



among its users and shareholders, and how this belief in corporate social goodness invites both disaster and the pomposity of self-righteousness. The author explores the apolitical language used by Zuckerberg in describing the negative aspects of Facebook while simultaneously dismissing them as design flaws to be fixed in the next update.

The last three chapters in the book clarify Facebook's role in politics, uprisings, and protests. The lack of transparency and accountability for political ads displayed to narrow sections of the population is addressed at length, as is the platform's use and complicity in disseminating extreme propaganda from dictators and their supporters around the globe. These chapters also discuss the election of Donald Trump in America and Brexit in the United Kingdom, offering deep insight into the pre-existing environments and social unrest that Facebook's algorithms expertly exploited to the satisfaction of both campaigns.

Anyone concerned about the ways Facebook uses the data it collects and the effects social media has had on society at large will be well served by reading this book. Those interested in examining the rise of Facebook and similar services from a historical perspective will likewise benefit from Vaidhyanathan's critical analysis of the twentieth-century ideologies that paved the way for current platforms. Many already harbor concerns about the lack of civil discourse in the public sphere and search for ways to correct this; while Vaidhyanathan does not provide a precise roadmap to bringing back reasoned

discussion, those in search of answers will find comfort and hope in the author's recommendations for the future.

Despite the dire nature of the topic, Vaidhyanathan's prose is a pleasure to read; the eloquence of *Anti-Social Media* lies in the careful balance struck between straightforward language and demonstrated depth of thought and research. Unencumbered by superfluous jargon, the author's style is a successful combination of astute observer and teacher. *Anti-Social Media* is not a manifesto encouraging readers to disembark Facebook en masse; rather, it is a call to seriously consider the impact of social media on the human experience and what steps may be taken not by Facebook or any other for-profit enterprise, but by the general public, to reclaim what has been stripped from society. Vaidhyanathan acknowledges that the path forward to meaningful discussion and careful deliberation will be long one, but that there are indeed means to correct the current course should the effort be put in to doing so. This book is predicated on the notion that a majority of people want to be informed and active participants in their own lives, but empowering people to fully participate in their existence and governance is a topic for another work. What the author does offer is a wealth of food for thought and the room for each reader to deliberate on how to possibly wrest their lives from the machinations of organizations that give lip-service to justice and equality while successfully chipping away at the most basic and essential freedoms.

Speak Freely: Why Universities Must Defend Free Speech

Author _ Keith E. Whittington

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There has been a rise in recent discussions about the purpose of higher education. Due to rising costs, political turmoil, and a perceived overabundance of censoring conservative voices, many are questioning whether universities are just bastions of left-leaning, socialist schools of thought. In his book *Speak Freely: Why Universities Must Defend Free Speech*, Keith E. Whittington, a constitutional law professor from Princeton University with a background in history, uses history, constitutional law, and philosophy to show how foundational free speech and intellectual freedom are to the American university system. These principles allow for the exchange of ideas in an environment meant to educate and promote intellectual

thought. Whittington writes that universities have a mission to "produce and disseminate knowledge." In order to accomplish those goals, students and faculty must be able to listen and freely discuss different forms of thought and expression in order to substantiate, strengthen, change, or produce knowledge.

Whittington sets the stage for his treatise with a narrative of a student protest at the University of California, Berkeley. The way it is written, the reader could easily assume the author is alluding to the recent 2017 protests that erupted into violence. However, Whittington is really referring to a historical event that occurred in 1903 when Carrie Nation was invited to speak. He believes that even



though there has been a long history of protesting and legal battles to support free speech, we are now at a turning point. If universities continue to handle issues of free speech the way they currently are, they may actually reverse many of the hard-won freedoms that we currently have.

The first chapter, “The Mission of a University,” feels like a second introduction. The author uses it to describe the nature of universities and how free speech is inherently built into it. The chapter is very short, but he is able to concisely address current views of the American university system, historical changes that made it the best in the world, and how the mission of universities is necessary for American society. He defends the idea that universities are an important part of democratic life and are places where ideas are formed, debated, and continually shaped. He disagrees with the idea that the university’s purpose is to “mobilize social movements.”

The second chapter addresses the progression of free speech in the United States. The author illustrates how the version of free speech we currently take for granted developed over the centuries, starting with the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. Whittington walks the reader through time, showing the legal battles fought and the philosophical evolutions made. He does this mostly by citing Milton, Locke, and Mill.

The third chapter is the longest and addresses the current events on campuses that are making the news. Whittington explains the original purposes and ideas behind controversial topics such as hate speech, safe spaces, and trigger warnings. He also argues that these terms have been distorted. Instead of learning from other perspectives, students now claim that anything they disagree with is “hate speech.” Instead of discussing topics that may be difficult to discuss, students claim that they need “trigger warnings” in the class descriptions.

People need to learn about opposing perspectives in order to strengthen, change, or develop new points of view. Now students feel that they need “safe spaces” so that they are not exposed to ideas that are different than

their own, when initially the idea of safe spaces was to allow students to know that they could freely express ideas without repercussions. It is the professor’s job to manage classroom discussions in a way that allows everyone to learn from the variety of viewpoints. If someone was wrong in their facts, they could be corrected without judgment. That is how students learn.

What is most interesting about this chapter is his position on the current protests and riots that have been occurring on campuses. Most of these have occurred because a few student organizations are opposed to conservative public figures being invited to the universities for speaking engagements, as in Whittington’s introduction. Protesting is covered under free speech laws, but when people begin obstructing others from attending one of these events it does not constitute free speech. More so, violence and rioting are not considered free speech either.

Chapter 4 discusses how academic administrations are poorly handling free speech issues. Once again this is not a new occurrence, but Whittington believes that this is where problems truly lie. If administrations are not willing to support their faculty and support intellectual freedom, then universities will cease to accomplish their mission.

As a reader, I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and learning how our free speech laws progressed. Whittington does an excellent job of laying out the different ways that free speech has been attacked on campuses from “hate speech” to “safe spaces” and even large protests and riots causing damage to property and persons. For such a small book, Whittington was able to succinctly discuss the history of American universities, free speech, intellectual freedom, and where our universities are heading if changes are not made. This book should be read by anyone interested in intellectual freedom, policy, and academia. It is also a good secondary reference for history students. It should be purchased for academic libraries and public libraries that have local college or university campuses.