In his vigorous defense of liberty, philosopher John Stuart Mill reminded us ‘that it is important to give the freest scope possible to uncustomary things, in order that it may in time appear which of these are fit to be converted into customs’. Mill was describing what we would now call cultural evolution – the evaluation of different ideas and the spread of those that work best. But cultural evolution is most efficient when ideas are allowed to flow freely.

The world is a complicated place and doesn’t always conform to what we think or hope the answers are. We can only arrive at the truth in a diverse environment of different backgrounds, considering all hypotheses and ideas – both those we like and those we don’t. Cultural evolution needs the fuel of diversity and free speech to create the variation for transmission and selection. This kind of exploration needs a diversity of people with different experiences to come together in a safe space that enables unfettered free speech.

The solution to misinformation is more information. The answer to the infamous fire in a theatre analogy is that when someone falsely shouts ‘Fire!’, we need other voices to shout ‘No there isn’t!’ And we need to exploit indirect reciprocity, tracking reputations like the boy who cried wolf, turning false fire alarmists into untrustworthy sources who lack credibility in other domains of life.

Many point out that there are problems associated with a policy of free speech, but these problems are not resolved by restricting speech. For example, some fear that power differences mean that speech is never truly free because some voices will be louder than others. But this problem is only made worse by restricting free speech. Powerful voices that can shout loudly in an environment of free speech can be balanced by whispers that grow into roars. But in an environment where speech is restricted, those same powerful voices can ensure alternative softer voices never speak at all.

The world is a complicated place. Yesterday’s obvious truths are today’s falsehoods and vice versa. As scientists we try our best to steel-man an opposition’s arguments. The goal is not to win the argument, but to arrive at the truth. And that means seeing our opponent not as an opponent but as a fellow truth seeker who deserves whatever assistance we may render in developing the best version of their argument no matter how wrong we think it is.

That’s why censorship by government institutional misinformation tribunals or making Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk, or whomever they designate arbiter over what is true and false is not a solution to the real problem of misinformation. Instead, like many proximate, band-aid solutions, it creates new problems. Misinformation is a real challenge, but banning or suppressing speech is not the answer.

History shows that time and time again, members of the creative community have been on the frontlines defending the right to speak freely. Members of the creative community, have stood up to promote freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. The result is a vibrant and robust marketplace of ideas.

It’s vital to the attainment and advancement of knowledge, and the search for the truth. The eminent 19th-century writer and civil libertarian, John Stuart Mill, contended that enlightened judgment is possible only if one considers all facts and ideas, from whatever source, and tests one’s own conclusions against opposing views. Therefore, all points of view — even those that are “bad” or socially harmful — should be represented in society’s “marketplace of ideas.”

A broader-grounded view is expounded by scholars who argue that freedom of expression is necessary to promote individual self-fulfillment—that, when speech is freely chosen by the speaker to persuade others, it defines and expresses the speaker’s “self” and promotes his liberty and “self-realization” by enabling him to develop his powers and abilities and to make and inﬂuence decisions regarding his destiny.

E.g., C. Edwin Baker, The Process of Change and the Liberty Theory of the First Amendment, 55 S. CAL. L. REV. 293 (1982); C. Edwin Baker, Realizing Self-Realization: Corporate Political Expenditures and Redish’s The Value of Free Speech, 130 U. PA. L. REV. 646 (1982).

It’s the foundation of self-fulfillment. The right to express one’s thoughts and to communicate freely with others affirms the dignity and worth of each and every member of society, and allows each individual to realize his or her full human potential. Thus, freedom of expression is an end in itself — and as such, deserves society’s greatest protection.

Ira Glasser, Visions of Liberty, Arcade, 1991. J. Gora, D. Goldberger, G. Stern, M. Halperin, The Right to Protest: The Basic ACLU Guide to Free Expression, SIU Press, 1991. Franklin Haiman, “Speech Acts” and the First Amendment 1993, SIU Press, 1993. Nadine Strossen, Defending Pornography: Free Speech, Sex and the Fight for Women’s Rights, Anchor Press, 1995.

（以下是民主社会的）

One of the most notable proponents of the link between freedom of speech and democracy is Alexander Meiklejohn. He has argued that the concept of democracy is that of self-government by the people. For such a system to work, an informed electorate is necessary. In order to be appropriately knowledgeable, there must be no constraints on the free flow of information and ideas. According to Meiklejohn, democracy will not be true to its essential ideal if those in power can manipulate the electorate by withholding information and stifling criticism.

Marlin, Randal (2002). Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion. Broadview Press. pp. 226–27. ISBN 978-1551113760. Archived from the original on 15 August 2021. Retrieved 11 November 2020.

Research undertaken by the Worldwide Governance Indicators project at the World Bank, indicates that freedom of speech, and the process of accountability that follows it, have a significant impact on the quality of governance of a country. "Voice and Accountability" within a country, defined as "the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and free media" is one of the six dimensions of governance that the Worldwide Governance Indicators measure for more than 200 countries.

["A Decade of Measuring the Quality of Governance"](https://web.archive.org/web/20080408193105/http:/info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/pdf/booklet_decade_of_measuring_governance.pdf) (PDF). World Bank. Archived from [the original](http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/pdf/booklet_decade_of_measuring_governance.pdf) (PDF) on 8 April 2008.

Freedom of speech and expression, especially about political and other public issues, is the lifeblood of any democracy. Democratic governments do not control the content of most written and verbal speech. Thus democracies are usually filled with many voices expressing different or even contrary ideas and opinions. A free and open debate will usually lead to the best option being considered and will be more likely to avoid serious mistakes.

Freedom of expression is a precursor to realization of democracy and rule of law.

许多人对言论自由的初印象来自霍尔的这句名言：“我不赞成你说的话，但我会誓死捍卫你说这些话的权利。”严谨地来说，“人人有权享有见解和言论自由；这项权利包括持有见解而不受干涉的自由，以及通过任何媒体和不分国界寻求、接受和传递信息和思想的自由。”本文将通过以下三个方面论证应当维护言论自由，分别是言论自由可以推进科技创新和文化更迭、促进个人的自我实现，以及可以捍卫社会民主。

言论自由可以推进科技创新和文化更迭。公民自由主义者密尔在论证自由的重要性时强调，"重要的是给非习俗事物以尽可能大的自由空间，以便在一定时间内显现出这些事物中哪些适合转变为习俗"。当思想能够自由流动时，他所描述的这种文化进化才是最有效的。科学家、哲学家以及一切思考者只有在不同背景的多元化环境中、考虑所有的假设和想法——包括他们喜欢或不喜欢的——才能接近真相。文化更迭需要多样性和自由言论的推动，以创造传播和选择的变异。纵观历史，创意界成员一次又一次地站在捍卫言论自由权利的前线。其结果是形成了一个充满活力和活力的思想市场。因此，言论自由权保护的是一个有价值的 "思想市场"，它有利于人类的普遍利益（移花接木！！）

言论自由能够促进个人的自我实现。言论自由为个人提供了发展个性、发扬主观能动性、形成道德观、建立社会联系和培养复原力的必要工具。通过这些过程，个人不仅能更好地了解和定义自己，还能更有效地驾驭和影响周围的世界。根据Glasser，表达自己的思想并与他人自由交流的权利肯定了社会中每个成员的尊严和价值，并使每个人都能充分发挥自身的潜能，而这正是自我实现的基础。（Ira Glasser, Visions of Liberty, Arcade, 1991.）当言论者自由选择言论来说服他人时，它界定并表达了言论者的 "自我"，并通过使其能够发展自己的力量和能力、对自己的命运做出决定并施加影响来促进其自由和 "自我实现"。（C. Edwin Baker, The Process of Change and the Liberty Theory of the First Amendment, 55 S. CAL. L. REV. 293 (1982)）

言论自由更可以捍卫社会民主。作为把言论自由与社会民主联系起来的代表之一，Meiklejohn认为言论自由是实现民主和法治的先决条件。要使民主制度行之有效，必须要有充分知情的选民。为了获得适当的知识，信息和思想的自由流动必须不受任何限制。（）在民主国家内，通常会存在许多分歧甚至截然相反的意见。那么，自由公开的辩论通常会使最佳方案得到考虑，也更有可能避免严重错误。

言论自由能够促进社会的宽容。它为国家和社会提供了一种安全阀。在当事人采取行动之前，他们还可以通过表达、交换意见的方式使得有可能过激的行为获得缓冲。如果外在环境允许各式各样的言论都能够发表，那么在最终的行动之前，公民就有更大的机会来进行充分的思考。更进一步，因为这样的社会可以包容互不相同的理论，这事实上培养了公民的民主素养。公民们可能无法对某件事完全满意，但仍然可以维护着这共同的生存家园。这也与民主政治的本质即宽容与妥协相符。

许多人和组织都认为，言论自由政策存在问题。例如有人担心，权力之间的差异意味着言论永远不会真正完全地自由，因为有些人的影响力总会比其他人大。但这些问题并不能通过限制言论来解决，因为限制言论自由只会让不平等变得更糟。在言论自由的环境中，有力量的声音当然可以凭借权力大声喊叫，而代表真理的低声细语仍然有机会最终进化成怒吼，从而达到平衡。但如果在一个限制言论的环境中，握有更强权力的人就能够压制住他们所不希望听到的意见表达。（）

也有人认为，言论自由政策会纵容错误信息的泛滥。在信息过载、审查和监管缺位的情况下，偏见和谬误很可能大行其道。然而，首先，真理具有相对性，反对言论自由的人很难界定什么是“错误”。因此在舆论场上，理性人的目标不是赢得争论，而是接近真相。持有不同意见者不应该被视作对手，而是应当把他们当作寻求真理的同道中人。无论他们的论点看起来有多么错误，他们都值得全体理性人提供任何帮助，以发展出最好、最接近真相的版本。其次，如果因为惧怕信息的庞杂从而导致错误在其中浑水摸鱼，那么赋予一小部分人以审查、监管的权力则是掉进了上一条所展示的不平等陷阱，会酿成更大的错误。

总而言之，虽然言论自由的实现在现实世界的境况并不如理想情况下那样顺畅、时常面临不少争议和阻碍，但言论自由仍然是是健康、进步社会的基石。推进科技和文化迭代、促进个人的自我实现、捍卫社会民主、促进社会宽容这四点是言论自由之所以必须坚持的重要理由。