



The Politics of Social Media, Public Health, and Misinformation

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Community News and Views

Global Publicity and Social Media

Following global publicity in 2021 about the alleged intentional harms caused by the social media platform Facebook, a Senate hearing titled *Protecting Kids Online: Instagram and Reforms for Young Users* focused on efforts to ensure the safety of children and young people. In December 2023, published dissertation research analyzed how specific language was used to assign blame, responsibility, and accountability in social media and mental health narratives. Analysis of newspaper articles revealed that proponents and opponents of greater government action constructed narratives regarding the “potential causes” of harms impacting social media users. Competing narratives focused on solutions to reduce the negative impact, such as parental controls, age verification systems, and algorithmic controls. However, First Amendment concerns and limitations in public health research reduced the impact of the proposed legislation. Results from this study indicated that policy experts would find the systematic summary of narratives beneficial for an improved understanding of initiatives being pushed forward by various entities, and future

policy decisions should prioritize the public interest.

In addition, this proposed legislation's timing was directed toward increasing numbers of anti-vaccine posts on social media platforms. This is the main reason for the release of these hearings and debates. This had nothing to do with protecting children and young people. If it was a concern, why were these concerns brought up immediately after the promotion of vaccines? The truth was that many people were getting access to academic documents informing them of the negative adverse effects of vaccines and face masks, personally witnessing the negative health effects themselves, and public health professionals were beginning to speak out against these harmful measures. Altogether, these efforts increased awareness to the public and will now allow this new administration to improve public health and provide justice for the victims.

The U.S. Vaccination Program

When you look at the millions of people (infants into older adults) across generations, vaccines have been primarily used for research and as a bioweapon against our most vulnerable, in

our opinion. Harming those susceptible to treatment interactions and their various combinations. The occurrence of COVID-19 is a constant reminder never to forget those who promoted these harmful treatments and created mandatory mask policies. We believe these harmful treatments should instead be described as vaccine genocide because of the various harms that directly cause health problems, cancer, hormone disruption, personality disorders, disability, and even possible death. Personally witnessing this phenomenon leads to the need for immediate change in public health. This involves its overall purpose, need, and transparency. The millions of people negatively impacted across generations deserve a voice, and now is the time to start taking steps to stop the U.S. vaccination program immediately.

Natural Health - The Best Solution for Improving Public Health

We have a very simple method for staying healthy: 1) Take a multivitamin daily with a natural herbal remedy that reduces inflammation, 2) Exercise for at least 20-30 minutes daily, and 3) Eat as clean and healthy as possible. The best health advice is a natural remedy, and also to be more conscious of how you are feeling.

How to Identify Misinformation on Social Media:

1. Question everything that is posted on any social media platform.
2. Who posted the content (is this someone you trust or an actor/AI generated character?)
3. Contact the individual who posted the information to inquire about how they found it.
4. If a professional states the information, contact that professional directly and ask for references to

validate their claims if these details are not provided.

5. Cross-reference the important details that grab your attention. You can always search for the primary source and then check other similar sources to see if they are consistent.
6. Personal Experiences Speak Louder than any Media Source! If you see it, you have personally observed the phenomenon and can provide those missing details to your social media audience. Provide as much detail as possible.
7. Always save your sources in case you are questioned about your own posts. If you have completed the steps detailed above, you are guaranteed to have valuable information that will help others, increase transparency, and prevent harm.

Conclusion

In summary, America was built on the concept of freedom and opportunity, and this foundation should be protected with health and safety being a priority. Censoring content imposes limits on these important concepts and Benjamin Franklin's famous quote best describes the limitations that have been imposed on Americans: "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." In the realm of technological advancement, we offer a new quote that focuses on the present experience of social media: "Liberty is essential in the digital age of technological advancement. Those who promote the need for restrictions in their various forms, deserve neither liberty nor safety." Furthermore, the decisions concerning social media will lay the foundation for future generations and the quality of society itself. Improving platforms and educating the public about the potential harms, with a focus on empathy, is a step in the right direction.

About the Authors

Dr. Renae Merrill is an adjunct professor with a doctorate in health policy.

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