

# CENSORED!

## How Online Media Companies Are Suppressing Conservative Speech



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Like it or not, social media is the communication form of the future — not just in the U.S., but worldwide. Just Facebook and Twitter combined reach 1.8 billion people. More than two-thirds of all Americans (68 percent) use Facebook. YouTube is pushing out TV as the most popular place to watch video. Google is the No. 1 search engine in both the U.S. and the world.

War is being declared on the conservative movement in this space and conservatives are losing — badly. If the right is silenced, billions of people will be cut off from conservative ideas and conservative media.

It's the new battleground of media bias. But it's worse. That bias is not a war of ideas. It's a war against ideas. It's a clear effort to censor the conservative worldview from the public conversation.

The Media Research Center has undertaken an extensive study of the problem at major tech companies — Twitter, Facebook, Google and YouTube — and the results are far more troubling than most conservatives realize. Here are some of the key findings:

- **Twitter Leads in Censorship:** Project Veritas recently had caught Twitter staffers admitting on hidden camera that they had been censoring conservatives through a technique known as shadow banning, where users think their content is getting seen widely, but it's not. The staffers had justified it by claiming the accounts had been automated if they had words such as "America" and "God." In 2016, Twitter had attempted to manipulate election-related tweets using the hashtags "#PodestaEmails" and "#DNCLeak." The site also restricts pro-life ads from Live Action and even Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), but allows Planned Parenthood advertisements.
- **Facebook's Trending Feed Has Been Hiding Conservative Topics:** A 2016 Gizmodo story had warned of Facebook's bias. It had detailed claims by former employees that Facebook's news curators had been instructed to hide conservative content from the "trending" section, which supposedly only features news users find compelling. Topics that had been blacklisted included Mitt Romney, the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) and Rand Paul. On the other hand, the term "Black Lives Matter" had also been placed into the trending section even though it was not actually trending. Facebook had also banned at least one far-right European organization but had not released information on any specific statements made by the group that warranted the ban.
- **Google Search Aids Democrats:** Google and YouTube's corporate chairman Eric Schmidt had assisted Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. The company's search

engine had deployed a similar bias in favor of Democrats. One study had found 2016 campaign searches were biased in favor of Hillary Clinton. Even the liberal website Slate had revealed the search engine's results had favored both Clinton and Democratic candidates. Google also had fired engineer James Damore for criticizing the company's "Ideological Echo Chamber." The company had claimed he had been fired for "advancing harmful gender stereotypes in our workplace." Damore is suing Google, saying it mistreats whites, males and conservatives.

- **YouTube Is Shutting Down Conservative Videos:** Google's YouTube site had created its own problems with conservative content. YouTube moderators must take their cues from the rest of Google – from shutting down entire conservative channels "by mistake" to removing videos that promote right-wing political views. YouTube's special Creators for Change section is devoted to people using their "[voices for social change](#)" and even highlights the work of a 9/11 truther. The site's very own YouTube page and Twitter account celebrate progressive attitudes, including uploading videos about "inspiring" gay and trans people and sharing the platform's [support for DACA](#).
- **Tech Firms Are Relying on Groups That Hate Conservatives:** Top tech firms like Google, YouTube and Twitter partner with leftist groups attempting to censor conservatives. These include the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Both groups claim to combat "hate," but treat standard conservative beliefs in faith and family as examples of that hatred. George Soros-funded ProPublica is using information from both radical leftist organizations to attack conservative groups such as Jihad Watch and ACT for America, bullying PayPal and other services to shut down their funding sources. The SPLC's "anti-LGBT" list had also been used to prevent organizations from partnering with AmazonSmile to raise funds.
- **Liberal Twitter Advisors Outnumber Conservatives 12-to-1:** Twelve of the 25 U.S. members of Twitter's Trust and Safety Council – which helps guide its policies – are liberal, and only one is conservative. Anti-conservative groups like GLAAD and the ADL are part of the board. There is no well-known conservative group represented.
- **Tech Companies Rely on Anti-Conservative Fact-Checkers:** Facebook and Google both had partnered with fact-checking organizations in order to combat "fake news." Facebook's short-lived disputed flagger program had allowed Snopes, PolitiFact and ABC News to discern what is and is not real news. Google's fact-checkers had accused conservative sources of making claims that did not appear in their articles and disproportionately "fact-checked" conservative sources. On Facebook, a satire site, the Babylon Bee, had been flagged by Snopes for its article clearly mocking CNN for its bias. YouTube also had announced a partnership with Wikipedia in order to debunk videos deemed to be conspiracy theories, even though Wikipedia [has been criticized for its liberal bias](#).

## Recommendations For Tech Companies:

**People Are Policy:** Tech companies like Google and Facebook are making a nominal effort to hire conservatives, but that doesn't address the core problems within those organizations. Companies need to eliminate policies and biases that discriminate against conservatives. They also need to protect employees' ability to disagree with the pervasive liberal groupthink that dominates the industry.

**Tech Companies Must Provide Transparency:** People and organizations have their posts and videos either restricted or deleted on all major platforms. If those companies expect their users to trust them, they must make this system transparent. They must show at least when posts of organizations and public figures are deleted and when they aren't. That would give users a baseline of what speech is allowed on a platform, not just whatever the companies choose to delete.

**Expect Regulation At This Pace:** Tech companies are facing calls for regulation from left and right. The firms should address this by setting rules about how they will treat both conservative and liberal organizations and information fairly. This means clear, published guidelines must be established that support free speech online. Algorithms, content guidelines and ad policies must be designed that don't target political speech. Firms must stop pretending disagreement is equivalent to hate speech. Fairness and transparency are equally essential.

**Avoid Partnering With Bad Actors:** Twitter, YouTube and others had tried to establish policies that prevent so-called hate speech on their platforms. But those policies are being enforced by organizations that spew hate against the conservative movement and can't pretend to be neutral players. Groups like the SPLC and ADL label core conservative values as "hate" or "bigotry." Tech companies can't expect conservatives to trust a system that is so blatantly one-sided.

**Modify Flagging Systems:** One of the worst problems tech companies grapple with is the abuse of their flagging and reporting systems. YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, in particular, succumb to liberal activists who game their systems and constantly report conservative content. These services must determine a better way to handle alerts that do not allow coordinated campaigns against the right.

**Use Neutral Fact-Checkers:** If social media sites are going to attempt to be the arbiters of what is real news, they must rely on fact-checking sources that are neutral and fair toward stories on both sides of the aisle. Relying on sites like Snopes, which has a clear liberal bias, raises concerns over whether the tech giants are trying to promote a liberal political narrative.

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“Nothing has changed politics not only in the U.S., but worldwide more than the advent of companies like Facebook. 45 percent of Americans now get news from Facebook. ... Mark Zuckerberg, who runs Facebook, has the power to tweak the algorithm that determines what gets into your news feed and my news feed. And that is an awesome power. ... Because let’s face it Mark Zuckerberg’s politics are liberal politics. He has no desire to see 2016 happen again. And I don’t think Republicans are fully alive to the fact that with really quite small changes to the way that the Facebook algorithm works, their presence in news feed could shrink dramatically.”

– NIALL FERGUSON,  
*Hoover Institute Senior Fellow*

BY ASHLEY RAE GOLDENBERG  
AND DAN GAINOR

**S**ocial media provides news and information that influences our worldview and can even influence elections. That has huge, real-world consequences — especially for the conservative movement.

Americans are seeing the results everywhere online. Conservative spokespeople, political candidates, even members of Congress, are falling victim to censors and the top tech firms are to blame.

These social media/tech media companies are liberal from the ground up and conservatives are right to be suspicious of them. The problem starts deep inside the liberal corporate cultures of the companies. Eric Schmidt recently stepped down as head of both Google and YouTube. While still in that role, he aided the Hillary Clinton campaign. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg has been a strong proponent of the Dream Act and LGBT issues.

Many of the employees reflect those biases. At Facebook, where users can create their own gender identities for their profile, employees donated a whopping 99 times more to Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign than to Donald Trump’s. Google employees donated 63 times more money to Clinton. Twitter’s employees gave Clinton 30 times more than they gave Trump.

Employees who don't fit that mold encounter major problems. Google and its video site YouTube are both facing lawsuits alleging discrimination against white employees as part of a corporate quest for diversity. In Google's case, engineer James Damore criticized the left-wing corporate culture and was fired. His suit accuses the company of discrimination against conservatives and men.

YouTube faces similar allegations and is also accused of using hiring quotas that exclude whites and Asians.

Negative employee experiences appear widespread. A survey of various tech companies conducted by the [Lincoln Network](#) found that 89 percent of "very conservative" respondents, 74 percent of "conservative" respondents, 69 percent of "libertarian" respondents and 50 percent of "moderate" respondents are hesitant of being themselves while at work for fear they might lose their jobs.

Things get even worse online as these social media firms have partnered with open enemies of the right. Groups like the SPLC, ADL, GLAAD and The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) make up an alphabet soup of hatred against conservatives. Yet they help determine the policies — who can post, who can advertise and what accounts are silenced or shut down.

Twitter has a Trust and Safety Council that includes 12 avowedly liberal groups, such as the ADL and GLAAD, but just one conservative organization.

The result from this kind of cooperation is that sites pull content. Those same sites rely on default processes to censor now and apologize later, after their censorship makes headlines.

The companies have employed computer programs to limit content they don't like. Complex algorithms monitor posts and react to complaints. Only there's more to the process than the companies typically let on.

Project Veritas caught Twitter with hidden camera interviews admitting the process of shadow banning — which means content is hidden from users without them ever knowing it. One engineer admitted that accounts were flagged as bots simply by searching for words such as "America" and "God."

Gizmodo reported that Facebook manipulated "trending" topics to limit conservatives during the election. Worse, Twitter shut down hashtags that aided the right. Even before the "fake news" panic, conservative news sources and information were at the mercy of decidedly liberal tech companies.

The companies have claimed to be neutral platforms for people to share their views. That has long been a facade. Now, even the claim seems to be a fantasy. The online companies are racing one another to shut down disparate voices — and conservatives are among the prime victims.

It's gotten so bad that lawmakers have noticed. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) sent a [letter](#) in May 2016 that worried Facebook. A January 2018 Senate hearing featured Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) warning the gathered tech company leaders that they had to treat content in a neutral fashion. According to Cruz, if they “are a neutral public forum, it does not allow for censorship, and if they are not a neutral public forum, the entire predicate for immunity under the CDA [Communications Decency Act] is claiming to be a neutral public forum, so you can't have it both ways.”

Democrats are also concerned about social media influence and calling for regulation. Both former [President Barack Obama](#) and former presidential candidate [Hillary Clinton](#) have suggested it.

Even without regulation, the tech companies are moving rapidly to remove content they don't like. There has been a tidal wave of news and complaints just during the time it has taken to produce this report.

Facebook, Twitter, Google and YouTube have all announced new efforts to influence how content is shared on their platforms. Conservatives need to be concerned about what it means for the 2018 election and beyond.

The question facing the conservative movement is one of survival. Can it survive online if the tech companies no longer allow conservative speech and speakers? And, if that happens, can the movement survive at all? For conservatives to answer those questions, they need to understand where things stand with the top tech and social media companies. This report addresses that and examines the claims against them.

Hardly a day goes by when controversies involving social media don't make news. Data concerns, calls for congressional testimony and dropping stock prices have placed social media at the center of debates over online speech and privacy. Even other tech companies have been sharing their concerns.

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey took a disturbing stance when he posted an about “America's New Civil War.” The piece claimed the U.S. is wrestling with a “fundamental conflict between two worldviews” and only one side must win—the Left. Dorsey called it a “great read.”

Facebook founder Zuckerberg plans to testify about his views before Congress, possibly in April. [The Hill](#) reported in late March 2018 that Facebook “now fact-checks videos and photos in an attempt to clamp down on fake news and hoax stories on its platform.” That all provides essential context for this project.

This is an extensive report, yet it could be 10 times or 100 times longer and still be incomplete. We focused on the top social media companies: YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. We also included Google because YouTube and Google are both part of the company Alphabet. The four company sections each have more-detailed appendices for readers who desire to know more about the issue.



One of the most sinister ways tech companies have stifled conservative speech has been by caving to pressure from anti-conservative groups, especially the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC).

The SPLC [claims](#) to fight “hate and bigotry” and promote “justice for the most vulnerable members of our society.” In reality, it has used its position to attack conservative groups like the American Family Association (AFA) and the Family Research Council (FRC) alongside Ku Klux Klan and Black Panther groups. Most conservative groups targeted by the SPLC were categorized as being “Anti-Muslim” or “Anti-LGBT” for either criticizing Islamic terrorism or promoting traditional marriage.

The SPLC has a disturbing history with the conservative movement. In August 2012, a gunman entered the FRC headquarters to “[kill as many people as possible](#)” and wounded a security guard before being disarmed. The man told investigators he targeted FRC after finding it listed as an anti-LGBT “hate group” on the SPLC’s “[Hate Map](#),” a literal map pinpointing the location of supposed “hate groups.”

Despite the shooting and conservative complaints, FRC and other conservative groups remain on the SPLC’s dangerous hate map.

News outlets and companies continue to trust SPLC claims in spite of the group’s history. Social media organizations not only refuse to stand up to the SPLC’s bullying, they consult the anti-conservative group for data and recommendations about so-called hate groups.

Liberal news outlet ProPublica [published an expose](#) claiming PayPal and Amazon were complicit in promoting “hate” by allowing organizations to raise money through their partnerships. ProPublica was founded with [tens of millions from liberal donors](#) Herb and Marion Sandler, who also funded Moveon.org. It has also been supported by liberal mega-donor George Soros’ [Open Society Institute](#).

The ProPublica story relied on data from both the SPLC and the ADL hate group lists. PayPal allows people and organizations to solicit donations through links, while Amazon allows people to either be affiliates which receive revenue from clicks on advertisements or AmazonSmile partners. [Amazon donates 0.5 percent of the price of eligible purchases](#) to charitable organizations which are AmazonSmile partners.

ProPublica senior reporting fellow Lauren Kirchner asked organizations if they disagree with being deemed a hate group, according to a version of the email obtained by the [Daily Wire](#). American Freedom Defense Initiative (AFDI) leader [Pamela Geller](#) received a similar email. Kirchner also asked the organizations to confirm whether they received money through PayPal and Amazon, and what the impact would be if they could no longer receive revenue from PayPal, Amazon and others.

Days after the ProPublica report, Jihad Watch, the AFDI and ACT for America [lost their ability to receive donations](#) through PayPal. In the email Geller provided on her [Facebook page](#), PayPal said it limited her account “[d]ue to the nature of your activities.”

The email told Geller to “remove all references to PayPal from your website,” including “removing PayPal as a payment option, as well as the Paypal logo and/or shopping cart.”

PayPal quickly reversed its decision to ban AFDI and Jihad Watch from raising money through their site. Their accounts were [reportedly](#) fully restored days later. ACT for America, however, was not as lucky. Its account was still suspended as of March 9, 2018.

The SPLC’s [“anti-LGBT” hate group list](#) was also used to deprive organizations of the ability to register with AmazonSmile. The [Ruth Institute](#) and [D. James Kennedy Ministries](#) both said they were unable to register as AmazonSmile partners because of their SPLC designation.

A remarkably similar “hate group” list popped up as part of a project launched by Color of Change in August 2017. The self-described “racial justice organization” launched a campaign called [Blood Money](#) which tried to pressure credit card companies, PayPal, ApplePay and Amazon to cut ties with supposed “white supremacist, anti-Muslim, anti-LGBTQ, anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant” groups.

“These companies direct funds to the groups responsible for numerous hate crimes, murders and the radicalization of terrorists like Dylann Roof, Timothy McVeigh, Wade Michael Page and Anders Behring Breivik,” the campaign outrageously claimed.

Its [list](#) includes the AFA, Center for Family and Human Rights, the David Horowitz Freedom Center, AFDI and the Ruth Institute. Blood Money’s list records which companies each group conducts business through, and whether it has successfully pressured the companies into cutting ties with each group.

While Blood Money did not cite any sources for its data, the list was very similar to the SPLC’s hate list. FastCompany [speculated](#) Color of Change ripped off the SPLC list for its campaign.

The SPLC’s hate list was also briefly used by Guidestar, [a non-profit database](#), to label certain conservative organizations as “hate groups.”

According to [The Washington Post](#), GuideStar added “warning labels” on its website to each group targeted by the SPLC. Two days after 41 conservative leaders [wrote a letter opposing GuideStar’s decision](#) to flag their organizations, GuideStar [announced](#) it was removing the warning labels because of “harassment and threats directed at our staff and leadership.” “In the meantime,” GuideStar said it “will make this information available to any user on request.”

D. James Kennedy Ministries, which was impacted by both the AmazonSmile ban and the GuideStar designation, [sued](#) the SPLC because of its “false and illegal characterizations” that reportedly “have a chilling effect on the free exercise of religion and on religious



BRIGITTE GABRIEL  
*ACT for America*

free speech for all people of faith.” The lawsuit was still ongoing as of [March 2018](#).

The SPLC’s hate list is the impetus behind actions at companies including Facebook and Google too.

The Media Research Center analyzed how four top tech companies — Twitter, Facebook, Google and its video site YouTube — handled conservative content and posters. Here is a company by company breakdown.

## TWITTER

Twitter claims to be a platform that allows users to “[see every side of the story](#),” but regularly suppresses conservative points-of-view. The site has become the location where left and right fight policy battles and debate the news of the day. But conservatives have increasingly found themselves at a huge disadvantage.

A hidden-camera sting operation found former and current Twitter employees talking about the possibility of “shadow banning” certain conservatives because they did not like their views (Appendix 1.1, page 23). Employees also discussed how they created algorithms to weed out bots, they identified those based on the use of conservative words like “guns” and “Trump.”

That is only a hint of what the right has to overcome when working with Twitter. The site’s “Trust and Safety Council” features 25 American-based organizations: 12 liberal, but only a single conservative organization (the Network of Enlightened Women) (Appendix 1.2, page 23). The Trust and Safety Council gives “[input](#)” to Twitter about policies. That tilt matters, since some of its most liberal members include the Anti-Defamation League, GLAAD and other organizations that have attacked conservatives and their opinions or values.

Twitter’s partnership with liberal organizations has helped create an atmosphere where conservative thought is restricted or banned. Twitter even prevented conservative-related hashtags from being viewed during the 2016 presidential elections (Appendix 1.3, page 24). They hid two hashtags related to WikiLeaks’ exposure of Democrat emails, “#PodestaEmails” and “#DNCLeak.”

The social media site’s acting general counsel told the House Intelligence Committee the move was meant to prevent Russian interference. However, he revealed that only four percent of the “#PodestaEmails” and two percent of the “#DNCLeak” tweets were from Russia-affiliated accounts.

This kind of censorship has especially targeted basic conservative beliefs such as the sanctity of life. The site has routinely blocked pro-life advertisements from the group Live Action to Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) (Appendix 1.4, page 25). The site deemed their pro-life content “inflammatory,” yet still allows pro-abortion content from Planned Parenthood.

Twitter has also marked tweets as “sensitive,” [including tweets by the Drudge Report](#). That has led Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) to claim it appears that Twitter is censoring the Drudge Report.

**Traffic:** Approximately [6,000 tweets a second](#)

**Website Ranking:** [8th in the U.S.](#), [13th in the world](#)

**Ownership:** Ev Williams, Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal, Jack Dorsey, Steve Ballmer, Peter Fenton

**Corporate Worth:** \$24.49 billion (Yahoo Finance)

**Summary:** Twitter is one of the most prolific social media sites and helps set the news agenda for journalists.



JACK DORSEY  
*Twitter Co-Founder  
and CEO*

The company acquiesced to the demands of foreign governments, especially European governments, to censor American tweets that violate hate crime laws in those countries. Conservative commentator Erick Erickson was told his tweet might be withheld from users in Germany after he criticized a transgender *American* politician (Appendix 1.5, page 26).

Even the site's verification process has become political. Instead of verification being open to people of public interest like athletes, journalists and musicians, Twitter changed practices. It stated it will only verify people who it can be "proud" of and took away verification from some people for their offline activities, particularly if they belonged to organizations Twitter deemed hateful (Appendix 1.6, page 27).

At the same time, Twitter claims it cares about the "health" of conversations on the site, which could potentially require users to have a "shared reality," or a similar set of facts (Appendix 1.7, page 27). This possible move, announced by Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, resulted in many users criticizing the concept, fearing that the company would try to decide policy debates.

## Bias Claims Against Twitter

**Claim:** Twitter hid 25 percent of tweets using the hashtag #PodestaEmails and 48 percent of tweets using the hashtag #DNCLeak.

**Findings\_**

**Conclusive Bias:** Twitter employees admitted to censoring the hashtags.

**Claim:** Live Action's pro-life advertisements were suppressed by Twitter for violating its policy against "inflammatory or provocative content which is likely to evoke a strong negative reaction."

**Findings\_**

**Conclusive Bias:** Twitter demanded Live Action purge not only its Twitter but also its website of a multitude of content including ultrasounds in order for it to advertise on the platform. Twitter was effectively trying to force Live Action to stop promoting everything it did as an investigative pro-life organization.

**Claim:** An ad on Twitter by Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) was censored for being "inflammatory." Twitter specifically singled out her phrase, "we stopped the sale of baby parts" (referencing the 2015 Planned Parenthood scandal) as inflammatory. Twitter told Blackburn she could only promote the video if she removed that phrase.

**Findings\_**

**Conclusive Bias:** By requiring Blackburn to remove the phrase from her video in order to advertise, Twitter was attempting to suppress a view it did not want promoted.

**Claim:** Sassy Gay Republican was suspended from Twitter. In a video, he claimed it was because of his critical views of Islam.

**Findings\_** The Media Research Center could not find any specific public information on why he  
**Inconclusive Bias:** was suspended to determine whether he was unfairly targeted for being conservative.

*\*See Appendix 1 (Page 23) for more detailed information about Twitter.*

# FACEBOOK

**Traffic:** 1.4 billion [daily active users](#)

**Website Ranking:** [3rd in the U.S., 3rd in the world](#)

**Ownership:** Public company, Mark Zuckerberg is CEO, founder and [24% owner](#)

**Corporate worth:** \$492.08 billion (Yahoo Finance)

**Summary:** Facebook is a global social networking site that allows people to share updates, photos and news stories with friends and families.

Facebook [prides itself](#) on being a place for people to “express themselves freely and share openly with friends and family.” However, the company has prevented conservative news from reaching audiences, censored videos by the NRA, banned pro-life and gun advertisements, threatened a Christian satire site and promotes a liberal culture inside and outside the organization.

Both founder Mark Zuckerberg and other Facebook employees have been vocal about their liberal views (Appendix 2.1, page 29). Zuckerberg supported DACA, defended Black Lives Matter and advocated for gay marriage. His employees expressed similar liberal attitudes. They donated overwhelmingly to support Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign over Donald Trump’s. Facebook employees even lobbied to remove Trump’s posts for violating the site’s “hate speech” standards.

The site has been accused of suppressing conservative news (Appendix 2.2, page 30). Former employees told Gizmodo that topics such as the Conservative Political Action Conference, Mitt Romney and Ted Cruz were reportedly suppressed, along with links to sites including the Washington Examiner and Breitbart.

Facebook is openly anti-gun and banned the private sale of guns on its site (Appendix 2.4, page 32). The company also attempted to censor discussion of firearms. Missouri U.S. Senate candidate Austin Petersen’s discussion about Missouri Democrat Sen. Claire McCaskill’s voting record on guns was removed from the platform, [allegedly](#)

because he violated gun sale rules. The site also labeled a recent NRA video about World War II veterans as “gore” and “sexually suggestive,” limiting user interaction with the video.

Conservative views run into problems in different ways. The company also suppressed pro-life advertisements (Appendix 2.5, page 33). Both Right to Life Michigan and the Wexford/Missaukee Right to Life were unable to advertise on the site because it did not “support ads for [their] business model.” Facebook only permitted the ads after media attention.



AUSTIN PETERSEN  
*Missouri U.S.  
Senate Candidate*

Facebook also routinely removed conservative content, only to apologize and restore it later (Appendix 2.3, page 31). Fox News contributor Todd Starnes shared a post on his page about eating Chick-fil-A in an NRA cap, while sitting in a Cracker Barrel chair and reading Paula Deen. It was removed. Facebook later apologized for its error.

“Fake news” concerns led to attempts to rein in content, to the detriment of conservatives (Appendix 2.6, page 34). The process failed and was scrapped after criticism.

The fact-checkers leaned heavily left — Snopes, PolitiFact, ABC News and FactCheck.org. According to Gizmodo, the conservative Weekly Standard is also an approved fact-checker.

The program didn't end. On March 1, 2018, the site had to apologize for allowing one of its trusted fact-checkers, Snopes, to deem a Christian satire site's writing as a hoax. The Babylon Bee, which calls itself "Your Trusted Source For Christian Satire News," was recently threatened by Facebook with the loss of advertising rights for sharing an satirical article about CNN because Snopes deemed it fake. Snopes' own headline, "Did CNN Purchase an Industrial-Sized Washing Machine to Spin News?" was laughable.



Facebook's neutrality is in doubt given the site's willingness to cooperate with anti-conservative groups like the SPLC (Appendix 2.7, page 35). Over time, Facebook [deleted the pages of at least 57 groups](#) at the behest of the SPLC. While that wasn't the full 200 SPLC requested, it showed a willingness to rely on groups that target the right.

MARK ZUCKERBERG  
*Facebook CEO*

### Bias Claims Against Facebook

**Claim:** Facebook news curators suppressed and blacklisted conservative outlets and issues on Facebook's "trending topics" feed.

**Findings\_** Gizmodo, a liberal source, ran the story about Facebook's censorship of conservatives.  
**Conclusive Bias:** Facebook denied that its news curators were suppressing conservative news and injecting liberal topics, but Gizmodo is hardly in the habit of aiding the right.

**Claim:** Facebook censored an NRA video featuring WWII victims, covering it with a message that said it "may be sexually suggestive or show partial nudity" and "may show violence against children or teenager." To view the video, users had to manually click to "uncover" the video.

**Findings\_** Often videos are covered automatically after Facebook users report them. Many harmless videos end up covered because of disgruntled users reporting them. As of March  
**Conclusive Bias:** 21, 2018, however, the video now displays a warning about "violent or graphic content."

**Claim:** Facebook censored advertisements from multiple pro-life organizations including Right to Life of Michigan, Wexford/Missaukee Right to Life and Live Action. Facebook only approved ads for Right to Life of Michigan and Wexford/Missaukee Right to Life after appeal.



**Findings\_** Facebook repeatedly blocked pro-life advertisements, but finally apologized and allowed  
**Conclusive Bias:** the ads to run. The length of time and number of appeals it took for the ads to be approved, however, suggested Facebook was reluctant to allow pro-life ads on its platform.

**Claim:** Pamela Geller's Facebook followers were unable to share some of her posts because Facebook blocked them for appearing to be spam. Other posts were deleted for violating the "Community Standards."

**Findings\_** Facebook has not apologized to Geller for labeling her content spam, or for removing  
**Conclusive Bias:** posts. It seems that Facebook is standing by its decision that Geller has posted "hate speech." Geller has an ongoing lawsuit against Facebook.

**Claim:** Fox News and Commentary host Todd Starnes was temporarily unable to post on his Facebook page after posting a humorous photo supporting the NRA, Chick-fil-A, Cracker Barrel, Paula Deen and gospel music. Facebook deleted the photo but apologized later.

**Findings\_** Facebook reinstated Starnes' account after several hours and told *The Washington*  
**Inconclusive Bias:** *Post* the post was removed in error. It is likely a user or multiple users who did not like Starnes' post reported it and Facebook removed it without adequate review. However, there is still a question of why Facebook's algorithm flagged it for removal in the first place.

**Claim:** The Center for Immigration Studies was unable to post four of its reports on Facebook because the reports were "blocked content." Users were also unable to send the reports in private messages.

**Findings\_** Facebook told *The Washington Examiner* the links were prohibited in error, due to a  
**Inconclusive Bias:** problem with Facebook's "system that helps block bad links." Depending on how the system determines what links are "bad," this may be an opportunity for Facebook to review its algorithms to make sure they are not inadvertently employed by users to block views they disagree with by mass-reporting them.

**Claim:** Special Operations Speaks PAC and Occupy Democrats Logic had their accounts temporarily suspended by Facebook. Facebook eventually reinstated each page.

**Findings\_** It is suspicious that multiple conservative accounts have been suspended for explicitly  
**Inconclusive Bias:** conservative content they posted. It is possible Facebook targeted them for their views, but it is also possible that Facebook did not spend adequate time understanding the posts before banning them. For example, the Occupy Democrats Logic posted a racist anti-Japanese sign which the page criticized in the caption.

**Claim:** Libertarian author James Bovard claimed Facebook would not allow him to post a story critical of Clinton's Attorney General Janet Reno while a different article praising her was allowed on the platform.

**Findings\_** Facebook said the image included in the critical Reno story “incorrectly triggered our  
**Questionable Bias:** automation tools.” This seems to be another instance where, rather than Facebook choosing to censor conservative content, something inadvertently triggered a automated response unrelated to its conservative content.

**Claim:** Facebook removed a pro-Chick-fil-A page created by Mike Huckabee after it had gathered more than 100,000 supporters in two days. The page was restored.

**Findings\_** Facebook restored Huckabee’s page as soon as it was notified and said it had been  
**Questionable Bias:** deleted by accident due to Facebook’s “spam prevention efforts.” A page growing that quickly could easily trigger a spam algorithm.

*\*See Appendix 2 (Page 29) for more detailed information about Facebook.*

# GOOGLE

**Traffic:** [3.5 billion searches](#) per day

**Website Ranking:** [1st in the U.S., 1st in the world](#)

**Ownership:** Public company, part of Alphabet Inc.

**Corporate Worth:** \$758.11 billion (Yahoo Finance)

**Summary:** Google is the top search engine in the world.

Millions of people rely on Google's No. 1 search engine every single day to find information. While many users assume the search engine is non-partisan, Google has suppressed conservative points-of-view within the company and in its own search results.

The obvious left-leaning bias translated into an intolerance of dissenting opinions within Google's ranks, according to some employees.

In a high-profile case, engineer James Damore was fired mere days after penning an internal memo criticizing "Google's Ideological Echo Chamber" (Appendix 3.1, page 37). CEO Sundar Pichai announced the firing personally, adding that Damore lost his job for "advancing harmful gender stereotypes" and threatening the "culture that is free of harassment, intimidation, bias and unlawful discrimination." Free, of course, for everyone but Damore and any who think like him.

In addition to marginalizing conservatives within its organization, Google targeted conservatives online. The company posted fact-checks of conservative sites but not their liberal counterparts, making the conservative sites appear less reliable (Appendix 3.2, page 38). The so-called fact-checks accused conservative sites of saying things they hadn't even said. Unsurprisingly, Google discontinued this program.

The bias also impacted Google's search engine results. Three separate studies confirmed those results favored liberal sites or liberal candidates during the 2016 presidential election (Appendix 3.3, page 39).

According to "A Method for Detecting Bias in Search Rankings, with Evidence of Systematic Bias Related to the 2016 Presidential Election," Google's pro-Clinton results were "more than twice as high as the level" found through Yahoo. Another study suggested results appeared to "[blacklist](#)" certain conservative domains like American Thinker and the Drudge Report, but promote liberal sites.

The search algorithms themselves are constantly being revised. In January 2018, Google [announced](#) it would

transition towards including "diverse perspectives" in search results. This might provide the company the opportunity to display left-leaning search results alongside conservative news and viewpoints.

That's a natural assumption given the company's earlier partnership with the anti-conservative SPLC (Appendix 3.4, page 40). Google News Lab partnered with left-wing news site ProPublica and the SPLC launched a hate crime database in January 2017. The SPLC maintains a discredited "hate map" listing conservative organizations like the American Family Association alongside Ku Klux Klan groups and the Black Panthers.



JAMES DAMORE  
*Former senior engineer  
for Google*

All that played out heavily in politics. Employees at Google and its parent company Alphabet donated \$1,547,930 to Hillary Clinton's official 2016 presidential campaign PAC, but only gave \$24,892 to Donald Trump's PAC. That was 63 times more for Clinton.

## Bias Claims Against Google

**Claim:** Google engineer James Damore claims he was wrongly terminated after he accused Google of "alienating conservatives" and claiming women were biologically less suited for tech jobs in an internal memo.

**Findings\_** Google admitted Damore was fired for voicing his personal views on gender, effectively demonstrating the company will police its employees' beliefs.  
**Conclusive Bias:**

**Claim:** The Google search algorithm favored Hillary Clinton during the presidential election, potentially skewing election results.

**Findings\_** A study conducted by the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology  
**Conclusive Bias:** found search results from Google and Yahoo were "nearly twice as biased in favor of Clinton." The study concluded that the bias may have impacted the outcome of the election.

**Claim:** Google search results displayed fact-checks for right-leaning media outlets far more often than for left-leaning outlets, leading searchers to potentially question the legitimacy of outlets on the right. The search results also accused conservative outlets of making claims that were not in their pieces.

**Findings\_** Google's fact-checkers were made up of liberal sources that disproportionately fact-checked conservative news sources. The fact-checkers also accused conservatives sources, such as the Daily Wire, of claims those sources did not even make in their pieces.  
**Conclusive Bias:** Google ultimately scrapped its fact-checking service, due to a Daily Caller investigation.

**Claim:** Google discriminates against conservative white men in multiple ways, including illegal hiring quotas.

**Findings\_** The lawsuit against Google is ongoing and it remains to be seen whether Google discriminates based on gender and race. However, the information alleged in the suit is troubling.  
**Inconclusive Bias:**

**Claim:** Google's Search Results Favor Liberal Sites and Appear to Blacklist Conservative Sites.

**Findings\_** While one study showed that liberal sources get more referral traffic from Google  
**Inconclusive Bias:** than conservative sources, it could be possible that this is due to people manually entering conservative URLs more often. The source of the data, Alexa, may also be inaccurate. However, this is another troubling claim. The results of this analysis skew heavily against the right.

*\*See Appendix 3 (Page 37) for more detailed information about Google.*

# YOUTUBE

**Traffic:** [30 million daily visitors](#), [1.3 billion users](#)

**Website Ranking:** [2nd in the U.S.](#), [2nd in the world](#)

**Ownership:** Part of Alphabet Inc, which owns Google

**Corporate Worth:** Estimated at \$75 billion, but part of Google's value

**Summary:** YouTube is the most popular video sharing platform in the world.

Google's YouTube video operation censors conservatives and conservative content. By removing or otherwise suppressing political speech presented by political personalities, the firm proves it is not neutral.

The site is so eager to rein in content it does not like that it announced it has a new procedure to limit that. YouTube said it "would begin adding 'information cues' to conspiracy theory videos, text-based links intended to provide users with better information about what they are watching." It will be using content from the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, which has been [much criticized by conservatives](#) for bias.

Just like Google, YouTube has been accused of using extreme diversity quotas in hiring (Appendix 4.1, page 43). A lawsuit alleges that YouTube told recruiters to "purge" all applicants who were not female, black and/or Hispanic and to cancel their interviews, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. The *Journal* said it had "corroborated some of the lawsuit's allegations, including the hiring freeze of white and Asian technical employees, and YouTube's use of quotas."

That agenda plays out on the site as well. Legal Insurrection and Pamela Geller are just two of the conservatives who have had their accounts shut down by YouTube, only to win them back on appeal (Appendix 4.2, page 43). Legal Insurrection's videos reporting on an event resulted in its entire YouTube account being deleted temporarily for allegedly violating copyright rules.



MICHELLE MALKIN  
*Conservative Commentator*

Conservative commentator Michelle Malkin had a 2006 video criticizing Islam removed from the site entirely until a *New York Times* writer came to her defense years later (Appendix 4.3, page 44). Diamond and Silk, two YouTubers famous for their support for President Trump, claimed 95 percent of their videos have been demonetized, taking away their ability to make money from their videos (Appendix 4.8, page 48).

YouTube's [Community Guidelines](#) prohibit a wide range of content from graphic violence to copyright infringement. But some actions are more subjective — such as the ban on hate speech — which leads to partisan interpretations in favor of the left. YouTube relies on anti-conservative groups, like the SPLC and the ADL, as "Trusted Flaggers" (individuals or organizations given the power to flag videos that violate content standards) (Appendix 4.4, page 45). YouTube even [admitted site moderators took down right-wing gun channels](#), according to a Bloomberg report. Far from an accident, YouTube announced in March 2018 that it was changing its policy regarding videos that feature firearms (Appendix 4.5, page 46). Starting in April, YouTube

said it will be banning videos that provide links to sites where people can purchase guns and gun accessories. It also said that videos that teach users how to build firearms will also be banned.

YouTube faces yet another lawsuit over its liberal agenda. PragerU, which produces educational videos from a conservative perspective on a wide variety of issues and conducts interviews with various experts (Appendix 4.7, page 47). It sued the company in October 2017 for restricting its videos and possibly preventing them from being viewed in places such as public libraries.

The site also promotes left-wing content through its handpicked “[Creators for Change](#)” section (Appendix 4.6, page 46). It is designed for YouTubers “who are tackling social issues and promoting awareness, tolerance and empathy.” Despite the calls for tolerance and empathy, the Creators for Change includes people who share [anti-white](#) views, disdain Republicans, and support Palestine and 9/11 conspiracy theorists.

## Bias Claims Against YouTube

**Claim:** YouTube temporarily removed entire right-wing channels rather than individual videos after users posted videos that potentially violated the community standards in the wake of the Parkland school shooting. YouTube said the channels were removed in error. “As we work to hire rapidly and ramp up our policy enforcement teams throughout 2018, newer members may misapply some of our policies resulting in mistaken removals,” YouTube [said](#). “We’ll reinstate any videos that were removed in error.”

**Findings:** YouTube’s response notes they are willing to sacrifice accuracy for speed in flagging videos. **Conclusive Bias:** Incorrectly removing entire channels shows YouTube is giving too much power to inexperienced, biased, over-eager employees.

**Claim:** Pamela Geller said her YouTube channel was deleted and she was temporarily banned from the platform. Her account was reinstated after appeal but says at least one of her videos is still unavailable.

**Findings:** YouTube deleted Geller’s account for a video titled “Al Qaeda and Islamic State flags in London’s tunnels.” Her first appeal was rejected, but after pressure from her followers, YouTube reinstated her account two days later. This appears to be a clear case of attempted censorship due to both the length of time it took for her account to be reinstated as well as the content of the video which caused the deletion.

**Claim:** PragerU’s conservative educational videos were wrongly restricted by YouTube, a feature which is supposed to filter out “mature” content.

**Findings:** Given the amount of content on YouTube that is not age-restricted, restricting PragerU’s videos appears to be a clear example of videos being censored not for actual mature content but rather an unpopular viewpoint.

**Claim:** YouTube banned gun modification videos following the Las Vegas shooting in October 2017.

**Findings\_** *The Telegraph* claimed YouTube was deleting gun modification videos, especially  
**Conclusive Bias:** those involving “bump stocks” in the wake of the Las Vegas shooting. As of February 2018, however, multiple videos on installing and using bump stocks and other gun modifications were still easily available on YouTube. MRC could not find any videos posted after October 2017, so it’s possible YouTube no longer allows those videos to be published. However, some older ones have not been removed. YouTube’s parent organization Google, [bans the sale of guns](#) through its Google Shopping feature.

**Claim:** Conservative author Michelle Malkin had a video critical of Islam removed after being flagged as “inappropriate” in 2006. YouTube did not restore the video until more than two years later, when *The New York Times* picked up Malkin’s story.

**Findings\_** By reinstating Malkin’s video after multiple mentions by *The Times*, YouTube seem-  
**Inconclusive Bias:** ingly admitted it was wrong to remove the video in the first place. However, it took them two years to take any action. However, the video contains graphic images of dead bodies, meaning it is possible YouTube removed the video for its graphic content, not its conservative message. Given the fact that YouTube ultimately restored the video, it is also possible that they believed it was removed in error. It has also been too many years to accurately assess it.

**Claim:** Legal Insurrection’s YouTube channel was temporarily removed from YouTube for copyright infringement claims made by Modern Language Association about a meeting in which anti-Israel sentiments were voiced. Legal Insurrection head Williams Jacobson said the video removal was politically motivated.

**Findings\_** Copyright infringement is a serious claim, and whether or not Modern Language Associ-  
**Inconclusive Bias:** ation had grounds to claim infringement, YouTube was acting in response to a potential legal issue. After reinstating Jacobson’s account, YouTube assured him it would give him prior notice if any copyright infringement claims were made against him in the future, demonstrating the company understood it had handled the matter inappropriately.

**Claim:** Numerous videos from conservative commentator Steven Crowder’s are not available due to “restricted mode” since at least November 2016.

**Findings\_** While numerous videos by Steven Crowder have been restricted, some at least de-  
**Inconclusive Bias:** serve the designation. One such video, titled “HILARIOUS: Chinese Funeral Strippers Anger Communist” is not child-friendly at all. It is unlikely, however, that all of Crowder’s restricted content is equally unsuitable.

**Claim:** Singer Joy Villa had her “Make America Great Again” music video temporarily removed from YouTube for supposedly violating YouTube’s privacy policy. The video was reposted with the face of the person who allegedly complained blurred out.

**Findings\_** Villa’s video appeared to be removed by YouTube based on a personal complaint from  
**Questionable Bias:** someone in the video. Since the video was reinstated after the individual was blurred out, this does not seem to be a case of conservative censorship.

**Claim:** Most Diamond and Silk videos were demonetized by YouTube, claiming their content was “not suitable for all advertisers.” The pair claimed it was censorship “which is a Violation of our First Amendment” and “A Bias Method used to Silence our Conservative Voices.”

**Findings\_** While Diamond and Silk’s videos were demonetized due to their political content,  
**Questionable Bias:** similar videos by liberals like The Young Turks have also been demonetized. Therefore, while YouTube demonetizes at least some political videos, it does not only target individuals on the right.

**Claim:** Two David Rubin videos, including a live-streamed interview with conservative commentator Ben Shapiro, were demonetized. YouTube re-monetized the Shapiro interview less than 24 hours later, but Rubin claimed the damage had already been done.

**Findings\_** As with Diamond and Silk’s videos, though the demonetization was most likely based  
**Questionable Bias:** on political content, it is not done exclusively to conservatives.

*\*See Appendix 4 (Page 43) for more detailed information about YouTube.*



# CONCLUSIONS

The conservative movement is facing a threat to its very existence — a new, insidious form of media censorship. Media bias has always been an enemy of the right. Liberal journalists relied on talking points and talking heads they agreed with for their stories. Conservatives were typically ignored or even targeted by old-school media monopolies.

But while conservatives were excluded, their organizations were still allowed to function and even flourish. The internet gave the right new tools to go around traditional media — websites, email, video and social media. Conservatives' power online continued to grow as groups expanded their base of supporters and were even able to fundraise online.

Now, all of that is under threat.

The left has become more radicalized, more obsessed with political correctness. They have taken the tools honed by the left for years on college campuses into the tech world. Disagreement is discouraged. Opponents are to be silenced or even banned. Opinions they don't like are termed "hate speech" and those they disagree with are called "bigots." The goal is to deny their opponents the chance to speak, also known as "deplatforming."

Tech companies awash in these so-called progressive worldviews are eager to placate the left. They push diversity initiatives internally that care little for opinion diversity. As a result, their workforces are filled with social justice activists promoting everything from the LGBT agenda to a war on gun rights. Conservatives in that world either go along to get along, or find themselves marginalized and even fired.

Those liberal ideals appear in hundreds of ways across the tech/social media spectrum — too many to include even in the detailed version of this report. Facebook and Twitter shut out pro-life speech. Both oppose gun rights. The top tech media companies have pro-LGBT initiatives, and Facebook lets users define their own genders after deciding more than 50 gender options were insufficient.

Conservatives and their organizations have been suspended, had their content deleted and been banned on a variety of platforms. Some of these top tech companies work with the SPLC to identify "hate." Ironically, the SPLC is one of the biggest examples of online hate available. Yet, some conservative groups lost their ability to post or raise funds because the tech industry relied on the strategies pushed by such groups.

Conservative concerns are growing at a time when social media has become suddenly suspect. Users fear their privacy has been invaded — in many cases by apps and sites they embraced. Their trust of such companies has fallen rapidly and so has their view of the firms. Axios/Survey Monkey reported that "Facebook's favorability has plunged in the last five months," from 61 percent to 48 percent. As a result, firms like Facebook and YouTube have been moving faster to ban content they deem unacceptable or controversial. Conservatives have once more found themselves targeted.

It's almost too much for conservatives even to contemplate fighting. But they need to do much more than contemplate it. The top tech companies are bigger and more powerful than any of their old media predecessors. The top 12 tech/social media firms are worth nearly a combined \$3 trillion. That's larger than the Gross Domestic Product for all but four nations — the United States, China, Japan and Germany. Companies like Google, Facebook and Twitter dominate the internet and control the ability of conservative organizations to share their messages.

Americans have always had to be willing to fight for a righteous cause, from Lexington and Concord to the beaches of Normandy. Now it's the conservative movement's turn to fight. This is a different kind of battle, but it's still a fight for freedom.

There is hope. It is possible that the tech companies will see reason. Perhaps a mix of cooperation, criticism, boycotts and fear of government regulation will prod these firms into better behavior. Both Facebook and Google have at least tried to hire some conservatives. Google also sponsored the annual Conservative Political Action Conference in 2018 and Facebook had a booth there.

If tech companies are willing to work with the right, they need to be welcomed as free-speech partners. But if tech firms continue to limit, silence, suspend and ban conservative speech, then the right needs to fight them — online and in Washington, D.C. Some have already taken their individual fights to court, and others are calling for regulation similar to how the old Bell System telephone monopoly was once broken up into smaller companies.

There is no guaranteed path to success. However, if the right doesn't fight, it is doomed — online and off.

This is more than just a free-speech battle. It is a struggle for the future of our nation and our world — one the right can't afford to lose.

*Corinne Weaver and Aly Nielsen contributed to this report.*

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# TWITTER

## 1.1 Claims of Shadow Banning Caught on Video

An investigation by Project Veritas revealed Twitter employees discussing the possibility of “shadow banning” conservative users, leading to their interactions being restricted on the site.

A [video](#) in January 2018 showed censorship of conservatives by Twitter. Olinda Hassan, the Policy Manager of Twitter’s Trust and Safety Council, told an undercover Project Veritas reporter that Twitter was working on a way to make sure certain “shitty people” did not show up in people’s feeds. Mo Norai, the former content review agent for Twitter, said there were “a lot of unwritten rules” regarding content that was allowed on Twitter, given that Twitter is based in a “blue state.”

Twitter direct messaging engineer Pranay Singh said accounts flagged as bots were sometimes identified by searching for words such as “America” and “God,” but it was unclear if accounts run by real people had also been deleted because of these tweets. Singh said the flagging mostly impacted Republicans because the bots were “from Russia and they wanted Trump to win.”

Former Twitter software engineer Abhinav Vadrevu also told the undercover Veritas journalist about the process of shadow banning. That process is where users’ posts are hidden from view so people cannot see or interact with their content. Former Twitter engineer Conrado Miranda admitted shadow banning was “a thing.”

It is unclear if Twitter has implemented the shadow ban technique or not. But [users have claimed their accounts were limited that very way](#). A Twitter spokesperson told [the Daily Caller](#) the comments made by Twitter employees “do not represent or speak for Twitter” and denied allegations of shadow banning. The company, however, admitted that the site does “downrank accounts” if they are deemed abusive. The spokesperson didn’t give a definition of “abusive.”

## 1.2 Twitter’s Safety Partners a Big Part of The Problem

Although Twitter actively censors conservative opinions, it claims on its [safety page](#) that “[f]ree expression is a human right” and that users on the site “should feel safe expressing [their] unique point of view with every Tweet.”

But [Twitter’s choice of Safety Partners](#) proved free expression did not really extend to all views. The list includes a number of organizations that are actively anti-conservative and anti-free speech.

Of Twitter's 57 safety partners, 25 of the organizations are U.S.-based. Twelve of those organizations are liberal and only one is conservative.

The most notable safety partner is the ADL, a group which [consistently claims](#) that "right-wing terrorism" is a threat to the United States. But what the ADL considers right-wing extremism ranges from white supremacists to "anti-government extremists."

As the Tablet's Liel Leibovitz [pointed out](#), the ADL apparently gives "left-leaning bigots a pass" in its coverage of alleged extremist threats. Instead of dedicating resources to monitoring anti-Jewish, left-wing speech, the ADL [has used guilt by association](#) to trash President Trump for his immigration positions. The Coalition for Jewish Values [condemned](#) the ADL for its "Alt Right / Alt Lite" list, saying "The ADL tars mainstream conservatives with guilt by association, and betrays its core mission by ignoring defamation from left-wing speakers."

GLAAD has consistently [criticized the media](#) for not including what it deems to be enough gay characters in films and movies. The group also [condemned](#) two Fox News anchors for attending its award show in 2013 and whined about Fox's "biased and misinformed coverage of LGBT issues." GLAAD has also [attacked](#) Republicans for their support for the [First Amendment Defense Act](#), which would "prevent the federal government from discriminating against individuals or institutions based on their beliefs about marriage."

Another one of Twitter's safety partners is Feminist Frequency, which is run by feminist activist Anita Sarkeesian. She made a name for herself famously opposing Gamergate, a movement dedicated to ethics in video game journalism and opposing the encroachment of social justice into video games. In Sarkeesian's "Tropes vs. Women" series, she railed against videos that portrayed scantily clad women for perpetuating sexism. In an interview with [Rolling Stone](#), Sarkeesian said she believes in driving out the "misogynist hatred" and "backlash against women who have anything to say" in gaming.

The Dangerous Speech Project is another openly liberal organization on the Trust and Safety Council. It claimed that "fear-inducing, divisive rhetoric rises steadily before outbreaks of mass violence." The project advocates countering that kind of rhetoric by engaging in what it calls "[counterspeech](#)." According to its [website](#) for its [work in the United States](#), the "dangerous speech" it wanted to combat was perpetuated by then-candidate Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign.

### 1.3 Twitter Censors Conservative Tweets

Conservatives have every reason to be worried about how Twitter handles their comments after the last election.

While [testifying in front of the House Intelligence Committee](#) in November 2017, Twitter Acting General Counsel Sean Edgett said the site interfered in the 2016 presidential election by suppressing tweets it assumed were attempts to interfere in the 2016 election. Edgett admitted the site hid 25 percent of the tweets using the hashtag “#PodestaEmails” and 48 percent of the tweets using the hashtag “#DNCLeak.”

However, as Edgett noted later in his testimony, only 4 percent of the #PodestaEmails tweets came from “accounts with potential links to Russia” and only 2 percent of the “#DNCLeak” emails were from “potentially Russian-linked accounts.” Despite the fact that only a few of those tweets were suspected to be linked to Russia, Edgett claimed, “These steps were part of our general efforts at the time to fight automation and spam on our platform across all areas.”

Users have reported being temporarily suspended and even permanently banned from using Twitter’s features because of conservative comments they have made. One user, who went by “Sassy Gay Republican,” [alleged](#) he was silenced on Twitter for 12 hours because of his tweet that violated Twitter’s “hateful conduct” rules. The tweet pointed out that “hundreds of millions of Muslims” supported policies that lead to women being hanged, gays being thrown off rooftops and Christians being killed. While the tweet was consistent with a 2013 [Pew study](#), Twitter considered it a violation. Later, Sassy Gay Republican was [permanently suspended](#) from the site.

Conservative commentator Steven Crowder claimed he was suspended from Twitter for seven days, also for violating the site’s “hateful conduct” rules. According to [his site](#), the team suspected Crowder was suspended after he shared a video that contained a slur referring to gay people. Sharing that video prompted Crowder with a 12-hour Twitter lockdown. After he reuploaded the video with the offending reportedly language bleeped out, and tried to share it on Twitter again, he received a seven-day Twitter suspension. Not only was Crowder suspended for sharing the video, but so was his one of his interns and one of his producers.

## 1.4 Twitter Censors Pro-Life Ads

Twitter limits pro-life speech by claiming advertisements with pro-life messages are “inflammatory” and squashing them.

The pro-life group Live Action [claimed](#) in September 2017 that Twitter suppressed its advertisements. According to [The Washington Post](#), Twitter told Live Action its advertisements violated the company’s policy against “inflammatory or provocative content which is likely to evoke a strong negative reaction” and its prohibition on shocking content by linking to the organization’s website.

*The Post* wrote that Live Action was given the option to either delete the content from its website and Twitter or create a new account that did not include a link back to its own website. As of March 2018, the situation had not changed.

There are no such restrictions for pro-abortion content from Planned Parenthood.

Shortly after Live Action's complaint against Twitter for censoring pro-life content emerged, Twitter censored an ad by Republican Rep. Marsha Blackburn, also claiming it was "inflammatory."

In [the ad](#), Blackburn said, "I'm 100% pro-life. I fought Planned Parenthood, and we stopped the sale of baby body parts — thank God." A Twitter spokesperson told the *Post* that Blackburn's promoted tweets "were suspended for violating Twitter's advertising rules." In a Twitter email [obtained by BuzzFeed](#), a company spokesperson admitted, "The line in this video specific to 'stopped the sale of baby body parts' has been deemed an inflammatory statement that is likely to evoke a strong negative reaction."

*The Hill* reported that the Susan B. Anthony List [was also prohibited](#) from running pro-life advertisements.

## 1.5 Twitter Censors Content Governments Find Objectionable

Twitter has a policy of catering to demands by governments to crack down on potentially offensive content. That policy has directly impacted conservatives, including radio host and writer Erick Erickson.

According to [Twitter's page on withholding content](#), Twitter will collaborate with governments in order to suppress content. Twitter's removal request [transparency report](#) claimed that from Jan. 1, 2017, to June 30, 2017, Twitter received 6,086 removal requests from either court orders or government agencies.

Twitter acknowledged it withheld content in 20 percent of those cases. A January 2018, [BuzzFeed report](#) found that Twitter often withheld accounts deemed to violate European internet hate speech laws. In fact, Twitter relies on external "Trusted Reporters" [which](#) "have a mandate to report content that may be considered hate speech under local European laws, and which have formed a formal partnership with Twitter." According to the Twitter transparency report, Twitter withheld content flagged by Trusted Reporters in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Germany.

Erickson was on the receiving end of this censorship. In [an email](#), Twitter told Erickson his tweet mocking a transgender (American) politician was "flagged for possible violations of Twitter's hateful conduct policy" "and/or German laws." According to the email, even if the tweet in question did not violate Twitter's policies, it could still be censored and withheld from viewing in Germany.

## 1.6 Twitter Politicizes Verification

Twitter's liberal ideals have also carried over into which accounts it verified.

The site indicates a user's identity has been verified with a blue check mark next to the user's name. This had been done for many people who were deemed publicly significant. Twitter suspended the program in the wake of complaints [in November 2017](#). It then took the coveted blue checkmark away from many, including some conservative journalists.

Rather than allowing verification to remain a way to confirm public figures were who they said they were, that all changed. The site claimed it had led people to view verification as Twitter's way of seemingly [endorsing](#) views it did not hold. Ultimately, [Twitter said](#) the verification program would be revamped so that the only people who could be verified were are ones "we are proud of" verifying.

Twitter also said it would remove the verification badges from users "whose behavior does not fall within these new guidelines." The [new rules](#) even extended to users' offline behavior. According to the statement, if users were seen as "[s]upporting organizations or individuals that promote" hate against others in their real life activities, they risked losing their blue checkmarks.

## 1.7 Twitter Might Begin Monitoring 'Health' of Conversations

In March 2018, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey announced an idea that could potentially usher in more sweeping changes to the content allowed on Twitter. Dorsey said he hoped to be able to [measure the "health" of Twitter conversations](#) to potentially crack down on users who didn't engage in a ["shared reality."](#)

In a series of tweets, Dorsey said he was disappointed Twitter had become a place for "abuse, harassment, troll armies, manipulation through bots and human-coordination, misinformation campaigns, and increasingly divisive echo chambers." Dorsey admitted that he did not foresee there would be "real-world negative consequences" due to the freedoms the site originally allowed.

Dorsey said, that "[w]hile working to fix" the problems at Twitter, its staff has "been accused of apathy, censorship, political bias, and optimizing for our business and share price instead of the concerns of society. This is not who we are, or who we ever want to be." Moving forward, he said the site would work toward "progress" by building a "framework" that would "encourage more healthy debate, conversations, and critical thinking" by determining if conversations are healthy.

Dorsey linked to a post by the tech firm [Cortico](#) that chastised social media for its ability to let people who share the same views avoid encountering other viewpoints. According to the piece, social media's shortcoming is that it has led to "balkanization, sustained



isolation of socio-political tribes, failure to entertain other points of view, distortion of others' views, etc.” and the “growing extremism of opinions and dehumanization of individuals and groups.” In order to combat this, Cortico claimed to want to measure the “health” of conversations — by asking if users are engaging in a “Shared Reality.”

While Dorsey said that he did not know if the Cortico's version of conversational health was the right one, he announced Twitter was open to discussing other ways to measure the concept.

On the [Twitter Health Metrics Proposal Submission website](#), the Twitter team asks for ideas about how to measure the health of conversations and said there will be funding available for the best proposal.

# FACEBOOK

## 2.1 Liberal Attitudes Are at The Core of Facebook

The people behind Facebook have been strong advocates for left-wing policies, such as gay marriage and DACA.

In the past, Mark Zuckerberg expressed his liberal attitudes, particularly his support for Black Lives Matter and illegal immigration. Gizmodo reported that Zuckerberg even chastised employees for promoting the phrase “all lives matter” over “black lives matter.”

Facebook employees are also overwhelmingly liberal, with some even advocating the removal of President Trump’s posts for violating “hate speech” rules. Facebook employees donated 99 times more money to Hillary Clinton’s official presidential campaign than Trump’s presidential campaign.

Zuckerberg favored and promoted DACA, which allows illegal immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children to stay in the country. In multiple public posts on Facebook, he [shared how he thought](#) it was “particularly cruel” to repeal DACA for people who just want to live the “American Dream.” Zuckerberg called on Congress to pass a “bipartisan Dream Act” to give Dreamers a “pathway to citizenship.” He [even hosted Dreamers at his own home](#), CNBC reported.

In a private [Facebook memo reported by Gizmodo](#), Zuckerberg admonished employees for crossing out “black lives matter” and writing “all lives matter” in its place on the famous Facebook signature wall. Zuckerberg called the act “malicious” and “disrespectful,” claiming that it was “deeply hurtful and tiresome” for the black community “and really the entire Facebook community.” Zuckerberg said the alleged act of vandalism was being investigated.

A [Wall Street Journal](#) report claims Facebook employees complained about Trump not being banned. Zuckerberg reportedly defended keeping Trump’s post about banning Muslim immigration because deleting it would be “too drastic.” Muslim employees at Facebook reportedly supported banning Trump. Facebook [addressed the controversy](#) by saying it would allow topics that violate its rules — and are even illegal in certain countries — to be discussed as long as they’re “newsworthy, significant, or important to the public interest.”

In addition, Facebook also had its own “[LGBTQ@Facebook](#)” page to support a wide array of topics related to the gay and transgender community. To celebrate gay pride, Facebook [temporarily](#) equipped users to use a rainbow flag emoji across the site as part of a celebration of “love and diversity.”

Users on Facebook in February 2014 received the ability to choose between more than 50 [different gender options](#) — meaning in addition to the traditional “male” and “female,” users could opt for things like “agender” or “genderqueer.” By February 2015, Facebook went farther by allowing people to [write in their own genders](#).

Facebook [even surveyed users](#) about how it should deal with topics related to pedophilia. In a short-lived poll from March 2018, it asked users for suggestions on how the company should handle “a private message in which an adult man asks a 14-year-old girl for sexual pictures,” which constitutes illegal child pornography in the U.S.

Instead of asking whether Facebook should refer the man to the police, the site gave users the option to choose whether they thought the content should be allowed. It even asked if users “would not mind seeing it” personally or whether they believed it should not be allowed on the site at all.

The following question asked whether Facebook should decide “the rules on its own,” follow its own rules “with advice from external experts,” consult external experts, or make its own rules through democracy. When it came to dealing with child pornography, Facebook tried to use direct democracy as a solution. The outrage was swift.

Facebook Vice President of Product Guy Rosen responded to outcry over the poll on [Twitter](#) saying, “this kind of activity is and will always be completely unacceptable on FB.” He said it was a “mistake” to include the questions and that the subject matter “shouldn’t have been part of this survey.”

## 2.2 Anti-Conservative Bias In Facebook’s Trending Topics Feed

Facebook waded into the news aggregation business with the [debut of the Facebook trending topics feed](#) in 2014. While the trending section was intended to be neutral and based on organically trending newsworthy topics, multiple former Facebook employees told [Gizmodo](#) that news curators intentionally suppressed and blacklisted conservative topics and news sources.

A former employee explained that, “Depending on who was on shift, things would be blacklisted or trending.” Examples of topics that were allegedly censored by the news curators, according to Gizmodo, including Glenn Beck, CPAC, Mitt Romney, Ted Cruz, Lois Lerner, Scott Walker, Chris Kyle and Steven Crowder.

They said conservative sites were also suppressed. Breitbart, the Washington Examiner and Newsmax stories would not trend unless a more mainstream source picked up those same stories. Posts by the Drudge Report were also allegedly buried.

The report claimed that if a certain topic was not trending, news curators could also use an “injection” tool in order to make topics, such as “Black Lives Matter” appear in the trending section.

One former news curator said, “It was absolutely bias. We were doing it subjectively. It just depends on who the curator is and what time of day it is.”

Facebook said it “found no evidence that the anonymous allegations are true.” However, in 2016, a [publicized Facebook internal memo](#) about trending guidelines claimed news curators could have leeway with what actually constituted a “major” news story and for blacklisting certain topics. On the listed reasons for a potential blacklist, the guidelines claimed “[h]oax sources” could be blacklisted.

Despite Facebook’s denials of conservative censorship, Zuckerberg [met with conservative leaders](#) after the Gizmodo report. In his Facebook post about the meeting, Zuckerberg said he wanted “to do everything I can to make sure our teams uphold the integrity of our products.”

In addition to bias in the trending section, Facebook announced multiple changes to its news feed section in January 2018. The news feed is what users first see when they log into their accounts. [Under the new guidelines](#), users would have the ability to vote on news sources they deemed “trustworthy” and “informative.”

A Zuckerberg [post accompanying the update](#) claimed the move was to crack down on news sources that employed “sensationalism, misinformation, and polarization,” since now people will only view news in their feeds that will help “build a sense of common ground.” He didn’t explain what he meant by building common ground.

### **2.3 Conservative Censorship Claims Against Facebook**

Facebook censorship is nothing new. The company has adopted a standard of apologizing for most of the instances where it restricts or removes content, but only after viral outrage. The site is enormous and conservative complaints are common.

The site has made it difficult for conservatives to make the most out of its platform — from censoring or removing posts itself to going out of its way to ban or suspend users. NRA videos have been filtered as “graphic” and “inappropriate,” posts from right-leaning personalities like former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee and Pamela Geller have been removed or marked as spam. In more extreme cases, conservative pages like “Occupy Democrats Logic” have been suspended or banned.

The National Rifle Association shared a “[Why We Stand](#)” video on Facebook, in February 2018, featuring images of World War II combat. On the desktop version of Facebook, the video was censored because the site deemed it “may be sexually suggestive or show partial nudity.” That is completely false. On the mobile app, the video had the warning that it “may show violence against a child or a teenager.” That’s also false. In both of these instances, users needed to click “uncover video.” As of March 2018, the video still displayed a warning claiming the video depicted “[violence or gore](#).”

Facebook also removed a post from Huckabee in support of Chick-Fil-A in 2012, according to [Mic](#). [The Daily Focus](#) stated that Facebook apologized and claimed it was “mistakenly blocked.”

Fox News and Commentary host Todd Starnes was [temporarily prohibited](#) from posting on his page after he shared a post that described him as wearing a NRA hat, eating Chick-Fil-A in a Cracker Barrel chair and reading a Paula Deen book with gospel music in the background. Facebook sent Starnes an email claiming that his post violated “Community Standards” and removed. Facebook told [The Washington Post](#) it made a “mistake” and Starnes’ account was restored after “a few hours.”

“Occupy Democrats Logic,” a Facebook page dedicated to mocking liberals, was temporarily unpublished for posting two “offensive images” that violated “Community Standards,” according to the [Daily Caller](#). The first image mocked someone who compared bigotry against the Japanese during World War II to President Trump, the second made fun of liberals for being against Christianity’s opposition to homosexuality but not Islam’s. The page was [restored](#) after a few days of complaints.

The Special Operations Speaks PAC Facebook page posted an image critical of President Obama for how the administration acted during Benghazi compared to how it acted during the raid on Osama Bin Laden. After the post [received almost 30,000 shares](#), Facebook allegedly sent a message to the administrator of the page, Larry Ward, and told him to delete the meme.

[The Washington Post](#) reported that when Ward refused, Facebook removed the meme because it allegedly violated Facebook’s “Statement of Rights and Responsibilities.” After Ward reposted the meme and included Facebook’s rationale for deleting it, the site suspended the page for 24 hours. After Breitbart reported on the issue, a Facebook manager told Breitbart that “removing the image was not an act of censorship on our part. This was an error and we apologize for any inconvenience it may have caused.”

The [Center for Immigration Studies](#) was not allowed to post links to four of its reports on the connection between jobs and immigration because of a Facebook warning that said the posts contained “blocked content.” Users were also prevented from sending the reports via private message.

Libertarian author [James Bovard](#) claims the site banned his post criticizing former Attorney General Janet Reno. In *USA Today*, Bovard wrote that Facebook rejected his title criticizing Reno, but accepted one that called her “an American saint.” Facebook told Bovard that his image “incorrectly triggered our automation tools.”

## **2.4 Ban on Gun Advertisements Ensnarers Senate Candidate**

Facebook [decided to ban advertisements](#) related to the sale of guns on its site in January 2016, but the decision did far more than ban gun sales. It even stifled a U.S.

Senate candidate from running his campaign's Facebook page.

According to [the policies](#), ads cannot “promote the sale or use of weapons, ammunition, or explosives.” While advertisements for gun shows and “weapons-related interests” are still allowed, ads for the sale of firearms or ammo or ads showing firearms were not. Examples of prohibited ads include: “Cheap firearms: Buy now!” “Our \$1,800 Ammo Giveaway starts now! Click here to enter for your chance to win.” “Come to Mom & Pops Gun Shop, open near you.”

Austin Petersen, [a Republican candidate for Senate in Missouri](#), posted a Facebook Live discussion about his opponent, Democrat Sen. Claire McCaskill's, voting record on guns in September 2017. Accompanying his video about the topic, he told people to register on his site to enter a raffle for a free gun. According to Petersen, he was banned from Facebook for 30 days as a result of the post, despite running for office.

Petersen said that his account was reinstated by Facebook after “the media got wind” of what happened to him, but his Facebook livestream was permanently deleted from Facebook. Petersen said that until media were made aware of the issue, he had tried unsuccessfully to tell Facebook that he had not violated its rules. Facebook ultimately agreed that Petersen did not violate their rules after his case received media attention.

He was banned from Facebook [again](#) in March 2018 after posting another video discussing McCaskill's voting record. Like in the previous instance, Petersen's post included mention of his gun raffle and an image of a gun. The candidate [claimed](#) Facebook did not say why he received that 30-day ban, although [he said he thought](#) it is because Facebook's COO, Sheryl Sandberg, contributed to McCaskill's campaign.

## 2.5 Pro-Life Advertisement Censorship

Pro-life advertisements have been repeatedly targeted for removal by Facebook. They have typically only been reinstated after journalists investigated the matter.

The Wexford/Missaukee Right to Life, an affiliate of Right to Life Michigan, had its advertising account deactivated by Facebook. The [group said](#) when they asked Facebook why the ad could not be promoted on Facebook anymore, it said the ad violated its policies and the site does not “support ads for your business model.”

[LifeNews.com](#) claimed the Wexford/Missaukee Right to Life page administrators were not told its ad account was discontinued, but were left to discover it when it tried to purchase another ad. MLive later [reported](#) the Wexford/Missaukee Right to Life had its ad account reinstated by Facebook and the site apologized.

Facebook also suspended Right to Life Michigan's advertising account in 2017 due to “policy violations.” Facebook told [LifeNews.com](#) the account was disabled for “running misleading ads that resulted in high negative feedback from people on Face-

book.” Right to Life of Michigan disputed those claims, saying only 0.04 percent of its 10 advertisements had received negative feedback. *The Detroit News* [reported](#) that Facebook later unblocked the account and apologized.

According to MLive, as of May 2017, groups affiliated with the Right to Life of Michigan also had their ads banned three times.

Facebook even temporarily [suspended advertisements](#) for a pro-life film associated with activist Alveda King, the niece of Martin Luther King, Jr. She told Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, “Facebook has pulled down our ads, the paid ads and any mention of the non-paid ads.” Facebook told the Christian Post the ad was “disapproved in error.”

Birthright of Bel Air, a Maryland pregnancy center, [allegedly](#) had its ad removed from Facebook for violating a rule against using the phrase “If you are.” Atha, the outreach coordinator for Birthright of Bel Air, told Fox Baltimore that the ad was rejected “[w]ithin five minutes.” According to Atha, “They paralleled it to ‘if you are fat’ or ‘if you are overweight.’” Atha’s next ad with different wording was approved, although it took twelve hours.

## 2.6 Facebook’s ‘Disputed’ Flagging System Let Left Call The Shots

Facebook has also taken it into its own hands to determine what is “fake news” and what wasn’t, to the detriment of conservatives.

Facebook debuted [its own flagging system](#) in order to crack down on the spread of “fake news” in December 2016. Users were given the ability to report stories as “fake news” by clicking on a story, hitting “report post,” and claiming their reason for reporting the post was that it constituted “fake news.”

Users who attempted to share “fake news” were alerted the link was “disputed by 3rd Parties,” and that “independent fact-checkers disputed its accuracy.” In order to share the link, users would have to manually press “continue.”

Stories marked as “fake news” by third-party fact-checkers were given a red exclamation underneath the link.

[Facebook’s fact-checkers](#) — Snopes, PolitiFact, ABC News and FactCheck.org — also had a liberal bias. The Daily Caller [reported](#) that one of the main fact-checkers at Snopes, Kim LaCapria, spread hoaxes, showed contempt for the Republican Party and attempted to defend Hillary Clinton at her previous job at Inquisitr. According to the Daily Caller, LaCapria referred to herself as “openly left-leaning.”

While at Snopes, LaCapria continued to defend Democrats. In one article referenced by the Daily Caller, LaCapria [said it was “mostly false”](#) that Clinton did not mention

the Benghazi attack when saying “we didn’t lose a single person” in Libya. LaCapria [called it a “mixture”](#) that Orlando shooter Omar Mateen was a registered Democrat, claiming that while he was a registered Democrat, his status at the time of the shooting was “unknown.”

LaCapria also [defended Clinton](#) for wearing an expensive Armani jacket during a speech on income equality. Her write-up said that while Clinton did wear the jacket, it wasn’t during a speech that was not entirely dedicated to “income equality.” The speech was merely one that [referenced](#) “raising wages and reducing inequality.”

PolitiFact has also criticized Republicans more harshly than Democrats. In one [“false” rebuke of Rand Paul](#), PolitiFact claimed he was wrong for saying “The average federal employee makes \$120,000 a year” and “The average private employee makes \$60,000 a year.” PolitiFact marked Paul with a “false” because the real numbers were \$61,051 and \$123,049. In April 2017, Newsbusters [noted](#) that PolitiFact criticized Republican politicians more than Democrats.

Facebook [ultimately scrapped](#) its flagging program. One of the reasons it gave was that at least two third-party fact-checkers needed to dispute a story before it could be brandished with the red exclamation point. Facebook also noted that some of its chosen fact-checkers used different systems, such as some ranking things as “partly false” or “unproven.”

Even though Facebook is no longer fact-checking sites through its flagger program, it still flags some shared links as questionable. A Christian satire site, Babylon Bee, recently [had its page threatened](#), after sharing an obviously satirical article, “CNN Purchases Industrial-Sized Washing Machine To Spin News Before Publication.”

Babylon Bee creator Adam Ford [received a Facebook message](#) saying Snopes had deemed the article a hoax. If Ford wanted to publish his post linking to his satire site, he was warned, “[r]epeat offenders will see their distribution reduced and their ability to monetize and advertised removed.” Users who [attempted to share the link](#) were warned there was “additional reporting” on the article by Snopes, which claimed it was fake news.

After complaints, Facebook [apologized for the mistake](#). Ford told *The Washington Post*, “There is no question in my mind that Snopes and Facebook are biased against conservative-leaning content. It’s clear that this is the case.”

## 2.7 Facebook Deleted Pages After SPLC Complaints

Although Facebook has not entirely caved to the SPLC’s anti-conservative agenda, it is still influenced by the group. The SPLC sent multiple requests asking Facebook to delete more than 200 pages and groups associated with organizations on its “hate map” in 2016. Following a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017, Facebook removed at least [57 groups](#) based on the SPLC recommendations, according to CNN.



In response, SPLC analyst Keegan Hanks told CNN that Facebook was “not doing nearly enough to combat organized hate groups on the platform.” But Facebook’s actions demonstrated it was willing to comply with at least some of the SPLC’s agenda.

“[W]e’ve taken down any post that promotes or celebrates hate crimes or acts of terrorism – including what happened in Charlottesville,” Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg [said](#) on Aug. 16, 2017. “With the potential for more rallies, we’re watching the situation closely and will take down threats of physical harm.”

Facebook announced in June 2017 it had removed an average of [66,000 posts](#) per week that it deemed “hate speech” in April and May. Hate speech, according to Facebook, was anything “that directly attacks people based on what are known as their ‘protected characteristics’ — race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, sex, gender, gender identity, or serious disability or disease.”

According to [CNN](#), Facebook found accounts and groups that violated community standards by scanning posts “including conversations in private and hidden groups.” The technology then flagged “slurs and violent language” for review by Facebook employees.

# GOOGLE

## 3.1 Google Employee Fired After Criticizing Firm's 'Ideological Echo Chamber'

Google's most high-profile case of censorship occurred not online, but within the company itself.

Engineer James Damore ignited a firestorm in August 2017, after he published a [10-page memo](#) criticizing his employer for its "Ideological Echo Chamber" and for "alienating conservatives." Reporters [viciously attacked](#) Damore by claiming his memo said women were genetically inferior to men. His memo, however, simply said men and women were biologically suited to different careers. Fellow Google employees including Google's Vice President of Diversity, Integrity & Governance Danielle Brown, quickly condemned their colleague,

Just a few days after the memo went public, Google CEO Sundar Pichai [announced](#) Damore had been fired for violating the company's Code of Conduct. Pichai claimed Damore was "advancing harmful gender stereotypes in our workplace" and threatening the "culture that is free of harassment, intimidation, bias and unlawful discrimination."

Damore and fellow former Google employee David Gudeman [filed a lawsuit](#) in January 2018, claiming the company engaged in discrimination against whites, males and conservatives. The lawsuit's claims shed light on the company's alleged anti-conservative bias and discrimination. Damore and Gudeman claimed the company used "illegal hiring quotas" to hire more women and minorities, "to the detriment of Caucasian and male employees and potential employees at Google."

In addition to discrimination against white males, the lawsuit said Google employees were pressured to attend diversity seminars and derided for their race and gender. For example, the "presence of Caucasians and males was mocked with 'boos'" at weekly company-wide meetings while women were "celebrated at Google solely due to their gender."

The Google Recognition Team reportedly gave people bonuses for promoting "googley values," even if that meant people engaged in arguments with their colleagues, such as Damore. Colm Buckley, identified as a high-ranking [Site Reliability Engineering](#) (SRE) Director, was mentioned in the lawsuit as saying he wanted people to be afraid of expressing viewpoints that he deemed "violently offensive." He was also quoted as saying of people he disagreed with, "Take your false equivalence and your fake symmetry, and shove them hard up where the sun don't shine." Hundreds of liberal Google employees would allegedly "target a single co-worker for harassment" and "potential violence," ultimately "humiliating the person and sabotaging his career."

The suit also accused Google employees of maintaining blacklists of conservative employees. SRE Manager Adam Fletcher reportedly even wrote of conservatives, “I will never, ever hire/transfer you onto my team. Ever. I don’t care if you are a perfect fit or technically excellent or whatever.” Former manager Kim Burchett allegedly wrote that she was “considering creating a public-inside-google document of ‘people who make diversity difficult.’” The lawsuit claimed, “It is common knowledge within Google that employees were habitually added to block lists for expressing conservative political views.”

One particular Google employee, Liz Fong-Jones, wrote about how she “could care less about being ‘unfair’ to [edited to add: cisgender, straight, able-bodied, wealthy] white men. You already have all the advantages in the world.” (Bracketed material reflects Fong-Jones’ edits.) An employee who argued against discriminating against whites and males was allegedly reprimanded.

Other employees called for the outright firing of conservatives. One wrote, “Can we just fire the poisonous assholes already?” Another asked, “Why aren’t we firing people?”

### 3.2 Google’s Fact-Checking System was Biased Against Conservatives

Google announced in [January 2018](#) it would begin highlighting fact-checks for certain searches to combat “fake news.” The move put liberal sources like Snopes, PolitiFact and Climate Feedback in charge of deciding what was “fake.” Google [suspended](#) its “reviewed claims” section in response to a Daily Caller report that the program targeted conservatives and because some of the fact-checks were of claims not even made in the respective articles.

Multiple conservative publications were targeted by Google’s fact-checking option, including the Daily Caller, [the Federalist](#) and the [Daily Wire](#). According to [the Daily Caller](#), right-wing outlets were given a column next to their search results with their “fact-checked” information, while “equally partisan sites like Vox, ThinkProgress, Slate, The Huffington Post, Daily Kos, Salon, Vice and Mother Jones [were] spared.” The Washington Examiner [reported](#) even left-wing blogs like Jezebel, AlterNet and Bustle were not given “reviewed claims” sections. Mainstream liberal sites, such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, had their awards listed instead of the “reviewed claims” section.

Both the Federalist and the Daily Caller argued the listed fact-checks were based on claims that were not, in fact, in their stories at all.

One fact-check asserted a Daily Caller story said Robert Mueller’s team was hiring supporters of Hillary Clinton, but it used a quote that was not even directly from the article. The [story](#) was about how Mueller hired a Clinton donor.

Another fact-check against The Federalist said Bill Clinton was expelled from Oxford University for raping Eileen Wellstone. [Nowhere](#) did the Federalist article say Clin-

ton was expelled for that reason, only that Wellstone accused Clinton of raping her. Regardless, fact-checkers gave the claim an “unproven” marking.

After outcry over the program, Google scrapped it within the same month.

### 3.3 Google’s Algorithm Biased Against The Right

Multiple studies revealed Google’s tendency toward left-wing bias in its search results.

Robert Epstein from the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology [conducted research](#) looking into search engine bias during the 2016 presidential election. The study found Google’s results were particularly biased in favor of Clinton.

Epstein showed Google and Yahoo both employed “demographic targeting” in their results. Search results for decided voters “were nearly twice as biased in favor of Clinton.” Those for men were “twice as biased in favor of Clinton” compared to similar results for women. The same pattern followed in blue states, which were more biased in favor of Clinton (followed by red states) and search results by young people (under the age of 35) were “more than twice as biased in favor of Clinton.”

His study said, “the average bias in people’s search terms was slightly pro-Trump.” Therefore, “[t]he search terms people used should therefore have yielded a pro-Trump bias in search results, but they did not.”

The study concluded the pro-Clinton bias may have actually shifted the results of the popular vote. “Without the pro-Clinton bias in Google’s search results, her win margin in the popular vote might have been negligible,” the authors claimed.

Even liberal website [Slate](#) found Google results biased in favor of Clinton during the election. “Democrats had, on average, seven favorable search results in those top 10, whereas GOP candidates had only 5.9,” Slate reported. The study also found that, among the first 10 Google results, the first results were more favorable towards Democrats than for Republicans:

“Comparing contenders for each party is telling. Donald Trump had four positive and three negative search results on the first page. Hillary Clinton had five positive results and only one negative on the first page. Ted Cruz had more negative results than anyone else, and Bernie Sanders was the king of positivity — with nine ‘very pro’ results and not a single negative. Of course, all of this could change tomorrow — though we did get substantially similar results when we ran the same experiment two weeks earlier.”

According to Slate, one of the possible reasons for the more favorable results for Democrats than for Republicans was that Democratic candidates had a larger social

media presence. The Slate authors, however, drew on the same study as Epstein which discussed how Google rankings could have influenced the election.

Google results were criticized in other subjects, as well. Writing on climate change blog [Watts Up With That](#), researcher Leo Goldstein claimed he determined Google's search results were intentionally biased in favor of liberal websites and against conservative websites, especially on climate change.

Goldstein wrote, "Google Search is found to be biased in favor of left/liberal domains and against conservative domains with a confidence of 95%," while "certain hard-Left domains" had such a high referral traffic their standing raised Goldstein's suspicions that they were hand-picked for prominent placement.

The study claimed that on average, the conservative sites "have almost two times lower PGSTN [percentage of referral traffic through Google] than the left/liberal ones."

The discrepancy was so large, Goldstein concluded conservative sites such as the Drudge Report, The Gateway Pundit, PJ Media, the American Thinker and Red State appeared to be "blacklisted" by Google. Goldstein determined a site was "blacklisted" if 12 percent or less of its traffic came from Google. Normal sites would have a referral percentage between 20 and 36. Sites on the "white list," or given a "green light" by Google had a rating of above 36.

As PJ Media [noted](#), Goldstein based his analysis on Alexa website ranking data, which was not a perfect measure. Goldstein also admitted his selection of sites for the study was subjective.

So far, Google shows no signs of removing bias from its algorithms. If anything, the search engine seems to be gearing up to inject even more. In January 2018, it announced it would be tweaking its "featured snippet" (the [highlighted text](#) that appears at the top of some Google searches) yet again to include more "[diverse perspectives](#)" as a way to combat fake news and hoaxes.

Google's latest change would offer multiple summaries to counter situations where "you can get contradictory information when asking about the same thing but in different ways," Google Public Liaison for Search Danny Sullivan said. While this sounded good, it could be just another opportunity for the company to insert bias and liberal viewpoints into search results.

### **3.4 Google News Lab Partners With Anti-Conservative SPLC**

Google News Lab joined a ProPublica project in January 2017 to create a crowd-sourced database of hate crimes in the U.S. called "Documenting Hate." It was founded based on the SPLC's dubious [claim](#) that hate crimes rose following Trump's election in November 2016. However, the SPLC report excluded at least [2,000 alleged hate crimes](#) against white students after Trump's election, according to *The New York Post*.

The narrative that Trump caused an increase in hate crimes is [still mentioned](#) on the Documenting Hate website as of March 2018. “The 2016 election left many in America afraid — of intolerance and the violence it can inspire,” the site still claimed.

The SPLC and Google News Lab are just two of more than [100 “Documenting Hate” partners](#). Some others included the ADL (which maintains its own secret, unpublished hate group list), the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), but zero conservative groups.

HRC, the largest LGBTQ “human rights” group in the nation, pushes for a radical LGBTQ agenda. The group attacked Christian members of “the radical right” it wanted to depict as dangerous criminals by using mugshots. The campaign led to death threats. In November 2014, HRC founder Terrence Bean was arrested for [sexually abusing](#) a 15-year-old boy. “The case was dismissed after the alleged victim failed to show for the trial and Bean [offered him \\$225,000 to civilly settle the case](#),” according to Oregon Live.

CAIR meanwhile has repeatedly condemned conservatives for their wariness of Islam. A 2016 report [accused multiple conservative groups](#) including Fox News, American Family Association and *The Washington Times* of Islamophobia. CAIR executive director Nihad Awad [accused](#) then presidential candidates Donald Trump, Ben Carson and Chris Christie of inciting anti-Muslim violence during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Like the SPLC’s initial one-sided hate crime report, Documenting Hate disproportionately focused on hate crimes allegedly perpetrated by the [far right](#). One ProPublica report from December 2017, even [attacked Facebook](#) for allowing a group on the SPLC hate list to have a verification check mark and donation button on its Facebook page. The supposed “hate group” was [Christian Action Network](#), an anti-Islamic extremism organization.

Instead of backing down from Documenting Hate’s one-sided reporting, Google [announced](#) in August 2017 it was creating the [Documenting Hate News Index](#), inspired by the original Documenting Hate project. The News Index was an unfiltered accumulation of stories related to hate crimes — even if the facts had not yet been verified.

In addition to ProPublica, other sources that were involved in the Documenting Hate News Index included liberal sources such as *The New York Times*, BuzzFeed, Univision, The Root and The Advocate.

These sources had published content that could, at best, be described as questionable. BuzzFeed published pieces criticizing [Obama](#) for putting too many “straight white men” on the U.S. Supreme Court. The Advocate is an LGBTQ publication that published pieces such as [“3 Reasons Mike Pence is \(Probably\) Gay,”](#) and [“Sexual Rebels and ‘Nasty Woman’ Scared the Medieval Establishment Too.”](#)

The Root had an entire tag on its site dedicated to “[white people](#),” featuring stories such as “[America Doesn’t Have a Gun Control Problem. We Have a White-People Problem](#)” and “[We Need to Start Barking at White People Who Speak Out of Turn](#).”

Univision had targeted the Latin-American community with liberal propaganda again and again, hosting people who refused to call [Venezuela a dictatorship](#) and [spreading misinformation](#) about immigration acts.

# YOUTUBE

## 4.1 Lawsuit Accuses YouTube of Enforcing Racial Quotas

YouTube is fighting a similar legal battle as its owner Google. A former YouTube recruiter claimed the company engaged in diversity quotas in hiring and told recruiters to “purge” all applicants who were not female, black and Hispanic and to cancel their interviews.

*The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) Arne Wilberg, who worked as a YouTube recruiter for four years out of his nine years at Google, filed a lawsuit in January 2018 claiming Google engaged in discriminatory policies against whites and Asians. Wilberg claimed that after he complained to Google about the policies he was fired in retaliation.

*The Journal* reported “People familiar with YouTube’s and Google’s hiring practices in interviews corroborated some of the lawsuit’s allegations, including the hiring freeze of white and Asian technical employees, and YouTube’s use of quotas.”

Wilberg’s lawsuit stated that since “at least 2016,” recruiters for YouTube were required to practice quotas for hiring “diversity candidates” and had a “diversity tracker” to count the number of female, black and Hispanic employees at the company.

He said recruiters were told they all had to hire five new employees, but they had to be from the designated “underrepresented groups.”

A Google spokesperson told *The Journal* that the company had “a clear policy to hire candidates based on their merit, not their identity,” however, “we unapologetically try to find a diverse pool of qualified candidates for open roles.”

Wilberg’s suit also claimed Google discriminated against him for being a white male, similar to former Google engineer James Damore’s lawsuit

## 4.2 YouTube Removes Conservative Accounts

YouTube follows a similar pattern of censorship as other tech sites. It has completely censored certain channels by deleting their accounts, justifying their removal by referencing vague Community Guidelines. Legal Insurrection and Pamela Geller both had their accounts temporarily shut down by YouTube. Geller’s account was also banned after receiving complaints about “graphic content.” In both of these instances, YouTube only restored the accounts after the cases received media attention.

Legal Insurrection’s account [was terminated for superfluous copyright infringement claims](#). Cornell Law professor William A. Jacobson, who runs the account, claims he never received prior warning. His site was also reporting on the event. Typically,



when a YouTube account [accumulates three strikes](#) within three months, the site terminates the user's account. Jacobson stated he received no such warning prior to his account termination.

The video that triggered the complaint showed footage from the Modern Language Association's meeting on the topic of BDS (the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement). According to Jacobson, the MLA's reporting of his videos triggered YouTube's "3-strike rule." Jacobson responded to the takedown notice by claiming MLA does not have exclusive rights to the footage of its own speakers. The YouTube account was restored the next day.

Jacobson told [FoxNews.com](#) he thought the termination of his account was "politically motivated." "I never received any request or complaint from MLA. These were perfectly legitimate fair use excerpts with great news value," he said. "This is an attempt to silence our reporting on a matter of great public importance."

Jacobson stated he was "assured" that he would be given prior notice and the ability to contest any of his videos that were flagged for copyright infringement in the future.

In a September 2017 [blog post](#), Geller shared that her YouTube channel was deleted after she received multiple strikes for violating the Community Guidelines. Geller received strikes against her account for uploading videos titled "More enemy propaganda" and "RAW VIDEO: Islamic Jew hatred in Israel." Geller said she was banned from YouTube entirely over a video she originally uploaded in 2007. YouTube [reinstated](#) Geller's account after an appeal, but she says she received an email saying her suspension could not be appealed — after her account was restored.

### 4.3 YouTube Removes Conservative Videos

Even without removing entire accounts, YouTube can and does still stifle conservative content by removing videos, arguing they are "inappropriate." By removing videos — even for a short period — YouTube restricts the reach of videos with conservative messages and hurts their chances of going viral. Michelle Malkin and Geller both had their videos exposing the evils of Islamic terrorism removed by YouTube. Joy Villa, a singer, was accused of copyright violation for her pro-America, pro-Trump music video even though she had a written release form.

Malkin uploaded a video titled "First They Came" in 2006 criticizing Islam. The video, which has since been re-uploaded by other users, [was taken down by YouTube](#) after users flagged it for being "inappropriate." The video featured images of Theo Van Gogh, a Dutch filmmaker who was killed by an Islamic terrorist and Salman Rushdie, the author of "The Satanic Verses" who has a fatwa against him by the Iranian government. Although YouTube was a new platform at the time, the video's deletion spurred [The New York Times](#) to publish an article about the "Slippery Slope of Censorship at YouTube." After [The Times covered the issue again in 2008](#), the video was restored.

When discussing her [YouTube account being terminated](#), Geller pointed to the individual videos that allegedly earned her the ban. In each of the videos, she was talking about the problem of Islamic terrorism and showing its effect. YouTube enforced its ban on violent content even though the videos were meant to warn people against terrorism.

Villa's "Make America Great Again" video was [removed](#) for allegedly violating the [site's privacy policy](#) after receiving a complaint. While Villa [maintained](#) that she personally shot her own video and asked everyone featured in the video for permission prior to uploading it, YouTube's [guidelines on privacy](#) claim it "cannot accept or review agreements granting consent before the video was uploaded." As of February 2018, the video was [back on YouTube](#) with the face of the person who allegedly complained blocked out.

YouTube has also banned an entire genre of videos that catered to a conservative audience. After the Las Vegas shooting in October 2017, YouTube [banned gun modification videos](#). According to *The Telegraph*, YouTube said it expanded its policy against "harmful and dangerous content" to extend to videos that show people explaining how to use a "bump stock."

#### 4.4 Trusted Flagger Program Relies on Anti-Conservative Groups

To assist its process of restricting videos, YouTube created a Trusted Flagger program. Among the 100 organizations involved in the program were the [SPLC](#) and the ADL. Both organizations have attacked conservative groups as "hate groups."

YouTube announced [a new policy](#) in 2017 against "hateful content" would include "tougher standards" on accounts that it does not want people to see, but that don't necessarily violate its rules. The firm's definition of "hateful content" included videos related to terrorism and those seen to be "promot[ing] hate" against people for their race, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation (and gender identity). This new subset of videos, flagged by users, would limit the ability of people to view "controversial religious or supremacist content" because the basic YouTube features, such as the ability to embed videos, like or dislike videos and comment on videos would be automatically disabled for users.

Trusted flaggers are allowed to report multiple videos at a time. YouTube claimed the flaggers were "accurate over [90% of the time](#)" about videos that violated the Community Standards. While most of YouTube's trusted flaggers are secret, SPLC [confirmed](#) to left-wing media outlet ThinkProgress that it was indeed a trusted flagger. That means the anti-conservative organization is not only seen as trustworthy by YouTube, but also has been given special privileges to report videos en masse.

## 4.5 YouTube Removes Right-Wing And Pro-Gun Channels

Just a few short months after YouTube announced the hiring of new moderators to sift through content, it issued an apology for “mistakenly” removing the content of right-wing and pro-gun channels. In a March 2018 announcement, however, YouTube revealed its plan to crackdown on videos that demonstrate how to assemble firearms and link to websites where users can buy guns and gun-related accessories.

In December 2017, the company announced that it would hire 10,000 new people to serve as moderators to police the site for violations of the Community Guidelines. After a video is flagged for removal, the moderators ultimately decided what went away and what stayed.

Bloomberg reported in February 2018 the new YouTube moderators, who were supposed to be able to spot “fake, misleading and extreme videos,” went too far and censored videos about guns in the wake of the Parkland, Florida, shooting. Among the conservatives who were censored for their discussions of Parkland were InfoWars, commentator Ashton Whitty and Jerome Corsi. The Military Arms Channel also received strikes for its gun-related videos.

YouTube addressed the controversy by saying the videos were taken down because “newer members may misapply some of our policies resulting in mistaken removals.” YouTube promised to restore accounts it “removed in error.”

In March 2018, YouTube announced that starting in April, the site will prohibit videos that provide links to websites that sell guns and accessories. The ban on gun-related videos also extends to videos that show viewers how to assemble guns. Although the policy was not going to take place until April, two gun related channels claimed they had already been banned for violating YouTube's rules.

Bloomberg News noted a disturbing trend and guns are just a part of it. “YouTube has placed greater restrictions on content several times in the past year, responding to a series of issues with inappropriate and offensive videos. Most of those changes involved pulling ads from categories of videos,” it wrote.

## 4.6 YouTube Pushes Anti-White, Pro-Palestine ‘Creators for Change’

YouTube's own social justice agenda includes a special group of video producers called Creators for Change who are “[voices for social change](#).” One of the Creators for Change [was later revealed to be a 9/11 truther](#). Amani Al-Khatahtbeh's video has since been deleted the video from YouTube.

The program also includes Franchesca Ramsey, who is famous for her MTV series [attacking white people](#), accusing them of being racist and claiming they're [the only people who can be racist](#).

“The Fault in Our Stars” author John Green, another one of the Creators For Change, has attacked Republicans on Twitter. He even asked if the Republican Party [believes](#) racism “has ended.” Another creator, Muslim Dina Tokio, promoted her own T-shirt line with the word “[EXTREMIST” on a shirt](#) and has [shared her support for Palestine](#), even though YouTube claims part of the program is a crackdown on “extremist” videos, particularly Islamic extremist videos.

An individual featured on the main Creators for Change page, Humza Arshad, [talks](#) about bringing Islam’s “positive energy” to “the mainstream.” He was also involved in producing a video — in collaboration with police — about being Muslim instead of a terrorist. Despite being involved in programs to stop Islamic terrorism, on his Twitter page, Arshad has [tweeted about fundraising](#) for Palestine. The official Palestinian government includes Gaza, currently run by Hamas which is considered a terrorist organization by both the United States and Israel.

#### 4.7 Political Videos Placed In Restricted Mode

YouTube also limits political views it disagrees with by filtering videos as “restricted.” The mode makes them less accessible at public places, such as libraries and universities.

YouTube’s restricted mode is meant to filter out “[potentially mature content](#),” including content that displays drug use, “sexual situations,” violence, and “[m]ature subjects,” such as “specific details” about war, crime, and political conflicts. However, it has been used to make it harder to find educational material by PragerU and videos by conservative commentator Steven Crowder.

PragerU, a conservative non-profit focused on education, filed a lawsuit against YouTube in October 2017 alleging the site discriminates against conservatives. At the center of the lawsuit is how it has treated PragerU’s videos. According to a [press release](#) about the lawsuit, YouTube placed more than 50 of the PragerU videos on restricted mode. Restricted mode can be turned on by school or library administrators and users can place it on accounts used by children — but it is never the default feature.

Among the videos that YouTube placed under restricted mode [include](#) videos such as “How Iraq Was Won and Lost,” “Gun Rights Are Women’s Rights,” “College Made Me a Conservative,” “Why America’s Military Must Be Strong,” and “Ten Commandments 9: Do Not Bear False Witness.” “Dirty Jobs” host Mike Rowe’s “commencement” address to PragerU’s online university was [also placed](#) under “restricted mode.”

According to a piece in [National Review](#), Dennis Prager said the people featured in PragerU’s videos include well-respected people in their fields, such as “dozens of professors at, among other universities, MIT, Notre Dame, Princeton, Dayton, Boston College, Stanford, UCLA, Harvard, and West Point; a black member of the South African Parliament; comedians Adam Carolla and Yakov Smirnoff; two former prime

ministers (Spain and Denmark); three Pulitzer Prize winners (George Will, Bret Stephens, and Judith Miller); Mike Rowe of Dirty Jobs; Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Arthur Brooks, Jonah Goldberg, Alan Dershowitz, Nicholas Eberstadt, Larry Elder, Steve Forbes, Walter Williams, Christina Hoff Sommers, George Gilder, Victor Davis Hanson; Bjørn Lomborg, Heather Mac Donald, Eric Metaxas, Amity Shlaes, and the commander of British troops in Afghanistan, among many others.”

Google [told](#) The Hollywood Reporter restricted mode was “an optional feature used by a small subset of users to filter out videos that may include sensitive or mature content.” It added, “Giving viewers the choice to opt in to a more restricted experience is not censorship.”

Like the PragerU videos, conservative commentator Steven Crowder [claimed](#) some of his videos had been placed under “restricted mode.” As Crowder pointed out, while his videos were restricted, videos by The Young Turks, a popular liberal YouTube channel that often used profanity and inappropriate language, were not impacted by the restricted mode.

In March 2018, a federal judge [dismissed](#) Prager’s lawsuit against Google, claiming that PragerU did not sufficiently make the case that YouTube acts as a state actor and therefore violated the First Amendment by restricting PragerU’s videos. PragerU [responded](#) to the judge’s dismissal by saying they “look forward to arguing the merits of our case in both state and Federal Court, as well as the 9th Circuit, or even the Supreme Court if that is what it takes to ensure every American’s freedom of speech is protected online.”

#### **4.8 Mass Demonetization of Videos Hits Conservatives**

Along with placing videos on restricted mode, YouTube has harmed conservatives through demonetization. When a video is “demonetized,” the creator of the video is no longer allowed to make revenue off ads placed in his or her videos. Videos were demonetized if they were deemed to be [unfriendly to advertisers](#).

Vocal conservative activists Diamond and Silk, famous for their videos endorsing Trump, claim 95 percent of their YouTube videos have been demonetized. Dave Rubin, the host of the popular Rubin Report, said [his interview](#) with Ben Shapiro was demonetized. [The same day](#) he said the Shapiro interview was demonetized, his video “Outrage, Anger, and Unusual Alliances” was also demonetized. YouTube [responded](#) to Rubin’s post about the Shapiro video by saying it was appealed and greenlit for monetization, but Rubin contended that the damage had already been done since it was no longer current.

Similar to the case with restricted mode, “demonetization” does not apply exclusively to conservatives. In a now-deleted tweet, the director of content distribution for the [3 million subscriber](#) Young Turks [said](#) its channel was also hit by one of demonetization waves. One [Huffington Post piece](#) on the topic even claimed, “Progressive Shows on YouTube Are in HUGE Trouble.” Famous YouTubers, such as Hank Green of Vlogbrothers, [also received demonetization notices](#) for their videos.



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