

Comprehensive Internet Reform

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Introduction

This topic paper was born out of a student survey that I gave to students at my former Urban Debate League job. They were asked quite eloquently, “What do you want to debate about?” And from that I received an overwhelming response for debates about Social Media. Which wasn’t all too surprising (the survey was done during Quarantine) because my students had to become heavily reliant on Social Media in order to communicate with others. The pandemic has shown the importance of internet access as a communication tool but there are little to no regulations on what you can post on the internet.

The first (and pretty much the last) regulations passed impacting the internet was the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which did little to regulate the internet but did introduce the Communications Decency Act. “The CDA created criminal penalties for transmitting obscene, indecent, and patently offensive materials online”(Strickland, 2009). However, section 230 within the CDA states "No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider" (Electronic Frontier Foundation, n.d.). This means that companies like Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok are not legally responsible for the posts that their users create. Unfortunately, this has caused widespread misinformation which has had a major impact on elections, health care services, and public safety.

Resolutions

1. The United States federal government should substantially increase its internet regulations.
2. The United States federal government should substantially increase its internet regulations within the United States.
3. The United States federal government should substantially reform its internet regulations within the United States.
4. The United States federal government should substantially increase its internet regulations in one or more of the following:
 - Social Media
 - Cryptocurrency
 - Data Privacy
 - Gambling
 - Child Protection
 - News
 - Commerce
 - Artificial Intelligence
5. The United States federal government should substantially increase its regulations of social media Companies.

Resolution Explanations

-Top Choice: The United States federal government should substantially increase its internet regulations.

-The United States federal government should substantially reform its internet regulations.

-The use of reform could allow affirmatives to repeal current regulations (there are not a lot of current regulations that could be impacted into a full affirmative case).

-A major affirmative under this resolution would be to Repeal Section 230 of the Common Decency Act, which says that Social Media Companies are not responsible for the content that people post on their platforms (Citron, D. K., & Franks, M. A. 2020).

This affirmative could still be run under the first resolution but there could be a Topicality debate about whether it is an actual increase of regulations.

I know this section should have more potential resolutions but I think any alternative wordings would limit the diversity of arguments and ultimately lead to stale debates by the time we get to the second semester. I will explain my reasoning behind not including certain resolutions but will also present those resolutions in each sub section.

“Within the United States”

-The United States federal government should substantially increase its internet regulations within the United States.

-The United States federal government should substantially reform its internet regulations within the United States.

“Within the United States” feels redundant to me. Countries can only regulate how and what content can be accessed by those living within their country, even if the company is based in a country with different internet regulations (Lavorenciuc, A. 2021). So the United States couldn’t pass and enforce regulations that would require China to remove its firewall. “Its” in the resolution refers to the United States Federal Government which means that only those under the jurisdiction of the United States Federal Government would be impacted. Any affirmatives that have the USFG passing regulations for another country wouldn’t be enforceable.

Lists

-The United States federal government should substantially increase its internet regulations in one or more of the following:

- Social Media
- Cryptocurrency
- Data Privacy
- Gambling
- Child Protection
- News
- Commerce
- Artificial Intelligence

I believe that lists would be very limiting on this topic because each subsection only has so many affirmatives and I do look at this topic as a new frontier in the sense that there are probably other subsections of the internet that needs reform that I just don't know about. This topic has the potential to lead to real world changes and I want students to explore all aspects of internet reform.

Social Media

-The United States federal government should substantially increase its regulations of social media Companies.

Though I am fine with the wording of this resolution, I believe that there is a limited amount of debates that could be had on this topic. The affirmatives on this resolution would be different variations of regulations on Facebook, Twitter, and/or Tik Tok and those debates would probably become a little stale.

Definitions

Internet

“Internet.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Internet>.

Internet: an electronic communications network that connects computer networks and organizational computer facilities around the world —used with the except when being used attributively

NOTE: In U.S. publications, the capitalized form Internet continues to be more common than internet, although the lowercase form is rapidly gaining more widespread use. In British publications, internet is now the more common form.

“Internet.” Dictionary.Cambridge.org Dictionary, Cambridge, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/internet?q=Internet>.

Internet: the large system of connected computers around the world that allows people to share information and communicate with each other:

Regulation

“Regulation.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/regulation>.

a: an authoritative rule dealing with details or procedure
safety regulations

b: a rule or order issued by an executive authority or regulatory agency of a government and having the force of law

Government regulation. (n.d.) West's Encyclopedia of American Law, edition 2. (2008). A rule of order having the force of law, prescribed by a superior or competent authority, relating to the actions of those under the authority's control. Regulations are issued by various federal government departments and agencies to carry out the intent of legislation enacted by Congress.

Cornell Law. (n.d.). Regulation. LII / Legal Information Institute.

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/regulation>

A Regulation is an official rule. In the Government, certain administrative agencies have a narrow authority to control conduct, within their areas of responsibility. These agencies have been delegated legislative power to create and apply the rules, or "regulations". Derived from "regulate".

Reform

reform verb

re·form | \ ri- 'fɔrm\

reformed; reforming; reforms

Definition of reform

(Entry 1 of 4)

transitive verb

1a : to put or change into an improved form or condition

b : to amend or improve by change of form or removal of faults or abuses

2 : to put an end to (an evil) by enforcing or introducing a better method or course of action

3 : to induce or cause to abandon evil ways reform a drunkard

4a : to subject (hydrocarbons) to cracking

b : to produce (gasoline, gas, etc.) by cracking

reform

us /rɪ'fɔrm/

social studies to become better, or to make something better by making corrections or removing any faults:

[T] As governor, he reformed election procedures.

[I] She insists that she has finally reformed.

reform

Word forms: reforms, reforming, reformed

1. variable noun

Reform consists of changes and improvements to a law, social system, or institution. A reform is an instance of such a change or improvement.

The party embarked on a program of economic reform.

2. transitive verb

If someone reforms something such as a law, social system, or institution, they change or improve it.

...his plans to reform the country's economy.

3. transitive verb/intransitive verb

When someone reforms or when something reforms them, they stop doing things that society does not approve of, such as breaking the law or drinking too much alcohol.

When his court case was coming up, James promised to reform.

reformed adjective

...a reformed alcoholic.

re·form

v. re·formed, re·form·ing, re·forms

v.tr.

1. To improve by alteration, correction of error, or removal of defects; put into a better form or condition: reform the tax code.

2.

a. To abolish abuse or malpractice in: reform the government.

b. To put an end to (an abuse or wrong).

3. To induce or persuade (a person) to give up harmful or immoral practices; cause to adopt a better way of life.

4. Chemistry To subject (hydrocarbons) to cracking.

v.intr.

To change for the better.

n.

1. Action to improve or correct what is wrong or defective in something: health care reform.

2. An instance of this; an improvement: reforms in education.

adj.

1. Relating to or favoring reform: a reform candidate for mayor.

2. Reform Of or relating to Reform Judaism.

United States Federal Government

Amy Blackwell, (J.D., Staff, U. Virginia Law Library), THE ESSENTIAL LAW DICTIONARY, 2008, 187.

Federal: Relating to the central government of a union of states, such as the national government of the United States.

Carol-June Cassidy, (Editor), CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH, 2nd Ed., 2008, 308.

Federal government: a system of government in which states unite and give up some of their powers to a central authority

Daniel Oran, (Assistant Dir., National Paralegal Institute & J.D., Yale Law School), ORAN'S DICTIONARY OF

THE LAW, 4th Ed., 2008, 206. Federal government: The U.S. federal government is the national, as opposed to state, government.

James Clapp, (Member of the New York Bar, Editor), RANDOM HOUSE WEBSTER'S POCKET LEGAL DICTIONARY, 3rd Ed., 2007, 103. Federal government: Relating to the government and law of the United States, as distinguished from a state.

Maurice Waite, (Editor), OXFORD DICTIONARY & THESAURUS, 2007, 377. Federal government: relating to the central government of a federation.

Substantially

Elizabeth Jewell, (Editor), THE OXFORD DESK DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS, 2nd Ed., 2007, 835. Substantially: Essentially, at bottom, fundamentally, basically, in essence, intrinsically.

Elizabeth Jewell, (Editor), THE OXFORD DESK DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS, 2nd Ed., 2007, 835. Substantially: Essential; true in large part.

Maurice Waite, (Editor), OXFORD DICTIONARY & THESAURUS, 2007, 1032. Substantially: concerning the essential points of something

Michael Agnes, (Editor), WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY, 4th

"Substantial" means permanent as opposed to temporary.

Richard Bowyer, (Editor), DICTIONARY OF MILITARY TERMS, 3rd Ed. 2004, 235. Substantive: Permanent (as opposed to acting or temporary).

"Substantial" means "important." Amy Blackwell, (J.D., Staff, U. Virginia Law Library), THE ESSENTIAL LAW DICTIONARY, 2008, 477.

Substantial: Important, large, considerable, valuable.

Carol-June Cassidy, (Editor), CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH, 2nd Ed., 2008, 873. Substantially: large in size, value, or importance

Christine Lindberg, (Editor), OXFORD COLLEGE DICTIONARY, 2nd Ed., 2007, 1369.
Substantially: Of considerable importance, size, or worth.

Elizabeth Jewell, (Editor), THE OXFORD DESK DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS, 2nd Ed., 2007, 835. Substantially: Of real importance, value, or validity.

Maurice Waite, (Editor), OXFORD DICTIONARY & THESAURUS, 2007, 1032.
Substantially: of great importance, size, or value.

Increase

“Increase” means to become greater in size or degree.

Carol-June Cassidy, (Editor), CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH, 2nd Ed., 2008, 441. Increase: to become or make something larger or greater.

Christine Lindberg, (Editor), OXFORD COLLEGE DICTIONARY, 2nd Ed., 2007, 687.
Increase: Become or make greater in size, amount, intensity, or degree.

Christopher Leonesio, (Managing Editor), AMERICAN HERITAGE HIGH SCHOOL DICTIONARY, 4th Ed., 2007, 702. Increase: To become greater or larger.

Elizabeth Jewell, (Editor), THE OXFORD DESK DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS, 2nd Ed., 2007, 415. Increase: Build up, enlarge, amplify, expand.

Elizabeth Jewell, (Editor), THE OXFORD DESK DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS, 2nd Ed., 2007, 415. Increase: Make or become greater or more numerous.

Erin McKean, (Sr. Editor), THE OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS, 2003, 751. Increase: To make or become greater in size, amount, etc., or more numerous.

Ian Brookes, (Sr. Editor), THE CHAMBERS DICTIONARY, 10th ed., 2006, 754. Increase: To grow in size or number.

Jean McKechnie, (Sr. Editor), WEBSTER’S NEW TWENTIETH CENTURY DICTIONARY, UNABRIDGED, 2nd Ed., 1979, 926. Increase: To become greater in size, quantity, value, degree, etc.

Michael Agnes, (Editor), WEBSTER’S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY, 4th College Edition, 2007, 396. Increase: To make or become greater, larger.

Sidney Landau, (Sr. Editor), CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH, 2nd ed., 2008, 440. Increase: To become or make something larger or greater.

“Increase” means to make larger, even if the starting point was zero.

WORDS AND PHRASES CUMULATIVE SUPPLEMENTARY PAMPHLET, Vol. 20A, 07, 76. Increase: Salary change of from zero to \$12,000 and \$1,200 annually for mayor and councilmen respectively was an “increase” in salary and not merely the fixing of salary. King v. Herron, 243 S.E.2d36, 241 Ga. 5.

Its

“Its” means belonging to the thing previously mentioned.

Augustus Stevenson, (Editor), NEW OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY, 3rd Ed., 2010, 924. Its: Belonging to or associated with a thing previously mentioned or easily identified.

“Its” means “relating to itself” or “possessing” something.

Frederick Mish, (Editor-in-chief), WEBSTER'S COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY, 10th ed., 1993, 623. Its: Of or relating to it or itself, esp. as possessor.

“Its” means “belonging to.”

Justin Crozier, (Editor), COLLINS DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS, 2005, 448. Its: Of or belonging to it.

Jean McKechnie, (Sr. Editor), WEBSTER'S NEW TWENTIETH CENTURY DICTIONARY, UNABRIDGED, 2nd Ed., 1979, 977. Its: Of, or belonging to, or done by it.

Erin McKean, (Sr. Editor), THE OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS, 2003, 798. Its: Of itself.

Carol-June Cassidy, (Managing Editor), CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH, 2nd Ed., 2008, 464. Its: Belonging to or connected with the thing or animal mentioned; the possessive form of it.

Stuart Flexner, (Editor-in-chief), RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, UNABRIDGED, 2nd Ed., 1987, 1017. Its: The possessive form of it.

“Its” can mean simply “relating to” or “associated with.”

Frederick Mish, (Editor-in-chief), WEBSTER'S COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY, 10th ed., 1993, 623. Its: Of or relating to it or itself, esp. as possessor.

Sandra Anderson, (Editor), COLLINS ENGLISH DICTIONARY, 8th Ed., 2006, 867. Its: Belonging to, or associated in some way with.

Carol-June Cassidy, (Managing Editor), CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH, 2nd Ed., 2008, 464. Its: Belonging to or connected with the thing or animal mentioned; the possessive form of it.

Timeliness

Social Media

In 2018, the CEO of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg had to testify in Congress for the first time over their data sharing policy with Cambridge Analytica (Confessore, N. 2018). Cambridge Analytica was a consulting firm that used data illegally collected from Facebook in order to create psychological voter profiles. These voter profiles were used to create ads, sometimes with false information, that would slowly manipulate users and affect their political decisions. They were hired to work on the Trump and Ted Cruz campaigns. Facebook was eventually fined \$5 billion by the Federal Trade Commission and had to implement new privacy restrictions (FTC. 2019). Those new restrictions have not done much more to ensure Facebook users' data privacy (Bhatia, A. 2020).

An important part of the Congressional hearings that demonstrates the timeliness of the resolution is the lack of understanding that Congress had about how Facebook works (Watson, C. 2018). Zuckerberg was asked questions like "How does Facebook make money if the users don't pay a user fee?" Basic questions like these show that there is a need for in depth conversations on how social media works and impacts its users lives. I believe that policy debates could play a major role in how society and potentially those in positions of power discuss this issue and ultimately pass regulations that reflect those conversations.

Zuckerberg was brought into another congressional hearing in 2021 because they allowed companies to run ads with misinformation about COVID (Lima, C. 2021). So it is clear that there are foundational changes that need to be made to Facebook and other social media companies and this is an educational opportunity for our debaters to discuss what those changes need to be. Even though this topic is constantly updating, it is very unlikely that any major legislation will be passed by the 2024-2025 debate season.

As of July 8, 2022, Elon Musk is in negotiations to purchase Twitter, in order to restore true "freedom of speech" to the platform. Though Twitter's user base isn't growing as much as Facebook and TikTok, the platform still holds a lot of influence as a mode of communication. Tweets and those who tweet have great influence over thoughts and actions of its users. Twitter played an integral role in the Jan 6th insurrection and now a person who believes that there should be freedom of speech for everyone regardless of the information's accuracy or potential to do harm wants to run the platform (Chayka, K. 2002). The only thing that can stop Twitter from returning to pre-insurrection regulations (note: Twitter isn't great now but the platform has tried to regulate dangerous misinformation posted to the platform) is the federal government.

Cryptocurrency/NFTS

Not only are the conversations around Social Media timely but there are constantly new developments on the internet, like cryptocurrency and non-fungible tokens (NFTs).

Cryptocurrency ownership in the United States has been rising quickly from 7.95% in 2018 to 23.16% in 2021 with half of all new users buying their first crypto coin in 2021 (Howarth, J. 2022). Bitcoin and Ethereum (which is used to buy NFTs) have a combined market cap of over one trillion dollars (Tretina, K. 2022). Between the growth of users and the growth of value, cryptocurrency is going to become a large part of the global financial system and our understanding of the consequences of that will also grow.

One thing that we have learned about the impact of cryptocurrency is that mining for crypto coins has a negative impact on the environment. Almost 40 billion tons of carbon dioxide is produced by US Bitcoin mining alone (Kim, P. 2022). This amount of carbon dioxide can lead to significant temperature changes and worsening climate change (Plait, P. 2014).

Data Privacy

The internet has made many aspects of lives more convenient and for that convenience we have willingly given companies access to our private internet data. Companies use the data collected from our social media accounts, search engine searches, and website visits to create targeted ads. This wouldn't be a tech topic paper if I didn't mention Black Mirror but some imagine in the future that advertising will look like the "Fifteen Million Merits" episode where we are constantly bombarded with ads on any screen our eyes can focus on. Now is the time to have those debates on how targeted constant advertising is regulated to hopefully prevent the Black Mirror dystopia from coming true.

Health Data

Another new development on the internet that could generate some fruitful debates is the collection of biodata. Our phones, watches, shoes, bikes, and other devices are constantly collecting our biodata to give us information about our health but that data is also controlled by the corporations who created the device. This is not necessarily a bad thing but with the recent advent of new health care apps like Nurx, Cerebral, Talkspace, we as a society need to have discussions about what these companies are allowed to do with our bio data. Our bio data could potentially be used to deny access to health care services, housing, and employment, so it is extremely important that we are aware of what companies are capable of doing with that data.

Update 7/8/2022: When writing this paper I never imagined I would have to write this but with the overturning of Roe v Wade, those who use period tracking apps now have to be concerned about that biodata being used to track whether a person will need or received an abortion.

There are so many new developments when it comes to what the internet can be used for and I'm sure by the time this paper becomes a topic there will be a lot more and as educators we

should be preparing our students for the world they will be living in when they get older. However, that world doesn't exist yet so we should create spaces where students can debate their future dilemmas or imagine (and then hopefully create) the future they want for themselves. And if these spaces aren't created, our students will find themselves in the same predicament as our current federal government, which is "what do we do with this powerful tool-the internet.

Scope

The internet has quickly become integrated into almost every aspect of life and is on track to become more integrated than we could have ever imagined. In mainstream American culture, we have become very comfortable with statements like "Everyone has internet" or "Everyone has a smartphone" but the reality is that there is still a large number of people in the United States and within our own debate community, that do not have access to the internet or smart devices also known as the digital divide. The scope of this topic is every person in the world, in theory, but in reality there are a lot of people who are left out of the decision of internet access. And usually those left out of those conversations are BIPOC, low income, rural residents, and/or those who are not college educated. However, I believe that this topic can help introduce those voices into the discussion. We need to start thinking about what it looks like to have universal access to the internet. Is it making the internet a government controlled utility? (also, yes!) Is it building more infrastructure in rural areas? Is it providing devices to families? The internet affects everyone but we have to make sure that everyone has access.

Range

Middle School Debate

Beginner: In college, I did parliamentary debate and the resolutions would sometimes mirror an overall concept that we should be debating about. In this section, I will give examples of concepts that would be good concept debates under this resolution that is appropriate for middle school beginner debaters.

-Social Media and Mental Health: I believe it is never too young to discuss mental health and there is a big movement to bring awareness to how social media impacts adolescents. Your students are going to have deep insight in how social media impacts their own lives but there is also a lot of research on this matter. The Wall Street Journal released a study in 2021 that revealed that 1 in 3 teenage girls experience body image issues because of Instagram (WP). These debates would present some type of change we could make to social media platforms in order to make them safer for younger users and the negative could say those changes wouldn't work or that the good of social media outweighs the bad.

-Freedom of Speech/Bullying: These debates would center around what is more important, freedom or safety. The internet is great because you're free to express your opinions and you might even find someone or a whole community of people who agree

with you. But we have seen that too much freedom can lead people being exposed to false and/or dangerous information. This is especially true when it comes to bullying, which unfortunately some of your students might be too familiar with.

Advance:

-Digital Divide: This topic would be a good introduction to debating social impacts like racism, structural violence, poverty, and/or ableism (Federal Communications Commission. 2021). The center of these debates would have students coming up with solutions for improving internet access and the neg would either say that those solutions don't work or that a move towards internet integration would actually be worse because it would increase people's dependence on technology.

Novice HS

These debates would look similar to the debates mentioned in the middle school debate section but since the students are older they can handle more advance subjects like:

Elections: These debates would center around the role the internet plays when it comes to campaigning. Does there need to be more regulations on what data campaigns can collect from internet companies or are targeted ads just another innovation of the field?

JV

Cryptocurrency: These debates could center around increasing or decreasing cryptocurrency usage or increasing regulations. Learning about cryptocurrency adds a layer of academic difficulty but for students who are up for the challenge, I believe they will find the research matter interesting.

Data Privacy: So many of our devices are collecting a wide range of data from us, so there are a variety of affirmatives on this topic and can fit a variety of interests your students may have.

Varsity

Meta Debates (no pun intended): There are a lot of philosophies around the internet and technological developments and debates could do a deep dive into their relationship with technology. Should we be 100% connected all the time? Is the convenience of the internet worth sacrificing our privacy? What happens when the oppressive systems in our society are reflected in the technology we use? There are a lot of directions students go which really demonstrates the diversity of this topic

This list is by no means exhaustive but it shows the diversity of arguments on this topic that can be tailored to be as complex or simple as your team needs.

Quality

Variety of Arguments

As I have said many times in this paper before, I believe that this topic will offer a large range of debates for all levels of debate and interest. This topic is ever evolving, so I am certain that by the time this paper is released there will be new subject matter to debate about.

Value to Debaters

The knowledge obtained from debating this topic will greatly benefit students. They will be spending a year learning about technologies that they will be completely reliant on in the future. Some of our students could potentially be working in the field when they get older and this resolution will get them strong introductory knowledge. This topic could also influence students' philosophical feelings about the internet. For a long time society has been fascinated with how technology and the internet has made our lives easier but we haven't really reflected on the impact of being so interconnected with technology. Under this resolution, students will be able to explore their own feelings around technology and get feedback from their peers.

Exposure to Divergent Points of View

From the tech companies, politicians, industry experts, and nonprofits, you are going to find a lot of diversity in what people think the internet should look like and operate. There are those who believe that the internet is amazing and should be allowed to develop in any way companies see fit and there are those who think our technological advancements are what is going to lead to the end of civilization as we know it. Even though there are a lot of opinions out there already there is still space for students to decide what their point of view should be.

Analyzing Current Issues

Since the internet is already so integrated into our lives it gives students the opportunity to incorporate their own experience and understanding into the debates. They will also be on the forefront of a lot of these conversations since there is such a lack of understanding amongst those in Congress and positions of power.

Problem Solving

One of my favorite parts of this resolution is that a lot of the subject matter has to deal with problems that will happen in the future if we don't solve them now. Students will have to learn about how to plan for contingencies and develop an understanding that something can still be a problem even if it's not a problem in the immediate future. These types of problem solving skills are extremely valuable to students, especially those entering the adult world for the first time because most students only experience trying to solve immediate problems and sometimes don't really plan for the future.

Material

The chart below is a collection of news and educational sites that provide a wide range of information that could be used on this topic. This list is by no means exhaustive but shows there is a wide range of reading level appropriate materials.

	Free	Paid
Middle School Reading Level (5-8)	TimeforKids DOGO News CBC Kids News Edutopia Common Sense	Kids Britannica
High School Reading Level	The Verge CNBC Time Common Sense Media Tech Reform	
College Reading Level	The Guardian Brookings Institute Reuters Business Insider Department of Justice Surveillance Capitalism , Shoshana Zuboff	Business Insider Washington Post
Video Content	The Truth About Algorithms , Cathy O'Neill	The Social Dilemma (Netflix) The Great Hack (Netflix) Coded Bias

Interest

This topic was born out of student interest. When I was working at a debate league, I gave a survey to the students asking them what they would like to debate about in the upcoming season and the top two responses were Social Media and the Internet and Women's Rights. There hasn't been a day at work where my students aren't asking me to make a Tik Tok with them or are upset over something their classmates posted on Snapchat or Instagram. Some of our students are still learning virtually, so the internet is really integral to their lives. I have said this before in this paper but this topic is allowing our students to be on the forefront of discussions that will impact their lives.

Balance

Affirmative

The affirmative has quite a bit of flexibility when it comes to advantage ground even if it seems like the number of affirmatives are limited. Affirmatives are going to increase regulations on internet based companies but those regulations can influence mental health (Delandro, T., & Diaz, I. 2022), public health, the economy, public safety, democracy, racism, Global Warming, innovation, and so much more. There is a potential for there to be small affs but they will have a hard time proving solvency or that they are substantial because most of the articles written about internet reform suggest widespread changes are what are needed to change the industry (Anderson, J., & Rainie, L. 2022).

Negative

The generics on this topic will be good for our novice debaters and for small teams who are looking for a solid base to start off the season. Beyond the generics, there is a lot of potential for in depth on case debates. Many leaders in the industry have conflicting ideas on what reform should look like (Anderson, J., & Rainie, L. 2022), some are more conservative than others, so the negative can tailor their arguments to their needs. As for aff specific off-case, private actor counterplans will be big because many proponents of internet reform don't necessarily think the government is capable of leading those reforms.

Possible Cases

- Repeal Section 230-False Information
- Social Media Reform- Time Restrictions, Age Restrictions, Filter Disclosures, Content Restrictions, Parental Access, Mental Health
- Internet as a utility (Toh 2020) (H.R.1644 - 116th Congress 2019-2020)
- Data Privacy-Restrict Targeted Ads, Restrict Data Collection, Restrict Data Sharing, Election Usage, Police Usage
- Artificial Intelligence- Environment, Restrict Usage, Racism
- Promoting Competition (Department of Justice. 2021)
- Innovation
- Clarifying Federal Government Enforcement Capabilities to Address Unlawful Content (Department of Justice. 2021)
- Promoting Open Discourse and Greater Transparency (Department of Justice. 2021)
- Cryptocurrency/NFTS
- Digital Divide

Possible Off Case

- Economy Disadvantage
- Innovation Disadvantage
- Freedom of Speech Disadvantage
- Hegemony Disadvantage
- Circumvention Disadvantage- Internet Users can use VPNs to "move" the location of their IP address to a different country to avoid U.S. regulations

- States Counterplan- Yes, states can regulate internet based companies, which is why in Illinois and Texas no longer have filters on Instagram (Braga, B. 2022).
- Private Actor Counterplans- Companies can lead reform better
- Surveillance Capitalism K
- Baudrillard K
- Anti-Blackness Ks

References

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