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Beyond the Scissors and Screens: Freedom, Censorship, and the Internet as Explored by Gergely Gosztonyi

Poza nożyczkami i ekranami: Wolność, cenzura i Internet w ujęciu Gergelyego Gosztonyiego

Abstract: Gergely Gosztonyi's *Censorship from Plato to Social Media – The Complexity of Social Media's Content Regulation and Moderation Practices* (Springer, 2023) delves into the evolution of censorship, tracing its journey from historical contexts to modern digital platforms. The book critically navigates the complexities of content regulation on social media, highlighting the shift from traditional state censorship to the nuanced practices of today's internet giants. Gosztonyi advocates for a collaborative approach to internet governance, emphasizing the need for policies that safeguard freedom of expression while addressing the challenges of online content moderation. Through this concise exploration, the book emerges as a pivotal resource, urging policymakers, scholars, and digital platforms to engage in informed dialogue about content regulation. Gosztonyi's insights invite readers to critically navigate the digital age's regulatory challenges, highlighting the imperative for a balanced, open, and democratic internet.

Keywords: censorship, digital governance, social media regulation, freedom of expression, content moderation

Abstrakt: Gergely Gosztonyi w swojej książce pt. *Censorship from Plato to Social Media – The Complexity of Social Media's Content Regulation and Moderation Practices* (Springer, 2023) podejmuje temat ewolucji cenzury, śledząc jej rozwój od czasów historycznych po współczesne platformy cyfrowe. Autor w sposób krytyczny analizuje złożoność regulowania treści w mediach społecznościowych, wskazując na przejście od tradycyjnej cenzury państwowej do

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bardziej zniuansowanych praktyk stosowanych przez dzisiejszych cyfrowych gigantów. Gosztorny opowiada się za modelem współzarządzania internetem, podkreślając potrzebę tworzenia polityk, które z jednej strony chronią wolność wypowiedzi, a z drugiej skutecznie odpowiadają na wyzwania związane z moderacją treści w środowisku online. Dzięki tej zwęższej, a zarazem pogłębionej analizie książka jawi się jako kluczowe źródło, wzywające decydentów, naukowców oraz platformy cyfrowe do zaangażowania się w merytoryczny dialog na temat regulacji treści. Refleksje Gosztornyego zachęcają czytelników do krytycznego podejścia wobec wyzwań regulacyjnych ery cyfrowej, akcentując konieczność utrzymania równowagi między otwartością, demokracją a efektywnym zarządzaniem przestrzenią cyfrową.

Słowa kluczowe: cenzura, zarządzanie cyfrowe, regulacja mediów społecznościowych, wolność wypowiedzi, moderowanie treści

Introduction

The internet has ushered in a seismic shift in the global dissemination of ideas and information, propelling it at an unprecedented pace, with unparalleled freedom and reach. This digital expansion has exposed individuals to novel concepts and a wealth of knowledge previously inaccessible, fostering an environment where they become more critical of legal frameworks, societal norms, and perceived injustices. This engagement facilitates a deeper participation in democratic processes, thereby enhancing the democratic fabric itself. The advent of New Media, characterized by interactive platforms such as social networking sites, search engines, and various intermediary services that rely on user participation, necessitates a departure from the approaches traditionally associated with both online and offline media. In this digital era, traditional state regulatory mechanisms appear increasingly obsolete as the architects behind the most frequented social media and Web 2.0 platforms establish their own governance structures. Over time, the policies implemented by these platforms have matured into distinct regulatory frameworks, mirroring formal legislation in their complexity and scope. Consequently, social networking sites independently delineate the boundaries of permissible speech through their proprietary regulations, fundamentally rooted in private law. This evolution means that the regulation of free expression on the internet extends beyond national legal limits, being predominantly dictated by the internal rules of service providers. Therefore, a significant portion of online discourse is moderated by private entities, marking a significant shift towards a predominance of non-state actors in

the governance of internet speech. It follows from this exercise of power that control over the platform under a given new media also means control over the content that appears on it. The filters, algorithms and community guidelines that are put in place give the operators of these sites an invisible influence that cannot be circumvented.¹ This one-sidedness can also be seen as a very specific form of censorship in the 21st century, where freedom of expression is not to be feared from state interference (if it is to be feared at all), but from the private companies' system of rules, which can be freely changed at any time, even after the fact. The emergence and explosion of social media is forcing us to rethink much of what we know (or thought we knew) about the democratic public sphere, the media, the advertising market and other areas. The concept and use of censorship is no exception.

Discussing censorship in the 21st century presents a fascinating paradox. On one side, the notion of censorship may seem an archaic relic, given that freedom of speech is safeguarded by constitutional mechanisms in most advanced nations, and the era of the internet ostensibly renders obsolete any committee-based control over public discourse. Yet, on the flip side, the discourse around censorship is increasingly prevalent, highlighting that the ostensibly unfettered access to information is, in reality, not as unbridled as it appears.² A significant segment of the internet-using populace is regularly subjected to various forms of manipulation, facing restrictions on the volume and type of information accessible to them – effectively, a form of censorship. According to the principle reminiscent of the Lomonosov-Lavoisier law, censorship does not vanish; it merely transforms. This dichotomy complicates the discourse on censorship further, exacerbated by the nebulous definition of what constitutes censorship itself. Censorship takes many forms and is often not the censorship we think it is. In this confusing environment, Gergely Gosztonyi's book, *Censorship – From Plato to Social Media*, published by Springer in 2023, serves as an excellent compass.

1 János Tamás Papp, "Recontextualizing the Role of Social Media in the Formation of Filter Bubbles," *Hungarian Yearbook of International Law and European Law* 2666–2701, vol. 11, no. 1 (2023): 137–138.

2 See: Gergely Ferenc Lendvai, "Media in War: An Overview of the European Restrictions on Russian Media," *European Papers: Journal on Law and Integration* 2499–8249, vol. 8, no. 3, (2023): 1235–1245.

Quid est censura?

The book starts with the most important question about modern censorship: what censorship is and what content regulation is. One of the most commonly held misconceptions about freedom of expression is that its existence is absolute, i.e. it is either all-encompassing or, if even a part of it is restricted, it ceases to exist. In reality, however, this is completely wrong: no constitution in the world provides for unlimited freedom of expression, since some kind of restriction is always necessary for various social interests. The protection of minors, the prohibition of hate speech, the prosecution of certain crimes all restrict freedom of expression, and this, in some respects, may be tantamount to censorship itself. As Gosztanyi points out, the first and most important question to be clarified in any effective discussion of censorship is what we call censorship, or more precisely, what form of censorship we are talking about. Chapter 2.1 of the book is extremely useful in clarifying this, as it takes a complex look at the difficulties of defining censorship and outlines a coherent, uniform, and comprehensible typology for identifying the different types of censorship.

Chapter 3 delves into the historical progression of censorship, tracing its journey from physical scissors to digital algorithms, serving as a historical primer. There is a consensus that the digital realm, including the internet, necessitates some form of regulation. Nonetheless, the fact that content is published online does not place it beyond the reach of legal oversight. The global nature of the internet and the sheer volume of content present significant technical challenges to regulation. A pivotal issue arises in determining the extent to which these restrictions on speech equate to censorship and, more importantly, at what point such censorship becomes detrimental. Central to this discourse are questions regarding the legitimacy of certain restrictions, the delineation of permissible boundaries, and the identification of entities vested with the authority to enforce these restrictions. The objective is to discern how such measures can be applied constructively, bolstering rather than undermining or constricting the democratic public sphere. Restricting speech on the internet is therefore certainly desirable, but there are a number of questions about how to do this. Gergely Gosztanyi presents the regulatory environment in this context with a very good sense of proportion, both in the European and the American context (Chapters 5–6).

Chapter 7, with its focus on China, stands out for its examination of the country's unique approach to internet content restrictions – a subject that has seen limited comprehensive and expert exploration. Gosztonyi's balanced treatment is commendable; it is a challenge to encapsulate the complex regulatory frameworks of both Europe and America in a succinct yet detailed manner, yet Gosztonyi achieves this with aplomb. The chapter skillfully assesses existing regulatory initiatives, applying professional insight to the analysis. The comparative review of U.S. and European regulatory proposals is particularly engaging, where Gosztonyi astutely highlights the historical and conceptual differences in freedom of expression that underpin these varying approaches. The author exposes a significant divergence in the evolution of regulations concerning internet freedom of expression. The U.S. approach of the 1990s, once considered avant-garde for fostering internet growth, is now evidently in need of reform, especially regarding the CDA230's overly generous immunity provisions. In contrast, Europe's GDPR and DSA-DMA regulations emerge as exemplary, eliciting admiration from across the Atlantic for their forward-thinking stance. Chapter 5.2 effectively critiques the flaws in the U.S. regulatory efforts and the ensuing ambiguity. It is then somewhat refreshing to explore, in Chapters 6.1 and 6.2, the regulatory clarity and direction offered by the DSA-DMA framework. While acknowledging that these regulations are not flawless, I concur with the author that they represent vital and appropriate steps forward in the regulation of internet freedom of expression.

The critique of major corporations for their role in shaping the online public sphere is multifaceted, particularly concerning their approach to online speech restriction. This critique stems from a dual paradox where, on the one hand, a considerable volume of content that is either illegal or harmful manages to permeate these platforms, reaching an unsuspecting audience. On the other hand, content that does not necessarily violate legal statutes is often preemptively restricted or removed. This situation encapsulates the paradoxical nature of online content moderation: the simultaneous occurrence of excessive and insufficient “censorship.”

This dichotomy underscores the complexity of online content regulation, which has increasingly sought to distinguish between unequivocally illegal content and content that, while not illegal, could be deemed harmful. The categorization of content as manifestly illegal is somewhat straightforward, contingent primarily

on the legal jurisdiction and specific legislation under which certain materials are classified as illegal. However, the delineation of content that is harmful but not illegal presents a more challenging conundrum. This category encompasses a broad spectrum of material that may not universally be recognized as detrimental but requires regulation to safeguard particular demographics, such as minors, or to mitigate the spread of disinformation and harmful trends.

In recent developments, regulatory frameworks and content moderation policies have started to address these distinctions, endeavoring to create a balanced approach that protects users from harmful content while ensuring that freedom of expression is not unduly compromised. Yet, defining the precise boundaries of what content should be moderated, especially in the vast and nebulous expanse of the internet, remains a daunting task. It involves navigating a tightrope between safeguarding the public from the tangible dangers of certain content and upholding the principles of open and free discourse. As such, the conversation around online speech restriction and content moderation continues to evolve, reflecting the ongoing struggle to reconcile these competing interests today.

Chapter 8, despite its conciseness, delves deeply into the nuanced human and technical challenges associated with content regulation. The reliance on algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI) for moderating vast amounts of online content is understandable, yet this approach frequently falls short. The technology often fails to discern context, nuance, or irony, leading to erroneous content regulation decisions. Compounding these technical shortcomings, the chapter commendably references the extensive reporting by Casey Newton and The Verge, which sheds light on the severe physical and psychological distress experienced by content moderators at Facebook. These individuals face the daunting task of sifting through disturbing content, which can have lasting impacts on their mental health.

The Many Problems of Moderation

The author posits that the optimal path forward for content moderation lies in a symbiotic integration of artificial intelligence and human oversight. This balanced approach promises to enhance the accuracy of content regulation,

ensuring that it is both sensitive to context and capable of discerning subtleties that AI alone cannot do. However, the transition to such a hybrid system is fraught with challenges. Until a robust and effective moderation framework is established, the phenomenon of “security censorship” – where potentially valuable discourse is prematurely excluded from the online public sphere in the name of safety – remains a significant concern. The chapter argues for a more refined, nuanced approach to content moderation that safeguards free expression while effectively managing harmful content, suggesting that achieving this balance is crucial for the future integrity and vibrancy of the online public sphere.

However, an equally important question is the extent to which social networking sites make use of hidden, much less visible means of censorship. Indeed, there are numerous examples that show that, contrary to their claims, social networking sites (and their algorithms) do not simply act as neutral transmitters, but actively organize the content they offer to users. This sorting may not always be based on objective indicators, but also on ideologies and political agendas. Of course, the social networking sites reject any claim that they have any self-interest in the algorithms used to compile content. One of the creators of Facebook’s timeline has denied that the timeline is “consciously edited content” that reflects Facebook’s views, saying its algorithms simply reflect what users want.³ In the world of personalized content recommendation, it is very difficult to conduct reliable empirical research on the subject, but recent analyses suggest that the ideological bias of social networking sites is more a delusion than a reality. According to a 2019 study by *The Economist*,⁴ Google does not favor left-wing sites, and a study by *Media Matters for America*, also in 2019, found that right-wing and left-wing Facebook pages have almost equal reach.⁵ And a recent report by the *NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights* found that “no reliable study has found that conservative content is removed for

3 Ravi Somaiya, “How Facebook Is Changing the Way Its Users Consume Journalism,” <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/27/business/media/how-facebook-is-changing-the-way-its-users-consume-journalism.html>, accessed 1 March 2024.

4 “Google Rewards Reputable Reporting, not Left-wing Politics,” <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2019/06/08/google-rewards-reputable-reporting-not-left-wing-politics>, accessed 1 March 2024.

5 Natalie Martinez, “Study: Facebook is Still not Censoring Conservatives,” <https://www.mediamatters.org/facebook/study-facebook-still-not-censoring-conservatives>, accessed 1 March 2024.

ideological reasons or that searches are manipulated to favor liberal interests.”⁶ However, empirical research shows that content on social networking sites is much less diverse and balanced from the perspective of individuals,⁷ and one of the results of this is that they are very effective at polarizing society.⁸

It is clear, therefore, that users’ timelines are in any case created on the basis of some kind of unique composition, i.e. they appear in a unique way. And “customized,” according to Paul Bernal, is synonymous with “manipulated,” since whether the users’ timelines are based on financial-economic, marketing or political goals, they cannot be called neutral content services free of influence.⁹ The problem is therefore real, social media have enormous influence and the potential to censor. A social networking site user encounters a huge amount of content every day, the vast majority of which is no longer the content of the sites they follow or their friends, but content or ads recommended by the sites’ algorithms.¹⁰ And these algorithms operate according to certain parameters, which necessarily reflect a value choice, and are therefore unbiased with a very low probability. And this curatorial activity on social networking sites can not only amplify certain voices, but also silence them, in other words, censor them.¹¹

The skepticism held by researchers towards the operations of social networking sites is largely attributed to the lack of transparency surrounding these platforms. The specific criteria and practices employed by social media companies for content filtering and imposing sanctions remain obscure, as are the procedures for addressing grievances and the avenues available for “redress” that lead to content being inaccessible. Furthermore, the feasibility of conducting thorough research and analysis on these platforms is significantly hampered. The vast scale, proprietary nature, and personalized user experience of social

6 Paul M. Barrett and J. Gran Sims, “False Accusation: The Unfounded Claim that Social Media Companies Censor Conservatives,” https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b6df958f8370af3217d4178/t/60187b5f45762e708708c8e9/1612217185240/NYU+False+Accusation_2.pdf, p. 19.

7 “Misinformation and Biases Infect Social Media, Both Intentionally and Accidentally,” <https://theconversation.com/misinformation-and-biases-infect-social-media-both-intentionally-and-accidentally-97148>, accessed 1 March 2024.

8 “Political Bias on Social Media Emerges from Users, not Platform,” <https://research.impact.iu.edu/key-areas/social-sciences/stories/social-media-platform-bias.html>, accessed 1 March 2024.

9 Paul Bernal, *The Internet, Warts and All* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 92.

10 See Amogh Mahapatra, “How Instagram Suggests New Content,” <https://engineering.fb.com/2022/08/12/web/how-instagram-suggests-new-content/>, accessed March 1, 2024.

11 James Ball, *Post-truth. How Bullshit Conquered the World* (Croydon: Biteback Publishing, 2017), 150.

media sites render comprehensive investigation and scrutiny by researchers nearly impossible. This opacity complicates efforts to understand and evaluate the mechanisms of content regulation on these platforms, contributing to a broader concern about the accountability and governance of social networking sites.¹² In most cases, users are not informed at all about changes to timelines, and if they are, they are very general and the average user has no idea what, how, to what extent and why the changes have been made on the site. In addition, the algorithms are a closely guarded trade secret, so even the researchers working on the subject cannot determine exactly what factors are used to recommend, prioritize or de-prioritize content. And even if the user wanted to, he or she could not influence the timeline, as there is no way to turn on or off the filters and recommendations applied by the platform, so even the conscious user is effectively at the mercy of the platform. The latter is even more pronounced for less aware users, who may believe in the lie of platform neutrality, i.e. that there are no influencing factors on the content that appears on their timeline. They may therefore develop the false impression that whatever appears there is some representative representation of the society around them, rather than just a personal bubble created for them.

Cyberlibertarian Ideals and State-Control

While the bulk of research on online content moderation has predominantly focused on social media, a notable strength of this book lies in its comprehensive examination of censorship within a wider digital ecosystem. The author, Gosztanyi, extends the discourse beyond the confines of social networking platforms to include the regulatory practices of various other internet platforms and Internet Service Providers (ISPs). This expansive approach enriches the narrative, providing a multidimensional perspective on the challenges and intricacies of content regulation across the digital domain.

Despite the daunting task of analyzing such a broad and complex subject area without resorting to overgeneralizations, the book excels in offering a nuanced exploration. Gosztanyi adeptly avoids the pitfalls of reiterating

¹² Geert Lovink, *Social Media Abyss – Critical Internet Cultures and the Force of Negation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 40.

common generalizations found in the field. Instead, he adopts a confident, focused approach to each sub-topic, delving directly into the core issues. This methodological choice ensures that the book's content remains exceptionally clear and substantive. By doing so, Gosztonyi manages to distill a vast array of information into a digestible format, making the book not only a valuable resource for understanding the broader implications of censorship across different digital platforms but also a compelling read that engages directly with the critical issues at hand.

In Chapter 11, Gosztonyi's analysis explores the transition from the internet's libertarian beginnings to an era of digital authoritarianism, where state control over online spaces is increasing. It critiques the notion that technology inherently promotes freedom, highlighting instead how countries like China and Russia use laws and surveillance to monitor and censor the internet. Gosztonyi points out the UN's nuanced stance on internet access as a facilitator of human rights, without declaring it a standalone right. Through examples of state censorship, the work underscores the economic and social costs of digital authoritarianism, emphasizing the challenge of balancing online freedom with security and governance. Gosztonyi calls for a collaborative effort to protect the internet's core values of openness and freedom against the backdrop of growing state intervention.

This comprehensive analysis delves into the evolution of internet governance, as articulated by Gosztonyi, tracing the journey from an era of cyberlibertarian optimism to the current landscape dominated by digital authoritarianism. Gosztonyi's work critically examines the gradual erosion of the early internet's libertarian ideals, once heralded as a bastion of unfettered freedom and decentralization, against the backdrop of increasing state intervention and control. Through this lens, Gosztonyi effectively challenges the notion, once widely held, that technological advancement inherently equates to liberation, highlighting the complex interplay between technology, power, and governance. Gosztonyi's nuanced critique extends to the interpretation of United Nations (U.N.) declarations on internet access. While dispelling the misconception that the U.N. Human Rights Council explicitly recognizes internet access as a human right, Gosztonyi elucidates the council's implicit acknowledgment of the internet's critical role in facilitating the exercise of fundamental freedoms such as expression, association, and privacy. This analysis contributes to the ongoing debate within international legal and human rights circles, underscoring the essential

nature of internet access in the digital age, albeit without formal recognition as a standalone right.

The exploration of state-led efforts to assert digital sovereignty forms the crux of Gosztanyi's argument, presenting a stark portrayal of the mechanisms and consequences of digital authoritarianism. Through detailed case studies of China, Russia, Iran, and Belarus, Gosztanyi elucidates how these regimes employ a strategic blend of legislative, technological, and coercive measures to monitor, censor, and control the digital sphere. This discussion not only sheds light on the tactical appropriation of technology by authoritarian regimes to consolidate their grip on power, but also situates the struggle for digital freedom within a wider context of political resilience and adaptation. Furthermore, Gosztanyi's investigation into the economic and social impacts of internet restrictions offers a critical perspective on the tangible effects of censorship and surveillance. By quantifying the economic losses and highlighting the suppression of dissent, Gosztanyi bridges the conceptual divide between abstract rights and their material implications. This segment underscores the multifaceted consequences of digital authoritarianism, encompassing not only the curtailment of individual freedoms but also broader economic and societal repercussions.

Not Merely Challenges, but Also Solutions

The author articulates a pivotal shift in the discourse surrounding state regulation of the internet: the debate has transitioned from questioning the justification of state intervention to strategizing its implementation. In concluding the book, the discussion transcends mere analysis of impending regulations' quality, venturing into concrete recommendations. The author proposes a comprehensive set of twenty-six recommendations aimed at guiding legislators in effectively subjecting this intricate domain to the rule of law. These suggestions are not only extensive, but are also infused with the intent to incorporate legal principles extrapolated from the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). The premise of these recommendations is the belief that the challenges posed by the internet's global nature are best addressed through a jurisprudential framework that is universally applicable, as interpreted by an international tribunal. This approach underscores the importance of enforcement

monitoring, particularly in an arena as complex as lawmaking for the internet. Such monitoring becomes crucial for accommodating the linguistic, cultural, and other specific nuances inherent to content management.

Gosztonyi's fourth proposal highlights the urgent need for diversity, pluralism, and impartiality on the internet. Areas where the Digital Services Act (DSA) remains inadequately defined. Although the DSA makes nominal references to these principles, its provisions are notably vague, lacking the specificity required to address the complexity of the issue effectively. Online platforms, driven by the objective to maximize user engagement and advertisement exposure, utilize algorithms that personalize content based on users' past interactions, searches, and behaviors. This personalization leads to the creation of "parallel realities" across different user demographics, significantly reducing the intersection of shared information and, consequently, shared social experiences.

This fragmentation threatens the fabric of society, as it exacerbates feelings of alienation and hostility, potentially deepening societal divisions. The algorithmic curation results in an uneven distribution of news and information, with certain narratives gaining disproportionate visibility, thereby reinforcing individual worldviews at the expense of a collective understanding. In such a scenario, only major sporting events and similar widespread phenomena may serve as common experiences that unite society, highlighting the necessity of shared moments for societal well-being.

The challenge of ensuring content diversity and platform impartiality is critical for the functioning of a democratic public sphere. It is not merely an academic concern of media law but a vital requirement for fostering an informed citizenry, enabling productive dialogue, and collectively addressing societal issues. Despite the DSA's attempt to tackle these concerns, the lack of concrete measures and clear guidance means that achieving a balanced and diverse online ecosystem remains an unresolved challenge. This situation underscores the need for regulatory efforts that go beyond the current provisions, offering detailed and actionable strategies to safeguard the principles of diversity, pluralism, and impartiality in the digital age.

The 12th point underlines the importance of media literacy. Media literacy encompasses a multifaceted set of competencies that extend beyond simple access to information, involving the critical analysis, evaluation, and creation of media messages. This literacy empowers individuals to navigate the complex

landscape of media, discerning biases, and underlying purposes within various forms of communication, from news articles to social media posts. Recognizing media as a crafted entity influenced by diverse cultural, social, economic, and political elements, media literacy cultivates a mindset that encourages questioning and understanding the broader implications of media messages. It promotes active engagement in civic affairs and fosters an informed citizenry capable of contributing constructively to the democratic process.

However, the journey to media literacy is fraught with challenges. Training can inadvertently lead to overconfidence, making individuals susceptible to sophisticated misinformation. The dynamic nature of misinformation tactics necessitates that media literacy education evolves to counter more nuanced narratives. Moreover, an excessive skepticism fostered by media literacy initiatives can engender a generalized distrust of all media sources, pushing individuals toward echo chambers and making them vulnerable to conspiracy theories. This highlights the delicate balance required in media literacy education, emphasizing the need for a structured approach that fosters critical engagement without leading to cynicism or skepticism that undermines the credibility of legitimate information sources. Addressing these challenges calls for a holistic approach to media literacy that goes beyond individual responsibility, involving all stakeholders in the digital ecosystem. This approach should foster an environment that encourages not just critical consumption of media but also active, informed participation in the digital public sphere. By prioritizing evidence-based practices and embedding media literacy into the digital infrastructure, it is possible to mitigate the risks associated with misinformation and enhance the democratic potential of media. This necessitates a continuous dialogue among educators, policymakers, and the media industry to ensure media literacy education remains effective and inclusive, supporting a diverse and engaged citizenry in navigating the complexities of the digital age.

Conclusions

Gosztonyi posits that censorship, or – more aptly termed – content regulation, is an immutable aspect of our digital landscape. This assertion, far from being problematic, underscores a fundamental reality of internet governance –

that some degree of content regulation is indispensable. As elucidated in the broader discussions of this volume, the crux of the matter lies not in the existence of regulation but in the pursuit of a model that balances the necessity of such measures with the imperative of safeguarding freedom of expression. This delicate balance is the linchpin of a healthy digital ecosystem, where the regulation of content does not stifle the vibrant exchange of ideas but ensures a safe and trustworthy environment for users. In this context, Gergely Gosztonyi's book emerges as a pivotal resource, offering profound insights into the complexities of content regulation within the digital domain. It serves not merely as a collection of academic musings but as a robust intellectual toolkit for those keen on navigating the nuanced debates surrounding censorship and freedom of expression on the internet. The book invites readers to delve into the intricacies of content regulation, challenging them to consider how such practices can be implemented in a manner that respects the diverse perspectives and rights of digital citizens while combating misinformation, hate speech, and other harmful content.

Ultimately, Gosztonyi's work is a call to action for policymakers, scholars, and digital platforms alike to engage in a more nuanced and informed dialogue about content regulation. It highlights the urgency of developing regulatory frameworks that are both effective and respectful of democratic values, encouraging a collaborative approach to fostering an internet that is open yet safe. As we grapple with the evolving challenges of the digital age, Gosztonyi's book stands as a critical beacon, guiding the quest for a content regulation paradigm that truly serves the public interest without compromising the fundamental freedoms that underpin the internet's transformative potential.

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