

Facebook and Fake News

Consider each of the below proposals, and fill in each of the below TODOs.

Proposals

Proposal 1

Facebook relies on an algorithm as well as individual users' reports to identify content that is potentially "fake news." Once the content has been identified, it is sent to third-party fact-checkers for verification. If the content is verified as fake news, it is publicly flagged with a warning that the content is disputed by fact-checkers.



Proposal 2

However, a designer at Facebook believes that there needs to be a different approach to content regulation. Their proposal is that content deemed problematic by third-party fact-checkers should be prevented from being shared on the platform altogether.

Questions

1. Which form of content regulation, Proposal 1 or Proposal 2, do you feel is better? Why?
 - a. My personal opinion is that **Proposal 1 is better**. The reason for this is that the ethical discussion in the lecture articles from Week 10 state that we must stop fake news whilst maintaining a democracy. A democracy is defined [here](#). Proposal 2 could be deemed as censorship while Proposal 1 is simply informative.
2. Which form of content regulation, Proposal 1 or Proposal 2, do you think best preserves or promotes the [five rights and opportunities necessary for a democratic public sphere](#)?
 - a. Which proposal best preserves or promotes Rights? Why?
 - i. Proposal 1. “**As citizens of a democracy**, we have **rights** to basic liberties, such as liberties of expression and association. The right to **expressive liberty** is important not only for the **freedom** of the individual, so that he or she is **not censored**, but also for **democracy** itself.” ([CS50 Guest Lecture](#)) This clearly states that people should not be censored if we are to maintain the rights defined in a democracy. Proposal 2 suggests censored information that is disputed or deemed false, whereas Proposal 1 suggests informing the user. Proposal 1 lets the user make a more informed decision while Proposal 2 would enforce the flow of information to the user.
 - b. Which proposal best preserves or promotes Opportunity for Expression? Why?
 - i. Proposal 1 because it is not restrictive of the information a user can post. Proposal 2, however, gives more opportunity to some users to post than others as information that is only **potentially false** is removed.
 - c. Which proposal best preserves or promotes Access? Why?
 - i. Proposal 1 because it publicizes all information and enables all users to access that information but simply informs the user of the post’s accuracy whereas Proposal 2 removes the information from public accessibility.
 - d. Which proposal best preserves or promotes Diversity? Why?
 - i. Neither. Proposal 2 removes information so it prevents users from hearing all viewpoints. Proposal 1 would continue the development of an “Echo Chamber” as described in [this article](#) by Joshua Cohen and Archon Fung.
 - e. Which proposal best preserves or promotes Communicative Power? Why?
 - i. Proposal 1. Proposal 2 would decrease communicative power because any transfer of information is filtered and enforced while Proposal 1 enables all information to be transferred, independently of factual evidence. Proposal 1 does still, however, may seem to value some posts or users more than others as markings can decrease the communicative power of certain users.