BOOK CHAPTER | Information Access Rights

Information Censorship and the Role of Information Technology

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Introduction
Information Censorship: It has been proven that the more information is censored or prohibited, the more people are going to want it (Hobbs, 2018). The censorship of individuals' rights to access information can lead to greater psychological reactance (reaction) (Ng, 2019). Also, the same study concluded that people's reaction to censorship depends on the source imposing it (2019).

The Cultural Impact
People from different regions of the world react differently toward censorship, Importance of Censorship, authority Imposing Censorship and Psychological Reactance.

Culture and Censorship
Mostly of non-Western countries live in close communities, close to their relatives, or even in a tribal community where their sense of independence or of self comes last (Ng, 2019, p. 5).

Counties with Limited Internet
1. Belarus
71.1% of its population (www.CIA.gov) In 2006, 2007 and 2008, Belarus was listed as an "Internet enemy" by Reporters Without Borders (RWB). The government of Belarus uses controls and policies to manage Belarus' national information space. Before 2006, most places in Belarus did not have access to broadband internet of any kind. Today, Minsk, the capital of Belarus, is the most connected place in the country with internet access in rural areas being limited. worldatlas, (2018)

2. Burma
25% of its population (www.CIA.gov) Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, has had internet access since the beginning of 2000. However, there was a lot of censorship courtesy of the military government which significantly reduced in September 2011. Outside of the city centers, internet access in Myanmar is extremely cost-prohibitive. worldatlas, (2018)

3. Cuba
38.8% of its population (www.CIA.gov) Internet was introduced to Cuba in the late 90s but stagnated for various reasons, including lack of funding and tight government restraints. There however still is extensive censorship with the government tightly controlling the internet. Currently, less than half of the country's population has access to the internet. Notably, it is not possible to use mobile internet in the country. worldatlas, (2018)

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4. Egypt

44.3% of its population (www.CIA.gov) Under the rule of Hosni Mubarak, the internet is Egypt was rated as being "partly free". When protest began on 25th January 2011, Twitter and Facebook were blocked, and two days later reports claimed that accessibility to the internet had been shut down. In 2017, 62 websites were banned. worldatlas, (2018)

5. North Korea

Although the internet is available in North Korea, it is strictly limited. Permission is with special authorization, mainly for government reasons. Access to the global internet is limited to a smaller group. worldatlas, www.CIA.gov, (2018)

6. Syria

31.9% of its population (www.CIA.gov) Syria has banned various websites for political reasons besides arresting people that access them. Internet connectivity was shut down late in November 2011, then ten times in 2013 and 2014. worldatlas, (2018)

7. Tunisia

50.9% of its population (www.CIA.gov) The internet was formerly censored in Tunisia, but after the ousting of President Zine Ben Ali, censorship reduced significantly. The new government also removed filters on social networking sites. worldatlas, (2018)

8. Turkmenistan

18% of its population (www.CIA.gov) The press and communication system of Turkmenistan is state-controlled. The telecom market remains very small, although the country began accessing internet in 1997. worldatlas, (2018)

9. Uzbekistan

46.8% of its population (www.CIA.gov) Uzbekistan first had its internet towards the end of 1995, but the growth has been slow. Besides, there are heavy restrictions and strict controls. worldatlas, (2018)

10. Vietnam

52% of its population (www.CIA.gov) Vietnamese internet accessibility is blocked by the government, especially to sites that are critical to the government. Information about overseas political opposition, religious topics or human rights is also blocked. worldatlas, (2018)

11. China

Even though China accounts for the higher number of Internet users (around 53% of its population), its censorship has skyrocketed (Mercy, 2018). The censorship in China is guided by government policies and technology that blocks content from users this initiative is known as the Great Firewall of China (Brett, 2016). Some of the American Internet technology organization's such as Google, have had its legal challenges imposed by China's policy on information. worldatlas, (2018)

12. Iran

44.1% of its population (www.CIA.gov) as per the World Atlas (2018), Iran's Internet access can be slowed down due to any civil unrest of the mere fear of one. As cited by Ng (2019), Iran sees Internet access and social media as a threat to its national security, therefore, websites such as Twitter and Facebook are banned. It is noted, that Iran is a country that mostly follows the religion Islam, therefore, their threshold on sustaining censorship can be much greater than countries from the West. worldatlas, (2018)

13. Saudi Arabia
73.8% of its population (www.CIA.gov) Saudi Arabia, which is located in the Middle East, has issues with the freedom of information. In Saudi Arabia, some websites have been blocked and or banned for multiple reasons (Mercy, 2018). Other websites and services such as *Wikipedia* and *Google Translate* have also been blocked for the general public since the year 2006. However, there are other deeper restrictions on topics that are imposed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On a positive note, there are more academic MoU's (Collaboration with Western Universities) than before as part of Saudi Vision 2030. worldatlas, (2018)

The United States of America
Internet users make up 76.2% of the population, United States First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech but many feel like the rules (Laws) don't apply to everyone

News Bias
During the election night, CNN reporter, Dana Bash, delivered the message that Hon. Hilary Clinton had conceded to President Elect, Donald J. Trump in a way that spoke beyond the words as if it was personal to her (CNN, 2016). Just three days after the elections, the media's reaction to the results of the election were of negation and catastrophe. The media used words such as "catastrophic" (Fox News, 2016) and news anchors questioning the President's ability and mental health as Commander in Chief (Fox News, 2016).

Hollywood Bias
During the 2011 Correspondents' Dinner, comedian Seth Meyers began what would be the "Hollywood Avalanche" against President Trump with this remark; "I assumed he was running as a joke" (Fox News, 2016). Following that remark, the endless events and situations where the "Trump Supporters" were ridiculed on live television (Fox News, 2016). The polarization of society continued, and this never leads to a good outcome. This is a big contrast with past electoral events that the nation always backed the winner of the elections.

The "Beginning of the End" and the Impeachment Trials
Ever since the fitful November 8, 2016, the media was flooded with the word "Impeachment". Van Johns, a CNN contributor described the events as "a sad night" and "you cannot polish this turd" among other words (Fox News, 2016). The synchronization of efforts and talking points from both sides of the aisle which resembles a sporting event, two sides (Fox News, 2019) (CNN, 2018).

Journalism Code of Ethics
"Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility." (US Press Association, 2019). The news organization should strive for impartial treatment of issues and dispassionate handling of controversial subjects. It should provide a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism, especially when such comment is opposed to its editorial positions. Editorials and expressions of personal opinion by reporters and editors should be clearly labeled. Advertising should be differentiated from news." (Associated Press Media Editors, 2015)**.** The news organization should report the news without regard for its own interests, mindful of the need to disclose potential conflicts. It should not give favored news treatment to advertisers or special-interest groups." (Associated Press Media Editors, 2015)

Web Browsers Manipulation
Internet users are targeted by ads based on their online behavior. In research using Google News, demonstrated that the majority of the results were negative toward chiropractic practice (Al-Azdee, 2018). Chiropractic discipline is not recognized as a medical practice. Searching for: "MSNBC, CNN, ABC, synchronized with DNC".
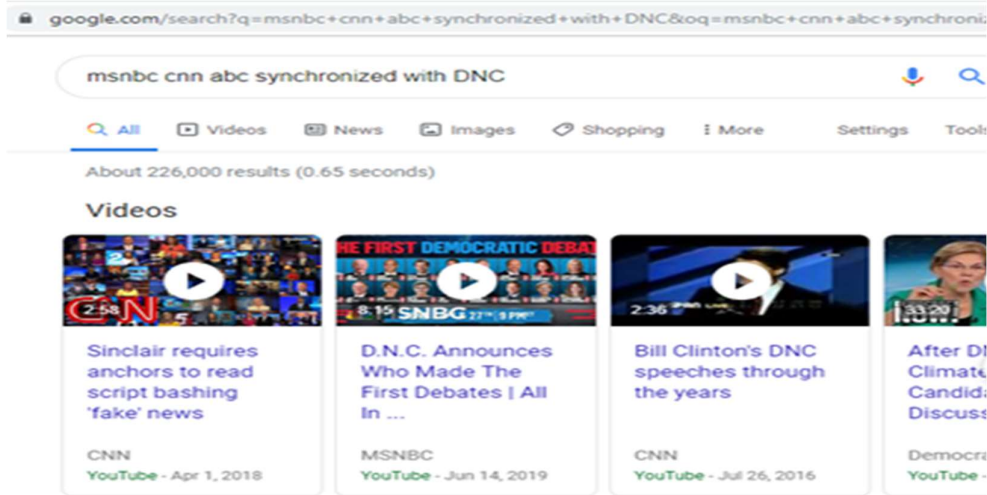
Fig 1: Web Browsers Manipulation
Source: google.com

Do as I say, Not as I Do

The weaponizing the government to spy on political rivals, the President caught on a "hot mic" Vice President admitting to pressuring the Ukrainian President. Compare video footage of the same individuals (politicians) during President Clinton's impeachment trial and now (TheDC Shorts, 2019). Also, the collusion narrative seemed to be one-sided as well, but the other side had many documented wrongdoings that indicate their own collusion (CBS, 2012).

Who can you trust?

Source:

Fig 2: Who To Trust

The Role of Information Technology

Information technology is here to stay, now organizations and people have a virtual persona (presence) that can get them in trouble. Many governments have implemented surveillance systems that work 24/7 to monitor areas and now, to keep track of its citizens (Reynolds, 2019, p. 27). Employees are constantly monitored (2019). The information technology profession observes its ethical behavior. Information technology professionals deliver products or services, our duty to promote the safe and ethical digital environment, there is an extreme dependence on computer systems, every program that is written and system that is built can have catastrophic consequences, information technology has a high grade of continuous improvement and education. Moore's Law (1965) IT professionals have a code of ethics that promotes the commitment to continuous improvement, thus, ensuring that IT professionals have at least a basic set of skills for performing its job.

Proposed Study

Proposed Study questions:
a.   Can citizens trust the news?
b.   Is the United States subject to information censorship?
c.   Is there a "Deep State" in the US?

Variables:

a.   Importance of Censorship (Dependent)
b.   Authority Imposing Censorship (Independent)
c.   Psychological Reactance (Dependent)

A Likert analysis would be done by presenting situations where the user evaluates each variable using a scale. This would be done using the Survey Monkey app in the northern region of the State of New York. Ng, A. K. (2019).

Hypothesis

H_0: Information is not censored in the United States.

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