

Book Review: Confronting Misinformation in the Age of Cheap Speech | Lawfare

By Jeff Kosseff

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A review of Richard L. Hasen, “Cheap Speech: How Disinformation Poisons Our Politics—and How to Cure It” (Yale University Press, 2022).

In 1995, Eugene Volokh published a law review article in which he predicted that the rapidly growing internet would “dramatically reduce the costs of distributing speech” and that “the new media order that these technologies will bring will be much more democratic and diverse than the environment we see now.” The concept, which Volokh dubbed “cheap speech,” would mean that “far more speakers—rich and poor, popular and not, banal and avant garde—will be able to make their work available to all.”

To say that Volokh’s article was prophetic would be an understatement. More than a quarter-century later, the cheap speech that Volokh predicted has upended commerce, art, politics, news and community. Many volumes can and should be written about the effects of the rapid evolution of cheap speech on discrete areas of American life.

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