

# How the Censorship Industry Works, and How We Can Stop It

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June 11, 2023

## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › The internet was likely not intended to remain free forever. The intention for it to be used as a totalitarian tool was baked in from the start
- › Google started as a DARPA grant and was part of the CIA's and NSA's digital data program, the purpose of which was to conduct "birds of a feather" mapping online so that certain groups could be neutralized
- › All of the early internet freedom technologies of the '90s were funded by the Pentagon and the State Department. They were developed by the intelligence community as an insurgency tool – a means to help dissident groups in foreign countries to develop a pro-U.S. stance and evade state-controlled media. Now, these same technologies have been turned against the American public, and are used to control public discourse
- › In the past, censorship was a laborious task that could only be done after the fact. Artificial intelligence has radically altered the censorship industry. AI programs can now censor information en masse, based on the language used, and prevent it from being seen at all
- › One of the most effective strategies that would have immediate effect would be to strip the censorship industry of its government funding. The House controls the purse strings of the federal government, so the House Appropriations Committee has the power to end the funding of government-sponsored censorship

In this video, I interview Mike Benz, executive director for the Foundation for Freedom Online. Benz started off as a corporate lawyer representing tech and media companies before joining the Trump administration, where he worked as a speech writer for Dr. Ben Carson, the former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and President Trump.

He also advised on economic development policy. He then joined the State Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Communications and Information Technology. There, he ran the cyber desks at state, meaning all things having to do with the internet and foreign policy.

*“This is toward the end of 2020, which was a really fascinating time to witness the merger, in many respects, of big government and big tech companies themselves,” he says. “I had grown up, I think, like many Americans, with a belief that the First Amendment protected you against government censorship.*

*The terms of engagement that we had enjoyed from 1991, when the worldwide web rolled out, until 2016, the election in the U.S. and Brexit in the U.K., which is, really, the first political event where the election was determined, in many respects, by momentum on the internet.*

*There was that 25-year golden period where the idea of being censored by a private sector company, let alone the government, was considered something, to me, very deeply anathema to the American experience.*

*What I witnessed at the State Department – because I was at the desk, basically, that Google and Facebook would call when they wanted favors abroad, when they wanted American protection or American policies to preserve their dominance in Europe, or in Asia or in Latin America.*

*And the U.S. government was doing favors for these tech companies while the tech companies were censoring the people who voted for the government. It was a complete betrayal of whatever social contract typically underlies the public-private partnership.”*

# The Internet Was Founded by the National Security State

Ostensibly, the rapid expansion of censorship started post-2016, but you can make a strong argument that the internet was never intended to remain free forever. Rather, the intention for it to be used as a totalitarian tool was likely baked in from the start when the national security state founded it in 1968.

The worldwide web, which is the user interface, was launched in 1991, and my suspicion is that the public internet was seeded and allowed to grow in order to capture and make the most of the population dependent upon it, knowing that it would be the most effective social engineering tool ever conceived. Benz comments:

*"I totally agree ... A lot of people, in trying to understand what's happening with the net censorship, say 'We had this free internet, and then suddenly there was this age of censorship and the national security state got involved at the censorship side.'*

*But when you retrace the history, internet freedom itself was actually a national security state imperative. The internet itself is a product of a counterinsurgency necessity by the Pentagon to manage information during the 1960s, particularly to aggregate social science data. And then, it was privatized.*

*Opening it up to all comers in the private sector, it was handed off from DARPA [the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] to the National Science Foundation, and then went through a series of universities on the infrastructure side.*

*And then, right out of the gate in 1991, you had the Cold War coming to an end, and then simultaneously, you had this profusion of Pentagon-funded internet freedom technologies. You had things like VPNs, encrypted chat, TOR.*

*All of the early internet freedom technologies of the '90s were funded by the Pentagon, the State Department, and developed by the intelligence community, primarily, as a way of using internet freedom as a means to help dissident*

*groups in foreign countries be able to develop a pro-U.S. beachhead, because it was a way to evade state-controlled media.*

*This was, basically, an insurgency tool for the U.S. government, in the same way that Voice of America and Radio Free Liberty, and Radio Free Europe were tools of the CIA in the Cold War, to beam in, basically, pro-U.S. content to populations in foreign countries in order to sway them towards U.S. interests. It was a way of managing the world empire.*

*The internet served the same purpose, and it couldn't be done if it was called a Pentagon operation, a State Department or CIA operation. But all of the tech companies themselves are products of that. Google started as a DARPA grant that was obtained at Stanford by Sergey Brin and Larry Page.*

*In 1995, they were part of the CIA and NSA's [National Security Agency's] massive digital data program. They had their monthly meetings with their CIA and NSA advisers for that program, where the express stated purpose was for the CIA and NSA to be able to map so-called 'Birds of a feather' online ... so that they could be neutralized."*

## **How It All Began**

As noted by Benz, the idea of having the intelligence community map political "Birds of a Feather" communities in order to either mobilize or neutralize them was (and still is) justified in the name of counterterrorism. Nowadays, as we've seen during the pandemic, it's used to control public discourse, suppress truth, and promote propaganda angles.

The technology used to control public discourse is an artificial intelligence (AI) technique called natural language processing (NLP). It's a way of aggregating everyone who believes a certain thing online into community databases based on the words they use, the hashtags, the slogans and images.

*“Emerging narratives, all manner of metadata affiliations, all that can be aggregated to create a topographical network map of what you believe in and who you're associated with, so that it can all be turned down in a fast, precise and comprehensive manner by content moderation teams, because they're all birds of the same feather,”* Benz explains.

*“The fact that this grew out of the U.S. National Security state, which is running the show, essentially, today, to me says that there's a continuation between the internet freedom and internet censorship. They simply switched from one side of the chess board to the other.”*

## **What Is the National Security State?**

For clarity, when Benz talks about the “National Security State,” what he’s referring to are the institutions that uphold the rules-based international order. Domestically, that includes the Pentagon, State Department, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), certain aspects of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the 17 intelligence agencies.

Of those, the Pentagon, State Department and the intelligence community (IC) are the three central ones that have managed the American world empire since the 1940s. None of them are supposed to be able to operate domestically, but in a sense their power has expanded so much that they essentially control domestic affairs.

As explained by Benz, the Pentagon, State Department and IC are not supposed to be able to operate domestically. “But in a sense, they really control domestic affairs, because their power has expanded so much that they've developed an extraordinary laundering apparatus to be able to fund international institutions that then boomerang back home and effectively control much of domestic political affairs, including discourse on the internet.”

As for the CIA, it was created in 1947 under the National Security Act. It was created as a cloak-and-dagger mechanism, to do things the State Department wanted done but

couldn't get caught doing due to the diplomatic repercussions – things like election rigging, assassinations, media control, bribery and other subversion tactics.

## **The Birth of Hybrid Warfare**

Benz continues his explanation of how and why internet censorship emerged when it did:

*“So, there's the U.S. National Security State, and then there's the transatlantic one involving NATO. The story of Western government involvement in internet censorship really started after the 2014 Crimea annexation, which was the biggest foreign policy humiliation of the Obama era.*

*Atlanta's School of Foreign Policy was deeply inflamed by this event and blamed the fact that there were these breakaway Russia-supporting entities in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea on a failure to penetrate their media, and this idea that hearts and minds were being swung towards the Russian side because of pro-Russian content online.*

*NATO then declared this doctrine of so-called hybrid warfare – this idea that Russia had won Crimea not by a military annexation, but by winning, illicitly in a sense, the hearts and minds of Crimeans through the use of their propaganda. And the doctrine of hybrid warfare, born in 2014, was this idea that war was no longer a kinetic thing.*

*There hadn't been a kinetic war in Europe since World War II. Instead, it had moved sub-kinetic into the hearts and minds of the people. In fact, NATO announced a doctrine after 2014 called 'From tanks to tweets,' where it shifted its focus, explicitly, from kinetic warfare to social media opinions online.*

*Brexit, which happened in June 2016 ... was blamed on Russian influence as well. And so all of these institutions that argued for control over the internet in Eastern Europe said, 'Well, it needs to come now. Now it's an all-of-Europe thing.'*

*When Trump was then elected five months later, explicitly contemplating the breakup of NATO, all hell broke loose. This idea that we need to censor the internet went from being something that was touchy and novel, in the view of Pentagon brass and State Department folks, to something that was totally essential to saving the entire rules-based international order that came out of World War II.*

*At the time, the reasoning was, Brexit, in the U.K., was going to give rise to Frexit, in France, with Marine Le Pen and her movement there. Matteo Salvini was going to cause Italexit. In Italy, there'd be Grexit in Greece, Spexit in Spain, and the entire European Union would come undone, just because these right-wing populist parties would naturally vote their way into political power.*

*They would vote for working-class, cheap energy policies that would make them more closely aligned with Russia naturally, because of the cheaper oil prices, or cheaper gas prices. Then, suddenly, you've got no EU, you've got no NATO, and then, you've got no Western military alliance.*

*So, from that moment, after Trump's election, immediately, there was this diplomatic roadshow by U.S. State Department officials, who all thought they were getting promotions in November 2016. They thought they were going to get promoted from the State Department to the National Security Council. Turns out, they all got fired, because someone with a 5% chance of winning ended up winning that day.*

*So, they took their international connections, their international networks around the Atlanta Council, the Council on Foreign Relations, the entire think tank, quasi-intelligence, quasi-military, government-funded NGO soup, and they did this international roadshow, starting in January 2017, to convince European countries to start censoring their internet ...*

*Out of that came NetzDG [Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz, the Network Enforcement Act] in Germany, which introduced a necessity of artificial intelligence-powered social media censorship.*

*All of that was, essentially, spearheaded by this network of State Department and Pentagon folks who then used their own internal folks in the government to procure government grants and contracts to these same entities. Eventually, they all rotated into those tech companies to set the policies as well."*

## **Threat From Within**

So, to summarize, the infrastructure for worldwide internet censorship was largely established by IC veterans who were forced out by the Trump administration, and that infrastructure was then used to catalyze the international censorship response during COVID in late 2019, early 2020. Benz continues:

*"Right. And those veterans were not alone. The full story is not just the shadow security state and exile. The fact is this. The Trump administration never had control of its own defense department, State Department or intelligence community.*

*It was the intelligence community that, essentially, drove his first impeachment, that drove a two-and-a-half year special prosecutor investigation that rolled up 12 to 20 of Trump's closest associates. You had a chief of staff there who was hiding the military figures from the government. The careers at state threatened the political appointees from the inside. I experienced that myself.*

*This permanent aspect of Washington, with unfireable careers in high places, combined with a turf war in the GOP [Republican Party] between the populist right and the neo-conservative right, with the neo-conservative right having many well-placed Republicans in the Defense Department, State Department, in IC, to thwart the previous president's agenda there, allowed this political network and exile, on the censorship side, to work with their allies within the government to create these censorship beach heads.*

*So, for example, that's how they created the Department of Homeland Security's ... first permanent government censorship bureau in the form of this entity*

*called CISA [the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, founded in November 2018], which is supposed to just be a cybersecurity entity.*

*It was done because of media and intelligence community laundering of a never-substantiated claim that Russia had potentially hacked the 2016 election, hacked the election machines or voting software, or might be able to do so in the future, and so we need a robust armed-to-the-teeth DHS unit to protect our cybersecurity from the Russians.*

*It's the mission creep of the century. After the Mueller probe ended in June 2019, this unit, CISA, within DHS [Department of Homeland Security] – which had set up all of this, and which is only supposed to do cybersecurity – said 'Well, if you squint and look at it, discourse online is a cybersecurity threat because if it undermines public faith or confidence in our elections, and it's done using a cyber nexus, i.e., social media post, then that's a form of cybersecurity threat, because democracy is essential to our security.'*

*And so you went from this cybersecurity mission to a cyber censorship bureau, because if you tweeted something about mail-in ballots in the 2020 election, that was deemed to be a cyber attack on critical infrastructure, i.e., elections.*

*When they got away with that in 2020, DHS then said, 'Well, if you squint and look at it, public health is also critical infrastructure.' So, now, DHS gets to direct social media companies to censor opinions about COVID-19.*

*Then they worked their way into saying the same thing about financial systems, financial services, about the Ukraine war, about immigration. It got to the point where, by late 2022, the head of CISA declared that cognitive infrastructure is critical infrastructure."*

Cracks only appeared after Republicans got a majority in the House of Representatives in November 2022 and Elon Musk acquired Twitter. Public support for government also dwindled as Musk's release of the Twitter Files revealed the extent of government's involvement in the censoring of Americans.

So far, though, public awareness hasn't changed anything. The very entities that once stood for internet freedom, like the National Science Foundation, are still actively funding and furthering government censorship activities.

## **AI Gives Censors God-Like Powers**

Benz first became "gripped by the stakes of what was happening on the internet" in August 2016, after reading a series of papers discussing the use of NLP to monitor, surveil and regulate the distribution of information on social media based on the words used.

*"DARPA provided tens of millions of dollars of funding for this language processing, this language chunking capacity of AI in order, ostensibly, to stop ISIS recruiting on Facebook and Twitter," Benz says.*

*"As part of the predicate for putting military boots on the ground in Syria, there was a lot of talk about ISIS coming to the U.S., and they were recruiting on Facebook and Twitter. And so the Pentagon, DARPA and the IC developed this language spyware capacity to map the dialectic of how ISIS sympathizers talk online, the words they use, the images they share, the prefixes, the suffixes, all the different community connections.*

*And then, I saw that this was being done for purposes of domestic political control instead of foreign counterterrorism, and the power that it has. It is what totally changed the internet forever. Before 2016, there was not the technological capacity to do mass social media censorship. That was the age of what censorship insiders like to call the whack-a-mole era. Censorship was reactive.*

*It was done by forum, by moderators, essentially. Everything had to be flagged manually before it could be taken down, which meant millions of people had already seen it, or it had already gone viral, it had already done its damage, so to speak, and you were just cutting off the backend with an act of censorship.*

*You could never have a permanent control apparatus in that setting, because there would always be a first mover advantage to whoever posted it. What AI censorship technology breakthroughs enabled after 2016 was a kind of nuclear weapon, if you will, on the censorship side, to be able to end the war immediately.*

*You don't need a standing army of 100,000 people to censor COVID. You need one good developer, working with one manic social scientist who spends her entire life mapping what Dr. Mercola says online, and what he's talking about this week, what his followers are saying, what they're saying about this drug, or what they're saying about this vaccine, or what they're saying about this institution.*

*All of that can be cataloged into a lexicon of how you talk. And then, all of that talk can just be turned down to zero. At the same time, they can super amplify the language that they themselves are doing. So it gives a God-like control to a tiny, tiny, tiny minority of people who can then use that to control the discourse of the entire population.*

*What's also so terrifying about the National Security State's involvement in this is, when they discovered the power of this by mid-2018, they began to roll it out to every other country in the world for purposes of political control there – to the Ghana desk, to the Ecuador desk, to Southeast Asia, all over Europe.”*

## **Can We Get Out of the Grip of Censorship?**

At the time of this writing, we're in a lull. The COVID pandemic has been declared over and aside from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, there are no major political crises going on that warrant heavy censorship. The networks and technologies for radical suppression are already in place, however, and can be turned up at a moment's notice.

We've also recently seen just how easy it is for alternative media to be infiltrated and upended, so the fact that there are alternative platforms doesn't guarantee that future

censorship efforts will fail.

*“There are so many threat vectors,” Benz says. “There are a lot of questions about what’s going on, for example, at Project Veritas, with how quickly it ousted James O’Keefe after releasing the most viral video ever, on Pfizer. It was about one week later – after their biggest accomplishment, perhaps, ever – that it was totally overthrown.*

*A similar thing has happened with Fox News with [the firing of] Tucker Carlson, the most popular cable TV host in the country – the guy who gets three times more concurrent viewership than CNN, in the opposing spot. Institutions can absolutely be penetrated and co-opted when enough pressure is applied.”*

## **Transatlantic Flank Attack 2.0 Underway**

As mentioned earlier, the U.S. censorship really began with NATO. Benz refers to this as the transatlantic flank attack. Basically, when U.S. intelligence want to impact the internet domestically, they first work with their European partners to enact regulatory changes in Europe first. This then ends up spilling into the U.S. market, and the IC appears to have had nothing to do with it.

The first transatlantic flank attack took place in early 2017 with the NetzDG. We’re now under transatlantic attack again, through the Digital Markets Act. This law, Benz says, will make it very difficult for Rumble and other free speech platforms to maintain that posture during the next pandemic. Once these platforms are forced to comply with the Digital Markets Act on the European side, the changes will be felt everywhere.

## **Cause for Cautious Optimism**

While Benz remains hopeful that solutions to global censorship will present themselves, he still recognizes that the forces at play are enormous and the risks are high.

*"It's one of these things where the more you see what we're up against, the more sobering it becomes. I think you need to maintain hope in order to maintain energy, to maintain momentum. With momentum, weird things can happen, even if you're not supposed to win. Strange things break, or take a life of their own, or resurface.*

*All the little weaknesses of the system get tested, simply by a momentum here and there. For example, Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter is probably the reason that the GOP got over the hump in doing all of these congressional investigations into the government's role in censorship.*

*They felt like they had an ally at Twitter, that they had billionaire backing. There was a waterfall, cascade impact. So, I am hopeful. DHS is on the run right now. They purged their website of all their domestic censorship operations that they listed and were loud and proud about for two whole years after the catastrophe of the disinformation governance board in April 2022.*

*They already had a Ministry of Truth at DHS. They just gave one hypothetical board the wrong name. They didn't call it the CISA. They made the mistake of calling it by the right name, and that's what ended the entire political support for the underlying apparatus.*

*So, the importance of an Orwellian name is essential for maintaining the political support. But I guess what I'm trying to say is, I'm hopeful, and I'm honored to be a part of this rebel fleet of folks trying to take on the empire behind the censorship situation.*

*But having seen, in so many iterations the toolkit they use, it is a medieval torture toolkit that can do strange things. Pressure can do strange things, even to great people. And so I'm cautiously optimistic."*

## **Essential Internet Backbone Is Not Politically Neutral**

In my view, internet decentralization is one key innovation that could break the grip of censorship. That said, other aspects, such as cybersecurity, must also be reinvented.

CloudFlare, for example, a content delivery and cloud cybersecurity service, basically controls the internet because they protect online businesses and platforms from hackers using Denial-of-Service (DoS) attacks. Without it, you cannot survive online if you're a big business. Even with a decentralized internet, CloudFlare might still be able to exert control by leaving sites open to DDoS (distributed denial of service) attacks.

Disturbingly, CloudFlare got political for the first time after 2016, when it decided to remove protection from a site called Kiwi Farms, which expressed anti-transgender views. As a result, the site had to move over to a Russian server to get back online.

Basically, U.S. citizens had to look for internet freedom in Russia because their architecture could not be supported in the U.S. — all because a government-integrated backbone of the internet made a political decision, likely at the behest of the IC.

*“If there is another pandemic, for example, and there's a push for certain medical interventions or countermeasures that certain sites don't go along with, the CloudFlare, absolutely, could be a weapon in that respect,” Benz says.*

*“One of the things I found so troubling is that CISA, this DHS censorship agency, after the 2020 election set up a private sector liaison subcommittee for mis- and disinformation policies in the private sector. It was a seven-person subcommittee, with all of the top censorship experts at the University of Washington and Stanford.*

*Vijaya Gadde, the former head of censorship at Twitter, was a part of this board. I thought it was very troubling that the CEO of CloudFlare was also one of the seven people on the DHS censorship board.”*

## **Major Challenges to a Decentralized Internet**

Benz continues:

*"To proceed to the various challenges to a decentralized internet, when you move up the stack of censorship ... they can move up to cloud servers, to payment processors, and even to things like CloudFlare and your infrastructure protection.*

*In the early era of censorship, there was a rebuttal by censorship advocates that if you don't like what private sector companies are doing, start your own social media companies. Build your own Google, build your own YouTube, build your own Facebook, build your own Twitter.*

*And then, what started to happen as censorship got completely insane, when it went from being troubling to disturbing, to saturating ... you started to see these alternative social media platforms like Gab and Parler ... that tried to escape the content moderation policies with Big Tech. But what started to happen is, those social media companies, like Parler, were completely destroyed.*

*Parler was de-platformed from, basically, the entire internet, when the president had just moved there, after being kicked off Twitter. That was a very instructive moment, and one that censorship insiders have reflected on, I should say, many, times as a moment of, 'Should we have done that? We did it, but it costs us a lot of political capital.'*

*Parler was kicked off of Amazon Web Services. They were kicked off of all of the banks. They were banned from email providers. They could not hook to the internet, essentially, to even maintain the ability to post anything there. So, it went from build your own social media company to build your own bank.*

*Now you need to build your own bank and get a banking license for the payment processors. You need to build your own email distribution. You need to build your own cloud servers.*

*You need to build your own software service providers. And, eventually, are you going to need to lay your own subsea cables across the Atlantic and Pacific*

*oceans? The social media companies didn't invent the internet. They are superimposed on Pentagon infrastructure."*

## **The House Needs to Defund the Censorship Industry**

Without doubt, there will be another crisis, whether it be another pandemic or war or something else, that will send the censorship machine into full gear yet again. Right now we're in a lull, so this is the time to think ahead and get prepared. The question is, what can we do? How do we prepare and fight back?

According to Benz, one of the most effective strategies that would have immediate effect, and could be done right now, would be to strip the censorship industry of its government funding. He explains:

*"Right now, there's a Republican controlled House. The advantage of the House is that it controls appropriations, the purse strings of the federal government. If the House Appropriations Committee took seriously the government subsidization of censorship networks in the private sector, you could defund the speech police, even though, on the AI side, it only takes one good coder to be able to take out an entire political philosophy.*

*The fact is, they can only do that job because of an army of social science folks across 45 different U.S. colleges and universities who get paid. There are tens of thousands of them who are paid through the National Science Foundation, through DARPA grants and State Department grants, to map communities online as a matter of social science, and then provide that to the computer scientist to censor it.*

*My foundation, the Foundation for Freedom Online, has detailed \$100 million, just in the past 18 months, that have gone from the federal government institutions directly into social media censorship insiders. Censorship is not an act anymore, it's an industry, and you can cripple their capacity building.*

*When you pump it full of money, you go from having a couple of people do it, to tens of thousands of people doing it. The censorship capacity is built on an infrastructure of an industry that relies on government to pay for it, and it relies on government to spearhead their penetration into the institutions.*

*Right now, there are about eight different congressional committees trying to solve this problem from different aspects. I've personally briefed eight different congressional committees ... But only a few of those committees are taking it seriously enough to pursue the issue deeply, and where that will shake out remains uncertain.*

*CISA worked with dozens of social media companies and private sector cutouts to launder censorship from the government into the private sector, but the institution I worked with more than anyone was the University of Stanford, the Stanford Internet Observatory in particular.*

*Jim Jordan's Weaponization Subcommittee just subpoenaed Stanford for what I call the perfectly preserved First Amendment crime scene. Stanford meticulously kept logs of all of its censorship activities with government officials for the COVID-19 pandemic, and for two election cycles.*

*They detailed 66 narratives that they censored online, having to do with everything about vaccines, efficacy of masks, opposition to lockdown mandates. And then, they had a fourth category for conspiracy theories, basically anything that someone said about the World Economic Forum, or Bill Gates.*

*They're now refusing to comply with that subpoena. But the stakes keep getting escalated, because who's going to enforce that subpoena? Steve Bannon, regardless of your opinion of him, just got indicted for not complying with a subpoena, but is this Justice Department going to pursue criminal penalties against Stanford, for withholding congressional subpoena for their government?*

*This is for their government, because they were the formal partners. They had a formal partnership with the DHS. That stuff should be FOIA-able, first of all. You shouldn't even need a subpoena for it. The only reason you can't FOIA it is because they laundered it through Stanford. Stanford holds the records rather than DHS.*

*I tried to FOIA that from DHS, and DHS says, 'We don't have it, even though they were our communications.' So this is the way the CIA structures in an operation, through a web of cutouts and offshore banks, so you can never really get transparency. They're now doing that for the censorship industry at home ...*

*Whether they will continue to raise the stakes is now a terrifying open issue. And the fact that it's the inside guys who are running the censorship situation means there may be other tactics that need to be pursued here, which is why I talked about, simply, going to the appropriations committee and zeroing it out, so you don't even need to enforce subpoenas, necessarily."*

## **Building a Whole-of-Society Solution**

As explained by Benz, the censorship industry was built as a so-called whole-of-society effort. According to the DHS, misinformation online is a whole-of-society problem that requires a whole-of-society solution. By that, they meant that four types of institutions had to fuse together as a seamless whole. Those four categories and key functions are:

1. Government institutions, which provide funding and coordination
2. Private sector institutions that do the censorship and dedicate funds to censorship through corporate-social responsibility programs
3. Civil society institutions (universities, NGOs, academia, foundations, nonprofits and activists) that do the research, the spying and collecting of data that are then given to the private sector to censor
4. News media/fact checking institutions, which put pressure on institutions, platforms and businesses to comply with the censorship demands

What the Foundation for Freedom Online is doing is educating people about this structure, and the ways in which legislatures and the government can be restructured, how civil society institutions can be established, and how news media can be created to support and promote freedom rather than censorship.

To learn more, be sure to check out [foundationforfreedomonline.com](http://foundationforfreedomonline.com). You can also follow his very active Twitter account [Benz on Twitter](#).