

8 Facts You Should Know About Social Media

The far reach of social networks into the communities and lives of billions of people around the world have made them both necessary tools for connection and vessels for hate speech, censorship and the exploitation of historically vulnerable communities. .

Facebook and social media sites like it are now primary sources for news, influential spaces for advertising, and perhaps most insidiously, tools for the collection of data at a scale unseen before. The perfect storm of these issues paired with unchecked growth - within the reality of American capitalist white supremacy - has led to the Internet being purposefully transformed from a tool of liberation and expression for communities of color, to one of surveillance, oppression, and control.

The Facts

1 Facebook has over 2 billion users today.

While Twitter and YouTube have over 1 billion.

2 67% of American adults somewhat rely on social media for their news, and 74% of people of color get their news from these platforms.

3 Immigration agencies like ICE and CBP use social media to track the movements of undocumented immigrants and visa holders.

4 92% of local law enforcement use some form of social media in their work, including to create profiles of potential criminals.

Between July and Dec. 2016, Facebook received 14,736 search warrants from US law enforcement agencies.

5 Russian actors used social media, particularly Facebook, to influence the 2016 presidential election.

6 In 2016, data analysis firm Cambridge Analytica inappropriately acquired the data of millions of Facebook users, which was subsequently sold to third parties.

Trust in Facebook has dropped by 66 percent since the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

7 The proposed "Honest Ads Act" would require social media to follow the same rules as radio, TV and print media when it comes to public disclosure of who is sponsoring political ads.

8 In response to these issues, groups like CMJ, Color of Change, and Muslim Advocates have called for a full and independent civil rights audit of Facebook.

The Solutions

By winning policies at the federal level to enhance consumer data ownership, limit social media platforms' abilities to surveil and censor communities of color, and curb computational propaganda (like bots), we can create digital sanctuary online, rooted in the values of self determination, dignity, justice, and accountability.

Join us at action.mag-net.org/join-the-movement

Sources

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