

Chapter 10

Retaking the Reins

Currently, humans risk becoming similar to domesticated animals. We have bred docile cows that produce enormous amounts of milk but are otherwise far inferior to their wild ancestors. They are less agile, less curious, and less resourceful. We are now creating tame humans who produce enormous amounts of data and function as efficient chips in a huge data-processing mechanism, but they hardly maximize their human potential. If we are not careful, we will end up with downgraded humans misusing upgraded computers to wreak havoc on themselves and on the world.

Yuval Noah Harari

Throughout history every single time something has gotten better is because somebody has come along to say this is stupid, we can do better. [Like] it's the critics that drive improvement, it's the critics who are the true optimists.

Jaron Lanier

Make Digital Get Again

Beginning in the early months of 2020, the arrival of the Covid-19 coronavirus heralded a new era of uncertainty and anxiety for most people across the world. This unprecedented pandemic event led to an almost universal global economic and social slowdown and then shutdown, with many confined to their homes and their immediate locality for extended periods of time. In these uncertain times, a new appreciation for the way digital information and communication technology (ICT) has kept us all closer our family, friends, neighbours and work, albeit virtually, has emerged. In acknowledging the ways and means we now use our digital technologies to remain connected, it may appear somewhat trite to confront and challenge some of the darker sides of this new digital reality and not just simply

**The Social, Cultural and Environmental Costs of Hyper-Connectivity:
Sleeping Through the Revolution, 155–165**



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accept and embrace it for what it is, or rather what we are told it is. But it is precisely because our digital technologies have proved invaluable in our time of need that we must double down on our efforts to protect and nurture the integrity and veracity of these technologies, and the global interconnected network, in our everyday lives so that it serves the common good and can truly be an instrument for human flourishing. This is not the case at this moment in time. A handful of big tech corporations have come to dominate the online landscape of many developed and developing countries, and despite the rhetoric of social responsibility and virtuousness, many of the practices employed by these digital behemoths are anticompetitive and frequently damaging to society and the democratic process, the environment and the economic prospects of early digital technology innovators and entrepreneurs. As the pressure increases from many angles of the digital tech debate on these corporate giants, a slow realisation of how they are now perceived in many sectors of society may well be hitting home. ‘Don’t be evil’ is the phrase adopted in Google’s original corporate code of conduct, which it adopted as the motto for the company. The motto attracted its fair share of criticism for being overly ambiguous and potentially hypocritical,¹ and when Alphabet took over as Google’s new holding company, it immediately dropped the *don’t be evil* mantra. Alphabet adopted a somewhat modified version of the motto, ‘do the right thing’, but the question remains to be asked: do the right thing for whom?²

Doing Nothing Is Not an Option

The mythology and star quality that surrounds digital ICT and big tech corporations as the beacon of progress has foundered of late, just as it did for the robber barons of the late nineteenth century, and a new era of antitrust legislation may well be on the way. Many politicians, scholars, lawmakers, journalists and the public at large have expressed real concerns that big tech has become too big and too powerful, and critics have now called for a renewal of stringent antitrust enforcement; more assertive antitrust authorities; and a general rebalancing of the economic, social and political power of their megacorporations. In July 2020, the US federal government turned its full investigative powers and attention to examining the world’s biggest technology companies, building upon a growing backlash against the tech sector that has been mounting over the last few years.³ Lawmakers in the House Judiciary committee’s antitrust subcommittee repeatedly accused the corporate leaders of Facebook, Amazon, Google and

¹Bogost, I. (2013). What is “Evil” to Google? *The Atlantic*, October 15. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/10/what-is-evil-to-google/280573/>

²Facebook’s motto has also changed many times since that company was founded. At first, it was ‘Move Fast and Break Things’. After years of growth and developers dealing with bugs, it became ‘Move Fast and Build Things’. Then in 2014, it became the much less catchy ‘Move Fast with Stable Infra’ before finally simply becoming ‘Move Fast’.

³Wakabayashi, D., Benner, K., & Lohr, S. (2020). Justice Department opens antitrust review of big tech companies. *The New York Times*, July 23. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/23/technology/justice-department-tech-antitrust.html>

Apple of engaging in anticompetitive and monopolistic practices that pose a real threat to free markets and digital technology innovation. In December 2020, the attorney generals of more than 30 US states hit Google with a major antitrust lawsuit, accusing the tech company of illegally protecting a monopoly over its search business.⁴ This followed on from lawsuits initiated against Facebook that could ultimately break up that company and charges brought by the European Union against Amazon for their monopoly practices.⁵ But much more international cooperation is required on this issue.

One of the main lessons we must learn from the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic of 2020 and 2021 must be the interconnectedness of our world and that acting alone in such circumstances is both futile and foolhardy. In a highly mobile hyperconnected world, nations and regions must act in unison in tackling the most pressing social and ecological issues facing humanity. Top of this list of concerns requiring global coordinated action is the climate emergency, but controlling and regulating unfettered transnational digital corporations must also be high on our list of priorities. The power that just a few individuals in the tech sector now have can be astounding to behold at times. Regardless of the rights and wrongs of the issues involved, Twitter's decision to permanently suspend Donald Trump's account after a decision a day earlier by Facebook to ban the president at least through the end of his term was a watershed moment in the history of social media and an example of where power now resides.⁶ Both organisations had spent years defending Mr Trump's continued presence on their social media platforms, only to change course days before the end of his presidency effectively muzzling the president of the United States, the most powerful nation on the planet. Such actions have reignited debates on free speech and censorship and big tech role as primary arbitrators in such decision-making.

So while these corporations may have their backs to the wall at this moment in time, they will be working hard on their survival strategies, and some worry that at the end of the coronavirus crisis, these big tech giants could have all the power and absolutely none of the accountability.⁷ The power and influence of big tech has increased during the months of the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic, and they may well have now become 'too big to fail' because of inaction by politicians and lawmakers over the last number of years. A recent Oxford University

⁴Paul, K. (2020). 'This is big': US lawmakers take aim at once-untouchable big tech. *The Guardian*, December 19. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/dec/18/google-facebook-antitrust-lawsuits-big-tech>

⁵Swartz, J. (2021). Big tech has an antitrust target on its back, and it is only going to get bigger. *MSN*, January 2. Retrieved from <https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/companies/big-tech-has-an-antitrust-target-on-its-back-heres-why-that-should-concern-investors/ar-BB1bP8YM>

⁶Roose, K. (2020). In pulling Trump's megaphone, Twitter shows where power now lies. *The New York Times*, January 9. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/09/technology/trump-twitter-ban.html>

⁷Swisher, K. (2020). The immunity of the tech giants. *The New York Times*, May 3. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/opinion/tech-companies-coronavirus.html>

study suggested just this point and that, like the banks and financial institutions in the 2008 economic crisis, these tech giants have grown so enormous that failure would be so highly disruptive and damaging to society that they should be preserved and protected.⁸ The study also called for new regulations to protect users and society in the event of a possible collapse. So, what should the way forward for digital ICT be and how can we, as a society, rebuild our attention and efforts in a way that digital technology serves not just the few but the many. Such digital technologies should not lead to a cognitive redundancy or diminish our prospects for well-being but instead lead to growing and sustaining our humanity while being to the forefront in protecting our environment. This final chapter will outline some key guiding principles that can help to reignite a genuine digital technology revolution that would benefit everyone and our overall anthropological and ecological development.

Private data are private and personal information and should be subject to the same protection as our private and personal property. One of the main ways big tech has been able to become so powerful over the past decade has been through the use, mismanagement, manipulation and misuse of personal data, and the monetarisation of such data has, and continues, to be more and more problematic and damaging to the individual and society over time. The true extent of the value of our own personal information to these digital goliaths is widely underestimated by users of these platforms, and such value must receive much more recognition and protection in regulation and law than heretofore. Our data are just that, ours, and no terms and conditions trickery should be permitted to change that fact. It must become mandatory for big tech to ask for permission every time they wish to use our personal information and to be much more upfront and transparent about the reasons and purpose for using such data. Legal safeguards must be forthcoming to protect an individual's right to the ownership of their own personal data, and this must be enshrined in national and international laws. Big tech cannot be trusted to protect or do the right thing by such data, as evident in their past actions and deeds. While these digital behemoths grow bigger and wealthier by monetarising and weaponising enormous quantities of aggregated personal data, the social consequences of their actions are trivialised or dismissed outright. If such personal data are set to continue to be the capital that powers and shapes the digital economy and corporate world, then its ownership and protection must become a basic human right. Data rights are human rights, and the European Union would tend to agree as it believes the protection of personal information is the same as other fundamental rights, including the right to freedom of expression. Your personal data are your private information and are closely linked with your private life. Human rights protect your privacy. Therefore, any activity using or misusing your personal data interferes with your human right to a private life. Big tech must outline the exact purpose for which they wish to use your personal data, and if access is granted must adequately compensate the individual for the use of such important resource. After all, if

⁸Öhman and Aggarwal (2020).

money is to be made from the content we create online, then it is only fair and proper that we share in the fruits of such endeavours.

The digital oligopoly must be broken up in a controlled and strategic manner in order to protect and nurture digital technological innovation, invention and creativity that supports a digital environment of healthy competitiveness. Big tech oligopolies have now amassed too much power over our society, economy and environment and regularly devour and destroy new and innovative competition, damage or shut down many small businesses and stifle digital innovation. They have been able to accomplish such dominance by adopting monopoly business models, through a series of mergers, and by using proprietary marketplaces in which the partisan promotion of their own products and services undermines and crushes such competition. Nearly two decades after the landmark Microsoft antitrust case, big tech companies have now more market power than ever before. Amazon has close to 50 per cent of all online retail spend in the United States⁹ and has long controlled pricing decisions on goods it buys and resells on its platform and manipulated the prices of other people's products for its own purposes and gain. And as they and other digital behemoths continue to grow and expand, they continue to vacuum-up new and promising start-ups that may have the potential to challenge big tech's dominance sometime in the future. Facebook, for example, scooped up WhatsApp for nearly \$20 billion when it was merely five years in existence with a staff of just 50 and Instagram for \$1 billion in 2012 when that company had only 13 employees. Documents show that Facebook bought Instagram to quash competition and because they were concerned about the fast-growing company's potential to turn users away from their own platform.¹⁰ To date, Facebook has acquired some 82 other companies over a 15-year period. The effect of all these mergers and acquisitions by large tech giants is that they are hindering and blocking future competition and innovation in the industry, while exerting undue power and influence over some smaller nation states and failing to pay their fair share of tax. Regulation against these anticompetitive strategies will stimulate innovation by giving small firms a fair chance to sink or swim instead of being immediately scooped up or crushed by their larger predatory competitors.

While there are recent signs of moves against these digital monopolies, traditionally the United States has been slow to take strong action against these big tech companies. In contrast, the European Union and regulators from many of its member countries have been strongly pressing these corporations to change policies that are in violation of antitrust laws or that pose serious risks to user privacy. Five of the most valuable US companies – Alphabet, Facebook, Amazon, Apple and Microsoft – have already faced regulatory action in Europe, and it's

⁹Day, M., & Gu, J. (2019). The enormous numbers behind Amazon's market reach. *Bloomberg*, March 27. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2019-amazon-reach-across-markets/>

¹⁰Frier, S. (2020). Documents show Facebook bought Instagram to quash competitor. *Bloomberg*, July 29. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-29/documents-show-facebook-bought-instagram-to-quash-competitor>

likely that most pressure will continue to come from Europe.¹¹ Facebook's official response to the Irish Data Protection Commission's¹² preliminary decision on the company's data transfers to the United States was to throw a legal 'hissy fit', and in a sworn court affidavit, Yvonne Cunnane, Facebook's Ireland's head of data protection and associate general counsel, threatened that Facebook and Instagram may well pull all of its services from European users in order to fully comply with data protection parameters laid out in the Schrems decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union.¹³ In response to one of the probing questions asked at the US Congress's House Judiciary Committee of Google and Amazon involving accusations that they used their dominant platform positions to scoop up data about competitors in a way that gave them an unfair advantage, Jeff Bezos testified that he could not guarantee that the company had not accessed seller data to make competing products, an allegation that the company and its executives had previously denied.¹⁴ In November 2020, the European Union charged Amazon with damaging retail competition, accusing the online giant of using its size, power and data to give it an unfair advantage over smaller merchants that sell on its online platform.¹⁵ It is also argued that even if one of these big tech companies attained its dominant position without employing anticompetitive practices, there is still no guarantee that it will continue to use that power for good or even for the benefit of its own users and consumers.¹⁶ Strategically breaking up this digital oligopoly will allow us reboot the digital tech revolution for the betterment of the industry and the population it serves, but we need some agreed guiding principles to nurture and protect this new divergence and rebirth.

¹¹Relihan, T. (2018). Will regulating big tech stifle innovation? *MIT Management Sloan School*, September 27. Retrieved from <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/will-regulating-big-tech-stifle-innovation>

¹²The Irish Data Protection Commission (DPC) is the national independent authority responsible for upholding the fundamental right of individuals in the EU to have their personal data protected. The DPC is the Irish supervisory authority for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and has functions and powers related to other important regulatory frameworks including the EU Directive known as the Law Enforcement Directive.

¹³Lillington, K. (2020). Will Facebook walk away from European market after data protection "hissy fit"? *The Irish Times*, September 24. Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/technology/will-facebook-walk-away-from-european-market-after-data-protection-hissy-fit-1.4362678>

¹⁴Online platforms and market power, part 6: Examining the dominance of Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google. (2020). *The House Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law*, July 29. Retrieved from <https://judiciary.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=3113>.

¹⁵Porter, J. (2020). Amazon accused of EU antitrust violation over Marketplace data. for *The Verge*, November 10. Retrieved from <https://www.theverge.com/2020/11/10/21558119/amazon-european-union-antitrust-charges-competition-commission-margrethe-vestager>

¹⁶Van Reenen (2018).

The digital technology sector must adopt a binding moral, ethical and ecological code of practice that enshrines their corporate societal and environmental responsibility to avoid social and planetary harm. There is currently an absence of internationally mandatory or enforceable codes of practice for how the digital tech sector should conduct itself, and so they are free to use the vast power and influence they have accumulated over the past two decades in whatever way suits their corporate agendas. Faced with the growing possibility of antitrust actions and legislation to curb their powers, the big four digital technology companies – Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google – have instead amassed an army of lobbyists and spent a combined \$55 million on lobbying in Washington in 2018 alone.¹⁷ In July 2020, when the Australian government released the first draft of a new code of conduct managing the way tech giants should deal with local media companies, specifically requiring them to pay for the content others had created,¹⁸ Google reacted by suggesting that the new code would give news media an unfair advantage over all other websites, as well as threaten Google’s free services. This perpetuates a strongly held ‘cuckoo’ approach of ‘ask for forgiveness not permission’ for the content others create that is pervasive throughout the digital tech sector. Yet Google and the other big tech goliaths themselves guard their own content and proprietary software with the strength and legal muscle only a mega-corporation of their size can muster. Together with Facebook, Google have now captured about two thirds of all online advertisement revenue, and this percentage continues to grow while newspapers, magazines and other online news publications – the content creators – have been forced to laid off tens of thousands of reporters and editors because the bulk of such advertising revenue has been diverted into the coffers of big tech.¹⁹ In other lucrative parts of their business model, Google, Facebook and others continue to build a business on their ability to manipulate individuals’ thoughts and perceptions, and fears and desires, by capitalising on all our personal data. All the while, if you want Amazon to carry your goods on their platform, you must pay whatever Amazon demands to handle them, as well as whatever it demands to advertise them to buyers, otherwise you stand to be crushed by their dominant market position and the sheer weight they can bring to bear on competition.

Digital social media is also giving voice to those who are deeply anti-science and deny the scientific consensus of anthropogenic climate change. Such individuals deny science in general because they view it as progressive, modern and

¹⁷Kang, C., & Vogel, K. P. (2019). Tech giants amass a lobbying army for an epic Washington Battle. *The New York Times*, June 5. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/05/us/politics/amazon-apple-facebook-google-lobbying.html>

¹⁸News media bargaining code. (2020). *Australian Competition & Consumer Commission*, July 31. Retrieved from <https://www.accc.gov.au/focus-areas/digital-platforms/news-media-bargaining-code/draft-legislation>

¹⁹Lynn, B. C. (2020). The big tech extortion racket: How Google, Amazon, and Facebook control our lives. *Harper*, September. Retrieved from <https://harpers.org/archive/2020/09/the-big-tech-extortion-racket/>

universal and because this comes into direct conflict with their own emotional response to place, patriotism and rational thought. The bizarre result of such a world view means that the scientific community are regularly labelled ‘sheep’, ‘asleep’, ‘idiots’ and ‘foolish’ on social media by those who reject logic and evidence-based reasoning. It is absurd that the unsubstantiated meanderings of the ignorant²⁰ is given equal billing to that of the career climatologist on the subject of climate change, and that social media platforms do nothing about this misbalance and distortion of the facts. Do not believe digital big tech when they maintain they cannot do anything about what their users post. They are very capable and adapt at blocking and removing pornography from their platforms but simply do not show the same will to block lies and untruths when it comes to climate change and general science. The digital tech sector must re-orientate their business models and use their expansive knowledge, innovation and expertise to focus on creating digital technology that protects the environment and aims to maximise human well-being and flourishing and strives to eliminate misinformation and falsehoods that intentionally and malevolently undermines our trust in the key institutions of society and democracy. Heretofore, they have been unwilling and uncooperative in articulating such a vision for their industry in any enforceable and binding code of practice or conduct. Decisions on such a vision and self-regulation must now be taken out of their hands.

It is our duty and responsibility, as global citizens, to understand and question the aims and objectives of the digital tech sector and to push for regulation when harmful social or environmental activities become apparent, or market competitiveness is threatened. In the end, it is all our responsibility, as global digital citizens, to hold the tech industry to account and not be hoodwinked into simply believing the narrative of ‘do[ing] no evil’. Big tech has every right to make money for their shareholders in the capitalist economic system that prevails in many developed nations, but they must operate to the moral and ethical rules of the society that they draw their revenue and legitimacy from. As a society, we must become much more aware of the dangers that are emerging, and will continue to grow, from the amassing of so much power and influence that big tech has managed to accrue over the past decade, how they have conducted themselves in amassing such power and the likelihood of their monopolist behaviours changing in the short and medium terms. Early signs of positive corporate behavioural change are not promising. When confronted by the realities of their actions, big tech has shown it will lobby and bluster its way out of its obligations as responsible corporate entities. So, it is our duty not to be fooled by the narrative emanating from the tech industry and instead do our duty as national and global citizens to hold these big corporations to account when they threaten our societal well-being; to become active ‘digital citizens’ in a world where we protect the best digital ICT has to offer and reject the practices that

²⁰The word ‘ignorant’ is used here not as a form of abuse but in its real definition as resulting from or showing a lack of knowledge or intelligence on a particular subject matter.

threaten our environment, damage our democracies, diminish our cognitive abilities and harm our overall happiness and sense of well-being. Digital technologies will have a crucial role to play in our lives in the medium term, but we must be the arbiters of its overall trajectory and demand from our politicians, legislators and decision-makers that they do the right thing by their citizens rather than buckled under the weight of the tech sector's corporate lobby groups and business self-interests.

But we can take heart that the tide might well be turning with regard to holding big tech to account and making the digital ICT landscape more conducive to serving our health and well-being needs into the twenty-first century. Many former tech luminaries have begun, and have continued, to magnify their criticisms of the behaviours of the digital technology industry. The former Googler Tristan Harris now fronts the Center for Humane Technology, whose website tagline suggests that 'as long as social media companies profit from outrage, confusion, addiction, and depression, our well-being and democracy will continue to be at risk'.²¹ Tech visionary Jaron Lanier has long warned us about the direction digital technology was taking and about the damage our addiction to social media can inflict upon us. His most recent work sets out a clear and definitive account of the harm he feels companies like Twitter, Facebook and Google do to society in general and to our individual psyches.²² He previously pointed to the risks to society from today's faulty 'information economy' in which corporations with the biggest computers and storage facilities, using data they have scooped up for free from everyone else, are able to calculate ways to avoid risk, thus making society riskers for everybody else.²³ Other former digital tech insiders, such as Andrew Keen and Wendy Liu, have given us very personal accounts of their experiences and ultimate rejection of the prevailing digital regime, while people like the Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes have called for the US government to break up that company claiming it is a 'powerful monopoly' in which Mark Zuckerberg has 'unchecked power' and influence 'far beyond that of anyone else in the private sector or in government'.²⁴

The 2020 docudrama *The Social Dilemma* features a host of digital tech luminaries and explores the damage social media has caused to society, focusing on its exploitation of its users for financial gain through surveillance capitalism and data mining, how its design is meant to nurture an addiction, its use in politics, its effect on mental health and its role in spreading conspiracy theories and misinformation.²⁵ Scholarly tech critics such as Evgeny Morozov, Shoshana

²¹Center for Humane Technology. Retrieved from <https://www.humanetech.com/>

²²Lanier (2018).

²³Lanier (2015).

²⁴Hughes, C. (2019). It's time to break up Facebook. *The New York Times*, May 9. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/09/opinion/sunday/chris-hughes-facebook-zuckerberg.html>

²⁵See 'The social dilemma' directed by Jeff Orlowski and written by Orlowski, Davis Coombe and Vickie Curtis. Retrieved from <https://www.thesocialdilemma.com/>

Zuboff, Tim Wu and Sherry Turkle, among others, have worked diligently over the past number of years to tackle the myths and narratives of the faux virtues of digital technology that emanates from big tech and have created new rallying cries for those inside and outside the industry in which healthy debate and discussion about the future direction of the sector can be accommodated. The Contract for the Web was created by representatives from over 80 organisations – representing governments, companies and civil society – and sets out commitments to guide future digital policy agendas.²⁶ To achieve the contract's goals, governments, companies, civil society and individuals are asked to commit to sustained policy development, advocacy and implementation of the contract, which includes the following principles: that it ensures everyone can connect to the internet, that it is kept available at all times, and that people's fundamental online privacy and data rights are both respected and protected.

Epilogue

The world is a better place because of digital ICT and, regardless, the genie is out of the bottle, and such technology will remain with us for the foreseeable future. But as a society, we never did engage in the type of public debates that would allow us discuss and plot the trajectory of its development so that it happens in a manner that serves humanity and the planet and that limits or eliminates human suffering and ecological destruction. This text, it is hoped, has added to the discussions around digital technology and digitalisation and its role in our lives, in pursuance of a more humane and responsive digital technology future. The notion of value-neutral digital technology is a myth; such technology embodies the values and principles of those who code, advance and, ultimately, control its development. Online platforms and software that uses real-world data merely recycle similar biases that exist in the real world. It has been a case of deflection, subterfuge and deceit on behalf of big tech to point to governments, regulators and other countries as the villains: those who would threaten the 'freedom of the internet', all the while they themselves amassed control of the network that now appears almost impossible to disrupt or end. 'If you look at where the top technology companies come from, a decade ago the vast majority were American. Today, almost half are Chinese', Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg said in his opening remarks at the hearings of the House Judiciary Committee's antitrust subcommittee.²⁷ He claimed, 'there's no guarantee our values will win out', and that limiting Facebook's power, he implied, would only play into Beijing's hands. Zuckerberg and the other big tech executives returned to the spectre of Chinese technological dominance more than 30 times over the course of the afternoon, according

²⁶See 'Contract for the web'. Retrieved from <https://contractfortheweb.org/>

²⁷Goldberg, C. (2020). To counter China online, regulate big tech. *World Politics Review*, August 26. Retrieved from <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29018/to-counter-china-online-regulate-big-tech>

to a *New York Times* tally.²⁸ But competing with China on a level playfield will not happen because of the regulation of big tech, instead it can only occur through a fair balance between a free and open online environment and protecting privacy and democratic institutions on the other.²⁹ It requires promoting a vision of a truly open and inclusive online environment and that will require meaningful regulations to restrict the power and overreach of current tech giants. A free and open internet that allows us access to the vast stores of knowledge while respecting and protecting our private data is worth fighting for, and the beginning of such a fight starts with a deeper understanding of the issues and problems that currently exists within the digital tech industry and the technology and devices we use to harness this critical resource. It is not enough to just connect the world; we must redouble our efforts to make sure it is a network worth connecting to in the first instance.

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²⁸Ovide, S. (2020). Lawmakers from both sides take aim at big tech executives. *The New York Times*, July 29. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/07/29/technology/tech-ceos-hearing-testimony>

²⁹Goldberg, C. (2020). To counter China online, regulate big tech. *World Politics Review*, August 26. Retrieved from <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29018/to-counter-china-online-regulate-big-tech>