

Walled Garden vs. The Open Internet

Main Points in favor of "walled garden" model of info & journalism

- Since newspapers are private companies, they need to pay for their operations
- Free content often results in negative side-effects
 - Paid placed content
 - significant amounts of advertisements
- Paid content ensures journalistic integrity and clear partiality
 - Newspapers with left-leaning or centrist or business-oriented focus may continue to do so, because their readership funds the practice

Summary

As many media outlets switch gears and begin focusing on online-native content, they have all seen an evaporation of the dependable income stream of paid subscriptions. In offering "5 free articles," "pay to see this article," "you must be a member to see this content," they have angered those who believe they are entitled to see all online content and created knowledge. Newspapers have never been free - in the past, you had to either buy it or get ahold of it in an archive. The expectation that all news be accessible for free has meant that demand-compliant newspapers end up without money or with staggering amounts of advertisements and paid content.

While openly accessible and free information is a wonderful ideal to aspire to, it is simply not economically feasible without significant government intervention. Outlets will run themselves out of money, and soon there will be no quality outlets to demand free content from. So-called "walled gardens" have always existed - public gardens are paid for by the government. Without public subsidies or outright funding of our news outlets, there is no way for their content to be made freely available.

Links

- [Vox](#)
- [NPR](#)
- [Taos News](#)

Should companies break encryption for law enforcement services?

I can't find this one somehow.

Links

- [The Washington Post](#)

Ethical obligations of apps to track screen time and late-night use

Summary

- It's uncontested that social media apps take advantage of addictive design choices to maximize user engagement. This is well-documented and attested to by current and former members of companies who design social media apps. We have seen this with Facebook, Instagram, and now online gaming companies. The practice has been dubbed "dark patterns".
- It's uncontested that this user engagement is negatively affecting users when not used in moderation. We can see that there is significant discontent in the people who are spending more and more time on their phones on these apps.
- It's uncontested that other similar issues are regulated. Linked below are the legal definition and regulations that support people with gambling addictions in kicking their habit. The steps taken to prevent this addiction are enshrined in law, and are largely undisputed as to why they exist. These are the steps taken to curb online and non-substance-based addictive behaviors, and they are well-embraced by society.
- ...it should be uncontested that we regulate the addictive and legal activity of social media use. The only difference between online gambling and social media in terms of addictiveness is the "hit" - emotional FOMO and dopamine instead of money.

Sources

- [USA Responsible Gaming Regulations](#)
- [The Guardian](#)
- [NY Post](#)

pre-emptive policing (e.g., Apple iCloud photo scanning)

Main Points

- The iCloud photo "scanning" is not scanning photos - it's comparing the hashes of photos against the hashes of photos stored in a database. It is impossible to reverse-engineer the contents of a photo based on its hash, because Apple uses a secure algorithm. Rather than using AI to determine if something is child pornography, it keeps track of well-documented child pornography and uses that database of image and data hashes to check if the user has downloaded something that has been recognized as child pornography.

- [Wired](#)
- [Apple](#)
- [Apple](#)

Is China's surveillance state ethical?

Summary

China's surveillance state does not align with Western conceptions of ethics that are based on personal liberty and freedom, but it is ethical in the sense that it is an incredible tool for ensuring the common good. The immense digital net allows:

- Ambulances to go straight from the scene of an injury to the hospital
- Data-driven trash collection routes that maximize public safety and public health while also saving money
- Tracking of local commerce and search trends to geographically locate concerns of sicknesses and crime problems
- Tracking of sicknesses, infected people, and quarantining people, as demonstrated through China's successful (also draconian) response to Covid that saved an incredibly high amount of people.

If we base the valuation of these tactics on the utility that they give to the expected person, the safety of each person in the republic goes up significantly, which their personal liberty goes down. To defend the surveillance state is to defend totalitarian and diffuse interests rather than the zoomed-in ethics of individual choices and liberties.

Sources

- [MIT Technology Review](#)
- [Wired](#)

Uber/Lyft disruption innovation

Also couldn't find this one. Not sure where it went.