

CENSORED! How Silicon Valley Online Media Companies Are Suppressing Conservative Speech

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Executive Summary (Full Special Report can be [found here.](#))

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 The 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.