

WAS FACEBOOK AIDING AND ABETTING IN THE
J6 INSURRECTION?



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Thesis

Given what we've learned about the events that led up to the January 6th Insurrection, Mark Zuckerberg and his leadership team should be investigated for aiding and abetting in the seditious actions that took place before, during and after that fateful day.

Abstract

Research into the history of Facebook's social media platforms reveals callous and malicious decisions that negatively impact our way of life and even threaten our ability to continue to function as a democracy. It's no surprise then that the driving forces behind it all are the usual suspects: greed, power, corruption, neo-colonialism, and the failure of US government regulation. To investigate the various ways that the FACEBOOK players manipulate their technology, and take advantage of the policies that empower them, we need to dive deeper into the horrific consequences of Zuckerberg's "Go fast and break things" philosophy. These sordid facts are now well documented – in books, in movies, in podcasts, in organizations such as the Center for Humane Technology, and as of late, in Congressional Hearings where whistleblower Frances Haugen has taken us inside the "belly of the beast." Using the collective insights of this research, I'll identify the core issues, document the negligence and malicious oversights, and briefly touch upon solutions that include old and new approaches to policy changes that address the accelerating devastation that will continue to wreak havoc until we can figure out what can be done to stop the madness, mayhem, and malicious outcomes of FACEBOOK's experimental technology.

Introduction

I. Aiding and Abetting

In addition to the superlative progress the J6 Congressional investigation has made, the Committee should also focus on the possibility that Mark Zuckerberg and his leadership team were aiding and abetting in the J6 insurrection before it occurred, during the insurrection, and after J6. The public and Congress deserve to know how much Facebook contributed to this malicious attempt to undermine our democracy whether intentionally or by their reckless negligence. It helps to compare this situation to a manslaughter case where a drunk driver who never set out to cause the death of innocent people, yet acted in such a reckless manner, that lives were lost.

When whistleblower Frances Haugen testified in Congress, she shared an internal report from Facebook, concluding that the company "helped incite the Capitol Insurrection. (Martin, 2021)." The Washington Post reported that "Facebook has never publicly disclosed what it knows about how its platforms, including Instagram and WhatsApp, helped fuel that day's mayhem," and added that Facebook even went so far as to reject "its own Oversight Board's recommendation that it study how its policies contributed to the violence and has yet to fully comply with requests for data from the congressional commission investigating the events. (Timberg, et. al., 2021)" Additionally leaked documents showed how Facebook was unsuccessful after the election to stop the growth of pro-Trump "Stop the Steal" initiatives as well as other conspiracy theorists.

As a troubled and divided nation, it's absolutely essential for Congress and the DOJ to investigate where, what, who, how, and why all social media platforms have unwittingly aided and abetted in these domestic terrorist activities. The bottom line: We need more answers to help us determine whether Mark Zuckerberg knew and knowingly neglected to take reasonably appropriate countermeasures to protect our Legislators, Capitol staff, police, and most importantly, Democracy itself.

Zuckerberg's partner in crime, ex-COO, Sheryl Sandberg tried to defend Facebook by claiming that they were not responsible for contributing to the mayhem of J6, However, first-

hand accounts of Facebook employees and watchdog groups have since come forward with a much different narrative. As J6 seditious activity continued to ramp up, a North Carolina GOP bussing ad on Facebook advertised, “This is a call to ALL patriots from Donald J Trump for a BIG protest in Washington DC! TAKE AMERICA BACK! BE THERE, WILL BE WILD!” On Jan 5th, more incendiary Facebook posts appeared, one calling for “Operation Occupy the Capitol” promoting the hashtag “#1776Rebel,” an obvious reference to America’s initial revolutionary efforts to break free from British rule. Another Facebook post invited people to consider overthrowing the government, using an Abraham Lincoln quote: “We the people are the rightful masters of both Congress and the Courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to overthrow the men who would pervert the Constitution.” Other posts on Instagram offered “detailed maps of the Capitol and a guide to the speakers there.”

When reviewing how Facebook has knowingly contributed to the demise of American democracy over time, keep in mind that some of Zuckerberg’s favorite cheerleading chants in the early years of Facebook were, “Go fast and break things!” and “Company over Country!”

II. Scandalous History

For well over a decade, Zuckerberg has given his “word” that he would follow up on its civil rights violations, privacy breaches, teen suicides, and accusations of inciting genocide, claiming that Facebook’s policies and actions going forward would reflect their commitment to change. However, as history has shown us, Zuckerberg has not done his part. So, it comes as no surprise to learn that even when it comes to assisting the White House with pandemic misinformation or J6 insights, Zuckerberg has doubled down on his cavalier attitude, deciding that it’s a good idea to stiff White House requests for specific data regarding malicious misinformation and disinformation.

[According to the Washington Post](#), vital pandemic related questions were asked by the Biden WH team, like, “How many people had been exposed to misinformation about covid-19 on Facebook and its sister platforms, Instagram, and WhatsApp. How many users were still sitting on the fence about whether to take the vaccine? And when Facebook blocks its algorithm from spreading unwanted content, how many people are still exposed to it?” Facebook answered

by giving up some data, yet failed to give up the specific data requested, therefore side-stepping critical concerns raised by the WH, even though Biden at one point emphatically stated,” This is killing people.”

As national and global issues for Facebook continued to expand, things became even more complicated by [their decision last year to shut down access](#) to data previously granted to academics and news agencies. This essentially shut down professional review taking away their ability to study and report on any discrepancies. So much for Zuckerberg’s inane claims that they have nothing to hide. This obviously denied the White House and Congress access to the “very data needed by the public to understand the scope of the problems and to potentially combat them, some experts and insiders say. (Dwoskin, et. al. 2021)”

Making matters worse, after Facebook [cut off researchers’ access to their data](#), they had the audacity to portray their actions as merely following a privacy policy that was part of an agreement with [the Federal Trade Commission](#). Responding to Zuckerberg’s coverup, the FTC released a statement to let the public know that this was an inaccurate portrayal of the FTC’s conditions and did not reflect the contractual language emanating from the FTC’s successful lawsuit against Facebook.

Compounding their lack of cooperation, [Facebook refused to give access to an internal report on the insurrection, hampering the Government’s efforts](#) to “examine the company’s role in promoting health misinformation and the events of Jan. 6.” This is one of core take-aways when examining the failures of Facebook. Essentially, they’re withholding vital information that could further expose domestic terrorist organizations responsible for the Capitol attack that killed police and civilians.

Zuckerberg’s attempts to portray Facebook as some kind of ethical company, continue to result in yet another display of awkward, public faceplanting. In a [House Financial Services Committee Congressional Hearing in 2019](#) investigating Facebook’s plans to develop a new currency, we find some of the best examples of Zuckerberg’s evasive tactics and egregious defense of a platform that is clearly un-American, antisocial, and the biggest threat democracy has ever confronted. Chairing that Committee, Rep. Maxine Waters opening statement slammed Facebook for their outrageous failures. Much of her original language is quoted here because it’s important to capture the essence of what she said:

(1) On Diversity and Inclusion

“Facebook has utterly failed. Facebook’s executive ranks and workforce continue to be mostly white and male.” Facebook has \$0 managed by diverse firms. Regarding fair housing, the National Fair Housing Alliance has sued Facebook for enabling advertisers to engage in discrimination on its advertising platforms. “The US Department of Housing and Urban Development has also filed an official charge of discrimination against Facebook for its advertising practices, including the company’s own ad delivery algorithms, which were found to have a discriminatory impact when advertisers did not target their audience in discriminatory ways. I understand that Facebook has refused to cooperate with HUD’s fair housing investigation by refusing to provide relevant data.”

(2) On competition and fairness

“Facebook is a subject of an antitrust investigation by the attorney generals of 47 states and the District of Columbia.

(3) On protecting consumers

“Facebook as was fined \$5 billion by the Federal Trade Commission for deceiving consumers and failing to keep their data private.”

(4) On elections

“Facebook enabled the Russian government to interfere with our election in 2016 with ads designed to pit Americans against each other, suppress the vote, and boost Trump.” In one of the most egregious examples, “Facebook allowed a counterfeit Black Lives Matter webpage to operate with the goal of discouraging African Americans from voting.” Yet here we are three years later and “these activities are still continuing on Facebook. We learned just this week that Russia and Iran are using the same tactics to meddle in our next (2020) election.”

(5) On political speech

“Last week, you announced that Facebook would not be doing fact checking on political ads.” This gives all politicians “a platform to lie, mislead, and misinform the American people” – all the while supporting Facebook business goals to sell more ads. “The impact of this will be a massive voter suppression effort that will move at the speed of a click.”

(6) Freedom of Speech

“Your claim to promote freedom of speech does not ring true, Mr. Zuckerberg. Each month, 2.7 billion people use your products. That’s over a third of the world’s population. *That’s huge.* That’s so big that it’s clear to me and to anyone who hears this list that perhaps you believe that you’re above the law.”

Representative Waters then went on to say, “You are aggressively increasing the size of your company and are willing to step on or over anyone, including your competitors, women, people of color, your own users, and even our democracy to get what you want.”

(7) On plans for a global digital currency to challenge the US dollar

Given the monolithic size and reach of Facebook “it should be clear why we have serious concerns about your plans to establish a global digital currency that would challenge the US dollar. In fact, you have opened up a serious discussion about whether Facebook should be broken up.”.

III. Sociopathic Leadership?

This all begs another bigger-picture question: Is Zuckerberg an incorrigible sociopathic hacker or just another greedy, self-indulgent billionaire recklessly overlooking the harm he has caused? Or both? After listening to hours of the various Congressional hearings that Zuckerberg has testified in, three primary themes emerge: (1) Their traditional mantra has been: Go fast and break things, then deal with the damage later; (2) Current US laws enable online companies like Facebook to literally get away with crimes that range from civil rights violations to manslaughter; (3) Criminal liability appears to be the only thing that will hold Zuckerberg and Facebook leadership to account, given their evasive tactics and failure to practice what they preach. They’ve certainly proven how efficient they are at breaking things, even though many people benefit from the good things that Facebook does. But the lethal side of this platform, coupled with the Congressional failures to hold them to account, clearly negate Facebook’s pledge to provide products and services that primarily support social good.

Historically, Facebook continues to act in reprehensible ways that reflect their insulated,

“White-bread” culture where critical issues like civil liberties and civil rights are deprioritized or ignored altogether.

Since Zuckerberg and his teams are capable of discovering and monitoring the seditious conversations and other nefarious activities that took place on their platforms (Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger), shouldn't they have alerted the proper authorities in the US Intelligence community immediately about what was observed before J6 was going down, during the events of that day, and afterwards? Moreover, because Zuckerberg is at the zenith of technological power and influence, why did he not act as any citizen witnessing a crime in progress? Does anyone doubt that Zuckerberg would not be able to speak to and collaborate with the most important officials in the DOJ, DOD, or the US Intelligence community? Are we to assume that US Intel has never conversed with Zuckerberg? Not likely. Did Zuckerberg, like Trump, decide to neglect his responsibilities? Yes, Facebook banned Trump, but only after the insurrection had taken place. So, the question remains, why didn't Zuck use his unbridled power and influence to do everything possible to intervene before the insurrection, during the insurrection, and after the insurrection, showing us that he has an honorable intention to share all the related information Facebook had?

Zuckerberg claims that Facebook is a “law abiding” social media company whose goal is to “connect” the world to do social good. If we accept that premise, why would we even have to ask the chief Facebook players to pony up all the information they have on J6? According to a [Washington Post article](#), after the election of 2020, “the company’s (FB) Civic Integrity team was largely disbanded by a management that had grown weary of the team’s criticisms of the company.” In whistleblower Frances [Haugen’s Congressional testimony](#) (Oct 2021), she stated that Facebook historically resolves “conflicts in favor of its own profits” with disastrous consequences that create “more division, more harm, more lies, more threats, and more combat. In some cases this dangerous online talk has led to actual violence that harms and even kills people.” And so, it goes with Facebook. Dignity and character ain't exactly their thing.

If Zuckerberg does secretly cooperate in the investigations and uncovering of seditious activities, it's hard to imagine that he and his cronies don't have the techno chops to ferret out the critical details about the players, plans, and post-insurrection fallout on their platform. However, to date, there does not appear to be a Congressional hearing focusing on the extent to which Facebook and other platforms have “aided and abetted” - overtly or otherwise - directly

contributing to this deadly game of revolution roulette. When it comes to sedition, I would have thought that no one would be immune from having their doors kicked in or their online information audited – not even Facebook. Now, I’m not so sure anymore. Given the existential threats involved, we can only hope that Congress goes the extra mile to bring cavalier CEOs to justice.

Exposing the fallacies of Facebook

Compounding Facebook’s widespread violations and allegations, there are several other fundamental reasons why social media platforms are dysfunctional when it comes to protecting human rights and will remain dysfunctional. Those challenges include, but are not limited to: (1) Unmanageable volumes of content that can extend into billions of interactions per day, (2) Evasive corporate tactics that came to light in Frances Haugen’s Congressional Hearings, (3) Freedom of Speech advocacy claims that fail to provide those freedoms when intimidation, threats, and insurrections strip citizens of their rights to speak freely without political oppression or other fringe group backlash, e.g. QAnon assaults, (4) Downstream existential threats to democracy, society, and the environment where disenfranchised populations are affected the most, and (5) Allowing dysfunctional technology to take precedence over election integrity.

I. Monitoring Facebook content is impossible

When Zuckerberg tried to defend Facebook, answering a Congressional Hearing question, he exposed Facebook’s fundamental flaws at the same time, “Congressman, I agree that this is a terrible issue and respectfully, when there are 10s of billions or 100 billion pieces of content that are shared every day, even 20,000 people reviewing it can't look at everything. What we need to do is build more AI tools ... that can proactively take them down (US Congress, 2018).”

The inability of Facebook and other social media companies to provide accurate reporting, often excludes one of the key oversights of social media. It’s a simple, yet expansive math problem that many people don’t understand and often overlook: When billions of pieces of content are in play daily, these companies can’t keep up with appropriate vetting of content.

This content monitoring issue is a fact that Zuckerberg knows all too well. It is impossible to monitor Facebook's unfathomable avalanche of content. In the House Financial Services Committee Hearing (Oct 2019) regarding Facebook's goals to develop Libra, a new form of cryptocurrency that would directly compete with the dollar, Zuckerberg's answered a question dealing with Facebook's current inability to monitor their content, "When there are 10s of billions or 100 billion pieces of content that are shared every day, even 20,000 people reviewing it can't look at everything. What we need to do is build more AI tools.". When Zuckerberg made this statement, he revealed the core dysfunctional framework affecting most social media platforms: There is simply far too much content coming in to accurately monitor. Not by "20,000 people" nor by probably by millions of people trying to cover "10s of billions or a 100 billion pieces of content." For the sake of argument, let's calculate how much content 20,000 people assessing 10 billion pieces of content a day can handle in an hour. This equation becomes: 10B (pieces of content) divided by 20,000 (people) = 500,000 pieces of content to be processed by each team member in a day, which translates into 62500 pieces of content per hour, or ***1042 pieces of content per minute!*** Quoting Mark Zuckerberg, they "can't do everything."

We need to find out the extent of what they can't do. Anything less is tantamount to accepting Facebook's failures in the past and their failure to explain how they'll be able to protect global users in the future. Obviously, for those of us with basic math skills, this is a mind-blowing revelation that speaks volumes about the dangers of unregulated technology.

It also reveals how ignorant it was for the GOP (led by Newt Gingrich) to [gut the Office of Technology Assessment \(OTA\)](#) in 1995 just as the internet was becoming available to the public and to commerce online. That mistake may well be recognized someday as the single biggest blunder in the history of American Technology. In other words, did we really think that exciting new online technology, new software, and the advent of artificial intelligence, was going to somehow magically all work out with no need to assess it anymore? Since the dawn of humankind, nothing has ever been that perfect. That Congressional error defies reason, mocks logic, and ignores the well documented history of new products and services made in America.

All that said, Facebook has not hired more content moderators and refuses to admit the abysmal shortcomings of A.I. Moreover, we as a nation actually allow them to continue to operate in demonstrably reckless, ruthless, and lethal manners with adequate form of checks and balances - the cornerstone of our democracy.

Unfortunately, our country's reputation also suffers from the damage caused by Facebook propaganda that extends far beyond our borders, exacerbating genocidal conflicts in Myanmar, Ethiopia, India, and Egypt, to name a few.

Compared to all other American businesses, healthcare facilities, food processing plants, etc., social media companies get a free pass when it comes to the Government conducting routine inspections that could: (1) Investigate and validate their data claims, (2) Allow algorithm inspections, (3) Protect the public and the world from any lethal policies and/or practices implemented by the company, and (4) Restore the public's faith in technology as well as restoring the public's faith in the Government's ability to monitor experimental technology with known existential threats. To their credit, Congressional Oversight Committees have been working diligently for years to reign in the malevolent direction of social media, with some victories, yet with more critical setbacks, making the lion's share of these dilemmas unresolvable at present.

Legally, without the ability to evaluate the company's claims, stating that they're able to cover "94% of Hate Speech," we're left with no way to properly assess their systems and get to the truth. Other assessments put FB monitoring totals at around 35%. This is an essential part of protecting society that is being overlooked at the worst possible time. As mentioned, Technology inspections need to become as comprehensive as any other type of US inspections, e.g., food production facilities, pharmaceutical production, restaurants, etc.

Other companies like Twitter, have the same problem, "In a hearing in Congress (9/15/2022), Twitter whistleblower Peiter Zatko was asked repeatedly about whether Twitter is aware of how its user data is accessed and stored. Over and over, he gave a troublesome answer: *The company doesn't know.*"

II. Post Frances Haugen Congressional Testimony: Coverups and Lies

Regarding Facebook's evasive tactics, after whistleblower, France Haugen, came forward (Oct 2021) it was revealed that Facebook's alleged failings included "permitting terrorist content, drug sales, hate speech and misinformation to flourish, while also failing to

adequately warn investors about the potential risks when such problems surface, as some have in news reports over the years.”

It was also noted that [despite Zuckerberg and other Facebook executives repeatedly claimed high rates of success in restricting illicit and toxic content](#) — to lawmakers, regulators and investors” they knew all along that they could not remove the fraudulent content and remain profitable.

Zuckerberg testified last year before Congress that the company removes 94 percent of the hate speech it finds before a human report it. But in internal documents, [researchers estimated that the company was removing less than 5 percent of all hate speech on Facebook](#). (Timberg, et.al., 2021)” The follow up comments by one of their spokeswomen tried to deny that Zuckerberg “makes decisions that cause harm,” a statement that is easily disproved by a landslide of evidence to the contrary. One only has to watch a few documentary films on PBS - like “The Facebook Dilemma, Parts 1 and 2”, or read “An Ugly Truth” to get a solid frame of reference about who Zuckerberg really is and what horrific decisions he’s made.

The facts are there for the whole world to see. Facebook is quite simply out of control and has been since its inception. The very nature of Zuckerberg’s social media platform was never designed to be a tool for social good, user-friendly, transparent, nor accountable. In short, human-centered design methodology was not the prevailing goal, despite the lofty platitudes Zuckerberg spoon fed to his early devotees.

As Facebook has grown, so has its invasive, dysfunctional platform, spreading all manner of madness and mayhem across the world. Historically, the Facebook platform is responsible for promoting some of the worst kind of incendiary propaganda directly inciting violence, genocidal attacks, and death. Whether you’re a DC cop who lost their life on J6, or an Indian student fearing for their life, or an innocent teen driven to suicide, Zuckerberg maintains that he has no responsibility. To date, Zuckerberg has not been held to account for the harm his experimental technology continues to cause.

As far back as 2016, Zuckerberg and Sandberg were confronted and warned by their friend, and mentor, Roger McNamee, “Mark, Cheryl, this is a trust business. The law doesn't protect you. If your users believe that you're undermining democracy, if they believe that you're harming civil rights, if you're harming public health, if you're harming privacy, there's no

protection against that.” McNamee went further, stating that, “once they were informed, once people like me, once President Obama went there, there was no excuse.”

This additional evidence demonstrates how Zuckerberg’s denial, and his decisions promote more political chaos – even if it means the end of democracy as we know it. It also exposes another character flaw common in CEOs who ruthlessly led startups that took wing from 2000 through 2020. McNamee’s insight in the Democracy Now interview does a good job of explaining the convoluted power trips that ran rampant from Facebook forward, “I got disillusioned with Silicon Valley, beginning around 2010 with the financing of Spotify, and then going on to Airbnb, Uber, and Lyft. I started to see companies that were clearly the best of what Silicon Valley had to offer, but who’s essential being violated my values -- that Airbnb and Uber and Lyft were really about breaking the law.” The trend with many startups is to sidestep morality and favor profits over individual rights, for example “Spotify was about essentially profiting at the expense of musicians.”

In another Congressional hearing, [AMERICANS AT RISK: MANIPULATION AND DECEPTION IN THE DIGITAL AGE](#), Tristan Harris, a founding member of the Center for Humane Technology, cuts to the bone with concise explanations that indicate the existential threats: “Currently, social tech companies are building infrastructure -- but they are not acting responsibly -- for the harms that that infrastructure is creating at both personal and societal levels. Therefore, the government must act, and not expect the industry to regulate itself.”

Comparing social media content to news organizations, Tristan stated, “By allowing technology platforms to take the role of an information environment without journalistic standards, long-form investigation, fact-checking, and some notion of care, we suffer the consequences. Exponential hearsay, gossip, “BREAKING” news, and cynical “hot take” commentary generated by the most outrageous voices have become the default information flows that make up how we see reality.”

This typifies the juvenile attitude that still drives underground hackers and young CEOs today. They seem to think that if there isn’t a law holding them to account, anything and everything is fair game, no matter how unethical their business practices. Zuckerberg and Sandberg defended Facebook, telling McNamee, saying, “Roger, the law says we're a platform, not a media company. We're not responsible for what third parties do.” Ultimately, they hide

behind the loopholes of the law instead of making sound ethical decisions.

Zuck admits to the impossibility of content moderation at Facebook

Zuckerberg defended Facebook and exposed its fundamental flaws, at the same time, “Congressman, I agree that this is a terrible issue and respectfully, when there are 10s of billions or 100 billion pieces of content that are shared every day, even 20,000 people reviewing it can't look at everything. What we need to do is build more AI tools ... that can proactively take them down (US Congress, 2018).”

III. The Ruse of Freedom of Speech

Freedom of Speech should not include Freedom to Harm

Regarding being too intimidated to enjoy Freedom of Speech online, like others who fear retribution, I find myself weighing out the consequences of publishing revealing insights that may become construed as confrontational to superpowers like Trump, the GOP, Zuckerberg, or Elon Musk. Because these CEOs are known to be vindictive liars who take great pride in crushing other businesses and any competition that stands in their way, I often think about how they might come after me if my work cuts too deep—knowing that Zuck is not exactly the poster child of online empathy and instead, exhibits what seems like sociopathic personality.

The more I think about it, this dovetails into the point I was making earlier about freedom of speech. In other words, the current trend for Big Tech and freedom of speech online should include a way to safeguard all people who are able to contribute to a public forum, or are able to contribute fresh ideas through their writing, video, art, film, or any other kind of media, without the fear of reprisals. However, in American society and globally, I believe that it's safe to say that we do fear the counter attacks of people who vehemently disagree with us, or people who feel that it's their military or patriotic obligation or religious affiliated obligation to come after people who try to speak their own truth.

When we are young, we are taught that Freedom of Speech is one of our most basic Constitutional rights. We grow up believing that there is a progressive, humanitarian agenda driving the spirit of America. Unfortunately, as we grow older, all that patriotic hoopla begins to

unravel as we learn about the true history of America. Though our Founding Fathers/Genocidal Generals carefully articulated the aspirational goals and principles of a healthy democracy, those humanitarian efforts continue to fail in contemporary society where the civil rights of American Indians, women, African Americans, Latinos, Chinese, Polynesian, and other races are aggressively under attack. Truly concerned humanitarian social media platforms should explore these things, doing research to understand what the downstream effects of their technology.

Regarding Facebook's argument that they are protecting their members' Freedom of Speech rights, there are several problems with that rationale: (1) Facebook demonstrates every day that they can't safely monitor speech that harms people; (2) Whether by posting, liking, rating, commenting, photos or videos, Facebook users can intentionally post disinformation, threats of violence, invitations to join domestic terrorists, political lies, doxing, [brigading](#), intimidating others with violent threats that causes those affected victims to lose their rights to free speech because they're too frightened to reply, post, and/or comment; (3) Ultimately, Facebook's version of Freedom of Speech does not support civil, constructive debate among known parties, but instead promotes surveillance capitalism and anonymous threatening communication where conflict is enhanced and hate speech is accentuated and accelerated; (6) Recent reports indicate that FACEBOOK had removed over 6 billion fake accounts. *Six. Fucking. Billion.* When a social media platform can produce that much violence, chaos, and confusion, then why even allow it to exist?

Unfortunately, the propaganda that flows daily through Facebook extends far beyond our borders and has historically stoked genocidal conflicts in the Ukraine, Myanmar, Ethiopia, India, and Egypt, to name a few. The promises made by Facebook to monitor violent content are at face value, a dangerous ruse: With *1.6 billion users on Facebook each day*, it is impossible to assess all that content. This is another undeniable fact that anyone with basic math skills can understand. Additionally, A.I. is not sophisticated enough yet to be able to keep up with that tsunami of malevolence. There simply is no evidence to the contrary.

IV. Downstream Existential Threats

Obviously, if Zuckerberg really did care about the consequences, he would have taken a drastically different approach to the research, design, ethical customer service provisions, and

development of this platform. For example, he could have employed Human-Centered Design methodology informed by empathetic research, social impact analysis, environmental impact, as well as the normative financial analysis and forecasting. And though this holistic approach is well known and used by many corporations the world over, it is often overlooked and deprioritized when CEOs focus their priorities on profits over people.

How Cambridge Analytica exposed the Belly of the Beast

The evolution of Steve Bannon's Chief Strategist role is a great case study in how social media leaders are so out of touch with geopolitics—or colluding with them—that they can't see the loopholes that enable bad actors to engage in violence taking many forms, including manipulation, propaganda, death threats, and even the horrific live-streaming of mass murders. As noted by many scholars who study the traffic patterns at the intersection of media culture and politics, irresponsible social platforms like Facebook pose a grave threat to national security and social wellbeing. When Facebook was so easily hacked and then manipulated by Bannon, Trump, et. al., it should have been an undeniable clarion call, prompting America to immediately do what it takes to put guard rails in place to protect us. Broken lives, broken dreams, and broken laws surround the dysfunctional mess that happens when technology and Ivy league, White-privileged billionaires are allowed to gain enough power to topple nations.

Bannon's White Nationalist Crusade

A brief look at Bannon's path to power:

1. Bannon does a Neo-Christian philosophical exploratory march across the world.
2. He becomes the Chief Strategist of the Cambridge Analytica and Facebook hack/scandal.
3. Breitbart is taken over by Bannon who turns it into a Trump megaphone
4. Trump team pays \$100 million to Facebook for political campaign technical consulting assistance
5. Trump gets elected.
6. Bannon becomes the Chief Strategist.
7. Bannon departs WH.

8. QAnon emerges in 2017.
9. Bannon leaves Breitbart.
10. QAnon becomes a global phenomenon and movement.
11. Bannon goes on a global crusade pushing Christian Nationalism.
12. Far Right campaigns in Europe are influenced by Bannon and some go on to win national leadership positions.
13. Ultimately, this downhill chain of events also leads to:
 - a. Breaking with the Paris Accord, causing setbacks in America's previous efforts to address climate change
 - b. J6 Insurrection
 - c. Gutting of the EPA
 - d. Negligent and preventable Covid fatalities
 - e. The rise of White Nationalism
 - f. The continued theft of Supreme Court power
 - g. Fracturing of the cultural divisions in America

Misinformation Deepens the Disenfranchisement of Latino Communities

Contrary to its fatuous platitudes, Facebook continues to exacerbate social divisiveness. Mr. Zuckerberg would do well to remember that Freedom of Speech, as guaranteed in the US Constitution, does not accurately translate into Freedom to Harm.

As Mariana Ruiz Firmat of advocacy group Color of Change, recently stated in the Guardian, "... the failure to eradicate misinformation in Spanish from social media platforms amounts to aiding and abetting disenfranchisement.(Paul, 2021)" Ms. Firmat went on to say, "This kind of nonchalant approach where companies turn their heads away from the threat, shows how little they value protecting or caring about Latinx users who rely on their platforms to gain crucial access to information about voting."

In her Congressional testimony, Frances Haugen also weighed in on this type of disenfranchisement, revealing that Facebook's ability to ferret out anti-vaccine rhetoric and other forms of disinformation and threats as "basically non-existent" when it comes to non-English comments.

Legal Strategies

On Aiding & Abetting:

“Even someone who learns of a crime after the fact and who in fact may disapprove of the crime, but who helps the person who committed it, may be charged with aiding, abetting, or as an accessory.”

I. Prosecution of Social Media Aiding and Abetting

If they haven't already, it's time for Congress to cut to the chase and hold social media barons accountable for aiding and abetting where and when it's applicable. While I'm not an attorney, the legal criteria here appear to indicate that (1) they knew trouble was brewing and (2) their platform was enabling seditious activity, yet they did nothing significant to ameliorate it. Ken Burns once said that he considers Zuckerberg to be an “enemy of the state.” Though that is yet to be decided in court, we can only hope and pray that Zuckerberg's conscience evolves before it's too late.

If you know that the volume of content is so large that you can't possibly monitor it all without hiring millions of content monitoring teams, yet you allow all this violent content to be shown and can't stop it, isn't your knowledge of the internal shortcomings of FB coupled with your inability to filter out violent content, an admission of guilt in A&A? This would seem to fit the legal criteria for aiding and abetting because (1) You are aware of the lethal outcomes; (2) You are aware that the Facebook platform and integrated systems can't operate in such a way that you can prevent the exponentially expanding harm it causes, including seditious activity and deaths that could be construed as criminal acts such as manslaughter.

Regarding this negligence, when it comes to operating a company that is inherently unsafe, reckless, and lethal, doesn't this make you out to be a liar when you go on the record in Congressional Hearings, stating, “We believe in values -- democracy, competition, inclusion and free expression -- that the American economy was built on” and “We create technology to enable social good.”? When you choose to operate a lethal service – even after you know that it causes harm and can't be monitored - isn't that a situation where legally you can be found guilty of Mens Rea that indicates that you just fundamentally don't care about the harm FB inflicts on innocent people, or you simply act evasively in hopes that the complaints won't hold up over time and hold you accountable?

It is a well-known fact that social media platforms are inherently National Security Threats in that they cannot and will not monitor their content in a manner that prevents subversive parties from “advocating the overthrow of Government, participating in seditious activities, and other treasonous initiatives.” When we allow such a demonstrably reckless and lethal technology to operate in an unregulated fashion, we are literally agreeing to allow the worst kinds of domestic terrorists to freely break the law, conspire out in the open online, and avoid any consequences. Yet, social media CEOs continue to hide their data, seeking to avoid any hint of aiding and abetting, even though their foreknowledge, negligence, and assistive technology clearly implicates them.

Consider the description of “advocating overthrow of Government” below:

18 USC Ch. 115: TREASON, SEDITION, AND SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES

From Title 18—CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE PART I—CRIMES

§2385. Advocating overthrow of Government:

“Whoever knowingly or willfully advocates, abets, advises, or teaches the duty, necessity, desirability, or propriety of overthrowing or destroying the government of the United States or the government of any State, Territory, District or Possession thereof, or the government of any political subdivision therein, by force or violence, or by the assassination of any officer of any such government, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than twenty years, or both, and shall be ineligible for employment by the United States or any department or agency thereof, for the five years next following his conviction.”

These laws are also arguably why these companies hide their data, as they did after the J6 Insurrection. If they didn’t, they’d have to admit that (1) They knew it was happening, and (2) They have (according to their own team members) failed to respond in a manner that would qualify as responsible, timely, and otherwise appropriate (Timberg, 2021).

II. Protecting Election Integrity

When it comes to election integrity and social media algorithms, unfortunately, you can't protect what you can't see. This is another reason why we need more Congressional oversight that allows us to assess the algorithms and other code that may cause harm.

Here are some of Zuckerberg's Congressional Hearing quotes:

"We believe in values -- democracy, competition, inclusion and free expression -- that the American economy was built on."

"We create technology to enable social good."

"They can't fact check everything."

Are we expecting dysfunctional technology to magically transform into safe havens for voters? Or has the DOD secretly developed a fleet of Integrity Unicorns that can fly over Social Media companies, showering them with enough Voting Integrity Pixie Dust to ensure free and fair elections? To kowtow to the lies of social media companies who say they have this under control, is to accept defeat. How about a new law instead: If your platform can't operate in a safe, responsible, and accountable manner, it won't be allowed to operate in our country? Why is it that we express our concern over election integrity, yet we remain unable or unwilling to pass laws to outlaw platforms that adversely affect election integrity and in doing so, violate the Constitution?

Monitoring billions of variable pieces of content is an impossible task that would require hiring millions of content monitoring teams. And the reason social media CEOs would find that kind of hiring ludicrous? Simple answer: They would have to admit that their platforms are in fact dysfunctional, experimental online playgrounds where some of the evillest people in the world are now allowed to knock on your door, harass or threaten you, and in the worst-case scenarios, make plans to take you out. *Is this the benefit of connecting all people in the world that Zuckerberg so proudly proclaims in our best interest?*

Even the NYTimes isn't aware of the content math when a reporter seems out of touch by using the word "greatly" instead of "infinitesimally": "Facebook greatly expanded its

election team after the 2016 election, to [more than 300 people](#). Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's chief executive, took a personal interest in safeguarding elections.”

Educational and Digital Media Illiteracy

Once again preying on the weak, corrupt politicians can buy their way into elections where a strategic techno psy-ops war is waged, hoping to sway the opinions of an electorate where 54% of the voters have a below 6th grade literacy rate – meaning that they can't read, write, or reason beyond that age group. *What could possibly go wrong?* Everything manipulative, for one. A bamboozled electorate, for another.

III. Repeal and Revise Section 230

Those avenues include but are not limited to revising the Communications Decency Act – Section 230 and exploring the opportunities inherent in the 9th Amendment, giving us a way to pursue heretofore untested legal avenues to fight for our civil and digital rights. There are unexplored solutions for holding Facebook to account; Otherwise, have they become the exception to the American standard of justice: No one is above the law?

IV. Congressional Bills and Acts

Too numerous to list and expound upon here, suffice to say that Congress has proffered many legislative remedies and provisions that could make a difference and might still some day. However, the elephant in the room here is twofold: Big Tech's mighty army of lobbyists and lawyers who have succeeded in protecting their cash cows as well as the coffers of those legislators willing to take Big Tech's donations.

The quintessential dark side question: When Big Tech makes tens of billions each year, how many million does it take to buy Congress and SCOTUS Justices? Anyone with sixth grade math skills can help you with that one.

Unfortunately, few US Lawmakers have been able to bring Zuckerberg to account, primarily because our current laws do not govern Facebook's global news and daily postings - allowing them to grow into a monopoly dominating the other social networks here and around the world. This means that our government is incapable of reigning in the worst - and in some

cases, the most lethal - parts of Facebook and its acquisitions: Instagram, WhatsApp, and even Oculus. People often forget that Facebook's total reach has traditionally blown away all competition at 56% when including all its acquisitions.

V. Explore 9th Amendment Redress

I have yet to see a comprehensive exploration into the use of the 9th to force companies to cease harm and abide in good faith, social good, and social responsibility. Constitutional lawyers who want to fight the good fight in court, should consider the potential impact that this could have. "Founding Fathers (Robbers?)" had enough foresight to know that new inventions and situations would take place and proved that through the drafting and ratification of the 9th amendment. Now it's our turn to take them up on the reason they put it in the Constitution to begin with!

Neo-Policy Advocacy

I. Tristan Harris Policy Proposals

Without calling out any specific nation, state, or provincial government and laws, Tristan Harris has put together what could easily be called THE HUMANE TECHNOLOGY MANIFESTO. In this list of solutions, Tristan lays out mandates, principles, and agreements that have an exciting potential to inform and radically alter inertia that seems to plague our current laws. Coupled with a newly implemented US Department of Technology, Tristan's policy advice could go a long way in helping us begin to turn things around.

- 1) "Mandate a "Digital Update" to each of the regulatory bodies already charged with doing their job on these problems. Instead of creating a brand new Digital Federal agency to regulate all digital matters, we could extend all the existing agencies who already have jurisdiction over the areas with a "digital update" to deal with the public health, public education, election, and broadcast issues, etc. The SEC could monitor fraud from tech platforms in the form of fake clicks, fake users, and mandate regular reporting from tech companies. HHS and NIH could force quarterly reporting by technology companies on how many users are

addicted, depressed, isolated etc. for addressing the public health, addiction, and teen suicide aspects, with quarter goals set with tech companies to issue product updates to address the problems. A “Digital Update” would also be popular with the American public who are increasingly alarmed about these issues and want to see government act to update our medieval institutions for the 21st century, let alone the 2020 decade.”

2) “Apply the principles of broadcast law to technology platforms that enable broadcasting of matching scale and reach, without any of the responsibility. There should be restrictions on developing and/or deploying tools for the creation of weaponized disinformation campaigns, or for the creation, dissemination, or distribution of ads targeting children, seniors, mentally disabled or developmentally disadvantaged, or other vulnerable populations. In the same way that you cannot simply just sell automatic weapons to anyone, that you cannot also grant unlimited broadcast license, beyond certain volumes, to just anyone who wants it.”

3) “Require tech platforms that have asymmetrically powerful and sensitive information about what influences users’ or communities’ behavior and beliefs to have Fiduciary responsibilities to that membership. We can’t have private companies that privately profit for their own self-interest, while dumping harm and excess risk onto the balance sheets of society. Business interest cares about short-term self-interest, not long-term, societal-scale issues. We need government to represent the common long term interest and well-being.”

4) “Decouple profit from attention and clean up the attention economy. Explore making attention, social, and voting manipulation markets should be illegal.”

5) “Put sane limits on the development and/or deploying of tools and technologies designed for the purpose of social capital value mining, extraction, and the aggressive repurposing of cultural norms, sacred icons, religious morals, etc. This includes the use of deepfakes.”

6) “Set up some forms of real and legal deterrence. In China, the use of deepfake technology without labeling it as such, for any reason, is simply illegal -- treated as an information weapon and inherent moral hazard -- and that people violating that law are put into prison. Our analog could be temporary platform bans. Citizens seeing actual enforcement of their own protection has the effect of supporting the building of reliable trust and identity infrastructures in community.”

II. Emulate the EU's General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Digital Services Act

This oversight always blows my mind! It is the aristocratic arrogance of America that refuses to admit that other countries have already figured out how to govern more effectively, yet our lawmakers are too divided to replicate viable restraints. At a time when we urgently need to expedite our efforts and collaborate with the EU, adopting their GDPR rules and regulations would be a great place to start. So, why try to recreate the wheel when the EU has done the heavy lifting for us?

Lawmakers have introduced bills here and there that try to take on such issues as addictive algorithms and surveillance advertising. But [so far, no meaningful regulation has taken shape—unlike in the European Union](#), which has introduced legislation including the **General Data Protection Regulation** and [Digital Services Act](#) aimed at enforcing transparency from big tech and protecting users' privacy.

Rebekah Tromble, director of the Institute for Data, Democracy, and Politics at George Washington University, believes the same hasn't been done in the U.S. because of interpretations of the First Amendment and increasing political polarization. "It's hard to see our way out of this. If there's any real hope, it will be Europe that's leading the way," Tromble says. "The European regulation that's in the pipeline is going to have impact far beyond Europe. Those studies and audits that the platforms are going to have to open themselves up to, they'll be focused on the impacts on European citizens, but we'll be able to say a lot about what the likely impacts are on American citizens."

"So, there, I do have a bit of optimism," she continues. "But in terms of how we might wrest the public's power back and achieve fundamental accountability for the platforms in the U.S., I remain unfortunately pretty pessimistic overall."

III. Replicate Germany's Network Enforcement Act

On the other end of the spectrum, Germany's Network Enforcement Act, (AKA, the Facebook Act) has demonstrated that new laws can help curb the verbal violence and bring

people to account for their malevolent actions, empowering a nation to take a stand distinguishing between freedom of speech and the freedom to harm. What's hard to understand is why anyone would believe that it's undesirable for a country to protect [their citizens from violent threats](#) and the violent acts that follow. "The Network Enforcement Act's objective is to combat online hate speech and fake news in social networks. (Library of Congress, 2021.)" Moreover, what many advocates of free speech fail to consider is how the right to free speech is compromised for those who are intimidated online, forcing them to retreat in the face of violent threats that can unpredictably culminate in offline casualties to Facebook users, their families, and even their pets. The point here is that American lawmakers can learn from other nations who are implementing progressive laws that will proactively save lives and protect the Freedom of Speech for all its citizens.

IV. Implement a US Department of Technology

Inefficient Government oversight of US Technology is a National Security Breach and an existential threat to Democracy

The US Government has failed to pass the necessary legislation to keep us safe from Big Tech, especially Facebook and all its subsidiaries who continue to harm individuals, organizations, foreign nations, and now threatens the very foundation of Democratic rule in America.

Ex-Pentagon Software Chief, Nicolas Chaillan obliterates the notion of American technical preparedness, stating he quit "because China has already won the tech war guaranteeing global dominance" comparing some US government systems as "kindergarten level" in comparison.

The cost of failing to implement a US Department of Technology

Democracy Activist, [Yaël Eisenstat, spent years as "a CIA analyst, diplomat and national security advisor at the White House"](#) and was later hired by Facebook, spending six months there in 2018 as the Global Head of Elections Integrity Operations. [She now contends that the "breakdown of civil discourse is the biggest threat to US democracy" \(TED, 2020\).](#) In a recent interview with NPR, Yael revealed, "... one of their most dangerous political decisions the

company made — this was actually around the time that I was working there — (was) to not fact check political actors, (allowing) some of the biggest voices with the biggest platforms to violate [Facebook's] own policies ...” Those decisions all combined to promote Trump’s agenda, setting the stage for the perfect storm that was to follow.

In solidarity with Yael Eisenstadt’s insights and activist work, I contend that if we are ever going to get a handle on how to regulate technology, a long overdue US Dept of Technology must be implemented and should oversee the madness and mayhem that US Technology continues to promote. Doing so would finally empower the government to sufficiently monitor technology, pass appropriate laws, and establish a cadence for sorely needed tech inspections.

Repairing Technology Oversight

So why has it taken so long to realize this obvious need? To get to those answers, we’ll have to jump back in time to 1995, a time when we did have an Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) in place, originally implemented in 1973. Things went off the rails in 1995 when a Congressional majority led by GOP Speaker Newt Gingrich passed a law that ended the OTA! That meant that the OTA would no longer provide an impartial analysis of technology and science issues at the most important technology event of the century – just as the internet was becoming available online, rapidly expanding across the world. It was the single biggest tech blunder in modern history, pulled off by Newt Gingrich pushing the absurd notion that “It was time to eliminate” the OTA, claiming that it was “ineffective and major tech decisions should be made by the private sector.” The t-shirt shown in Figure 1. appeared not long after the demise of the OTA.

In the aftermath, Gingrich may well go down in history as the leader of the biggest technology blunder in US history along with his supporting cast of Conservative Lemmings who followed his lead, gutting the OTA at the most inopportune time possible, just as the internet was expanding worldwide.

Today, after 26 years of perpetually accelerating growth in technology, the government continues to let us down, failing to regulate the malicious outcomes of technology, leaving us wide open to the devious machinations of Facebook and other

Big Tech companies who brazenly violate our privacy and human rights, making all our worst nightmares come true.

Therefore, it's essential for the government to establish a stand-alone US Department of Technology. When we consider all the downsides of technology intrusion and divisiveness in our lives, I can't imagine why it's taken this long for us to take this vital step. As Jan 6 has shown us, the very bedrock of democracy depends upon it. Without this type of aggressive Executive implementation, we'll continue to lose ground in the fight to compete in global technology and lose ground in protecting innocent citizens pummeled by Big Tech, here and abroad.

Outlaw Reckless, Lethal Technology

[Confronting the threats of unregulated technology](#) (Video: Fleming, 2021.), we are left with this inevitable, albeit vital question: Is protecting defective and dangerous social media platforms worth the risk? If that's the case, should we then allow auto-piloted vehicle makers to use whatever technology they want, even though those vehicle casualties continue to mount? As others have pointed out, this is no different than mandating seat belts to help save lives. Why

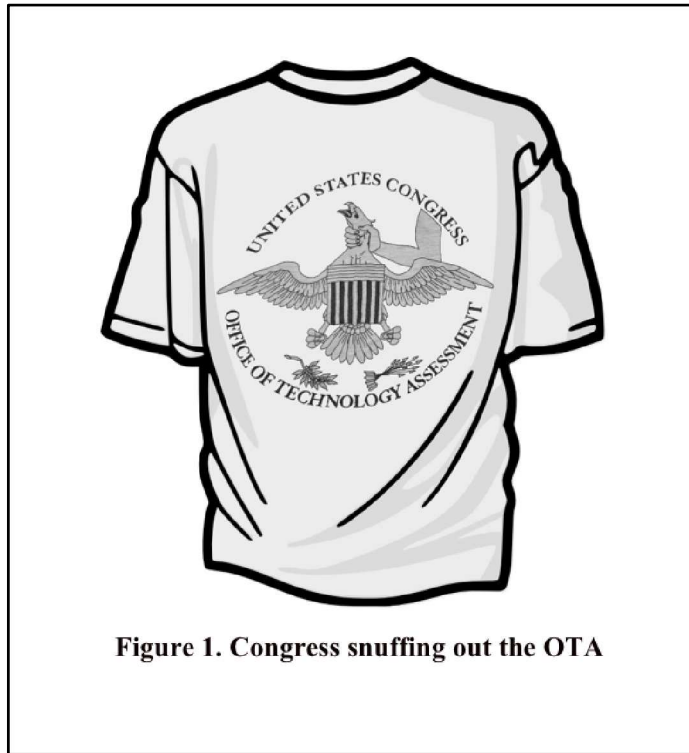


Figure 1. Congress snuffing out the OTA

shouldn't we mandate social media to help save lives? As many films and books have already pointed out over the last decade, social media is exponentially more dangerous than anyone could ever have imagined.

The Cost of Sediton and its Facilitation

So, why exclude FACEBOOK's role in the J6 Congressional investigation? We should demand that Facebook revise its abusive platform and negligent policies that continue to cause escalating harm and suffering. The oxymoronic notion of Facebook's platform integrity should also be exposed, revealing how unmanageable it's become and how ludicrous it is to assume that billions of daily comments, postings, media uploads, and group creation can be safely and ethically monitored. Facebook's platform must be outlawed unless it can demonstrate that appropriate changes have been made, for example, revising the algorithms to prioritize people over profits. And now that the aspirational future of Zuck's metaverse is looming large on the horizon, it's essential to shed light on the disingenuous promotion of metaverse advantages and Facebook's empty rhetoric targeting underserved communities and uneducated global citizens.

The bottom line is: There is no way to protect the public on social media platforms because it's impossible for companies such as Facebook to manage and monitor its billions of online interactions.

The Milestones and Mayhem Timeline

Timeline Spreadsheet

Due to the sensitive nature and legal complications in sharing this information publicly, this spreadsheet can only be reviewed in a private setting, protecting all parties.

The FACEBOOK Milestones and Mayhem timeline provides a chronological list of Facebook history, coupled with related events such as Key Milestones for Trump, Bannon, and

the other key players in that regime. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Milestones showing FACEBOOK growth and investments
- Congressional Hearings
- Lawsuits against Zuckerberg and Facebook
- Some of the most significant omissions and oversights
- Financial History

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Appendix

FTC Rulings

\$5 billion fine and constraints explained <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2019/07/ftc-imposes-5-billionpenalty-sweeping-new-privacy-restrictions-facebook>

FTC complaint, Case No. 19-cv-2184 COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES, INJUNCTION, AND OTHER RELIEF, outlines the decade of FB failures and exposures of private data, totaling in the billions that continued to get access to FB users' data

- As of 2018, Facebook had more than 2.2 billion monthly active users worldwide.
- Substantially all of Facebook's \$55.8 billion in 2018 revenues came from advertising.
- To address concerns associated with Facebook's sharing of user and

Affected Friend data with the more than 36 million third-party apps on the

Facebook Platform in 2012, Part IV of the Commission Order required Facebook to implement and maintain a comprehensive privacy program reasonably designed to address privacy risks and protect the privacy and confidentiality of covered information.

- In September 2013, Facebook audited a set of apps to determine whether to revoke their data permissions. That audit revealed that over a 30-day period, the audited apps were making hundreds of millions of requests to the Graph API for a variety of data, including Affected Friends' work histories, photos, videos, statuses, "likes," interests, events, education histories, hometowns, locations, relationships, and birthdays.
- 83.
- In some instances, the apps called for data about Affected Friends in numbers that greatly exceeded the number of the apps' monthly active users. For example,

one app highlighted in the audit made more than 450 million requests for data—roughly 33 times its monthly active users.

- 85. This was not the only instance in which an examination of apps showed massive amounts of Affected Friends' data being accessed. A mere month after the September 2013 audit, while discussing upcoming Platform changes, senior Facebook management employees observed that third-party developers were making more than 800 billion calls to the API per month and noted that permissions for Affected Friends' data were being widely misused.
- 86. Likewise, in 2014, when discussing changes that would be made to the Platform, Facebook senior management employees considered reports showing that, every day, more than 13,000 apps were requesting Affected Friends' data.
- Facebook made several changes to the Privacy Settings and Apps Settings pages throughout 2013 and 2014. However, none of the changes sought to inform users that sharing data with their Friends also allowed Facebook to share that data with any of the more than one million thirdparty developers whose apps could be used by their Friends.
- On April 30, 2014, Facebook also issued a press release in which it stated: Putting people first: We've heard from people that they are worried about sharing information with apps, and they want more control over their data. We are giving people more control over these experiences so they can be confident pressing the blue button.
- Despite these clear statements, Facebook gave third-party developers with a preexisting, approved app at least one year of continued access to Affected Friends' data. In other words, third-party developers that had a preexisting app on the Facebook Platform as of April 2014 could still access and collect Affected Friend data until April 2015. Facebook did not disclose this fact to its users.

- In or around April 2015, Facebook gathered journalists in San Francisco and discussed the deprecation of Graph API V1 and the removal of access to Affected Friend data.
- 108.
- However, going forward, Facebook privately granted continued access to Graph API V1 to more than two dozen developers—the Whitelisted Developers—which included gaming, retail, and technology companies, as well as third-party developers of dating apps and other social-media services. Those Whitelisted Developers thus still had access to the same Affected Friend data that Facebook had publicly announced was no longer available.
- Some of the Whitelisted Developers retained access for months, while others retained access for years.
- 110.
- Facebook granted access to Affected Friend data to a few Whitelisted Developers as a beta test, with that access left active until June 2018.

Congressional Hearings and Related Events

1. JUNE 21, 2010 – [The Facebook Effect \(CSPAN\)](#)
 - a. (Naivete rules here ...) Mr. Kirkpatrick tells the story of the creation, growth, and influence of Facebook, using interviews with the company insiders. The event was in Seattle.
2. Redlining and Civil Rights
3. Nov 1, 2017 - [Facebook, Google, and Twitter Executives on Russia Election Interference](#) (CSPAN)
 - a. The Senate Intelligence Committee held a hearing on Russia and social media influence in the 2016 election. Officials from Facebook, Twitter and Google testified about what their companies were doing to protect users after the 2016 election from misleading and malicious content. They shared what they have learned about the number of Russian-based fake

accounts and the impact and reach of posts from those accounts on other users. Senators admonished the witnesses and their companies for not doing enough to understand the scope of the problem and said they needed to do more to prevent the dissemination of malicious content on their platforms.

4. April 10, 2018 - [Data Privacy and Russian Disinformation Senate Hearing](#)

a. [Washington Post - transcript](#):

Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg appeared before the Senate's Commerce and Judiciary committees Tuesday to discuss data privacy and Russian disinformation on his social network.

5. April 11, 2018 - [Open Phones on Facebook CEO Testimony \(CSPAN\)](#)

a. Telephone lines and social media were open for viewer comments following Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's testimony before a House committee on the company's use and protection of user data.

6. April 24, 2018 - Heritage Foundation - [The Future of Facebook \(CSPAN\)](#)

a. (Facebook Content monitoring propaganda) Monika Bickert talked about Facebook's future and its responsibilities to users. She also discussed how the social media company monitors content from its users.

7. Oct 23, 2019 - [AN EXAMINATION OF FACEBOOK AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FINANCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING SECTORS](#) (Congress.gov)

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a. Rep. Waters:

“As I have examined Facebook's various problems, I have come to the conclusion that it would be beneficial for all if Facebook concentrates on addressing its many existing deficiencies and failures before proceeding any further on the Libra project. Let us review the record.

- i. First, on diversity and inclusion, Facebook has utterly failed.
- ii. On fair housing, Facebook has been sued by the National Fair

Housing Alliance for enabling advertisers to engage in discrimination on its advertising platforms. The U.S.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has also filed an official charge of discrimination against Facebook for its advertising practices, including the company's own ad delivery algorithms, which were found to have a discriminatory impact when advertisers did not target their audience in discriminatory ways.

iii. Facebook has refused to cooperate with HUD's fair housing investigation by refusing to provide relevant data.

iv. On competition and fairness, Facebook is the subject of an antitrust investigation by the attorneys general of 47 States and the District of Columbia.

v. On protecting consumers, Facebook was fined \$5 billion by the Federal Trade Commission for deceiving consumers and failing to keep their data private.

vi. On elections, Facebook enabled the Russian government to interfere with our election in 2016, with ads designed to pit Americans against each other, suppress the vote, and boost

Trump. For example, Facebook allowed a counterfeit Black Lives Matter website to operate with the goal of discouraging African Americans from voting.

vii. Three years later, these activities are still continuing on Facebook. We learned just this week that Russia and Iran are using the same tactics to meddle in our next election.

viii. Now on political speech, last week they announced that Facebook would not be doing fact-checking on political ads, giving anyone that Facebook labels a politician, a platform to lie, mislead, and misinform the American people, which will also allow Facebook to sell more ads. The impact of this will be a massive voter suppression effort that will move at the speed of a click.”

8. Jan 2020 - **Americans at Risk**: Manipulation and Deception in the Digital Age.
 - a. Tristan Harris, President, and Co-founder of the Center for Humane Technology, testifies at the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce of the Committee on Energy and Commerce hearing, on Wednesday, January 8, 2020.

9. July 27, 2020 - **Antitrust Hearings** - [NPR Post hearing review](#)
 - a. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Apple CEO Tim Cook and Google CEO Sundar Pichai testified Wednesday before Congress on the power of Big Tech.

10. Oct 28, 2020 — **Section 230 hearings** (Guardian): Twitter, Facebook and Google CEOs testify before Congress.
 - a. Section 230 hearings: Twitter, Facebook, and Google CEOs

11. Sept 10, 2021 - J6 Committee requests records from carriers and social media
 - a. Social media and telecom companies vague about their response to January 6 committee
 - b. Ryan Nobles, Zachary Cohen and Annie Grayer, CNN

12. Oct 2021 - Whistleblower, Frances Haugen testifies
 - a. Congressional Hearings

13. Jan 2021 - J6 Hearings
 - a. Select Committee Hearings

Ex-Facebook Moderators reveal dysfunctional Content Abuse Reporting

The ex-moderator, whose job was to track graphic content in private Facebook groups, claims that if moderators saw discussions about illicit payments for illegal goods, such as child pornography or illegal narcotics, they had no way to warn executives running Facebook Pay, the system that lets users send and receive money across the main social network, Messenger, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

“There were groups where pornographic content related to children was auctioned. And they used [Facebook] systems [for] all of it, from what I could see,” the ex-moderator wrote in a sworn statement.

Another whistleblower behind the complaint is an ex-employee at a cyber security firm hired by Purdue Pharma to police online counterfeiters of its drug OxyContin. This person said other Internet platforms such as eBay, Alibaba, Craigslist, and Google agreed to work with the cybersecurity firm to take down illegal offers to sell OxyContin around 2012 and 2013.

Facebook, however, refused to take action on its main site as well as on Instagram, the person claims in a statement.

“Facebook executives were made aware the scale of counterfeit OxyContin being sold across their platforms was enormous. But while other tech firms and the pharmaceutical industry invested heavily in resources to mitigate the damage of illegal narcotic sales online killing tens of thousands of Americans, Facebook executives aggressively lobbied other social media platforms including Twitter not to take action or to engage in the counterfeit OxyContin removal initiative,” the statement says.

Facebook says that since 2013 it has been a member of Center for Safe Internet Pharmacies (CSIP), a nonprofit organization to address consumer access to illegitimate pharmaceuticals from illegal online pharmacies and other sources. Of CSIP, the Purdue contractor's statement says, "Facebook's supposed 'outside expert' organization has exactly one full time employee and no other staff, including part time staff or consultants, according to its IRS filing."

Instagram Disinformation

Instagram Served Up COVID-19 Falsehoods

"We have over a year's worth of evidence that the platform helped drive billions of views to pages and content that confused voters, created division and chaos, and, in some instances, incited violence," said Fadi Quran, campaign director at Avaaz.

In response, Facebook said the report's methodology was flawed and that it "distorts the serious work we've been doing to fight violent extremism and misinformation on our platform."

Tristan Harris – Congressional Testimony

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUNErhONqCY&t=118>

[Please note: This is a rough draft of the video transcript and is subsequently, not thoroughly edited]

"Thank you, chairwoman Schakowsky and members. I really appreciate you inviting me here I'm gonna go off script I come here because I'm incredibly concerned, I actually have a lifelong experience with deception and how technology influences people's minds I was a magician as a kid, so I've started off by seeing the world this way,

"I studied at a lab called the Stanford persuasive technology lab—actually with the founders of Instagram—and so I know the culture of the people who build these products and the way that it's designed intentionally for mass deception.

I think there's a thing I most want to respond to here, is we've often framed these issues as, "We've got a few bad apples. We've got these bad deep fakes. We got to get them off the platform. We've got this bad content. We've got these bad BOTS."

What I want to argue is: we've got these dark patterns (and) what I want to argue is (that) we have dark infrastructure. This is now the infrastructure by which 2.7 billion people – bigger than the size of Christianity – make sense of the world. It's the information environment.

If someone (worked with) private companies and built nuclear power plants, and all across the United States they started melting down, and they said, "Well, it's your responsibility to have hazmat suits and, you know, have a radiation kit. That's essentially what we're experiencing now. The responsibility is being put on consumers when, in fact, it's the infrastructure. *It should be put on the people building that infrastructure.* There are specifically two areas of harm I want to focus on even though when this becomes the infrastructure it controls all of our lives. So, we wake up with these devices. We check our phones 150 times a day. It's the infrastructure for going to bed. Children spend as much time on these devices as they do in school. So, no matter what you're putting in people's brains, kids' brains at school, you've got all the hours they spend on their phones.

And let's take the kid's issue. So, the infrastructure is not aligned with the fabric of society. How much have you paid for your Facebook account recently or your YouTube account? Zero. How are they worth more than a trillion dollars of market value? They monetize our attention. The way they get that attention is by influencing you and using patterns or tricks to do it.

The way to do it with children is, they say, "How many likes or followers do you have?" So, they basically get children addicted to getting attention from other people. They use filters likes, etc. beautification filters that enhance yourself image. After two decades in decline, the mental health of teen girls – high depressive symptoms – went up 170%. There's an image here that they'll be able to show went up a hundred and seventy percent after the year 2010 with the rise of Instagram etc. Okay these are your children. These are your constituents. This is a real

issue, because we're hacking the self-image of children on the information ecology, (operating) from the business model.

Think of it like, we're drinking from the Flint water supply of information.

This business model is polarization because the whole point is, "I have to figure out and calculate whatever keeps your attention, which means affirmation, not information." By default, it polarizes this - *by default!* There's a recent Upturn study out that says it actually costs more money to advertise across the aisle than it does to advertise to people with your own same beliefs. In other words, polarization has a home-field advantage in terms of the business model. The natural function and plot of these platforms is to reward conspiracy theories. Outrage is what we call the race to the bottom of the brainstem. It's the reason why all of you at home have crazier and crazier constituents who believe crazier and crazier things, (yet) you have to respond to them.

I know you don't like that

Russia is manipulating our veterans. We have totally open borders! We left the digital border wide open. Imagine a nuclear plant who said, "We're not going to actually protect the nuclear plants from Russian cyber-attacks." Well, this is sort of like Facebook building the information infrastructure (but) not protecting it from any bad actors until that pressure is there, and this is leading to a kind of information trust meltdown because no one even has to use deep fakes for essentially people to say well that must be a faked video, right? So, we're actually at the last turning-point-kind of an event horizon where we either protect the foundations of our information and trust environment, or we let it go away.

You know we say we care about kids' education, but we allow, you know, technology companies to basically tell them that the world revolves around "likes, clicks, and shares".

We say we want to, you know, come together but we allow technology to profit by dividing us into echo chambers. We say America should lead in the global stage against China with a strong economy, but we allow technology companies to degrade our productivity and mental health while jeopardizing the development of our future workforce which is our children.

While I'm finishing up here, I just want to say that instead of trying to design some new federal agency, some master agency, when technology has basically taken all the laws of the physical world, taken all the infrastructure the physical world, and virtualized it into a virtual world with no laws. What happens when you have no laws for an entire virtualized infrastructure? You can't just bring some new agency around and regulate all of the virtual world. Why don't we take the existing infrastructure, existing agencies who already have purview: Department of Education Health and Human Services National Institute of Health and have a digital update that expands their jurisdiction to just ask well how do we protect the tech platforms in the same areas of jurisdiction?

I know amount of times that they thank you very much, given the prevalence of deceptive content online our platforms doing enough to stop the dissemination of misinformation and what can government do to prevent such manipulation of consumers should government be seeking to clarify the principle that if it's illegal offline then it's illegal online yes a good example of that so first is know the platforms are not doing enough and it's because their entire business model is misaligned with solving the problem, and I don't vilify the people because of that it's just their business model is against the issue we used to have Saturday morning cartoons we protected children from certain kinds of advertising time place manner restrictions when YouTube for cute when YouTube gobbles up that part of the attention economy we lose all those protections so why not bring back the protections of Saturday morning you used to have fair price equal price election ads on TV there's same price for each politician to reach someone.

When Facebook gobbles up election advertising, we just remove all of those same protections so we're basically moving from a lawful society to an unlawful virtual Internet Society and that's what we have to change unlike other addictive industries. For example, addiction is part of the deception that's going on here the tobacco industry doesn't know which users are addicted to smoking this alcohol industry doesn't know exactly who's addicted to

alcohol but unlike that each tech company does know exactly how many people are checking more than you know a hundred times a day between certain ages they know who's using it late at night. You can imagine using existing agencies, say the Department of Health and Human Services, to be able to audit Facebook on a quarterly basis, and say, "Hey, tell us how many users are addicted between these ages? And then, what are you doing next quarter to make adjustments to reduce that number? And every day they're the ones issuing the questions and the responsibilities, and the resources have to be deployed by the actor that has the most of them, which in this case would be Facebook. And there's a quarterly loop between each agency, asking questions like that forcing accountability with the companies for the areas of their existing jurors' jurisdiction.

So, I'm just trying to figure out, is there a way that we can scale this to meet the scope of the problem. You realize this is happening to 2.7 billion people, flat earth conspiracy theories were recommended hundreds of millions of times. This might sound just funny and look at those people but actually this is very serious.

I have a researcher friend who studied this: if the Flat Earth theory is true. It means not just that all of the government is lying to you but all of science is lying to you. So, think about that for a second. That's like a meltdown of all of our rational epistemic understanding of the world – how have the various election interference strategies evolved from the 2016 and 2018 election cycles?

You know I'm actually not an expert on exactly what Russia's doing, (but) what I'll say is, I think that we need a mass public awareness campaign to inoculate the public. Think of it as like a cultural vaccine. There's actually – back in the 1940s we had the committee for national morale and the Institute for propaganda analysis that actually did a domestic awareness campaign about the threat of fascist propaganda. You've probably seen the videos from (there black and white from) 1947. It was called "Don't be a Sucker" and they had us looking at a guy's fascist propaganda: Someone's starting to nod and then the guy taps him on the shoulder and says, "Now son, that's fascist propaganda and here's how to spot it." We actually saw this as a deep threat, a national security threat to our country.

We could have another mass public awareness campaign now, and we could have the help of the technology companies to collectively use their distribution to distribute that inoculation campaign, so everybody actually knew the threat of the problem.

I think every time a campaign is discovered how do we notify people, all of whom were affected, and say you were the target of an influence operation? So, right now, every single week we hear reports of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel, China, and Russia, all doing various different influence operations. Russia was recently going after US veterans. Many veterans would probably say that's a conspiracy theory, right? But Facebook is the company that knows exactly who was affected and they could actually back-notify every time there's an influencer operation, letting those communities know that this is what happened, and that they were targeted. We have to move from this as a conspiracy theory to this is real. I've studied cult deprogramming for a while and how do you wake people up from a cult when they don't know they're in? You have to show them essentially the techniques that were used on them to manipulate them.

And every single time these operations (influencer operations) happen, I think that has to be made visible to people and just like we said you know we have laws and protections.

We have a pentagon to protect our physical borders. We don't have a Pentagon to protect our digital borders. And so, we depend on however many people Facebook chooses to hire for it. For those teams, their third-party fact-checking services are massively understaffed, underfunded and a lot of people are dropping out of the program. And the amount of information completely flowing through that channel is far beyond their capacity to respond.

More or less, fact-checking isn't even really the relevant issue, I think. If you look at the clearest evidence of this, is Facebook's own employees wrote a letter to Mark Zuckerberg saying, "You are undermining our election integrity efforts with your current political ads." policy that says it all to mean. That letter was leaked to the New York Times about a month ago. I think that those people – because they're closest to the problem and they do the research queries – they understand how bad the issue is. We're on the outside, so we don't actually know.

It's almost like they're Exxon but they also own the satellites that would show us how much pollution there is. So, we don't actually know on the outside so all we can do is trust people like that on the inside that are saying this is far less than what we would like to do, and they still have not updated their policy.”

Course details

SCMC 5339 - Directed Study, Fall 2022

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