

Arguments for and against internet censorship



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

What would you do if you had an invisibility cloak? Freud stated that human behavior is driven by two instincts: *eros*, related to the world of the sexuality; and *tanathos*, related to with death or violence (Freud 4). When we are anonymous, there is more probability that we will abandon self-control to those instincts because the consequences of our behavior are not linked to our identity. Anonymity leads to transgression. Nowadays, the Internet is providing us with layers of invisibility to hide our name; therefore, people are more likely to behave in ways that they would not in real life. Given the accessibility of this powerful tool to citizens and the enormous impact that it has on society, the Internet should be censored by individual governments.

The first reason is that measures should be implemented to establish logical boundaries with the goal to protect human rights. In the last few years, a wave of online attacks on minorities have been carried out. A survey run by the Anti-Defamation League shows that more than half of Americans declared to be online harassed in 2018, a 35% increase from the year before (Anti-Defamation League 4). Moreover, the Council on Foreign Relations acknowledges that social scientists have detected that online harassment is not just limited to the Internet; in fact, acts of violence that start online, then take place off-line (Council on Foreign Relations 4).

Secondly, the Internet should be monitored to mitigate the dissemination of fake news. If there the information isn't truthful, the free choice doesn't exist; hence, if your decisions are based on fake news, there is no real democracy. After the 2016 presidential election campaign in the U. S., it has been demonstrated that misleading news is an existing problem. Indeed, a

research conducted by BuzzFeed asserts that fake news stories achieved more engagement than the mainstream stories did (Silverman 5).

Lastly, control is necessary to keep users, especially children, away from criminal activities such as illegal drugs, pornography, and sex trafficking. The net is full of dark areas that are not limited, and the youngest population is not only able to find them, but they are also targeted to receive this kind of content. A study published in the Journal Adolescent Health reveals that “ one in five teenagers are seeing unwanted sexual content online”, and “ one in nine are receiving unwanted sexual solicitations online” (Journal Adolescent Health 4).

Detractors of this argument such the Electronic Frontier Foundation or the American Civil Liberties Union allege that Internet censorship will mean a curtailment of a foundation of democracy: the right of expression, “ which is codified into laws of many countries, and included in the Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (Electronic Frontier Foundation; American Civil Liberties Union, 4). This right was set to protect citizens against abuses of power. However, it must be noted that anonymity in digital communications places the sender in a more advantageous and powerful position in comparison to the receiver. Furthermore, the right of expression ends where the rights of the other person begin; hence, acts that attempt other people’s rights must be prosecuted. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which is the institution in charge of, asserts that “ limitations of the right of expression are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental right and freedom

of others” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 4).

In conclusion, the government of each country should be committed to control and censor dark areas and bad practices on the Internet. If we allow this kind of behavior on the digital net, we send a wrong message to the new generations. And this is already happening because behaviors that were used to be legally and socially punished in the off-line world; now those are being normalized due to the virtual world. Therefore, the lack of limits on the Internet is triggering a breakdown of the values that sustain democratic societies.

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