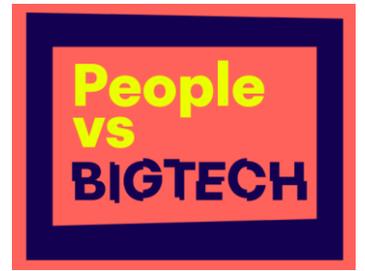


A 10-point plan to address our information crisis

02 September 2022

Presented by 2021 Nobel Peace Prize laureates Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov at the Freedom of Expression Conference, Nobel Peace Center, Oslo 2 September 2022



We call for a world in which technology is built in service of humanity and where our global public square protects human rights above profits.

Right now, the huge potential of technology to advance our societies has been undermined by the business model and design of the dominant online platforms. But we remind all those in power that true human progress comes from harnessing technology to advance rights and freedoms for all, not sacrificing them for the wealth and power of a few.

We urge rights-respecting democracies to wake up to the existential threat of information ecosystems being distorted by a Big Tech business model fixated on harvesting people's data and attention, even as it undermines serious journalism and polarises debate in society and political life.

When facts become optional and trust disappears, we will no longer be able to hold power to account. We need a public sphere

where fostering trust with a healthy exchange of ideas is valued more highly than corporate profits and where rigorous journalism can cut through the noise.

Many governments around the world have exploited these platforms' greed to grab and consolidate power. That is why they also attack and muzzle the free press. Clearly, these governments cannot be trusted to address this crisis. But nor should we put our rights in the hands of technology companies' intent on sustaining a broken business model that actively promotes disinformation, hate speech and abuse.

The resulting toxic information ecosystem is not inevitable. Those in power must do their part to build a world that puts human rights, dignity, and security first, including by safeguarding scientific and journalistic methods and tested knowledge. To build that world, we must:

Bring an end to the surveillance-for-profit business model

The invisible 'editors' of today's information ecosystem are the opaque algorithms and recommender systems built by tech companies that track and target us. They amplify misogyny, racism, hate, junk science and disinformation – weaponizing every societal fault line with relentless surveillance to maximize "engagement". This surveillance-for-profit business model is built on the con of our supposed consent. But forcing us to choose between allowing platforms and data brokers to feast on our personal data or being shut out from the benefits of the modern world is simply no choice at all.

The vast machinery of corporate surveillance not only abuses our right to privacy, but allows our data to be used against us, undermining our freedoms and enabling discrimination.

This unethical business model must be reined in globally, including by bringing an end to surveillance advertising that people never asked for and of which they are often unaware. Europe has made a start, with the Digital Services and Digital Markets Acts. Now these must be enforced in ways that compel platforms to de-risk their design, detox their algorithms and give users real control. Privacy and data rights, to date largely notional, must also be properly enforced. And advertisers must use their money and influence to protect their customers against a tech industry that is actively harming people.

End tech discrimination and treat people everywhere equally

Global tech companies afford people unequal rights and protection depending on their status, power, nationality, and language. We have seen the painful and destructive consequences of tech companies' failure to prioritize the safety of all people everywhere equally. Companies must be legally required to rigorously assess human rights risks in every country they seek to expand in, ensuring proportionate language and cultural competency. They must also be forced to bring their closed-door decisions on content moderation and algorithm changes into the light and end all special exemptions for those with the most power and reach. These safety, design, and product choices that affect billions of people cannot be left to corporations to decide. Transparency and accountability rules are an essential first step to reclaiming the internet for the public good.

Rebuild independent journalism as the antidote to tyranny

Big tech platforms have unleashed forces that are devastating independent media by swallowing up online advertising while simultaneously enabling a tech-fueled tsunami of lies and hate that drown out facts. For facts to stand a chance, we must end the amplification of disinformation by tech platforms. But this alone is not enough. Just 13% of the world's population can currently access a free press. If we are to hold power to account and protect journalists, we need unparalleled investment in a truly independent media persevering in situ or working in exile that ensures its sustainability while incentivizing compliance with ethical norms in journalism.

21st century newsrooms must also forge a new, distinct path, recognizing that to advance justice and rights, they must represent the diversity of the communities they serve. Governments must ensure the safety and independence of journalists who are increasingly being attacked, imprisoned, or killed on the frontlines of this war on facts.

We, as Nobel Laureates, from across the world, send a united message: together we can end this corporate and technological assault on our lives and liberties, but we must act now. It is time to implement the solutions we already have to rebuild journalism and reclaim the technological architecture of global conversation for all humanity.

We call on all rights-respecting democratic governments to:

1. Require tech companies to carry out independent human rights impact assessments that must be made public as well as demand transparency on all aspects of their business – from content moderation to algorithm impacts to data processing to integrity policies.
2. Protect citizens' right to privacy with robust data protection laws.
3. Publicly condemn abuses against the free press and journalists globally and commit funding and assistance to independent media and journalists under attack.

We call on the EU to:

4. Be ambitious in enforcing the Digital Services and Digital Markets Acts so these laws amount to more than just ‘new paperwork’ for the companies and instead force them to make changes to their business model, such as ending algorithmic amplification that threatens fundamental rights and spreads disinformation and hate, including in cases where the risks originate outside EU borders.
5. Urgently propose legislation to ban surveillance advertising, recognizing this practice is fundamentally incompatible with human rights.
6. Properly enforce the EU General Data Protection Regulation so that people’s data rights are finally made reality.
7. Include strong safeguards for journalists’ safety, media sustainability and democratic guarantees in the digital space in the forthcoming European Media Freedom Act.
8. Protect media freedom by cutting off disinformation upstream. This means there should be no special exemptions or carve-outs for any organisation or individual in any new technology or media legislation. With globalised information flows, this would give a blank check to those governments and non-state actors who produce industrial scale disinformation to harm democracies and polarise societies everywhere.
9. Challenge the extraordinary lobbying machinery, the astroturfing campaigns and recruitment revolving door between big tech companies and European government institutions.

We call on the UN to:

10. Create a special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General focused on the Safety of Journalists (SESJ) who would challenge the current status quo and finally raise the cost of crimes against journalists.

Signed by:

Dmitry Muratov, 2021 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa, 2021 Nobel Peace Prize laureate

Endorsed by:

1. Amnesty International, 1977 Nobel Peace Prize laureate
2. Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director, ICAN - the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, 2017 Nobel Peace Prize laureate
3. Kailash Satyarthi, 2014 Nobel Peace Prize laureate
4. Jody Williams, 1997 Nobel Peace Prize laureate
5. Prof. Joseph E. Stiglitz, 2001 Nobel Economics Prize laureate
6. Juan Manuel Santos, 2016 Nobel Peace Prize laureate
7. Leymah Gbowee, 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate
8. Nadia Murad, 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureate
9. Shirin Ebadi, 2003 Nobel Peace Prize laureate
10. Tawakkol Karman, 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate
11. Alexandra Geese, Member of the European Parliament
12. Dr. Anya Schiffrin, Director of the Technology, Media, and Communications specialization at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs
13. Bruce Mutsaers, Associate Professor, Media and Performance Studies, University of Utrecht
14. Can Dundar, Turkish journalist in exile
15. Carole Cadwalladr, Guardian & Observer journalist & co-founder, The Real Facebook Oversight Board
16. Christophe Deloire, Chair of the Forum on Information and Democracy

17. David Carroll, Associate Professor of Media Design, The New School
18. Frances Haugen, Facebook Whistleblower
19. Gerard Ryle, Director, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists
20. Irene Khan, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression and opinion
21. Julie Posetti, Deputy Vice President and Global Director of Research, International Center for Journalists
22. Khadija Patel, Chair of the International Press Institute
23. Marietje Schaake, Stanford Cyber Policy Center
24. Mogens Blicher Bjerregård, International Advisor, Danish Union of Journalists
25. Peter Pomerantsev, Senior Fellow, Johns Hopkins University
26. Paul Tang, Member of the European Parliament
27. Phumzile van Damme, Ethical Tech Activist and Former South Africa MP
28. Roger McNamee, former advisor to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg; author of Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe
29. Safiya Umoja Noble, MacArthur Fellow, Professor, and Author, Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism
30. Shoshana Zuboff, Author, The Age of Surveillance Capitalism; Professor Emeritus Harvard Business School; Co-Chair Steering Committee, International Observatory on Information and Democracy
31. Staffan I. Lindberg, Professor of Political Science, University of Gothenburg
32. Susie Alegre, Human Rights Lawyer and Author of Freedom to Think: The Long Struggle to Liberate Our Minds
33. Wendell Wallach, Co-Director AI and Equality Initiative, The Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs.
34. Access Now
35. Alliance4Europe
36. All Out Action Fund
37. ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights
38. Avaaz
39. BUKLOD CSSP
40. Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK
41. Center for Democracy and Technology
42. Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations
43. Centre for Peace Studies
44. Corporate Europe Observatory
45. Digitalcourage e.V.
46. Digital Society, Switzerland
47. Defend Democracy
48. Demos
49. Deutsche Vereinigung für Datenschutz (DVD)
50. digiQ
51. Digital Content Next
52. D64 - Zentrum für Digitalen Fortschritt (Center for Digital Progress)
53. Electronic Frontier Finland (Effi)
54. Elektronisk Forpost Norge
55. Estonian Human Rights Centre
56. European Center for Not-For-Profit Law (ECNL)
57. European Digital Rights (EDRi)
58. EU DisinfoLab
59. European Federation of Public Service Unions
60. Fair Vote
61. Freedom United
62. Free Expression Myanmar
63. Freemuse

64. Free Press (United States)
65. Foxglove
66. Global Project Against Hate and Extremism
67. Global Witness
68. Human Rights Watch
69. Hacked Off
70. HateAid
71. I Am Here International
72. In Defense of Human Rights and Dignity Movement (iDefend) Philippines
73. Irish Council of Civil Liberties
74. KaskoSan Roma Charity
75. Kofi Annan Foundation
76. Larger Us
77. Lie Detectors
78. Luminate
79. Missing Children Europe
80. MovePH
81. Movement Against Disinformation, Philippines
82. Nadia's Initiative
83. National Center on Race and Digital Justice (U.S.)
84. Open Britain
85. Open Rights Group
86. Panoptikon Foundation
87. People vs. Big Tech
88. Privacy International
89. Progressive Voice Myanmar
90. Rappler Inc.
91. Ranking Digital Rights
92. Reporters Sans Frontières
93. Simply Secure
94. SocietyInside
95. Stiftung Neue Verantwortung
96. Stichting the London Story
97. SUPERRR Lab
98. SumofUs
99. The Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties)
100. The Coalition for Women in Journalism
101. The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation
102. The Fritt Ord Foundation
103. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue
104. The Legal Resources Centre
105. The 'NEVER AGAIN' Association
106. The Real Facebook Oversight Board
107. The Signals Network
108. Transparency International EU
109. UCLA Center for Critical Internet Inquiry
110. Victims Advocate International
111. Waag
112. WeMove Europe
113. Wikimedia Deutschland
114. 5 Rights Foundation
115. #jesuislà
116. #ShePersisted

<https://peoplesbig.tech/10-point-plan>