

# Democracy Divided: Countering Disinformation and Hate in the Digital Public Sphere | Public Policy Forum, University of British Columbia

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Democracy has been made vulnerable to attack by hate speech and disinformation. Never before has the digital news sphere been so fragmented, and social marketing tools on Facebook and elsewhere on the Internet are part of this offensive. Policy must be implemented to reconcile freedom of speech & freedom of the press with these online news threats to democracy.

This report flows from a two-day workshop the Public Policy Forum and University of British Columbia [organized in April 2018](#). It contains an analysis of the state of the internet in 2018, particularly as it relates to the relationship among large platform companies, their audiences and democracy. The report, written by PPF President Edward Greenspon and University of British Columbia professor Taylor Owen, offers sets of policy options for governments to consider in responding to the rapid emergence of digital risks to democratic institutions and social cohesion. The internet represents the greatest advance in communications since the printing press, but its consolidation by a handful of giant global companies and the exploitation of its vulnerabilities by individuals and organizations intent on destabilizing our democracy have reversed its early promise and challenged the public interest. This report and the options offered up represent an initial attempt to help policy-makers weigh possible policy responses aimed at ensuring the internet remains a force that informs and connects.

Source: [Democracy Divided: Countering Disinformation and Hate in the Digital Public Sphere | Public Policy Forum, University of British Columbia](#)