



Silencing Conservatives: Social Media's Invisible Iron Muzzle

Americans have increasingly come to believe that the Fourth Estate is a fifth column, with [polls showing](#) that only about 20 percent of the public trusts the media. Yet there's a type of information-entity manipulation that's probably more insidious but perhaps less well known: social-media bias.



This type of bias is about suppression as much as expression. And a good example is the recent revelation by a source inside Twitter that the company is stifling conservative users by blacklisting them and employing a process known as “shadowbanning.” Speaking exclusively to *Breitbart Tech*, the source also disclosed that Twitter places favored users (generally liberals) on a “whitelist,” which gives them a higher profile in search results than their popularity warrants. Furthermore, as *Breitbart* [wrote](#):

Our source was backed up by a senior editor at a major digital publisher, who told *Breitbart* that Twitter told him it deliberately whitelists and blacklists users. He added that he was afraid of the site's power, noting that his tweets could disappear from users' timelines if he got on the wrong side of the company.

Shadowbanning, sometimes known as “Stealth Banning” or “Hell Banning,” is commonly used by online community managers to block content posted by spammers. Instead of banning a user directly (which would alert the spammer to their status, prompting them to create a new account), their content is merely hidden from public view.

For site owners, the ideal shadowban is when a user never realizes he's been shadowbanned.

However, Twitter isn't merely targeting spammers. For weeks, users have been reporting that tweets from populist conservatives, members of the alternative right, cultural libertarians, and other anti-PC dissidents have disappeared from their timelines.

Among the users complaining of shadowbans are sci-fi author and alt-right figurehead Vox Day, geek culture blogger “Daddy Warpig,” and the popular pro-Trump account Ricky Vaughn. League of Gamers founder and former World of Warcraft team lead Mark Kern, as well as adult actress and anti-censorship activist Mercedes Carrera, have also reported that their tweets are not appearing on the timelines of their followers.

The pattern of shadowban reports, which skews towards the alt-right, the populist right, and cultural libertarians, follows close on the heels of [Twitter's establishment of a “Trust and Safety](#)



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[Council” packed with left-wing advocacy groups, as well as Islamic research center the Wahid Institute.](#)

Shadowbanning essentially withers information on the vine: Your message can't have an impact if it doesn't get out.

Unfortunately, stealthy Internet censorship isn't limited to Twitter. For example, Google announced early last year that instead of ranking websites based on the number of other sites linking to them, which can be a proxy for popularity, it had a plan to “rank websites according to their truthfulness,” [wrote](#) *New Scientist* at the time. For this purpose, Google was developing software that “works by tapping into the [Knowledge Vault](#), the vast store of facts that Google has pulled off the Internet. Facts the web unanimously agrees on are considered a reasonable proxy for truth. Web pages that contain contradictory information are bumped down the rankings,” *New Scientist* explained.

The problems with this plan are clear. “Facts” aren't facts because they're popular but because they're objectively true; Truth isn't Truth because of majority vote. Legendary scientists and social leaders became legendary precisely because they departed from the popular, Galileo's rejection of geocentrism being a good example.

The plan also appears contradictory. Google apparently considers popularity an acceptable guide for determining “facts,” but rejects popularity as a guide for determining site rankings. And many might consider it almost a fact that Google is wholly unqualified to be the Ministry of Truth. In 2012, [97 percent](#) of its employee political contributions went to Barack Obama. And this just mirrors other tech firms; Apple's and eBay's employees gave, respectively, 91 and 89 percent of their contributions to Obama. Moreover, [wrote](#) the *New York Times*, “Among the 10 American-based information technology companies on *Fortune's* list of ‘[most admired companies](#),’ Mr. Obama raised 83 percent of the funds between the two major party candidates.”

But insofar as there's a Web of Deceit, Google can easily be its Big Brother. It was [reported](#) in 2013 that the company set a new record, with almost 25 percent of North America's consumer Internet traffic going through its servers; moreover, an “amazing 60 percent of all Internet end devices/users exchange traffic with Google servers during the course of an average day,” making it “bigger than Facebook, Netflix and Twitter combined,” [wrote](#) Internet monitoring firm Deepfield's Craig Labovitz at the time.

And taken together, the control over information flow wielded by the major search engines and social media sites is profound. Consider *The New American*: 80 percent of the site's traffic comes from search engines, not regular readers. Thus, these entities can easily influence the exposure *TNA* receives by manipulating its placement in search results.

Perhaps a good example of this occurred last year when I [penned an article](#) about how pop star Justin Bieber allegedly wielded great clout with the Obama White House. When the piece underperformed traffic-wise despite being about the celebrity with the planet's second-most-followed Twitter account, I investigated. Putting “Justin Bieber” into Google and performing a search limited to the previous 24 hours, I discovered that my *TNA* article was not on any of the top search result pages (I didn't find it at all, in fact). Yet a small [site](#) called JustJared.com was on the third one. This was despite its [traffic ranking](#) being upwards of 187,000.

And *TNA's* [being close](#) to 11,000.

This is anecdotal, of course, but Google's manipulation is nothing new. It has long been known that the



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company censors information at the behest of foreign governments, as RT.com reported [here](#). Again, though, what's done stealthily is most effective. As to this, consider Google subsidiary YouTube. In 2009, it appeared that the popular site was [purposely making it seem](#) as if a video of a government schoolteacher instructing young students to praise Obama in song was getting fewer views than it actually was; this would limit the video's exposure by preventing it from appearing on YouTube's "Popular" videos page.

And this censorship strikes where many wouldn't suspect. For an obscure example, consider a Britney Spears [video](#) entitled "Circus." As I [wrote](#) in 2009:

When it was issued late last year, it was immensely popular and was prominently featured by YouTube (currently has 56,371,680 views). Yet it quickly was "disappeared." What was its trespass?

It featured circus animals.

The obvious conclusion is that YouTube's commissars received complaints from animal-rights wackos — and these were reflected in the video's comments section, actually — and decided it wasn't fit for young, impressionable eyes. Of course, this is the same company that regularly features all manner and form of lewd, perverted behavior on its main video pages.

The above are just a few examples of a truly destructive media bias. The media are our conduit of information, and it's as with a computer: garbage in, garbage out. As UCLA political science professor Tim Groseclose [pointed out](#) in his 2011 book *Left Turn*, the consistently left-wing mainstream media bias "makes us more liberal, which makes us less able to detect the bias, which allows the media to get away with more bias, which makes us even more liberal."

And that leads to social-media companies populated with leftists who fancy themselves qualified censors, a Ministry of Truth.

And that makes us even more liberal.



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