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Social Media and Liberty

In the article “Do Social Media Platforms Promote or Limit Individual Liberty?” written by Timothy B. Lee, it discussed social media platform could be used for both good and evil, depending on who’s behind them and controls them. Social media platform owned by firms in free societies are good to organize and promote individual freedom. On the contrary, social media manipulated by repressive regimes serves surveillance and propaganda purpose may do serious damage to individual freedom.

I agree with the author that social media platform could be good and bad at the same time, however I disagree with Gladwell’s view that social media isn’t going to change society all by itself. I strongly believe social media platform is a necessary help of individual liberty. First, in order to have people making decisions on solve the problems and think of how to solve the problems, they will need to be aware of the problems exist. Social media platform is a great channel to wake people up and pass around ideas and questions. Secondly, language has its own vitality no matter who controls or potemkinize the social media. Everyday, internet users are creative enough to invent prop-word or ironies expressions to communicate, that automated filtering and manual human review could not match them. Besides the Great Firewall is not a difficult technical block for liberty pioneers who bring back the “outside” news.

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The article mentions the impact of social media on the development or restriction of individual liberty.

First, Gladwell believes that social media itself does not change entire society. However, when people have the willingness to gather and express, social media play a facilitating role in connecting people and transmitting information. Social media is an effective and convenient tool.

Next, as a tool, individuals can use social media and the government can use it as well. The government can use social media to convey what it wants to be known to individuals, and believe that individuals are free on social media without government control.

After that, some authoritarian governments create their own social media for people to use. The government collects objections and punishes those who make them. The bigger problem now is that there may be more governments to do so.

At last, companies with social media should protect personal information and cannot be used by the government. if the government can censor personal information at any time, individual will pay for the liberty.