MediaWell

News Item

Roundup: Perspectives on Social Media Regulation

November 15, 2019

Check out Mediawell's weekly roundup of content, focusing this week on various perspectives on social media regulation. See below for scholarly and news article excerpts and their sources.

Fervor Grows for Regulating Big Tech | The New York Times

> The time is now.
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> Government regulation, public pressure, worker action — all these and more are needed to rein in the big tech companies, which have been allowed to operate largely unhindered for too long.
>
> That was the view of most participants in the DealBook conference task force last week. The group of eight technology experts in the public and private sectors was moderated by Kara Swisher, a contributing opinion writer on technology at The New York Times and editor at large at Recode. They sought answers to the question: "How Big Should Big Tech Be?"
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> […]

Source: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/11/business/dealbook/regulating-big-tech-companies.html

UK shows how not to regulate tech | BBC

> Nobody said it was easy. But it shouldn't be this hard either.
>
> For the past three years, the clamour to better regulate the internet – that is, exercise democratic scrutiny over it – has grown exponentially. But in terms of new laws, the silence has been deafening.

> As Dr Kate Dommett, director of the Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics, in Sheffield, has written this week, two regulators (Electoral Commission and Information Commissioner's Office), eight parliamentary inquiries, and four reviews have looked into how better Britain might regulate the internet, in just the past few years.
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> […]

Source: https://www.bbc.com/news/election-2019-50350091

We must bridge the gap between technology and policymaking. Our future depends on it | World Economic Forum

> Technologists and policymakers largely inhabit two separate worlds. It's an old problem, one that the British scientist CP Snow identified in a 1959 essay entitled *The Two Cultures*. He called them sciences and humanities, and pointed to the split as a major hindrance to solving the world's problems. The essay was influential – but 60 years later, nothing has changed.
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Source: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/11/we-must-bridge-the-gap-between-technology-and-policy-our-future-depends-on-it/

'Filter Bubble' author Eli Pariser on why we need publicly owned social networks | The Verge

> Given the phenomenon it describes, it's perhaps appropriate that the concept of "filter bubbles" has turned out to be so polarizing. To believers, it's self-evident that social feeds mostly show people news that confirms' users prior beliefs, encouraging partisanship and tribalism. To skeptics, the phenomenon describes behavior that has little to do with tech and algorithms — and, they say, there's

> evidence that platforms like Facebook and Twitter introduce people to a broader set of views than they might otherwise encounter.
>
> To internet activist Eli Pariser, who coined the term and wrote a book on the subject, questions about how tech platforms are reshaping public life remain as relevant as ever. In a new TED talk, Pariser says social platforms should be rebuilt to serve the greater good, drawing on principles from urban planning. (Civic Signals, a NEW organization he co-founded with University of Texas at Austin professor Talia Stroud, aims to build new models that would do just that.)
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> […]

Source: https://www.theverge.com/interface/2019/11/12/20959479/eli-pariser-civic-signals-filter-bubble-q-a

How to Regulate (and Not Regulate) Social Media | SSRN

> To understand how to regulate social media you must first understand why you want to regulate it.
>
> We should regulate social media companies because they are key institutions in the twenty-first century digital public sphere. A public sphere does not work properly without trusted and trustworthy intermediate institutions that are guided by professional and public-regarding norms.
>
> The current economic incentives of social media companies hinder them from playing this crucial role and lead them to adopt policies and practices that actually undermine the health and vibrancy of the digital public sphere.
>
> […]

Source: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3484114

How to Regulate the Internet | Project Syndicate

> WASHINGTON, DC – The only topic uniting right and left in the United States these days is “techlash”: everyone seems to agree that the time has come for federal regulation of digital platforms. The question is no longer if, but how.

> Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives and the highest-ranking Democratic federal official, recently pushed back against her big-tech San Francisco constituency, declaring that “the era of self-regulation is over.” President Donald J. Trump is holding a summit on social media at the White House this week, and Republican Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri has introduced legislation threatening the platforms’ protection from immunity if they demonstrate “politically biased” moderation.
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> […]

Source: https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/digital-platforms-disinformation-new-regulator-by-karen-kornbluh-1-and-ellen-p-goodman-2019-07

CNBC’s full interview with Sen. Mark Warner on regulating Big Tech | CNBC

> Sen. Mark Warner (D—Va.) joins “Squawk Box” to discuss his thoughts on the role Congress has in regulating Big Tech companies such as Google and Facebook as well as why he’s pushing back on Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook’s political advertising policies.
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> […]

Source: https://www.cnbc.com/video/2019/11/13/cnbcs-full-interview-with-sen-mark-warner-on-regulating-big-tech.html