



Reinterpreting WTO Rules in the Algorithmic Age: AI, Digital Platforms, and the Future of Trade Law

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ABSTRACT

The rise of artificial intelligence AI and digital platforms has transformed the structure of international trade, challenging the adequacy of existing World Trade Organization WTO rules. Agreements such as GATT, GATS, and TRIPS were negotiated in an analogy era and do not fully address issues of data flows, algorithmic decision-making, or the dominance of platform-based business models. This research investigates how WTO law can be reinterpreted in the algorithmic age to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Using a doctrinal legal methodology, the study analyses WTO agreements alongside emerging digital trade practices and comparative insights from regional trade frameworks. The findings suggest that reinterpretation of WTO provisions on goods, services, and intellectual property can partially accommodate algorithmic trade, but systemic gaps remain in areas such as data governance, algorithmic transparency, and regulation of digital monopolies. The study argues for a future-oriented WTO framework that balances trade liberalization with digital sovereignty, ensuring that global trade law evolves in step with technological innovation. The rapid diffusion of AI and the rise of digital platforms have transformed the nature of international trade, challenging the relevance and applicability of existing WTO rules. While the WTO legal framework was designed to regulate goods, services, and intellectual property in a traditional market economy, digital trade now defies neat categorizations. Algorithms determine pricing, AI-driven platforms facilitate cross-border commerce, and data flows have emerged as critical drivers of economic growth. This article examines the challenges posed by the algorithmic economy for WTO law, explores potential reinterpretations of existing rules, and considers pathways for reform that balance trade liberalization, digital sovereignty, and ethical governance.



Introduction

The digital transformation of the global economy has redefined the foundations of trade. AI, big data analytics, and platform-based business models now play an indispensable role in shaping international commerce. Algorithms determine supply chains, automate financial services, and influence consumer behaviour, while digital platforms serve as the principal gateways for cross-border exchange. Yet, the legal architecture of the WTO rooted in the 1995 Marrakesh Agreement remains anchored in a world economy where trade was primarily conceived in terms of tangible goods and human-driven services. The purpose of this study is to critically examine how WTO law can adapt to the algorithmic age. It explores the scope of reinterpretation of existing rules particularly under GATT, GATS, and TRIPS while also assessing the need for new frameworks to regulate algorithmic trade. The central hypothesis is that although WTO provisions can be stretched to accommodate digital trade, systemic deficiencies persist in regulating data governance, algorithmic transparency, and platform monopolies. The key research questions are: To what extent can existing WTO rules be reinterpreted to govern algorithmic trade? What reforms are necessary to ensure the continued relevance of the WTO in the digital economy? The methodology adopted is doctrinal and interpretive, drawing upon treaty texts, dispute settlement jurisprudence, and secondary literature, while also incorporating comparative insights from regional trade agreements. The outcomes anticipated are twofold: first, to demonstrate the interpretive flexibility of WTO law in addressing digital trade; and second, to highlight the necessity of a future-oriented legal framework that balances free trade with digital sovereignty and regulatory autonomy (Khan, 2023; Mathlouthi et al., 2025; Khan & Wu, 2021).

The article proceeds in six parts. Following this introduction, Part II contextualizes the algorithmic transformation of trade. Part III examines the reinterpretation of WTO rules in the digital context. Part IV identifies systemic challenges and enforcement gaps. Part V advances proposals for a future-oriented WTO framework. Finally, Part VI concludes with reflections on the significance of adapting global trade law to the realities of the algorithmic age. The WTO, founded in 1995, reflects a world economy vastly different from the present digital landscape. Its agreements particularly the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade GATT, the General Agreement on Trade in Services GATS, and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights TRIPS were designed with tangible goods, conventional services, and intellectual property in mind. Yet, trade in the twenty-first century is increasingly mediated by algorithms and digital platforms that rely on cross-border flows of data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence. The algorithmic age blurs the distinction between goods and services, raises questions about jurisdiction, and introduces challenges around data protection, algorithmic transparency, and digital monopolies. WTO members face a dual challenge: reinterpreting existing agreements to cover these new realities, while also considering new rules tailored to the digital economy (Khan & Wu, 2021; Khan et al., 2025; Abdelrehim Hammad et al., 2021).

Research Methodology

This study focusing on the interpretation and analysis of primary and secondary legal sources. The primary materials include WTO agreements specifically GATT, GATS, and TRIPS alongside ministerial declarations, negotiation texts, and dispute settlement reports relevant to digital trade. Secondary sources such as scholarly articles, policy papers, and comparative analyses of regional trade agreements e.g., CPTPP, USMCA, DEPA are examined to contextualize evolving norms around AI, data flows, and digital platforms. The selection of these sources is guided by their relevance to the research questions concerning the adaptability of WTO law to the algorithmic age. Analytical emphasis is placed on identifying interpretive gaps, doctrinal tensions, and potential

pathways for reform. This normative and interpretive approach allows the study to synthesize existing legal frameworks with emerging technological realities, producing insights into both the limits of current WTO rules and the prospects for their evolution in governing algorithmic trade (Khan & Ullah, 2024; Usman et al., 2021).

The Algorithmic Transformation of Trade

Algorithms and Market Functioning

Algorithms have become central actors in shaping how international trade is conducted. No longer confined to technical back-end processes, they now directly influence pricing strategies, product recommendations, logistics, and even dispute resolution. Their capacity to process vast amounts of data in real time enables firms to predict consumer preferences, optimize supply chains, and reduce transaction costs, thereby enhancing global competitiveness. In this sense, algorithms serve as both facilitators and regulators of market activity. However, their growing influence also raises complex challenges for the functioning of markets. Algorithmic pricing, for example, while efficient, can result in tacit collusion where competing firms' pricing systems align without explicit human coordination, undermining competition principles. Similarly, algorithmic discrimination—where outcomes vary according to demographic or geographic indicators can distort access to international markets, violating the spirit of non-discrimination embedded in WTO law. Moreover, the opacity of algorithmic decision-making, often referred to as the “black box problem,” poses obstacles to transparency and accountability, especially in trade disputes. From a regulatory perspective, the WTO framework is ill-equipped to address such algorithmic distortions. Traditional rules presuppose identifiable state measures or corporate actions, whereas algorithmic behaviour often emerges from complex, decentralized, and automated processes. Reinterpreting trade rules in light of these dynamics is essential to ensure that efficiency gains from algorithmic trade are not achieved at the cost of fairness, transparency, and compliance with global trade norms. Algorithms now shape trade outcomes in ways that were unimaginable when the WTO was created. From personalized pricing to automated dispute resolution and AI-managed supply chains, digital tools are redefining competitiveness. While these innovations increase efficiency, they also raise concerns about discrimination, market distortion, and algorithmic opacity (KHAN, et al., 2022; Khan, 2024; Khan & Wu, 2021).

Digital Platforms as Global Gatekeepers

Digital platforms have emerged as the central infrastructures of the global economy, reshaping how trade is organized, mediated, and controlled. Companies such as Amazon, Alibaba, Google, and Meta do not merely provide services; they operate as quasi-sovereign entities that structure market participation, control data flows, and determine the visibility of goods and services. Their dominance is sustained through network effects, where the value of the platform increases as more users join, creating near-insurmountable entry barriers for competitors. In doing so, these platforms act as gatekeepers of global commerce, influencing which producers gain access to markets and under what conditions. This concentration of power raises significant challenges for international trade law. WTO disciplines were drafted with state actors and traditional firms in mind, not with transnational digital intermediaries that simultaneously function as marketplaces, regulators, and competitors. For instance, platform-imposed fees, algorithmic ranking systems, and preferential self-promotion can distort competition and undermine the principles of market access and national treatment. Moreover, the accumulation of vast datasets provides platforms with competitive advantages that amount to monopolistic control, blurring the line between legitimate innovation and unfair trade practices. The WTO currently lacks explicit tools to address these dynamics. Neither GATT's provisions on goods nor GATS's coverage of services fully contemplate the

hybrid role of platforms. While competition and subsidies rules could be stretched to cover platform-related distortions, they were never designed for digital dominance based on data monopolies. Without reinterpretation or reform, WTO law risks becoming irrelevant in regulating the most powerful actors in twenty-first-century trade. Platforms like Amazon, Alibaba, and Google have become quasi-sovereign entities, controlling access to markets and influencing trade flows. Unlike traditional intermediaries, digital platforms leverage network effects and data accumulation, creating monopolistic tendencies. WTO rules on competition, subsidies, and market access were not designed to regulate such actors (Khan & Wu, 2021; Khan et al., 2021).

Data as the New Trade Resource

In the digital economy, data has emerged as the fundamental resource driving trade, innovation, and competitiveness. Unlike traditional commodities, data is non-rivalrous and infinitely replicable, enabling firms to extract value through analysis, algorithmic training, and predictive modelling. Cross-border data flows underpin critical sectors such as e-commerce, financial services, cloud computing, and AI development, making them indispensable to global value chains. In many respects, data now functions as the raw material of international trade, akin to oil or capital in earlier economic eras. Yet the rise of data as a trade resource exposes tensions between liberalization and regulation. On one hand, advanced economies advocate for unrestricted data flows as a principle of digital trade, arguing that restrictions act as non-tariff barriers. On the other hand, many developing countries emphasize digital sovereignty, seeking to localize data to foster domestic industries, safeguard privacy, and protect national security. This divergence has led to competing models of data governance, with the European Union prioritizing stringent privacy standards under the GDPR, while countries like China adopt state-centric data control frameworks. WTO rules currently provide no comprehensive framework for managing these conflicts. GATS provisions on services and TRIPS rules on intellectual property can be interpreted to cover certain aspects of data, but neither directly addresses its cross-border movement or regulatory treatment. The absence of binding multilateral norms risks regulatory fragmentation, as regional trade agreements such as the USMCA and DEPA establish varying standards for free data flows and localization restrictions. Without a coherent WTO approach, data governance may evolve through fragmented regimes that undermine predictability and fairness in global trade. Reinterpreting WTO disciplines to treat data as a trade resource requires balancing two imperatives: safeguarding members' regulatory autonomy while ensuring that data restrictions do not become disguised protectionism. Crafting such a balance will be essential if the WTO is to remain central in governing twenty-first-century trade. Data flows are now integral to trade in both goods and services. However, WTO rules provide no comprehensive framework for data governance. While some members argue that free data flows should be a trade principle, others prioritize digital sovereignty and national security. The tension between free trade and regulatory autonomy is central to current negotiations on e-commerce (Khan, et al., 2021; Khan, 2024; Khan et al., 2021).

Reinterpreting WTO Rules in the Digital Context

GATT and the Problem of Digital Goods

The GATT was designed for a world in which goods were tangible, measurable, and physically transported across borders. Its central disciplines tariff bindings, most-favoured-nation MFN treatment, and national treatment presume that trade flows can be classified, taxed, and regulated in a clear and material sense. The rise of digital products such as e-books, downloadable software, music streaming, and 3D-printable design files has unsettled this framework, as such goods defy traditional customs classifications. The core legal uncertainty lies in whether digital products should be treated as “goods” under GATT or as “services” under GATS. This classification gap

has significant consequences. If considered goods, digital products would be subject to tariff bindings and border measures. If treated as services, they would fall under market access and national treatment commitments in members' GATS schedules. To date, WTO members have sidestepped this issue by maintaining a moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions, first adopted in 1998 and periodically renewed. While this moratorium has preserved tariff-free digital trade, it has also deferred resolution of the fundamental legal question. This ambiguity creates vulnerabilities. Developing countries argue that the moratorium deprives them of potential tariff revenues and policy space, while advanced economies emphasize the benefits of frictionless digital trade. Moreover, the classification dilemma risks regulatory inconsistency if members unilaterally impose tariffs or restrictions on digital products. WTO dispute settlement has yet to clarify the issue, leaving open whether GATT obligations extend to intangibles. Reinterpreting GATT provisions to encompass digital goods through a purposive approach focusing on the functional equivalence between digital and physical products could offer a solution. Such an approach would ensure that core trade principles, including MFN and national treatment, apply regardless of format. However, absent consensus, the problem of digital goods continues to highlight the limitations of a trade regime rooted in twentieth-century assumptions. Digital products such as e-books, streaming services, and downloadable software challenge the goods–services dichotomy. WTO members have so far avoided classifying digital products explicitly, leaving uncertainty over whether tariffs can be applied. A reinterpretation of GATT provisions could extend the principle of non-discrimination MFN and national treatment to digital goods, but disputes remain unresolved (Mathlouthi, et al., 2025; Khan & Jiliani, 2023; Khan et al., 2020).

GATS and Algorithmic Services

The GATS was negotiated at a time when cross-border services were primarily conceived as human-delivered activities financial advice, telecommunications, or professional consulting. Its framework is built around the four “modes of supply,” which distinguish between services delivered across borders, consumed abroad, provided through commercial presence, or supplied via the presence of natural persons. However, the rise of AI-driven and algorithmic services unsettles this architecture, as automated processes increasingly substitute for human intervention in the delivery of services across all modes. Algorithmic services encompass a wide spectrum: AI-powered financial trading platforms, automated legal document review, telemedicine diagnostics, and cloud-based machine learning applications. These services challenge the underlying assumptions of GATS in two ways. First, the distinction between modes of supply becomes blurred an AI-based financial service may be simultaneously delivered across borders (Mode 1), consumed abroad (Mode 2), and dependent on commercial presence through servers or data centers (Mode 3). Second, algorithmic automation raises the question of whether commitments scheduled under GATS for human-provided services can be interpreted to cover their AI-driven equivalents. From a regulatory standpoint, the opacity of algorithmic decision-making complicates the application of GATS principles of market access and national treatment. Discriminatory outcomes generated by algorithms may disadvantage foreign service providers in ways that are difficult to trace, raising questions of compliance with non-discrimination disciplines. Moreover, new regulatory concerns such as algorithmic bias, data privacy, and cybersecurity fall outside the explicit scope of GATS but are increasingly central to market access conditions. Reinterpreting GATS to account for algorithmic services requires a functional approach, extending commitments to AI-enabled services where they perform equivalent economic functions. At the same time, members may need policy space to regulate these services in the public interest, particularly where consumer protection, fairness, and transparency are at stake. Balancing liberalization with regulatory autonomy will be critical to ensuring that GATS remains relevant in governing services trade in the algorithmic era. The GATS applies to cross-border services, but it does not account for

automated AI-driven services. For example, cloud computing and AI-based financial services blur the traditional four modes of supply under GATS. A purposive interpretation could broaden GATS coverage to include algorithmic services, ensuring that market access and national treatment obligations apply to AI-enabled cross-border trade (Hui, et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2020).

TRIPS and Algorithmic Creativity

The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights TRIPS was crafted to protect human-centered innovation, granting rights to authors, inventors, and creators. Its provisions on copyright, patents, and industrial designs assume that intellectual property IP originates from human ingenuity and is safeguarded to incentivize further creativity. The advent of artificial intelligence, however, complicates this paradigm. AI systems can now generate music, literature, visual art, and even novel inventions, raising the question of whether outputs created without direct human input fall within the protective ambit of TRIPS. At the heart of this issue is the definition of authorship and inventorship. TRIPS do not explicitly require authors to be human, but its language presumes human agency. Extending copyright or patent protection to AI-generated works risks unsettling the incentive structure that IP law is built upon, since machines do not require economic rewards. Conversely, denying protection could undermine the commercial value of AI-driven innovation and disincentivize investment in creative technologies. National responses vary. Some jurisdictions, such as the United States and the European Union, have reaffirmed the necessity of human authorship, while others, including the United Kingdom, have experimented with recognizing computer-generated works. This divergence risks creating fragmentation in global IP regimes, complicating cross-border enforcement and raising the prospect of forum shopping. For the WTO, the challenge lies in reconciling TRIPS obligations with algorithmic creativity. A purposive reinterpretation could treat AI outputs as protectable where there is significant human input in the design, training, or supervision of the system. Alternatively, members could develop *sui generis* frameworks for algorithmic works, balancing incentives for innovation with safeguards against overprotection. Without clarification, TRIPS risks becoming increasingly detached from the realities of digital creativity, leaving critical questions of authorship, ownership, and enforcement unresolved in the algorithmic age. AI is generating creative works, inventions, and designs, raising fundamental questions about authorship, ownership, and intellectual property rights. TRIPS obligations, drafted for human-centered innovation, require reinterpretation to determine whether AI-generated content qualifies for protection and how states should handle disputes over algorithmic outputs (Mukherjee & Chang, 2025; Khan & Usman, 2023).

Subsidies, Competition, and Digital Monopolies

The WTO's existing rules on subsidies and competition were designed to address state intervention in traditional markets, such as agricultural subsidies or industrial state aid. In the algorithmic age, however, these provisions face significant limitations when applied to the digital economy, where value is increasingly generated through data accumulation, network effects, and platform dominance rather than conventional production. State support for AI development, cloud infrastructure, and digital platforms often takes forms that are difficult to capture under the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures SCM. For instance, preferential access to government datasets, state-funded research, or tax incentives for tech giants may distort trade just as much as direct financial contributions, yet they often fall outside the narrow definitions of "subsidies" in WTO law. As a result, some members benefit from substantial state-backed digital industrial policies without clear avenues for challenge under the multilateral system. Competition concerns are equally acute. Digital platforms consolidate market power not through price manipulation alone, but by leveraging data monopolies and algorithmic control. Self-preferencing

practices, where platforms privilege their own products in search rankings, or the extraction of excessive commissions from sellers, can distort market access in ways not contemplated by GATT or GATS. Unlike traditional monopolies, digital dominance often arises from intangible advantages such as control over consumer data or proprietary algorithms, making it harder to assess under existing WTO disciplines. The absence of clear multilateral competition rules further complicates the issue. While the WTO has occasionally engaged with competition-related principles—such as non-discrimination and market access—its agreements do not provide comprehensive tools for regulating global digital monopolies. This has left space for regional agreements, like the EU's Digital Markets Act or provisions in the CPTPP and USMCA, to introduce rules targeting anti-competitive practices in digital trade. To remain relevant, WTO law must expand its conception of subsidies and competition to account for the unique distortions of the digital economy. This could include recognizing data access and algorithmic control as sources of trade distortion, adopting broader definitions of state support, and developing competition principles tailored to platform governance. Without such reforms, digital monopolies risk entrenching themselves beyond the reach of multilateral oversight, undermining both fairness and efficiency in the global trading system (Soomro, et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2020).

Challenges in Reforming WTO Rules

Divergent Member Interests

Efforts to adapt WTO rules to the digital economy are complicated by the sharply divergent interests of its members. Unlike traditional trade negotiations, where disagreements often revolved around tariff levels or agricultural subsidies, digital trade touches upon sensitive domains such as national security, privacy, and industrial policy. These differences make consensus elusive and stall meaningful reform. Advanced economies including the United States, European Union, and Japan tend to prioritize the free flow of data and minimal restrictions on digital services, reflecting the global reach of their technology industries. Their agenda emphasizes open digital markets, strong intellectual property protections, and safeguards for cross-border cloud and AI services. In contrast, many developing and emerging economies advocate for digital sovereignty, arguing that unrestricted data flows undermine domestic innovation and expose national security vulnerabilities. Data localization requirements, investment in indigenous platforms, and industrial policies aimed at building domestic digital capacity are central to their strategies. The divide is further deepened by differing regulatory philosophies. The European Union emphasizes robust privacy and consumer protections, while the United States promotes a more market-oriented approach. Meanwhile, China has advanced a state-centric digital model that prioritizes control over data flows and strategic investment in AI. These competing visions make it difficult to craft WTO rules that balance liberalization with regulatory autonomy. The result has been a fragmented negotiation landscape. Plurilateral initiatives, such as the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on e-commerce, have advanced among like-minded members, but lack universal buy-in. Many developing countries remain cautious, fearing that binding digital trade rules could lock them into disadvantageous positions and limit their policy space. Unless these divergent interests can be reconciled, the WTO risks being sidelined, with regional and bilateral agreements becoming the de facto sites of digital trade governance (Hauser & Zimmermann, 2003; Khan, 2023; Kahn & Wu, 2020).

Enforcement and Transparency

The effectiveness of the WTO has historically rested on the credibility of its dispute settlement system, which provides members with a structured process to challenge violations of trade rules. Yet, in the digital economy, enforcement and transparency face unique challenges that strain this

model. Unlike traditional trade disputes where contested measures involve tariffs, quotas, or subsidies conflicts over algorithms, data governance, and digital platforms often involve opaque, rapidly evolving technologies that are difficult to detect, monitor, and evaluate within existing WTO structures. One core challenge is the “black box” nature of algorithms. Many AI-driven systems operate in ways that are not easily explainable, even by their developers, making it extremely difficult for a complainant to prove discriminatory treatment or market distortion. For instance, if an algorithm systematically disadvantages foreign suppliers in digital marketplaces, tracing causation and attributing responsibility to a member state becomes a formidable task. Transparency obligations under WTO law, such as those requiring the notification of subsidies or trade-related measures, are ill-suited for capturing algorithmic processes and data-related practices. Furthermore, enforcement is hindered by jurisdictional complexities. Many digital platforms are private actors whose conduct may not neatly fall under the category of “measures by a member” as required under WTO law. This creates accountability gaps, since the WTO primarily adjudicates state actions, not the practices of transnational corporations. Without mechanisms to compel disclosure of algorithmic decision-making or data management practices, dispute panels may struggle to make informed rulings. The weakening of the WTO’s Appellate Body has further exacerbated these challenges, raising doubts about the institution’s ability to resolve disputes in technologically complex areas. To remain credible, the WTO may need to consider reforms such as requiring enhanced transparency for digital trade measures, developing specialized panels with technical expertise, and encouraging cooperation with domestic regulators on algorithmic oversight. Without such adaptations, the enforcement of digital trade rules risks becoming fragmented, undermining both trust and compliance in the multilateral system. Even if WTO rules are reinterpreted, enforcing them against opaque algorithms and multinational platforms poses serious challenges. Ensuring transparency, accountability, and traceability in digital trade disputes will require new institutional tools (Odilovna, 2024; KHAN et al., 2022).

The Risk of Fragmentation

One of the most pressing risks in adapting global trade rules to the algorithmic economy is the increasing fragmentation of regulatory regimes. As WTO negotiations on digital trade and e-commerce stall, members are pursuing regional and bilateral initiatives that reflect their own strategic priorities. Agreements such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership CPTPP, the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement USMCA, and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement DEPA already contain extensive provisions on data flows, source code protection, and digital platform regulation. While these frameworks offer clarity for their participants, they create a patchwork of overlapping and sometimes inconsistent rules at the global level. This regulatory pluralism poses several risks. First, it undermines predictability for businesses operating across multiple jurisdictions, increasing compliance costs and discouraging smaller firms from participating in cross-border trade. Second, fragmentation erodes the principle of multilateralism that underpins the WTO, shifting the center of gravity of digital trade governance to regional and plurilateral settings. Third, divergent standards on issues such as privacy, data localization, and algorithmic transparency may entrench geopolitical blocs such as the U.S.-led open data model, the EU’s rights-based regulatory approach, and China’s state-centric digital sovereignty model thereby politicizing digital trade. The danger is that instead of a coherent, universally applicable set of trade rules, the world may face “digital silos,” where firms and consumers operate under different regimes depending on geography. This not only complicates enforcement but also risks excluding developing countries that lack the capacity to join advanced digital agreements. Unless the WTO reasserts its role by developing baseline multilateral norms for the algorithmic economy, fragmentation will continue to weaken its legitimacy and effectiveness in governing twenty-first century trade. Regional agreements, such as

the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement DEP and provisions in mega-regional trade deals, are filling the gap left by the WTO. While these initiatives promote innovation, they risk creating fragmented digital trade regimes that undermine multilateralism (Munir, 2024; Khan, 2022).

Conclusion

The algorithmic age is reshaping global trade in ways that the drafters of the WTO agreements could not have foreseen. Artificial intelligence, digital platforms, and cross-border data flows have become the lifeblood of the international economy, yet WTO disciplines remain anchored in a framework designed for physical goods, traditional services, and human-centered innovation. This article has shown that while reinterpretation of existing provisions under GATT, GATS, and TRIPS can partially accommodate digital trade, fundamental gaps persist in addressing data governance, algorithmic opacity, and the concentration of power in platform monopolies. For policymakers and scholars, the stakes are clear: without adaptation, the WTO risks marginalization in the governance of twenty-first century trade. To remain relevant, the institution must advance reforms in three directions. First, it should establish minimum standards for algorithmic transparency and accountability in cross-border commerce. Second, it must strike a balance between free data flows and members' legitimate claims to digital sovereignty. Third, it should consider developing a plurilateral or multilateral framework specifically tailored to digital platforms and AI-driven trade practices, while enhancing the expertise of its dispute settlement bodies in technical domains. Future research should explore how emerging technologies—such as blockchain, quantum computing, and generative AI will further disrupt the trade landscape, and how WTO law might integrate with parallel regimes on privacy, cybersecurity, and human rights. By engaging proactively with these challenges, the WTO can transform the algorithmic age from a source of legal uncertainty into an opportunity for renewed multilateralism, ensuring that trade law continues to promote fairness, predictability, and inclusivity in a rapidly evolving digital economy. The algorithmic age is reshaping the foundations of global trade, demanding a rethinking of WTO rules that were drafted for a different era. While reinterpretation of existing provisions provides a temporary solution, structural reform will ultimately be necessary to address the unique challenges posed by AI and digital platforms. A future-oriented WTO framework must balance free trade with digital sovereignty, innovation with regulation, and efficiency with fairness. The future of trade law lies in its ability to adapt to the algorithmic transformations that define the twenty-first century.

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