

Asynchronous Classwork for Week 0 – Thursday, August 27, 2020 – Kenneth Chung

TASK ALPHA: Find an article dealing with ethical issues in CS

Article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/25/world/asia/thailand-facebook-monarchy.html>

Focus:

Facebook has often been criticized for not monitoring its platform well enough and being slow to react. What role do we as a community and Facebook have for determining what is and is not posted on social media?

Summary:

Thailand's digital economy and society minister warned Facebook that it would be breaking the country's computer crimes act if it did not shut down a Facebook group called Royalist Marketplace. The "computer crime" was being critical of the Thai monarchy – calling for democratic reforms and more oversight over the king.

On Monday, August 24, 2020, Facebook started restricting access to the Facebook group but plans to pursue legal action against the government of Thailand to have the order revoked. Facebook claims that "requests like this are severe, contravene international human rights law and have a chilling effect on people's ability to express themselves. We work to protect and defend the rights of all internet users and are preparing to legally challenge this request." Although Thailand may be seen as restricting the right to free speech and expression, the issue would be tried in a Thai court under Thai laws.

The Facebook group, Royalist Marketplace, created a new group with a similar name the same night it was restricted.

This article actually shines a positive light on how Facebook has handled a government's attempt to restrict its people's voice. Facebook's bottom line is often seen as its profits and not its morals.



Is it Facebook's responsibility to ensure the ethical use of its platform?

It seems like they're trying to enforce any violations of its "community standards" but is it possible to flag and deal with all potential issues posted by its 2.5 billion active users? (It smells of an AI solution with some privacy violations. Anyone thinking "Minority Report?") Where do you think Facebook should draw the line?



Read more about Facebooks policies: <https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/>



Here's a list of other articles to consider reading:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/23/world/asia/cambodia-facebook-disinformation.html>
 - Facebook was slow to take down fake accounts that a government agency made to spread misinformation to discredit a political dissident.
 - “We know that Facebook will side with repressive regimes if their bottom line is impacted by freedom-of-expression issues,” said Michael Caster, a human rights researcher who has studied technology use in authoritarian countries.
- From Josh - <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ryanmac/facebook-employees-slam-zuckerberg-kenosha-militia-shooting>
 - Facebook was slow to take down groups that were promoting violence in response to the Kenosha shooting.
 - Employees say Facebook needs to stop reacting and start being proactive.
- From Lisa - <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/27/technology/what-if-facebook-is-the-real-silent-majority.html>
 - Facebook as a political platform.
 - It's no secret that, despite Mr. Trump's claims of Silicon Valley censorship, Facebook has been a boon to him and his allies, and hyperpartisan Facebook pages are nothing new.
 - Brad Parscale — the digital director of Mr. Trump's 2016 campaign — told “60 Minutes” that of everything Mr. Trump did that year, the thing that actually moved the needle was Facebook.
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/05/technology/trump-facebook-coronavirus-video.html>
 - Facebook takes down a video posted by President Trump which spread coronavirus misinformation.
 - “They've got much stronger immune systems than we do somehow for this,” Mr. Trump said. “They don't have a problem. They just don't have a problem.”
 - The White House's deputy national press secretary, said, “The president was stating a fact that children are less susceptible to the coronavirus. Another day, another display of Silicon Valley's flagrant bias against this president, where the rules are only enforced in one direction. Social media companies are not the arbiters of truth.”