

Governing Platforms after COVID-19 | Centre for International Governance Innovation

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The search for trusted information in a crisis exposes the architecture of power at the intersection of media, society and government — and it's not what it used to be. Newspapers and broadcasters dedicated to public service journalism remain central to the media landscape, but they are no longer the gatekeepers of the information distributed in society. For better and (mostly) worse, that role is now played by digital media platforms such as Google and Facebook. The products and services these platform companies offer have no pretense to serve the public good. When it comes to media, they are built to maximize corporate profit at the expense of any other interest. The editorial role is now played by complex algorithms. They operate at a scale that makes any form of content moderation immensely challenging and almost certainly devoid of local context, culture and histories. Internet platforms are not designed to give us quality information; they are calibrated to maximize attention capture. The result is that conspiracy theories about the pandemic are flooding Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. It turns out that replacing newsroom editors with advertising technology is a terrible deal for democracy and society.

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