Notes:

Getpocket.com –

* Social media collapsed “pluralistic ignorance” – the belief that one is alone in one’s views when in reality everyone has been collectively silenced
* Flow of attention > flow of information
* Egypt: dissidents had more influence when it was just them on twitter, now its then being harassed by gvt supporters
* “Power always learns, and powerful tools always fall into its hands.”
* Obama’s campaign used social media, voter profiling, and microtargeting
* Microtargeting – creates a world where you don’t know what messages your neighbors are getting or how the ones aimed at you were being tailored to your desires and vulnerabilities
* Essentially, social media was able to be used by corporations, politicians, and governments to feed us misinformation and manipulate our beliefs and behaviors because of a massive misunderstanding of digital behaviors/culture, internal drives for profit by big tech, and mass distrust sown by political and international events leading up to the 2010s

Section 230 –

* Communications Decency Act – enables free speech
* “No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider”
  + Online outlets can host content, but would not be legal owners of content
  + Allowed online platforms to exist
* Jennifer Huddleston, Director of Technology and Innovation Policy at the American Action Forum
  + Research focuses on intersection of law and tech, like data privacy, online speech, regulation’s impact on internet
  + S230 enables online platforms to engage in content moderation
  + Platforms are not liable for content users post, or decisions made around moderation
    - Exceptions: violating federal law, copyright, and violations like sex trafficking
  + Social movements benefit since platforms can carry content that’s controversial
* Enables small voices to have their message go viral
* Allows sites like Yelp to exist, but without s230, every bad review could get hit with a lawsuit
* R: S230 should be repealed because social media giants shut down voices, especially right wing ones
  + But, impartiality is not baked into the communications decency act
  + Enables platforms to not be neutral and serve specific audiences
  + If made to be neutral, platforms could not target certain audiences anymore
* L: Say social media content is not moderated enough, enabling hate speech
  + Nothing to do with s230
  + Laws already exist to handle hate speech
* Courts have ruled out that platforms are the public square
* CDA only protects the service provider to be held accountable for the actions of other parties
* S230 does not protect big tech
* S230 keeps barriers of entry low for new companies to carry user generated content
* Protects content moderation
* Platforms created and based in US because of our freedom of expression
  + 1A
  + Proposed changes to S230 want to insert gvt regulator into online speech to decide what speech is and isn’t allowed online

How to choose your news –

* Information is not useful if you do not know how to read the news
* News was once limited to a small amount of magazines, newspapers, and news channels
* Internet has multiplied amount of information and viewpoints
* If everyone is a reporter, then nobody is
* How to know the truth:
  + Get news from original sources
  + Follow reporters on social media
  + More chaotic the story, less you should follow in real time
    - Constant coverage leads to inaccurate information when new info isn’t coming fast enough
    - Should check only a few times a day, not every few minutes
  + Read coverage from multiple outlets
  + Separate fact from opinion
    - Think, likely, probably – being careful or taking a guess
    - Anonymous sources = could be a bad source
  + Verify news before spreading it

Why is fake news created –

* Anyone can produce news content without fact checking what they’re creating
* Three main drivers of fake news:
  + Satire
  + Influence public opinion
  + Generate ad revenue
* Satire:
  + Makes fun of serious topics, allowing people to engage with uncomfortable things they’d otherwise ignore
* Influence public opinion
  + Targets individuals because it gains attention
  + Offering misleading headlines paint individuals in worst possible light, though article may contain truths
  + Headlines can be used to put idea in the heads of those who view it
* Ad revenue
  + Every click + time spent = more charged
  + Macedonia – hotbed for false news
  + When a story matches our own opinions, more likely to be believed and shared
  + The more sensational, the more likely it is click bait
* Fake news received lots of coverage from legacy news because content targeted voters
* Fake news also tries to influence voters, and may do so with state sponsored support

How to spot fake news –

* Browser plug-ins like BS Detector help
* Who claims this as true?
  + Verify the web address
    - Many are imitation sites
  + Read up on the organization in their about us section
  + What’s their reputation like?
* Who else is reporting this story?
* What evidence is offered?
  + Links to original sources
  + Quantity of data
* Do images look false or otherwise altered for emotional effect?
* What other content is presented?
  + Soft celebrity content or clickbait hurts credibility

Explanation of cancel culture Denver 7 –

* Boycott or public shaming of a person who shared a questionable/unpopular opinion
* Someone who’s past behavior is unethical, illegal, or morally wrong
* Me Too movement
* “Social Justice”
* Started as justice, but leads to going too far
* Employers can look you up and see your past posts, then deny you a job

Microtargeting in political advertising –

* State has files profiling voters
* Campaigns began to do the same
  + Have lots of data, but not necessarily correlated with political positions
* Large source of revenue now to work with campaigns
  + TV and satellite DVR providers do this a lot
* Addressable advertising: delivers an ad no matter what you’re watching
* Useful for targeting people on your side, but wouldn’t otherwise turn out to vote without an extra push
* If goal is to change minds, that hasn’t been figured out yet
* Voter registration and activity is public data
* Can model publicly available data, then link to other data available about an individual
* Privacy issues settled by state legislatures
  + Bills to stop campaign microtargeting tends to be ended, doesn’t pass