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Shaping Future Internet Policy: Balancing Freedom and Security Through Globalization

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Abstract: Information Communication Technology (ICT) advancements have a significant effect on the balance of international security and freedom. This relationship has exposed a pattern of waves in the levels of social, economic, and political globalization over the last century. Nations have failed to adapt to rapid societal changes and to understand the pattern and its relationship to international security, freedom, and human rights, only delaying and increasing the risk of global instability. The internet is the most recent ICT advancement, but its unprecedented capabilities have made it difficult to anticipate social, economic, and political effects when left improperly regulated. Finding a solution at the international level requires finding a middle ground with potential to benefit all countries. Every country's unique condition makes it impossible to find a strict one-size-fits-all approach to internet regulation. Factors such as development, location, history, culture (traditions and morals), and governance must be taken into account and used to establish boundaries for the minimum and maximum levels of internet regulation. The actions needed to combat internet threats to security (misinformation, calls for violence, hacking, and cyber attacks) and individual freedom (suppressed, private data collection, threats to journalists, and excessive censorship) will require sacrifices to both to find a suitable balance. Extreme internet freedom or censorship will continue to deteriorate global stability by pushing public opinion toward nationalism and isolationism. Failure to maintain and improve globalization through balanced international internet policies provoke single-stakeholder control to threats such as internet sovereignty, access monopolization, and the privatization of human rights. This article seeks to further explain these relationships and offer recommendations for a long-term, balanced approach with defined minimum and maximum levels of internet regulation through the comparison of biases and internet

policies between the United States, the European Union, and China, as well as policies established by the United Nations and private sector.

Keywords: Internet, Internet policy, WWW, World Wide Web

"Those who would give up essential Liberty,
to purchase a little temporary Safety,
deserve neither Liberty nor Safety."

Benjamin Franklin, 1775

Introduction

The words of Benjamin Franklin helped shape the foundation of constitutional rights in the United States and rang true for nearly a century. However, the rapid advancements in information communication technology (ICT) since the late 20th century are far beyond what even he could have imagined. For years, the average speed and reach of information have outpaced the ability of individual countries and the international community to comprehend and combat new technological developments' negative effects. There is no end for the evolution of technology, and no turning away from the reality of the internet's power and the grasp it has on world order. Public policy, security, and technology experts must track and stay ahead of these trends and work together to find solutions to prevent growth from being our own demise. The global network the internet has built is far too intricate and integrated for one nation to abandon without detrimental consequences for all[177].

Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the creator of the internet, has expressed his concern for the future of the internet and the need for all nations to work together to develop modern laws for the digital age that balance freedom and security for all[178]. Misinformation, election interference, calls for violence,

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[177] George Soros. "The Crisis of Global Capitalism: Open Society Endangered "New York: Public Affairs. 1998.

[178] Tim Berners-Lee, 30 years on, what's next #ForTheWeb? 2019. Accessed August 23rd, 2020. https://webfoundation.org/2019/03/web-birthday-30/.

cyber-crimes, and illegal markets are among the most common activities. The long-term lack of consensus on how to properly monitor and manage online activity to ensure international security without damaging social structures and economic growth is leading to a tipping point for globalization. Anticipating the issues that come with ICT and the waves of globalization with these recommendations in mind will ensure long-term security and protection of freedoms. No matter the approach, there needs to be action in the international community on internet regulations for the sake of international stability.

Waves of Globalization

Today, the internet expands the base of global knowledge and offers numerous benefits and opportunities for growth. Economically, the internet provides the means for companies thousands of miles apart to communicate, increases productivity and competitiveness, and opens the job market for remote work opportunities. Socially, the internet opens up global communication at the individual level, allowing anyone with internet access to interact with someone across the globe and increase their exposure to new ideas, cultures, and information. Politically, most news organizations can instantly broadcast to anywhere in the world, keeping those with internet access up to date on current events[179].

While there are numerous positive aspects of the internet, there seems to be a never ending list of issues that, if left unaddressed, could leave a policy gap that could become impossible to fill. Before the internet, the most significant downsides of new ICT developments throughout history have stemmed from their most positive aspect – creating a more connected, globalized world. Unfortunately, faster and easier communication always comes packaged with a higher risk of tension and conflict due to ethical and cultural differences[180]. These changes tend to stoke fears of

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[179] Richard Baldwin. "The Great Convergence: Information Technology and the New Globalization". (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Cambridge, MA) 2016.

[180] Michelle Maiese. "Moral or Value Conflicts". *Beyond Intractability*. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. 2003.

change and unfamiliarity, giving rise to the preference of protectionism, isolationism, and nationalism over globalization when expansion and over-saturation become too much for a population to handle[181]. Experts have observed this cycle of global connection and disconnection – known as the Waves of Globalization – three times within the last century[182].

The first wave of growth began with introducing the telegraph in the la-te19th century kick starting the Industrial Revolution and making long distance communication faster than ever before. However, the capability of speedy international communication might have been a factor in increasing global tensions that led to conflict on a global scale – World War I. In the aftermath of the war, globalization was set aside as nations withdrew themselves from the international community in favor of iso-lationism and protectionism[183]. Not long after, satellites and telephones launched the second wave and eclipsed the speed of the previous globalization growth – more so for developed countries than developing countries – and revealed the need for regulated international economic integration following the financial toll of World War II. The Bretton Woods Agreement secured the United States' role as the global hegemon. This wave took its downturn after the Vietnam War ended the Bretton Woods Agreement and prompted the growth of isolationism again[184]. The third wave began in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the internet became increasingly available to the general population, and the Cold War came to an end. Based on this pattern, another downturn in globalization is likely to occur in this decade for nations with earlier access to the internet, while those previously left behind are catching up[185]. We have already witnessed this shift

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[181] Diane Coyle, Patrick Meier, "New Technologies in Emergencies and Conflicts: The Role of Information and Social Networks". United Nations Foundation; Vodafone Foundation. 2009.

[182] World Bank, 2001.

[183] Adam Tooze,. "*The Deluge: The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order 1916–1931*". (Penguin, London.) 2015.

[184] James A. Johnson "The New Generation of Isolationists". Foreign Affairs 49, No. 1, pg. 136. 1970. https://doi.org/10.2307/20037824.

[185] Sey, A., Coward, C., Bar, F., Sciadas, G., Rothschild, C., & Koepke, L. "Connecting people for development: Why public access ICTs matter". Seattle: Technology & Social Change Group, University of Washington Information School. 2013.

for the last couple of years as some of the most connected global powers have shifted away from involvement in the international community as disputes over cyberspace and freedom of information become the new norm.

In this fourth wave of globalization, less developed countries, formerly left behind in this long race for technological advancements and global influence, are now quickly catching up at varying rates. Most of these countries are experiencing high growth rates of economic impact, intercultural competence, and technology adoption. This makes this wave challenging to predict and regulate as it fractures and deviates based on various factors, including governance and level of development. There is a push for nations to favor a globalized internet over "internet Balkanization" because "internet fragmentation will bring about a paradoxical de-globalization as communications within national borders among governmental bodies and large national companies become increasingly localized."[186]. To stay ahead of this curve, international policymakers must carefully consider and thoroughly grasp the roots of decisions made by the leaders of those countries, to determine the range of positive and negative effects at all levels of internet control.

Control+Alt+Delete

Governments' have justified the development of policies and laws used to place restrictions on cross-border flows of data, monitor citizens' online activity, and control what can be accessed, especially regarding social media for the sake of national and personal security[187]. Many of these types of policies are necessary, but to what extent? Every nation faces different circumstances and has different needs. Establishing effective and fair policies at the international level requires taking these differences into account, understanding the motives behind current internet policies, and

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[186] Milton Mueller,. "*Will the Internet Fragment?: Sovereignty, Globalization and Cyberspace*". John Wiley & Sons. 2017. https://doi.org/9781509501250.

[187] Adrian Shahbaz, and Allie Funk. "The Crisis of Social Media", 2019. https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2019/crisis-social-media.

finding a balance between security and freedom that does not impede the quality of life, development, and growth.

The Great Firewall

Regarding external influences, China's Great Firewall is often seen by western nations as a means of authoritarian control to prevent the Chinese population from being exposed to external cultures, ideologies, and information. But, censorship of outside media has actually improved the average quality of life, most notably from the stability it provides[188]. Today's open internet, especially social media, has caused significant fragmentation in oversaturated nations due to millions of people vying for attention and their opinions to be heard. Those desperate for attention may resort to radicalization and misinformation. Compared to the West, China has only recently become a technologically advanced nation, and its infrastructure did not offer internet access to half of the population until 2016[189]. In recent studies, Chinese students were given unrestricted internet access for 18 months. The results showed that "the combination of low demand for uncensored information and the moderate social transmission means China's censorship apparatus may remain robust to a large number of citizens receiving access to an uncensored Internet."[190]. The participants displayed "self-censorship" and showed no interest in accessing uncensored information on their own. When uncensored and inappropriate information – think annoying pop-up advertisements – persistently show up on users' screens, it is hard to miss. The restrictions on information flows, and the consequences journalists and individuals face if a line is crossed, undoubtedly violate human rights. If China desires to be of higher value to and more respected by the international community it needs to reduce restrictions to fit within boundaries suggested in this article.

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[188] Guo, S., Feng, G. "Understanding Support for Internet Censorship in China: An Elaboration of the Theory of Reasoned Action". Journal of Chinese Political Science 17, 33–52. 2012. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11366-011-9177-8.

[189] Max Roser, Hannah Ritchie and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina. "Internet". OurWorldInData.org. 2015. 'https://ourworldindata.org/internet'.

[190] Yuyu Chen, and David Y. Yang. "The Impact of Media Censorship: 1984 or Brave New World?" American Economic Review, 109. 2019. doi: 10.1257/aer.20171765.

Building Connections

Chen and Yang's first two observations are undeniable, but free, open access to the internet is not the only way to expose individuals to new information[191]. However, their latter two points are debatable. Those who argue that the Chinese government seeks to shelter its citizens from the world and control their every thought and opinion neglect to take other means of increasing globalization into account. As their economy grows and citizens have more disposable income, Chinese citizens have been traveling internationally – now ranked the second largest group of tourists, following closely behind the United States[192]. The government highly encourages international travel and education so that its citizens can experience the world. Non-Chinese students are eagerly welcomed and offered scholarships to Chinese universities. In 2016, China ranked third globally for the number of international students, closely behind the United States and the United Kingdom. This number will continue to grow as 40 percent of all new international students received sponsorship from the Chinese government, a five-fold increase from 2006[193]. The hope is that face-to-face intercultural interaction will improve China's reputation by giving the world every opportunity to experience, understand, and appreciate their culture and perspective. This diplomacy through education approach worked for some time, but the rise of nationalism is destroying progress[194].

The majority of Chinese citizens understand how censored they are and aware of human rights violations. Yet, while engrained self-censorship

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[191] *"(i) free access alone does not induce subjects to acquire politically sensitive information; (ii) temporary encouragement leads to a persistent increase in acquisition, indicating that demand is not permanently low; (iii) acquisition brings broad, substantial, and persistent changes to knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and intended behaviors; and (iv) social transmission of information is statistically significant but small in magnitude".* Chen, Yuyu, and David Y. Yang. "The Impact of Media Censorship: 1984 or Brave New World?" 2019.

[192] Diana Munoz Robino, Global Destination Cities Index. 2019.

[193] "Is China Both a Source and Hub for International Students?" ChinaPower Project, March 12, 2020. https://chinapower.csis.org/china-international-students/.

[194] Salvatore Babones. "It's Time for Western Universities to Cut Their Ties to China". Foreign Policy. August 19, 2020. https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/08/19/universities-confucius-institutes-china/.

limits their desire for some information, many agree that these extreme policies are far beyond unacceptable. Being abroad exposes you to knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, planting the seed for the spread of information and attitudes in the long run. However, even as Chinese citizens are increasingly exposed to Western culture, their government controlled news media is ranked the most trusted in the world[195].

The Road Ahead

The regimes of many vulnerable and developing countries are adopting stricter models of censorship because they realize how unrestricted access to internet media can negatively affect their stability and damage development progress[196]. Through censorship, China has created a stable situation that has lifted millions out of poverty and allowed the government to concentrate on continuing development[197]. China's levels of globalization are increasing socially, economically, and politically, but Evan Osnos, reporter for The New Yorker, observed that "to the degree that China's connection to the outside world matters, the digital links are deteriorating."[198]. Although this level of censorship is viewed as over aggressive, it is necessary, to an extent, to keep the cohesion of its population for the time being. In the coming years, China will likely meet in the middle with other nations as democratic nations continue to implement policies and regulations as they recognize the increasing dangers of misinformation and abuse of power that comes with the unrestricted flow of information through the internet. There are still many issues with China's internet policies, especially concerning human rights and freedom of the press. Yet, the West's policies do not represent the ideal foundation for international ICT policy. These nations must be aware of their own growing faults before casting

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[195] "2020 Edelman Trust Barometer". Edelman. 2020. https://www.edelman.com/trustbarometer.

[196] Kazeem B. Ajide & Ibrahim D. Raheem. "Does Democracy Really Fuel Terrorism in Africa?" International Economic Journal, 34:2, 297–316. 2020. DOI: 10.1080/10168737.2020.1741014.

[197] "World Report 2020: Rights Trends in China's Global Threat to Human Rights". April 10, 2020. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/global.

[198] Evan Osnos, "Born Red". New Yorker. 2015. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/04/06/born-red.

stones. Press freedom has been deteriorating globally over the last decade, and it is not only the nondemocratic regimes to blame[199].

The World-Wide West

Regardless of the regime, most nations have policies already in place that censor certain websites, block language deemed inappropriate, track illegal activity, and restrict or remove misinformation on social media[200]. Within democratic nations, the issues with most of these policies are details and stipulations that are either too vague to effectively hinder those searching for a loophole or lack means of enforcement. In this realm, policy and law are necessary to maintain security and growth on the national and international levels. However, these policies' reach is only acceptable if applied in a realistic manner that balances freedom and security without reducing levels of globalization. Members of the European Union are among those that have implemented the most effective practices with favorable results. Europe has been rising to the forefront of internet policy over the last few years.

A Dangerous Precedent

In 2016, Eva Glawischnig-Piesczek, former federal chairperson of the Austrian parliamentary party, had a photo of herself attached to a viral Facebook article calling her corrupt, fascist, and a traitor. Glawischnig-Piesczek demanded Facebook delete the posts and reveal the identity of the publishing user. After Facebook refused, she took her case to the Austrian Supreme Court, arguing that the comments were defamatory and violated the copyright she held of her image. Under existing Austrian law, Glawischnig-Piesczek's case was sufficient enough for Facebook Ireland Ltd. to be ordered to remove the post, as well as similar posts, from the

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[199] Reporters Without Borders ranked China 176 out of 180 countries in its 2016 worldwide index of press freedom. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/media-censorship-china.

[200] Róisín Áine Costello. *"Law, Policy and the Internet". International Journal of Law and Information Technology*, 204–207. 2019.

platform. However, Facebook Ireland Ltd. is governed by the United States and Ireland. Both parties chose to appeal the verdict and took the case to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

The key deciding factor was the interpretation of Article 15 of the Directive 2000/31/EC to determine if a host provider can be forced to extend the removal of a post with identical verbiage or identical content, and the order can be extended to apply worldwide. The Court strengthened relating definitions and ruled that the Directive does not prevent a host provider from being ordered to remove content deemed unacceptable or unlawful and any identical or similar content as long as the provider does not make these assessments independently. As to the question of if these laws can be applied internationally, the Court ruled that Article 18 of the Directive leaves the power to determine the geographic scope of the restriction up to the EU Member state, as long as it remains within the framework of relevant international law[201]. A decision like this in the United States would be viewed as undermining existing law and violating individual freedoms, not to mention that it is unconstitutional.

Comparing Approaches

Countries most invested in the information economy and intellectual property with large knowledge producing sectors are those actively restricting their citizens' access to information[202]. In addition, countries with similar governmental structures pressure one another to match the others' level of internet control. The United States is among these countries, but it takes an under-the-radar approach to information security, data privacy, press freedom, and misinformation control. There is a lack of focus on protecting both nongovernmental organizations and individuals from cyber attacks

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[201] Directive 2000/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2000 on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the Internal Market ('Directive on electronic commerce') https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CEL EX:32000L0031&from=EN.

[202] Stephen A. Meserve, and Daniel Pemstein. "Google Politics: The Political Determinants of Internet Censorship in Democracies". *Political Science Research and Methods* 6, no. 2 (2017): 245–63. ttps://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2017.1.

and other internet threats. Russia's influence in the 2016 election is being taught as a case study at European universities as the most significant cyber scandal in history. Yet, little has been done to combat these disinformation campaigns and the spread of misinformation since the United States is again falling victim to interference during the 2020 election. The desire for complete freedom of opinion and expression causes many to bury the truth from themselves and spread information that confirms their biases, no matter how farfetched and unverified it may be – an effect explained by the Selective Exposure Theory[203].

The United States has criticized China's intense surveillance of its citizens for years, but this is one of the most hypocritical American points of view. To the degree that China admits to surveilling its citizens, it is somewhat more open in comparison to the United States. Actions on both sides cross ethical lines in terms of privacy, especially China. However, the majority of user data requests sent to Google, Facebook, Apple, and Twitter come from the United States government. In 2012, Twitter received twice as many requests for its users' data from the United States government than the next six countries combined[204]. In addition, the Trump Administration has created a hostile environment for the press and news media organizations. Between 2018 and 2019, the United States fell three places into the "problematic" classification on the World Press Freedom Index[205]. In 2018, the United States tied with India as the fifth most dangerous country for journalists in a report by Reporters Without Borders[206].

One of the key indicators of a corrupt democracy is a government that works to impede press and intellectual freedom[207]. Similar to authoritarian

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[203] Natalie Jomini Stroud. "Selective Exposure Theories". *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199793471.013.009_update_001.

[204] Twitter Transparency Report, Accessed August 25, 2020. https://transparency.twitter.com/en/reports/information-requests.html#2019-jul-dec.

[205] "2019 World Press Freedom Index – A Cycle of Fear", April 21, 2020. https://rsf.org/en/2019-world-press-freedom-index-cycle-fear.

[206] Reporters Without Borders. "WORLDWIDE ROUND-UP of journalists killed, detained, held hostage, or missing in 2018". 2019.

[207] Jonathan A. Solis and Philip D. Waggoner. 2020. "Measuring Media Freedom: An Item Response Theory Analysis of Existing Indicators". *British Journal of Political Science*. Cambridge University Press, 1–20. doi:10.1017/S0007123420000101.

regimes, these governments aim to control public knowledge by restricting access to materials, promoting information the confirms their message, and covering up their mistakes. Research shows that "governments engage in more digital censorship when internal dissent is present and when their economies produce substantial intellectual property."[208]. As technology drives globalization and the United States and China try to outpace one another in research and development, we can observe how these two regimes contrast in balancing security and freedom. The desire to control information to protect intellectual property and cybersecurity is not the only motivation for democratic nations to establish reactive policies due to other national threats.

Proactive vs. Reactive Policy

In 2018, after the dangerous example made of the United States two years prior, the European Commission implemented measures to ensure that European elections remain free and fair. The Commission's formal recommendation outlined the need for election cooperation networks, digital transparency, protection against cybersecurity incidents, and combating disinformation campaigns[209]. While these measures were motivated by the result of another democratic nation falling victim to foreign intervention in elections, other European internet and security policies have been motivated by their own misfortunes; one implemented proactively while the others are reactive. No matter the regime, governments tend to increase internet restrictions as a response to internal threats.

In Stephen Meserve and Daniel Pemstein's award-winning article *"Google Politics: The Political Determinants of Internet Censorship in Democracies",* the authors explain that "internet freedom in liberal democracies is sensitive to internal threats, and that democratic governments, like their

[208] Stephen A. Meserve, and Daniel Pemstein. "Google Politics: The Political Determinants of Internet Censorship in Democracies". *Political Science Research and Methods* 6, no. 2 (2017): 245–63. https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2017.1.

[209] *EUROPEAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION of 12.9.2018 on election cooperation networks, online transparency, protection against cybersecurity incidents and fighting disinformation campaigns in the context of elections to the European Parliament.* https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-cybersecurity-elections-recommendation-5949_en.pdf.

autocratic counterparts, restrict digital freedom when faced with terrorism and insurgency."[210]. As an example, France increased its number of strict ICT regulations on digital content that led to mass censorship and decreased internet freedom and began to lean toward isolationism, protectionism, nationalism. Many other European nations have begun to follow suit. As events and restrictions such as this continue to escalate, the developed world will see its decline in the waves of globalization, as predicted, with developing nations following soon after. Policymakers must be proactive in their decisions regarding control of the internet to advance international freedom, security, and growth. If not, they will continue to set standards that can be viewed as questionable or unclear to the point that, if applied at the international level, may lead corrupt leaders with bad intentions to search for loopholes to take advantage of the situation and to advance and protect their interests. Internal threats are not the only causes of rushed, inadequate internet policy. As new situations appear, policymakers and legal establishments are pressured to decide based on grievances, legal precedents, and little information on the internet's framework and capability.

Measuring Trust

The growing distrust in tech companies, news organizations, and even experts is coinciding with a lack of media literacy that is exacerbating the growing political divide, threatening the nation's stability, and disconnecting Americans from the world. Western nations like to believe that their respective news organizations are more trustworthy and honest than others, especially more than China's news media. However, according to the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer report[211], Chinese media was ranked the most trustworthy in the world, and the majority of its citizens want to keep it that way[212]. The report shows developed nations declining in nearly

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[210] Stephen A. Meserve, and Daniel Pemstein. "Google Politics: The Political Determinants of Internet Censorship in Democracies". *Political Science Research and Methods* 6, no. 2, 245–63. 2017. https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2017.1.

[211] "2020 Edelman Trust Barometer". Edelman, 2020. https://www.edelman.com/trustbarometer.

[212] Wang, D., and G. Mark. "Internet Censorship in China: Examining User Awareness and Attitudes". 2015.

every category, leaning towards some form of protectionism and isolation-ism. Of the nations surveyed, 66 percent worry it will soon be impossible to know what is real, with 61 percent believing the pace of technology change is too rapid and that governments cannot adapt to this ever evolving sector enough to regulate it effectively[213]. Compared to Americans and Europe-ans, Chinese citizens have become more accustomed to trusting their me-dia, which makes them easy targets for external misinformation or propa-ganda campaigns. Even the United States fell victim to interference in the democratic electoral process during the 2016 Presidential Election. Perhaps in the coming years, China will be ready for lower levels of censorship, but there is a high risk of backsliding in its development progress without some level of regulation in its censorship policies.

Stakeholders

Technology can enhance or destroy democracy and development. It all de-pends on who is in control and how it is used. There are only a handful of companies that currently control the vast majority of technology and information flow. Internet governance experts are studying how a public-private multi-stakeholder approach can play a role in maintaining the bal-ance of freedom and security within a globalized internet[214].

Social Media

As the United States government hesitates to take the lead on protecting social media users and combating misinformation, host platforms are tak-ing it upon themselves to experiment with measures to regulate online activity within the boundaries of the First Amendment. The changes in the hierarchy of internet control since Denardis and Hackl conducted their research shines a light on whether internet policy is best approached as

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[213] "2020 Edelman Trust Barometer". Edelman, 2020. https://www.edelman.com/trustbarometer.

[214] Jonathan A. Obar, and Steven S. Wildman. "Social Media Definition and the Governance Chal-lenge – An Introduction to the Special Issue". *SSRN Electronic Journal* 39, no. 9 (October 2015): 745–810. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2663153.

"governance by social media rather than governance of social media."[215]. As of July 2020, over 50 percent of the world uses social media (3.96 billion users) and nearly 60 percent have internet access (4.57 billion users)[216]. Social media platforms are at the center of internet activity and have more policies in place to improve transparency, combat misinformation, and target calls for violence[217]. There is a concern in the field of internet governance that social media platforms are slowly encroaching upon the privatizing of human rights[218]. However, many do not see this as a bad thing – within reason.

A poll released by Gallup and the Knight Foundation on public opinion of internet control and misinformation in 2020 shows that many Americans are facing internal conflicts in regards to many of their stances on media censorship, valuing freedom of speech yet more critical of companies that do too little to monitor harmful content than those who do too much[219]. Recent surveys and studies show that most Americans favor more being done to eliminate misinformation and disinformation attacks that skew the accuracy of public knowledge and opinion[220]. Overall, U.S. public opinion favors social media host companies managing internet regulation over the government as these companies take action.

In 2016, Microsoft, Google, Apple, Facebook, and other companies sued the U.S. government for the legal authority to inform the public on what

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[215] Denardis, L., and A.M. Hackl. "Internet Governance by Social Media Platforms". *Telecommunications Policy* 39, no. 9 (October 2015): 761–70. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2015.04.003.

[216] https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-july-global-statshot.

[217] Dawn Carla Nunziato, Misinformation Mayhem: Social Media Platforms' Efforts to Combat Medical and Political Misinformation (2020). 19 First Amendment L. Rev. ___ (2020), GWU Legal Studies Research Paper No. 2020–48, GWU Law School Public Law Research Paper No. 2020–48, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3672257.

[218] Emily Taylor. 2016. *The Privatization of Human Rights: Illusions of Consent, Automation and Neutrality*. GCIG Paper Series No. 23 referring to Morozov 2014. https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/gcig_no24_web_2.pdf.

[219] https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-2020-trust-media-and-democracy/.

[220] Dawn Carla Nunziato, Misinformation Mayhem: Social Media Platforms' Efforts to Combat Medical and Political Misinformation (2020). 19 First Amendment L. Rev. ___ (2020), GWU Legal Studies Research Paper No. 2020–48, GWU Law School Public Law Research Paper No. 2020–48, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3672257.

information the U.S. government collects on them[221]. These companies were successful in arguing the Fourth Amendment and offering transparency reports on user data. Individually, platforms have their own approaches to combating misinformation. This year, Twitter was in the spotlight for its policies after it removed and labeled tweets from President Donald Trump's as misleading and violent. After becoming the center of misinformation during the 2016 election, Facebook developed a network of independent fact-checkers around the world monitor posts. Google's search algorithms are currently removing misinformation on the 2020 election and frontloading information on COVID-19 from trusted health authorities. These are milestones for improving internet regulation, but the inconsistency between platforms in their dedication to the cause and definitions of what is considered "misinformation" could damage freedom in the long run.

Network Providers

In 2018, the Federal Communications Commission's Restoring Internet Freedom Order provided a "framework for protecting an open Internet while paving the way for better, faster, and cheaper Internet access for consumers."[222]. This was a step in the right direction for regulatory reform, but there are many arguments against this decision to eliminate net neutrality[223]. The most notable concern regarding a lack of net neutrality is service providers' ability to control users' access to content. However, transparency requirements seem to have replaced some former data regulations. Policies such as this benefit the future of internet policy in the long term. Similar to the issue of inconsistency in regulation between social media platforms, network providers themselves must establish the same rules across the board. Inconsistency between regional network providers

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[221] Microsoft Corp v United States Department of Justice et al in the United States District Court, Western District of Washington, No. 2:16-cv-00537.

[222] https://www.fcc.gov/restoring-internet-freedom.

[223] Net neutrality is the principle that an internet service provider (ISP) has to provide access to all sites, content and applications at the same speed, under the same conditions without blocking or preferencing any content.

is far more dangerous than growing inconsistency between nations and the "Balkanization" of the internet[224, 225].

Private Sector

Achieving consistency between organizations is difficult, especially in bureaucratic matters. The answer to a globalized internet access network might not lie in interorganizational and international cooperation at the policymaking level, but in a having single internet source. Space X's Starlink satellites are designed to be "unblockable" and able to "provide high-speed, low-latency broadband connectivity across the globe, including to locations where the internet has traditionally been too expensive, unreliable, or entirely unavailable."[226]. The company's goal is to put approximately 2,000 smaller satellites in orbit by the end of 2021. If successful, the remaining 40% of the global population without the internet will have access. This will change the course of human history and the central cultural framework of the internet. Space X will have to be prepared to defend its decisions against critics and policymakers, its equipment from damage, and its information from corruption.

International Oversight

The United Nations should be responsible for establishing international internet regulations. Many of the necessary actions would go against articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but there have been dozens of unfulfilled requests for amendments. It was drafted with the intent to prevent another global conflict after World War II, but these rules have not been equally or regularly enforced since their inception. Even Western

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[224] Jonah Hill, Internet Fragmentation: Highlighting the Major Technical, Governance and Diplomatic Challenges for U.S. Policy Makers (May 20, 2012). Berkman Center Research Paper, Harvard Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs Working Paper, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2439486.

[225] Victor W. Pickard, and David Elliot Berman, *After Net Neutrality: a New Deal for the Digital Age*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019.

[226] "Astronomy discussion with national academy of sciences", Spacex, Accessed August 25, 2020. https://www.spacex.com/updates/starlink-update-04-28-2020/.

nations, especially the United States, have been exempted for actions that clearly defy multiple articles in this declaration.

In regards to internet freedom, Articles 19 forbids limitations on an open and free internet, stating: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; including the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."[227]. Articles 12 and 29 state that individuals have the right to protect their reputation and the responsibility to respect others' rights and freedoms. To ensure security and stability for all nations, amendments must be added to update and clarify these limitations to protect the world from modern threats. Freedom and security can and must be balanced and of lasting quality to international internet policy.

The most recent updates to the United Nations' Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology for Development 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognize that "the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies"[228]. This shows that the leading international organization sees how globalization depends heavily on security, growth, and freedom concerning the internet. In addition to this commitment, global trust ratings of the United Nations have been increasing.[229] The task of establishing and enforcing standards of internet policy for all nations will likely damage this rating as many sides will make sacrifices. To minimize the loss of trust and credibility, the United Nations must seek out experts in each of their ICT indicators.

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[227] Declaration of Human Rights, UN, Accessed August 25,2020. https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/.

[228] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/2020-23-ICT-EE.pdf.

[229] "2020 Edelman Trust Barometer". Edelman, 2020. https://www.edelman.com/trustbarometer.

Policy Makers

In addition to foreign and public policy experts, among those who must be included as policymakers for the future of internet policy are electrical engineers, computer scientists, mathematicians, and ICT logisticians. Journalists, economists, and programmers and those in the fields of cybersecurity, human rights, communications law, artificial intelligence, and grassroots development must also be included to ensure that these experts and policymakers avoid pushing the boundaries of freedom and security too far. Technical experts fluent in network and telecommunications management will ensure that technical aspects are accounted for in the decision-making process, minimizing the details that could be left out with dangerous consequences. This is critical, as these types of decisions highlight often missed issues when dealing with new ICT policy and will provide a foundation of what artificial intelligence methods can be used to uphold such policies. Mathematicians working in artificial intelligence have recently developed an algorithm using Benford's Law[230] to track "bots" online and identify deep fakes[231]. Misinformation is one of the major threats of the internet. The ability to enforce laws targeting misinformation by using this algorithm will be vital for ensuring that appropriate accounts and content are not removed, thus, lessening the potential for damage to internet freedom.

Recommendations

While the first drafts for the foundation of international internet law may fail to accurately determine the maximum and minimum amount of internet freedom for every nation, some matters must be included across the board with great attention to detail:
- the protection of journalists,
- right to criticize politicians,

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[230] Benford's Law is an observation about the frequency distribution of leading digits in many real-life sets of numerical data.

[231] Jennifer Golbeck. 2019. "Benford's Law Can Detect Malicious Social Bots". *First Monday* 24 (8). https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v24i8.10163.

- individual data privacy,
- democratic/election interference,
- misinformation control and calls for violence.

Various experts and organizations must work in coordination to effectively and efficiently establish long lasting global ICT policy. Answers can be found by studying past and current examples of internet policy, the waves of globalization, and those who have a hand in internet operations. Globalization and the internet in relation to freedom and security is a complex topic, much of which was not covered in this article. However, a few recommended redlines based on what has been covered is provided.

The first priority is to prevent developed countries from turning away from globalism and the "Balkanization" of the internet. By doing so it avoids exacerbating human rights and creating other cybersecurity issues such as unequal access to information. Second, we must realize that there are ways to limit threats connected to the censorship of ourselves and other nations. Economic, social, geographical, historical, and cultural factors will be considered when establishing boundaries on the scope of internet regulation and censorship. Violating human rights and press freedom is where we must draw the line. The definition of "press" may need to be specified to make sure satire and false sources will not fall under this protection. Censorship and restrictions must be capped, and barriers to cross-border data flow removed, creating opportunities to benefit from and play a role in the global community made available to everyone. National internet policy will vary based on the factors listed above, but establishing international limits is necessary to ensure a minimum standard. One limit, for example, should be censoring criticism of public and political officials. Since the European Union's recent decision on Directive 2000/31/EC stemmed from a disgruntled politician, the decision must be overturned to set an example and not an opportunity for corruption.

Third, citizens must hold their governments and stakeholders accountable for their actions and decisions, especially concerning user data privacy. International regulations should declare the use of data collection only when necessary, but the issue with this lies in what would be deemed

"unnecessary" and at what level would that decision be made. Again, the finer details would most likely have to be managed at the national level. Users should also be able to control who has access to their information and how it is used. Countries using E-governance, such as Estonia, utilize the Cloud for all bureaucratic purposes, including individual financial and medical documentation. Although this framework might not work for every country due to cybersecurity concerns, it is nevertheless something to aspire towards. Estonians have complete digital control of their information and no one has had any of their information stolen. The National Cyber Security Index ranks Estonia as the third most cybersecure nation and could be looked to for recommendations for secure networks[232]. This will require a change in societal norms in many nations. There is a global shift in the opinion of democracy, with nearly all nations losing favor. The opinions in weaker democracies have changed twice as much as those in more democratic nations between 1998 and 2020. This coincides with the shift in levels of globalization as this opinion is exacerbated by the effects of the internet. For internet regulation policies to be adopted in a manner that benefits all, the opinions toward sacrificing some freedom for security must continue to be more acceptable[233]. At the same time, implementing these policies will require negotiations explaining that a path toward globalization is the only way to ensure long-term stability. We live in a world with infinite variations in ideals and morality, varying even within seemingly homogenous societies. Balancing social norms to lessen tensions over conflicting values over time might allow us to live peacefully.

Conclusion

A single government, social network, or person can take the blame for the state of the internet today. Energy is wasted on writing the narrative of how we got here and tracking these problems' symptoms. Instead, we

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[232] https://ncsi.ega.ee/ncsi-index/.

[233] "A Rift in Democratic Attitudes Is Opening up around the World". The Economist, August 22, 2020. https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2020/08/22/a-rift-in-democratic-attitudes-is-opening-up-around-the-world.

must focus on the root of what causes these problems and act in sync as a global internet community. Addressing this and the pattern of ICT effects on globalization is the only way to ensure long-term freedom and security. However, making these decisions civilly will not be an easy task as our world, even within homogenous societies, is unfathomably diverse regarding ethics, values, social norms, and expectations. Creating and implementing internet policy at the international level will require a case by case study, precise terminology, and means of enforcement. Cases of China, the European Union, and the United States have already been highlighted in this paper. However, least developed nations on both sides of the internet freedom index must be considered when experts and policymakers begin setting the foundation. Placing too many restrictions will limit the growth of globalization and exacerbate existing political tensions. On the other hand, failing to define terminology and details will offer corrupt leadership opportunities to hinder growth and exacerbate present tensions. Staying ahead of and stabilizing the wave of globalization with these recommendations in mind will ensure long-term security and protection of freedoms. No matter the approach, there needs to be action in the international community on internet regulations for the sake of international stability.