

Based on the readings and [The Internet Rights and Principles Coalition](#), I identified the following list of rights of digital citizens, based on IRPC's list. Just as the U.S. Constitution and the U.N. Human Rights Declaration have served for decades, even centuries, as the yardstick of freedom, it is important to have the broad goals in mind even as we quibble about specific applications or implementations.

1. All humans are born free and equal, with inalienable human rights. To preserve these freedoms, their dignity and rights must be respected and upheld online and off.
2. The Internet must be open and provide equal access to all users. This includes users with disabilities.
3. Net neutrality must be protected to prevent prioritization, censorship, and discrimination.
4. All users are also responsible for upholding these rights.
5. Everyone has right to speech free from arbitrary surveillance. Everyone has to right to privacy online.
6. Life, liberty, and security must be respected, while not impinging on those of others.
7. Internet technologies must help preserve and allow to flourish the diversity of languages and cultures around the world.
8. The Internet should be built on open standards and regulations. Governance over the basis of the Internet should be open and inclusive.

Some of these can seem to come into conflict with each other. For instance, allowing freedom of speech can allow for hate speech. Rejection discrimination can therefore lead to censorship; perhaps that is inevitable. The question then is, who gets to censor? That leads to other rules, like the one over open and inclusive governance. If we have organizations built on those principles, it can help reduce the amount of hate on Internet without infringing on the rights, freedom, or liberty of others.

I don't think we can choose some of these principles over others or try to attain them instead of others. That inevitably leads to dictatorship or corporate control. Sooner or later, giving up one freedom leads to the loss of others. Freedom of speech cannot exist without the freedom of the press.

Currently, equal access is a huge problem everywhere. The digital divide, government firewalls, and websites not accessible to the hearing- or visually impaired means we have very different castes of users. Net neutrality lost in the last U.S. election, and the merging of media conglomerates has led to a severe limit on trustworthy media sources.

The phenomenon that only one or two companies can survive in each niche (for instance, only Apple and Samsung make money from selling smartphones) means everyone ends up by will or by force on one or two platforms, like Facebook or Google, and cultures are wilting around the world. Even Cantonese, spoken by hundreds of millions of people in China, are falling by the wayside from Mandarin, with or without the Internet. When languages die, so do cultures.

Schoolchildren must be educated to the extent our views and knowledge are shaped by institutions well beyond our control. They must help rebuild our Internet and our society if they want to reclaim democracy and freedom. We need to create curricula and materials to educate children and adults on the way companies and governments have reshaped our minds through the use of social media, the Great Firewall, and other society-changing technologies.

Piecemeal efforts like poisoning facial recognition programs won't work. To the extent we can still recognize the pictures, eventually so will software. We need to concentrate all efforts on broad changes, instead of fighting individual wildfires when the whole world is burning.