

**ENCS4210, COMPUTER ENGINEERING ETHICS.**

**Paper #3**

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**Section 2.**

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**Content Censorship on social media**

**Abstract:**

In this research paper the researcher will answer the following questions:

* What are the main cases of content censorship on popular social media sites, The researcher focuses on cases related to Palestine?
* Are social media companies free to allow or ban content based on their own standards?
* Should there be a role for governments in regulating social media apps?

1. **Introduction:**

According to physiological researchers' people prefer social communication by nature, which is created by Allah.

Social media has been changing over time, starting with old styles such as carrier pigeons and lighting fires as a means of visual signals, then moving to mail and manuscripts, until it reached in the present, by using websites on the Internet.

These opportunities that people have today was once the dream of many people more than 100 years ago.

However, in order to prevent this opportunity from bad people. We have to be sure of the following: the copy right, censorship of social media sites and the role of governments in taking care of and preserving their affairs?

2. literature review and answering questions:

**2.1 Kantian Theory**

Human mental should cultivate desire to do right thing. so, your desire should create a moral universal law. However, it is considered one of the ways to examine ethical dilemmas.

According to Kant's theory, in order for my false promise to be believable, I want everyone except myself to be truthful all the time.

In other words, this means denying the dilemma for myself, and asking myself a question: Is the dilemma that I intended to do is morally acceptable, in case it has become a low that applies to all human?

If my answer is No, that means self-defeating, and I refrain to do the dilemma, else I proceed to do the dilemma.

This is called the golden rule which means to treat others as you like to be treated (Immanuel Kant).

**2.2 Principle of Utility**

An action is good if its benefits exceed its harms, it is bad if its harms exceed its benefits. If you are intended to do a project, you have to find out the benefits and harms of the project, by giving a scale for the good and a scale for the worse. Then we have to examine the ascending scale and descending scale. If the scale is more than zero then the result is good, else worse result (Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill).

**2.3 Answering the research questions:**

Internet Censorship: Why It’s Important, Plus Pros and Cons?

The pros and cons of internet censorship have been at the root of much debate over the past few years. The purpose of internet censorship is to control, remove and suppress information online, also known as the “information superhighway”.

Internet censorship occurs when there are different controlling measures for the purpose of controlling or restricting the access on the online content.

There are several different types of online censorship:

* Blocking or filtering websites
* Monitoring online activities
* Restricting access to online platforms or services
* Suppressing specific content types

There are also less severe forms of censorship. For example, an employer may restrict access to social media websites so that workers don’t spend their time talking with each other. Moreover, coffee shops may restrict access to certain websites. This behavior may restrict other customers from entering others web pages. Parental controls are also a type of online censorship. For example, a parent may limit their child’s access on social media platforms in order to keep them safe.

**The type of content censored**

All sorts of topics may be blocked or limited, such as:

* Drugs
* Gambling
* Inappropriate or obscene content
* National security
* News
* Politics

**Types of Internet Censorship**

* **Internet Protocol Address Blocking**: This protocol works when specific websites are blocked and you can’t access them. For example, you may not be able to access your U.S.-based social media site from overseas.
* **Laws and Regulations**: Legal requirements may prohibit certain types of content from appearing online. Internet service providers would then have to abide by these rules.
* **Search Result Removal**: Search engines may exclude certain websites from search results, which makes the site “invisible” to searchers. The search engine may do this because of a legal requirement or at its own discretion.

**Pros and cons:**

There are many pros of internet censorship, as it works to [prevent sites from publishing graphic and explicit content](https://www.netreputation.com/how-to-remove-personal-information-from-google/). From the other perspective, censorship limits the access you have online (netreputation.com).

According to Thomas Maddens, a filmmaker and activist based in Belgium, noticed something strange: it is a video about Palestine that has been posted on Tik Tok using the word “genocide”. Suddenly, the web page has been stopped and they have done an investigating on this issue, and then preventing the contents on the platform.

“I thought I would have got millions of views,” Maddens told Al Jazeera, “But the engagement had stopped.”

Maddens is one of the hundreds of social media users who are accusing the world’s largest social media platforms – Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube and TikTok – of censoring accounts or actively reducing the reach of pro-Palestine content, a practice known as shadow banning.

Authors, activists, journalists, filmmakers and regular users around the world have said posts containing hashtags like “FreePalestine” and “IStandWithPalestine” as well as messages expressing support for civilian Palestinians[killed by Israeli forces](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/24/no-one-is-left-to-mourn-in-gaza-as-israels-bombs-deliver-daily-death) are being hidden by the platforms.

Some users have also accused Instagram, owned by Meta, arbitrarily taking down posts which simply mention Palestine for violating “community guidelines” (aljazeera.com).

Meta’s policies and practices have been silencing voices in support of Palestine and Palestinian human rights on Instagram and Facebook in a wave of heightened censorship of social media amid the hostilities between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups that began on October 7, 2023(hrw.org/report).

In order to answer the second question regarding the contents, does the owners of the social media web sites are eligible to decide what content is permissible online? Platforms will always exercise some degree of discretion over content moderation, and ensuring that platforms exercise their discretionary powers responsibly is a large part of making governance legitimate.

Putting a private policy on the platform for each country should be based on the tradition and culture of the particular country, which decides the acceptance or rejection of these policies ([Digital Platform Regulation](https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-95220-4)).

The role of the government in this issue is the spread of mis- and disinformation poses a fundamental threat to the free and fact-based exchange of information that underpins democracy (www.oecd-ilibrary.org).

These critiques of transparency make two points. The first is that transparency requirements enforced by the law wouldn’t ensure much useful disclosure.

The second is that substantially increased disclosures wouldn’t do much to mitigate the information disorder on social media [(brookings.edu/articles](https://www.brookings.edu/articles)).

3.conclusion:

According to the "principle of the utilitarianism", as mentioned previously. The privacy policy is different from country to another, due to the diversity of countries’ cultures. The social networking sites have the right to ban any contents that doesn’t match their policies. However, they don’t have the right to ban contents which are not listed under their control officially. Internet censorship is when there are measures in place to control or restrict access to online content. This behavior by the governments cannot be called as democratic censorship. Finally, we have an argument about what prevent some governments of giving freedom to the Palestinian content. Thus, people can explain and publish what the occupation is doing?

4. references:

<https://www.netreputation.com/internet-censorship-pros-cons>

<https://www.aljazeera.com>

<https://www.hrw.org/report>

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