# Information Presentation Response

The presentation on global internet censorship aligns pretty well with my belief that censorship is abused by the people in power to retain control of their respective regimes. Some countries go as far as being surveillance states that track all their citizens and/or restrict what media is allowed which aligns with their political-economic agenda. There would have to be a very convincing study with data which supports this kind of information filtering to protect democracy and promote social equality to change my opinion.

# Internet Censorship

Saying any activity against the law of the country should be censored could be an easy answer, but this assumes jurisdictions always prioritize the citizens first. Realistically, some countries have different cultures of what is appropriate content or not (Ex. The Age of Consent varies throughout the world), and many countries would censor some content which would only be harmful to the positions of power. To determine the line(s) to be drawn, we need an international organization which is somehow free from any possible biases, whether it be cultural, economic, national, or any other variable between jurisdictions. This council should be an equal representation of the human population and make choices which are beneficial for the general health of people and society and follow well-accepted human rights principles.

Because of the diversity of views, there will more than likely be a massive number of issues which lie in a grey area, which would end up in the amount of restricted content being fairly small (if we rely on a majority system for choosing the content which should be restricted). Ultimately a balance must be found, as these rules of restriction are more or less like laws in any country. The more restrictive laws are, the more rights you are given but at the same time, your freedom will be further restricted with each additional law. Some laws are fairly necessary to keep society together like making murder illegal; you lose the freedom of possibly murdering people for the guarantee that active participants in society will probably not try to murder you. Censorship is the same way, by choosing to censor some topic or media, we lose the freedom to express such a topic, but gain the right to be safe from the repercussions of anyone else expressing that freedom.

# Internet Health Report

Because of the mass adoption of social media in the modern digital age, it is very easy to spread information to millions of users instantly. The article prefaces itself with the (at the time) recent event of people storming the capital which was publicly arranged through social media. This is a prime example of how the algorithms in social can incite harmful actions and spread disinformation. In lieu of this event, the article then proceeds to describe who could be held accountable for actions like this, what meaningful transparency could look like, possible regulations for providers, and the techniques that could be used to force and monitor transparency.

The article provides further examples of international politics being affected by social media such as the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria. These posts related to the protests were mislabeled as “false information” which heavily hindered the effectiveness of this protest. Facebook’s actions regarding this incident are one of many in which a large company failed to prevent a major incident to the detriment of society.

The main complaint of the current transparency in the tech sector in the article is that none of the responsibility is put on the companies themselves. In their words, the transparency given by the large tech companies is only reactive to criticism and not active in their efforts to help civil society. Regulating these companies comes with its own set of problems like whether to let a court of justice handle the cases or giving the power to governments to censor media on their own. As complicated as the issue is, there are examples given of progress like the Digital Services Act in the EU and the Oversight Board which handled the 2021 Trump case.

Investigations into the inner workings of some algorithms have been conducted and displayed in the article. A browser extension was used to track how Facebook targets ads, and the investigation showed that they allowed ads to racially discriminate; Another given example showed that Facebook continuously recommended partisan groups and exposed users to radically different content depending on their political alignment for at least a year.

The cited articles benefited the report greatly, giving many high-profile examples of the direct impact of failed transparency. A clear point of the article is to present objective information to show why the current landscape of online media is potentially harmful to society and presents a few real examples of change which can bring about transparency to benefit the greater society. Personally, I think an analysis of more indirect ways the tech sector is affecting (and possibly hindering) the movement towards transparency is missing from the article. Section 230 deserves a mention at least in shaping the world of online platforms we have and can help formulate ideas and connections to better the case for transparency.