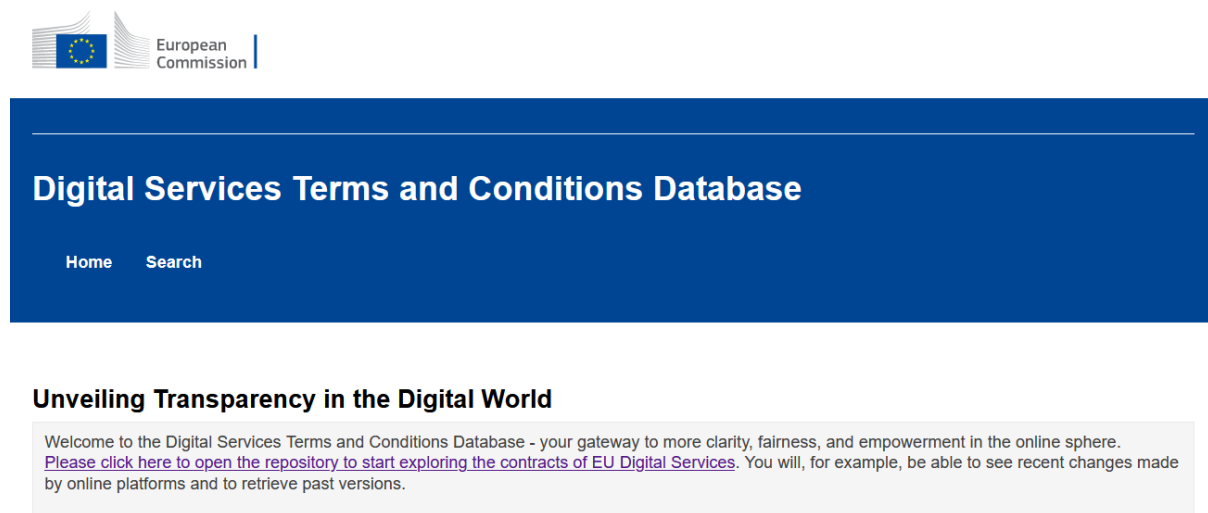


Figure 1: homepage of the digital Services Terms and Conditions Database

The “Search” top button brings you to a new page where you can:

- Perform a search
- Access the repository, named “contrib-versions”, alphabetically, from where you can also access the [project homepage](#) in Gitlab and the other three repositories
- Submit a request for a new terms and conditions to be inserted in the database
- Submit an issue for a problem you found in the terms and conditions database

3 The Digital Services repositories:

[Accessible here](#), the platform counts 4 public groups of repositories:

- -contrib-declarations
- -contrib-snapshots
- -contrib-versions
- -Contrib Versions and Snapshots

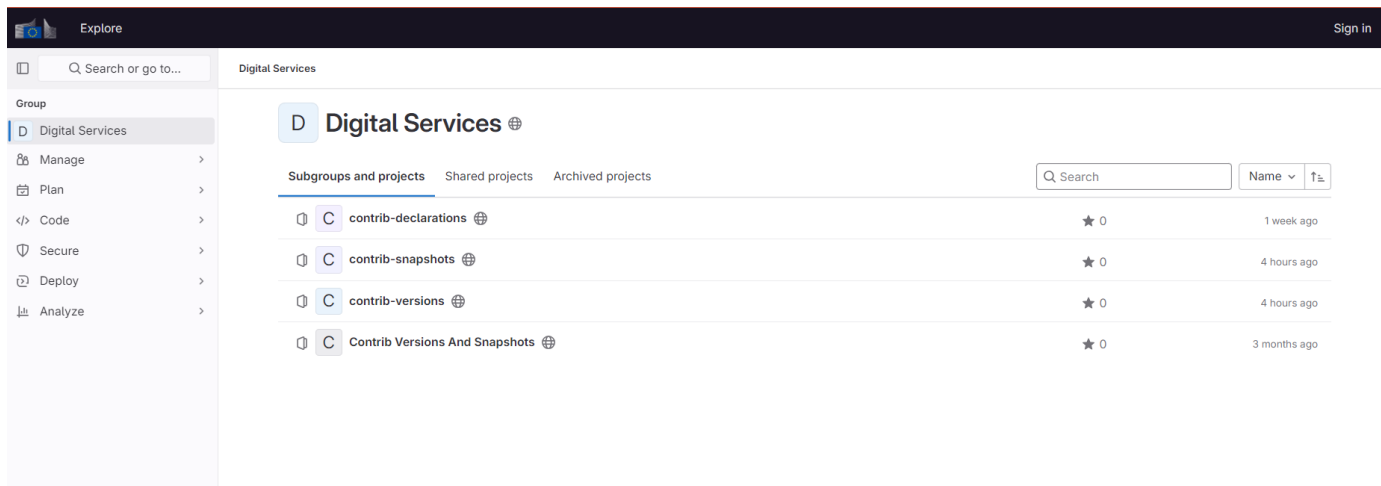


Figure 2. Home screen of the Digital Services platform repository

The **contrib-declarations** repository hosts all the first registration in the database of a company's T&C. These first declarations are done manually by Commission staff or contractors. Each entry includes the name of the service, and active links to the service's T&C. All the T&C or related pages entered here, will be followed-up in the other repositories.

The **contrib-versions repository** uses the Open-terms archive engine: a web-tracker which runs every 6h every day. This software tracks all the **text** changes that happen in all the declared documents, identified through their url. The results of the comparison are different recorded versions of the T&C per service, which forms the basis of this repository.

The repository: **contrib-snapshots** stores the HTML format of all versions.

The repository: **Contrib Versions and Snapshots** stores version and snapshot files in .zip format.

3.1 How to use the main repository: contrib-versions

The contrib-versions repository is an extensive repository where are stored all the different versions of the T&C of one service, in text document format. The related HTML data is stored in the "contrib snapshots" repository. If the T&C of one service are being tracked in several languages there will be one entry per language/country.

The repository allows users to:

- track changes across one same service T&C's.
- do searches across the database.

3.1.1 Performing a search in the contrib-versions repository

The repository is searchable. You can use the “Search” field from the Database search page. The search function allows users to check changes performed all over the registry's corpus relating to specific terms. The search results are always text in documents. It is not possible to search only for folders' names, for example, to find the folder with all the versions of one service's T&C. For this, it is recommended to use the [alphabetical list](#). (see below [1.1.1 Tracking historical versions of a document in the alphabetical database](#))

Please note: the alphabetical list includes names starting with lower or upper cases. The names starting with an upper-case letter are at the top of the list, and the ones starting with lower case are afterwards, regardless in this case of the alphabetical order. A service starting with upper case “Z” will be higher in the list than one starting with lower-case “a”. Remember to check both orders in the list when you search alphabetically for a service's name.

3.1.1.1 Using the "search" function to search per terms:

The repository allows a search per terms. In order to perform a search in the repository, type the terms in the “search” field of the “Search” homepage.

If you are already in the project page, on the left sidebar, at the top, select “Search or go to”.

- Type your search query. You must type at least two characters.
- Press “Enter” to search, or select from the list.

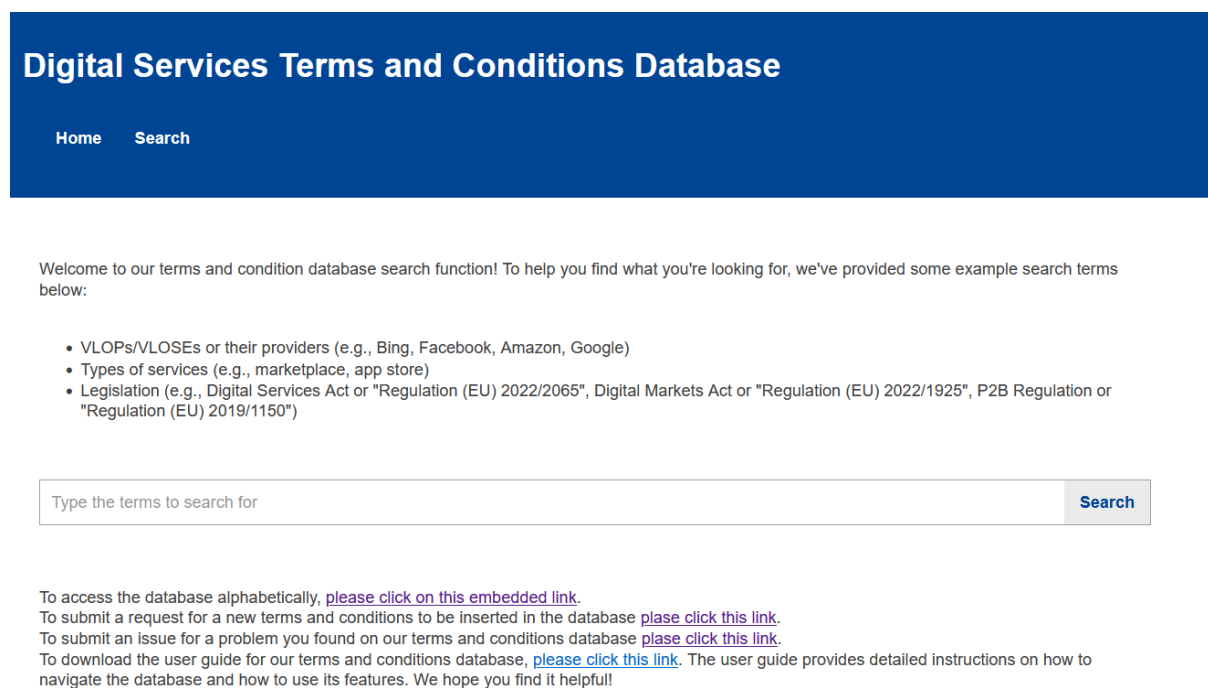


Figure 3. Search per terms and other search fields

This function searches all the repository; it is not possible to search only one folder or file. The search function is strict: it cares about terms order, including punctuation. In the case of searching

for combined terms, these will show only if the order is exactly the same. The search results will display:

-a list of all the documents where the term appears.

-in each document, a list of the paragraphs where the term appears; the paragraph are highlighted.

-The term itself is not marked.

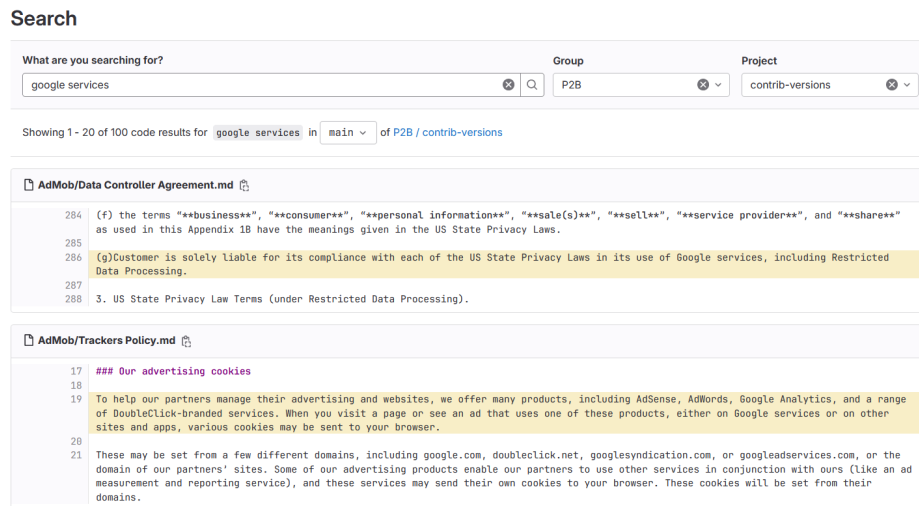


Figure 1. Example of a search per term results list

3.1.1.2 Search per files: using the "find file" function

This function is available from the Search function in GitLab through: https://code.europa.eu/p2b/contrib-versions/-/find_file/main ;

You can access it from the contrib-versions repository, clicking on the button at the right: "Find file".

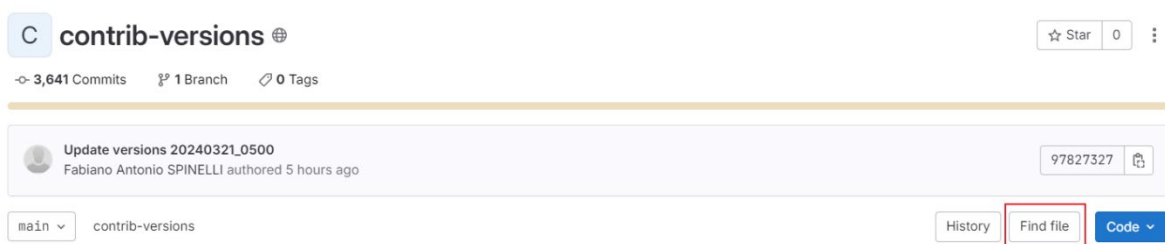


Figure 5. Search for a file

It will open a search box where to enter the version of the file or terms included in the file's name.

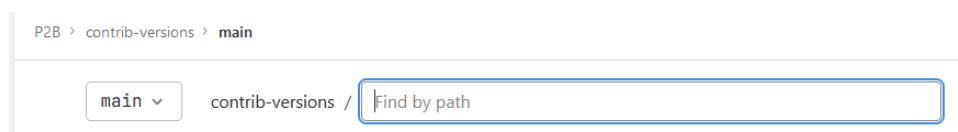


Figure 5b. Search for a file

It is also possible to search for a file directly by typing “/” at the start of the search per terms.

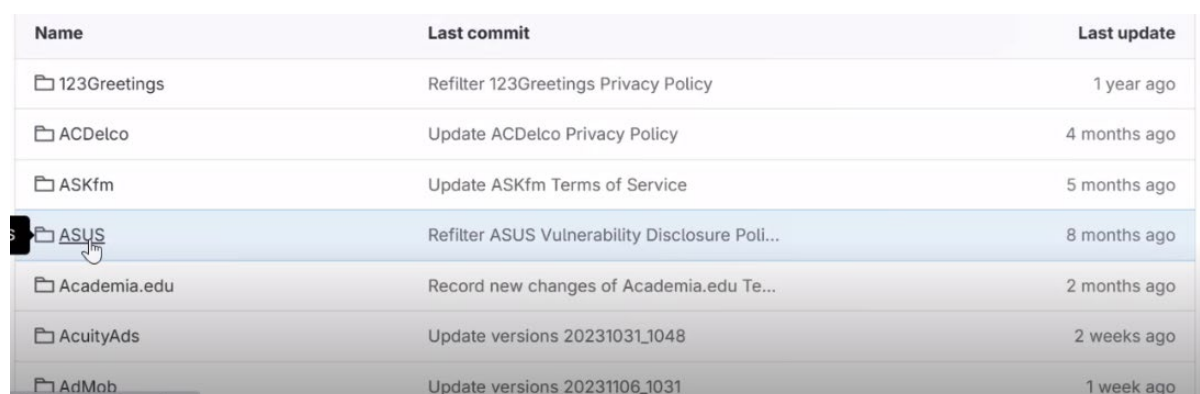
To search for a specific file, you need to enter a specific version of it. For files names (/), the search function accepts imperfect matches, and even displays results for each character of the search. The results are displayed in a drop-down list from the search box and you can select which result you want to see.

3.1.2 Tracking historical versions of a document in the alphabetical database:

From the search page, you can **access the database alphabetically** following the indication “[please click on this embedded link.](#)”

The repository home page is a list of folders, one per service, listed alphabetically, where you can scroll down to search for a service. If there is country-specific versions being tracked, they will be each in a different folder.

Please note: the registry list includes names starting with lower or upper cases. The names starting with an upper-case letter are at the top of the list, and the ones starting with lower-case are afterwards, regardless in this case of the alphabetical order. A service starting with upper case “Z” will be higher in the list than one starting with lower-case “a”. Remember to check both orders in the list when you search alphabetically for an entry.



Name	Last commit	Last update
123Greetings	Refilter 123Greetings Privacy Policy	1 year ago
ACDelco	Update ACDelco Privacy Policy	4 months ago
ASKfm	Update ASKfm Terms of Service	5 months ago
ASUS	Refilter ASUS Vulnerability Disclosure Poli...	8 months ago
Academia.edu	Record new changes of Academia.edu Te...	2 months ago
AcuityAds	Update versions 20231031_1048	2 weeks ago
AdMob	Update versions 20231106_1031	1 week ago

Figure 6. A screenshot of the contrib-versions entries list

To open a folder, users need to click in the name of the folder only, in the left column (as in the screenshot above). Opening a folder reveals the data collected for a service in the form of text documents.

The “Last commit” column contains a description of the last update executed on that folder. Normally, it should be in the format: update version+yyyymmdd+time (GMT-1). For example, “Update versions 20231106_1031”. Attention: By clicking on the commit’s reference in the middle column, all the updates of all services updated in this commit will open, not only the ones of the service listed on the left.

The “Last update” column indicates when the last text change was detected and recorded among the documents stored in the service’s folder.

Each folder would contain the different relevant information, as text-only document, for one service. For example, the Privacy policy and the Terms of Service. For each document, we can see when the last update in the text was recorded.

Name	Last commit	Last update
..		
Privacy Policy.md	Refilter ASUS Privacy Policy	1 year ago
Terms of Service.md	Refilter ASUS Terms of Service	1 year ago
Vulnerability Disclosure Policy.md	Refilter ASUS Vulnerability Disclosure Policy	8 months ago

Figure 7. A screenshot of the documents in a service's folder

The user can use the folders' list to identify a service, and in this folder, the relevant document. In the "last update" column you can check if any change happened in the time limit relevant to your search.

Once you have identified a change, it is possible to find out what exactly the change was:
 -click on the document's name to open it. The user can then see all the text of the latest version.
 -then, on the top menu, click on the "History" button (figure 8).

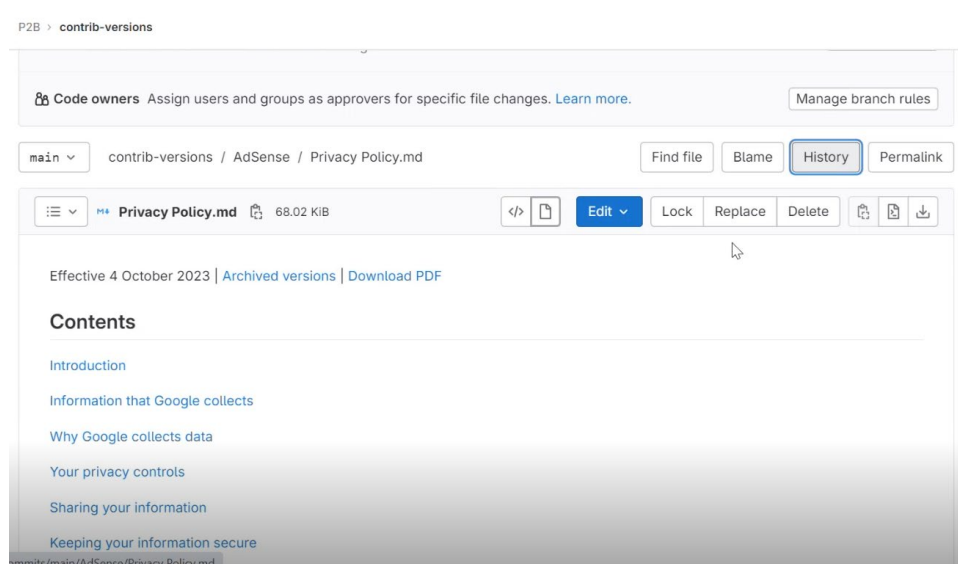


Figure 8. How to see the history (previous versions) of one file

-a list will open with all the previous versions of the document, with all the dates and times when a change was recorded in the database.

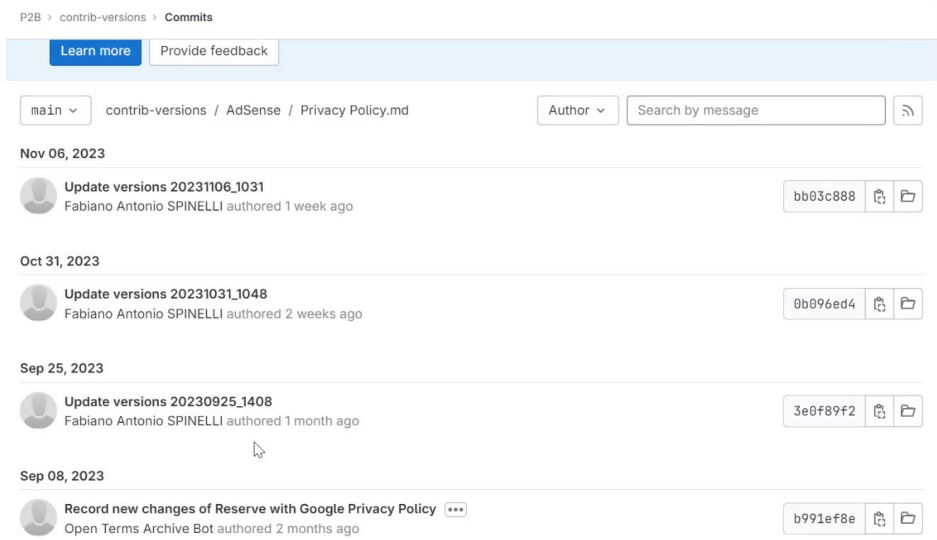


Figure 9. How to see the history (previous versions) of one file

The change may not be very relevant: the tool tracks all changes, independent on whether it concerns a comma or a full paragraph. In order to investigate if the change is what you are looking for, you can use the comparison function.

-to see where in the text the change happened, click on the commit (the name of the version). The repository will load the text with the changes.

You will see highlighted in red, the previous version's paragraph; and in green, the new version. The exact terms which have changed will be highlighted in slightly darker color (Figure 9).

In case the change is only deleted text, it will show only in red. For only added text, in green.

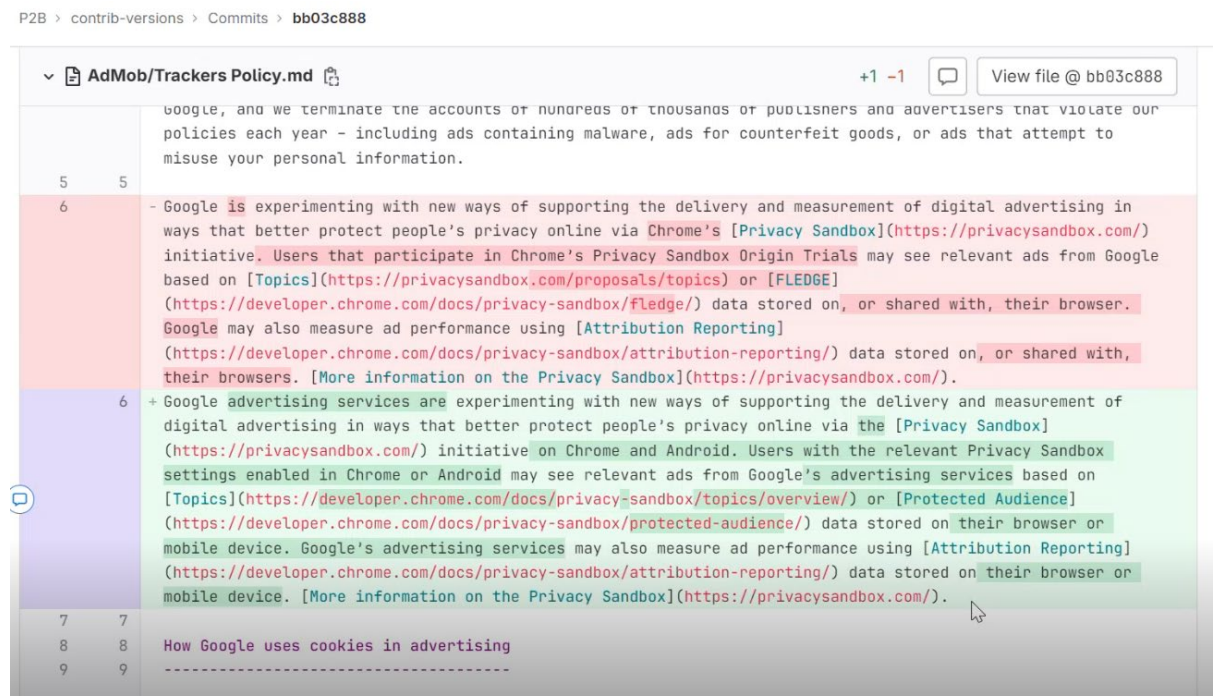


Figure 10. How to see the comparison between two versions of one file.

This allows users to identify and retrieve previous versions of T&C and to easily see the changes.

3.1.3 Tracking historical changes over all the repository:

It is also possible to check and compare all the recorded changes in each individual (6 hourly) repository update. For this, the user needs to click on the "History" button directly from the branch main page, the list of folders (Figure 10). The button is on the top menu.

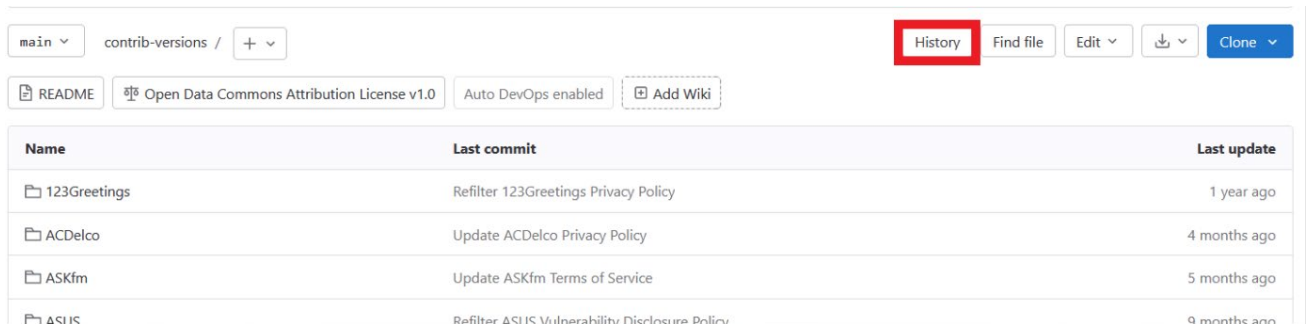


Figure 12. How to see the history of commits

This will open the list of general updates (commits) performed over all the repository documents.

You can select any of these updates by clicking on it.

You can then see (Figure 11):

- the numbers of changes which happened since the previous commit
- the file where it happened
- and the text changes will be highlighted.

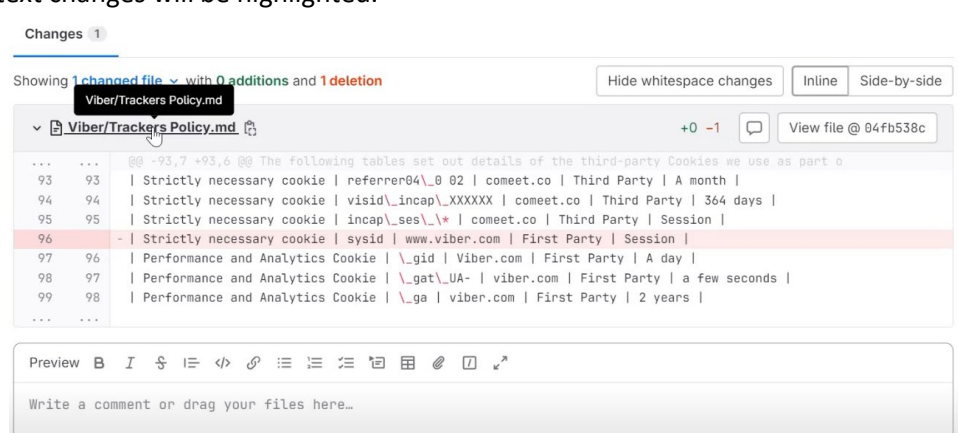


Figure 12. Example of a list of a commit's changes

It is also possible to see, from a specific service's folder, all the other changes which have happened in the same commit by clicking on the commit's name instead of the folder's name (see figure 6 and 7) . You can also check this from inside any service's folder, selecting a commit from one specific document.

This allows to check changes happening at the same time than a relevant change already identified by the user.

3.1.4 How to request the addition of a service's Terms & Conditions to the repository?

If you consider that a service Terms and Conditions not figuring in the database should be included, you can request it. Please follow the steps below.

3.1.4.1 Create an EU Login account:

In order to access the form for the request, you will need a EU Login account. EU Login is the European Commission's user authentication service. It allows authorised users to access a wide range of Commission web services, using a single email address and password.

You can [register for an EU Login account](#) online. In case of difficulties you can check the [Help page for externals users](#) from outside the European commission institutions.

3.1.4.2 Request a new declaration of T&C

Log in to EU Login in your browser.

Then go back to the Digital Services search page, and follow the link: “To submit a request for a new terms and conditions to be inserted in the database [please click this link.](#)”

The form is also accessible from the contrib-declarations repository, by clicking on “Issues” on the left-hand side menu.

This will open the form for a new request with the following fields: title, type, and description

Digital Services / contrib-declarations / Issues / New

New Issue

Title (required)

Type ?

Issue

Description

Preview | B I

Terms & Condition Name

(Indicate the name of the T&C you want to insert in the database)

Links

(Put here the link of the T&C you want to insert in the database)

Type

(Please put an "x" on the checkbox you want to select to identify the type of the T&C)

- * [] Acceptable Use Policy
- * [] Brand GuideLines
- * [] Business Mediation Policy

Figure 13. Form for the request of a new T&S to be included.

To fill it in:

-Title: always use the format: “Request: new T&C declaration: [name of the service] “

-Type: no need to fill in

-Description: this field contains a template that the user just needs to fill in. Please respect this format and complete according to it.

-Name of the T&C

-Link to the T&C

-Check the box in order to specify which type of T&C is the request referring to.

The user can preview the request by clicking on “Preview” in the upper left-hand corner of this box. Once in the preview, click on “continue editing” to go back to the previous editable view.

To submit the request, at the bottom of the page and after completing all the required information, click on the blue button “Create issue”.

3.2 Reporting Issues or Errors:

If you wish to signal an issue or an error in the main repository (contrib-versions): log in to EU Login in your browser.

Then go back to the Digital Services search page, and follow the link: “To submit an issue for a problem you found on our terms and conditions database [please click this link.](#)”

The form is also accessible from the contrib-versions repository, by clicking on “Issues” in the left-hand side menu.

This will open the form for a new issue with the following fields: title, type, and description.

To fill it in:

-Title: always use the format: “Request: new T&C declaration: [name of the service] “

-Type: no need to fill in

Description: this field contains a template that the user just needs to fill in. Please respect this format and complete according to it. -Name of the T&C

 -Link to the T&C

 -Check the box in order to specify which type of T&C the request is referring to.

The user can preview the request by clicking on “Preview” in the upper left-hand corner of this box.

Once in the preview, click on “continue editing” to go back to the previous editable view.

To submit, at the bottom of the page and after completing all the required information, click on the blue button “Create issue”.

3.2.1.1 For advanced users:

If you wish to signal an issue or an error in another of the repositories:

-Go to the dropdown menu under “Digital Services” in the left menu of the project homepage in Gitlab

-Select “Issues”

-Select the repository you wish to signal the issue for.

-Click on “New issue in [name of the repository]”

-Fill in the form’s fields:

 -Title: use the format: “Issue: (short description + name of the service if any)”

 -Type: no need to fill in

 -Description: fill in according to the indications already in this field: Terms and Conditions name in the Versions repository, links, and issue description. You must use the name of the T&C as they appear in the repository, even if you are requesting a correction on the name, so that the repository entry can be identified.

To submit, at the bottom of the page and after completing all the required information, click on the blue button “Create issue”.

4 Advanced users interface – set up our preferences (only for GitLab registered users)

The Gitlab interface at <https://code.europa.eu/p2b> hosts the repository and allows Gitlab registered users to set up preferences, including language. It is not necessary to have a GitLab user profile to access the repositories, so this part does not necessarily apply to all users. The GitLab language settings don't affect the language of the documents contained in the repository itself.

To edit preferences, the user needs to go to the icon with their initial in the left-side vertical menu. In the drop-down menu, select "Preferences" (figure 2).

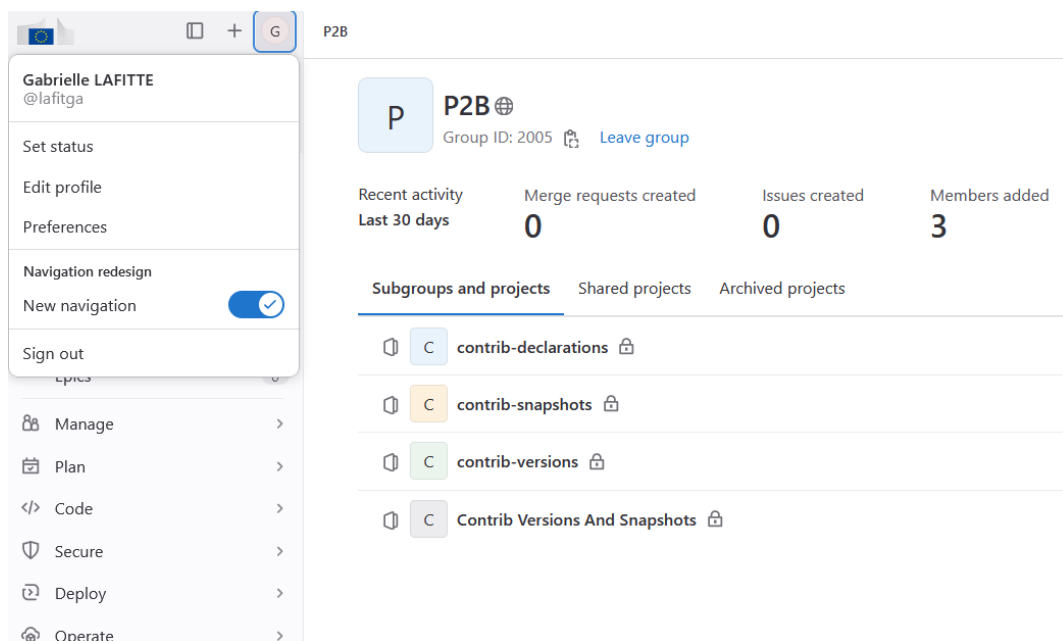


Figure 14. Home screen with the Profile settings menu

Scroll down and edit your preferences as needed. The language is towards the end of the scroll-down list, under "Localization". Not all languages are fully supported and the percentage of translated text is indicated in the selection menu.

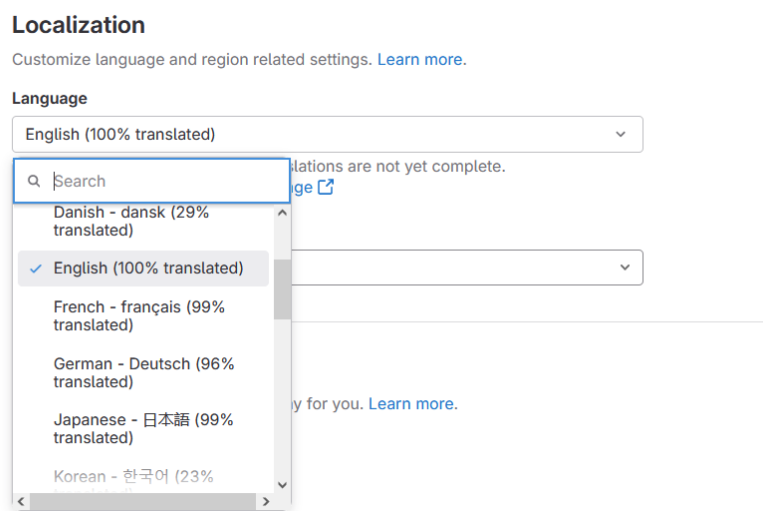


Figure 15. Screenshot of language preferences options

5 Closing remarks

We hope that this manual may help you. Feedback is welcome and can be provided using the **Contact us** section.

