

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Business

GSBGEN 578

Is the Internet Broken?



Spring 2019
(Compressed course, April 8-19)

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Description:

This interdisciplinary course examines the promise, peril, and possible future of the Internet and the impact of the World Wide Web on our lives. We will explore the most pressing contemporary issues facing the Internet, including debates on privacy, antitrust, freedom of speech, access, neutrality, and regulation. We will also unpack the claim that "decentralization," as it has grown with new technologies such as blockchain and crypto assets, captures the original vision of the Internet. A key question we will address is: What should be the roles of markets, governments, and different stakeholders in shaping the Internet? Students will have the opportunity to reflect on their own motivations and roles as digital consumers, potential innovators, and future leaders in this process. Guests from the tech sector and elsewhere will enrich our discussion.

VISITORS

A number of visitors will join us to enhance the discussion with their rich experience and expertise. Confirmed speakers (subject to change):

GRADING

The course grade will be determined by:

Class participation	30%
Assignments	25%
Final paper	45%

Class attendance and participation are important. Participation includes being prepared for class by doing the required readings, contributing thoughtful comments and questions during class, submitting questions in advance when prompted, and other engagements, such as sharing relevant materials (such as news, commentary or research) with the teaching team. We will use some polling (via PollEverywhere app) to help engagement in class as well as to assess participation. Please refer to the posted course policy document and note that we are not allowing laptop in class.

Assignments will consist of surveys and short essays meant to focus the readings and to facilitate class and small group discussions during the course. The final paper will be 1,300-1,500 word essay, written individually, on your choice from a set of topics and associated prompts that will be provided. The paper is due on Friday, April 26, 2019 at 7 pm.

We will use Canvas to post materials, assignments, and links and for your submission of assignments. We will also post later optional readings and “deep dives” that might be useful to you at some point. Please check the latest postings before each class; this document may become dated.

Schedule

Session 1 Monday, 4-8-19

What is the Internet? Why Might it be “Broken?” Visitor: Richard Whitt

- Topics: “Big picture:” the economic landscape and role of the Internet; what do we take for granted about the Internet? history, milestones and counterfactuals; initial observations about the promise and peril; the laws that shaped the internet as we know it.
- Read (Required): “Tim Berners-Lee on 30 Years of the World Wide Web: 'We can Get the Web we Want',” Alex Hern, The Guardian, March 12, 2019
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/mar/12/tim-berners-lee-on-30-years-of-the-web-if-we-dream-a-little-we-can-get-the-web-we-want>
- “Section 230: A Key Legal Shield for Facebook, Google is About to Change,” Alina Selyukh, National Public Radio, March 18, 2018
<https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2018/03/21/591622450/section-230-a-key-legal-shield-for-facebook-google-is-about-to-change>
- Prepare by April 7, 11 pm: (i) Fill out this short questionnaire about your background and expectations from the class
https://stanfordgsb.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_6MbFhbFPp7VWwOx?Q_CHL=preview;
- (ii) Register to and download Poll Everywhere at
<https://www.polleverywhere.com>
Use your correct student name as in Stanford directory. To indicate to the teaching team that you are a registered student matching class lists, fill in your name and Stanford SU number in this link <https://www.pollev.com/admati>
- Finally, download the Poll Everywhere App for use in class.
- iOS <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/poll-everywhere/id893375312>
 - Google play
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.poll.everywhere.mobile>
- (iii) Submit (on Canvas under Session 1 Assignment) 150-300 words answering these questions and explaining your answer: Is the Internet Broken (Yes/No/Unsure)? Why? What is the source of any problem you identify and how might it be

addressed (e.g., government action on x, private sector solution on y)?

Session 2 **Wednesday, 4-10-19**

Imagining the Future of the Internet **Visitors: Albert Wenger, Nikhil Pahwa**

- Topics: Where is the Internet headed in next 10-20 years; next generation applications, platforms, protocols and devices; the puzzle of sovereignty on the Internet and the prospect of a new “splinternet” with competing visions of the Internet freedoms and regulations from Australia, China, EU, India, Russia, and the UK.
- Read: “There May Soon Be Three Internets. America’s Won’t Necessarily Be the Best,” New York Times editorial, October 15, 2018
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/15/opinion/internet-google-china-balkanization.html>
- “The Inside Story of Facebook’s Biggest Setback,” Guardian, Rahul Bahtia, May 12, 2016
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/may/12/facebook-free-basics-india-zuckerberg>
- 2-3 short pieces about an assigned for assignment and group discussion about Internet governance in different places.
- Prepare: Assignment posted on Canvas for assigned nation (template)

Session 3 **Friday, 4-12-19**

Investors and Governance **Visitors: Roger McNamee, Carlos Gomes-Uribe**

- Topics: The business models enabled by the Internet, algorithms and transparency the role of companies in mediating the tension between privacy, freedom of expression, and monetization; the incentives of network effects; the challenges of content moderation; filter bubbles, addiction and misinformation; potential solutions.
- Read: “The Internet needs new rules. Let’s start in these four areas,” Mark Zuckerberg, Washington Post, March 30, 2019
https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/mark-zuckerberg-the-internet-needs-new-rules-lets-start-in-these-four-areas/2019/03/29/9e6f0504-521a-11e9-a3f7-78b7525a8d5f_story.html?utm_term=.569f773b8c19
- “Mark Zuckerberg says he wants to fix the internet. Don’t take him seriously,” Roger McNamee, Guardian, April 2, 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/02/mark-zuckerberg-fix-the-internet>

“O.K., Google: How Much Money Have I Made for You Today?” Jennifer Szalai, New York Times, January 16, 2019
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/16/books/review-age-of-surveillance-capitalism-shoshana-zuboff.html>

Prepare: You will be assigned a side (pro or con) related to a proposal to improving the internet. Read the relevant articles and be ready to debate the proposal. (See links on Canvas.)

Session 4 Monday, 4-15-19

Regulation: By Whom and How? Visitor: Rohit Chopra

Topics: Monopoly, privacy, data portability and inter-operability, fair business practices, evolving definitions of consumer harm; click-wrap agreements and contracts of adhesion, the FTC, federal and state rules and enforcement, continued debate on proposals.

Read: Remarks by Commissioner Rohit Chopra, Silicon Flatirons Conference, Boulder, CO. February 10, 2019
https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/public_statements/1453633/remarks_of_commissioner_chopra_at_silicon_flatirons.pdf

“Elizabeth Warren’s Big Idea on Big Tech,” Kenneth Rogoff, Project Syndicate, April 1, 2019 <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/elizabeth-warren-tech-regulation-proposals-by-kenneth-rogoff-2019-04>

“Click to agree with what? No one reads terms of service, studies confirm,” David Berreby, Guardian, March 3, 2017
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/mar/03/terms-of-service-online-contracts-fine-print>

Prepare: Determine whether you can download your personal data from the following platforms: Google, Facebook, Instagram, and Amazon. Choose one of them and attempt to download your personal data. How might the data be useful to you in its current form?

Session 5
Wednesday, 4-17-19

Power and Accountability
Visitors: Sheera Frenkel and Riana Pfefferkorn,

Topics:

The role of encryption in consumer rights, privacy and anonymity; journalism's role and challenge in scrutinizing the technology sector, the impact of the Internet on the media sector.

Read:

"In India Election, False Posts and Hate Speech Flummox Facebook," Vindu Goel and Sheera Frenkel, New York Times, April 1, 2019

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/01/technology/india-elections-facebook.html>

"Testimony to Australian Parliamentary Committee on Assistance & Access Bill," Riana Pfefferkorn, November 15, 2018, Center for Internet and Society blog

<http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/blog/2018/11/testimony-australian-parliamentary-committee-assistance-access-bill>

Session 6
Friday, 4-19-19

The Internet and You
Visitor: Mitchell Baker

Topics:

Open source code; software-based governance, decentralization, and grassroots power. Summary and reflection: Is the Internet broken and if so, how? What is next? What will you do?

Read:

"How to Break Open the Web," Dan Gillmor and Kevin Marks, Fast Company, June 21, 2016

<https://www.fastcompany.com/3061357/the-web-decentralized-distributed-open>

Prepare:

Revisiting Session 1 assignment. How have your views changed since the beginning of the course? Submit 150-300 words.

The Internet around the World

Readings and Assignment for Session 2

You will be assigned a nation. Read the pieces relevant to your assigned nation (the rest is optional), submit the posted assignment using the template at the end of the document, and be ready to summarize the reading to your group during class.

China

- How China Is Changing Your Internet (Video), August 9, 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAesMQ6VtK8&feature=youtu.be>
- "Young People In China Don't Know the Internet We Do --- and They Like It This Way," Li Yuan, Independent, September 5, 2018
<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/features/china-internet-social-media-great-firewall-of-china-censorship-apps-a8510036.html>
- "Chinese Social Credit Score: Utopian Big Data Bliss Or Black Mirror On Steroids?" Barnard Marr, Forbes, January 21, 2019.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2019/01/21/chinese-social-credit-score-utopian-big-data-bliss-or-black-mirror-on-steroids/#678609ce48b8>

Russia

- "How Russia Polices Yandex, Its Most Popular Search Engine," Luise Matsakis, Motherboard, November 24, 2017
https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/8x5z54/how-russia-polices-yandex-its-most-popular-search-engine
- "Russia is building its own version of China's Great Firewall," David Gilbert, Vice News, March 6, 2019 https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/gyakjx/russia-is-building-its-own-version-of-chinas-great-firewall
- "In Russia, You Don't Have To Be A Telegram User To Be Affected By The Ban," Tony Wesolowsky, Radio Free Europe, April 17, 2018 <https://www.rferl.org/a/in-russia-you-dont-have-to-be-a-telegram-user-to-be-affected-by-the-ban/29172774.html>

United Kingdom

- "UK set out 10 principles to regulate the Digital World," Ian Murphy, Enterprise Times, March 11, 2019 <https://www.enterprisetimes.co.uk/2019/03/11/uk-set-out-10-principles-to-regulate-the-digital-world/>

- “What is GDPR and how will it affect you?” Alex Hern, Guardian, May 21, 2018 <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/may/21/what-is-gdpr-and-how-will-it-affect-you>
- “Facebook was destroyed by British lawmakers for its disastrous year, but new laws should not be narrowly focused on the social network?” Shona Ghosh, Business Insider, February 18, 2019 <https://www.businessinsider.com/facebook-should-not-be-narrow-focus-of-new-uk-internet-laws-2019-2>

Australia

- “Australia data encryption laws explained,” BBC, December 7, 2018 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-46463029>
- “Jail time and billions in fines under fast-tracked crackdown on social media giants,” Fergus Hunter and Jennifer Duke, Sydney Morning Herald, March 30, 2019 <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/jail-time-and-billions-in-fines-under-fast-tracked-crackdown-on-social-media-giants-20190329-p518y7.html>
- “Countries Want to Ban ‘Weaponized’ Social Media. What Would That Look Like?” Damien Cave, New York Times, March 31, 2019 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/31/world/australia/countries-controlling-social-media.html>

EU

- “Europe’s GDPR offers privacy groups new ways to challenge adtech,” The Economist, March 23, 2019 <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2019/03/23/europes-gdpr-offers-privacy-groups-new-ways-to-challenge-adtech>
- “GDPR: What Small Businesses Need To Know,” Raad Ahmed, Forbes, March 4, 2019 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2019/03/04/gdpr-what-small-businesses-need-to-know/#4fc8b3513197>
- “‘Right to be forgotten’ by Google should apply only in EU, says court opinion,” Owen Bowcott, Guardian, January 19, 2019 <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/jan/10/right-to-be-forgotten-by-google-should-apply-only-in-eu-says-court>
- “Article 13: Memes exempt as EU backs controversial copyright law,” Zoe Kleinman, BBC, March 26, 2019 <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-47708144>

Proposals to ‘Fix’ the Internet

Readings and Assignment for Session 3 and 4

You will be assigned a proposed solution to debate for or against - check [here](#) for your assigned topic and side of the debate. Read/skim the pieces relevant to your assigned topic prior to class on Friday April 12th. (Reading on other topics is optional.) Feel free to do your own research beyond the readings suggested below. Groups will have 20 minutes in class on Friday April 12th to discuss and prepare debate points. The first two debates will happen in class on Friday April 12th, and the remaining two will happen in class on Monday April 15th.

1. Expiration dates for stored personal data on services (Fri. April 12)

- “Data is a toxic asset, so why not throw it out?” Bruce Schneier, CNN, March 1, 2016 <https://www.cnn.com/2016/03/01/opinions/data-is-a-toxic-asset-opinion-schneier/index.html>
- “Why there is so little left of the early internet,” Stephen Dowling, BBC, April 2, 2019 <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20190401-why-theres-so-little-left-of-the-early-internet>
- “Data is a Toxic Asset,” Lance Cottrell, January 27, 2018 <https://ntrepidcorp.com/cyber-security/data-toxic-asset/>

2. Binding third-party arbitration on content moderation (Fri. April 12)

- “How to Make Facebook’s ‘Supreme Court’ Work,” Kate Klonick and Thomas Kadri, NYT Opinion, November 17, 2018 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/17/opinion/facebook-supreme-court-speech.html>
- “The Speech That Facebook Plans to Punish,” Conor Friedersdorf, The Atlantic, December 11, 2018 <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/12/facebook-punish-censorship/577654/>
- [Optional] “Glastnost! Nine ways Facebook can make itself a better forum for free speech and democracy,” Timothy Garton Ash, Robert Gorwa, and Danae Metaxa, Reuters Institute and University of Oxford. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-01/Garton_Ash_et_al_Facebook_report_FINAL_0.pdf
- [Optional] “‘Men are Scum’: Inside Facebook’s War on Hate Speech,” Simon Van Zuylen-Wood, Vanity Fair, March 2019. <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2019/02/men-are-scum-inside-facebook-war-on-hate-speech>

3. Use antitrust laws to break up Big Tech (Monday, April 15)

- “Where Warren’s Wrong,” Stratechery, March 2019, <https://stratechery.com/2019/where-warrens-wrong/>
- “A Better Way to Break Up Big Tech,” Kevin Roose, NYT, March 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/13/technology/elizabeth-warren-tech-companies.html>
- [Optional] “4 things to know about how — and if — Elizabeth Warren’s plan to break up the tech giants would work,” Nik DeCosta-Klipa, Boston.com, March 13, 2019 <https://www.boston.com/news/politics/2019/03/13/elizabeth-warren-big-tech-plan>
- [Optional] Happy Prime Day! Experts worry Amazon is building a dangerous monopoly,” Emily Stewart, Vox, July 17, 2018 <https://www.vox.com/2018/7/17/17583070/amazon-prime-day-monopoly-antitrust>

4. Federal level GDPR-style privacy laws in the U.S. (Monday, April 15)

- In the Wake of GDPR, Will the U.S. Embrace Data Privacy? <http://fortune.com/2018/11/29/federal-data-privacy-law/>
- “It’s here! The winners and losers of GDPR,” Jessica Davies, Digiday, May 25, 2018 <https://digiday.com/media/winners-losers-gdpr>
- GDPR six months on: Is it working? 12 experts weigh in,” Robert Scammell, Verdict, November 26, 2018 <https://www.verdict.co.uk/gdpr-six-months-on-is-it-working-12-experts-weigh-in/>
- [Optional] California’s New Data Privacy Law Could Begin a Regulatory Disaster,” Danny Allen, Fortune, October 23, 2018 <http://fortune.com/2018/10/23/california-data-privacy-law-gdpr/>

Final Assignment

A core goal of this course is to give you the tools to analyze pressing governance issues related to the Internet. For your final assignment, you will pick an important topic that came up during the course, and analyze it from the perspective of a key stakeholder group as it interacts with at least three other stakeholder groups within a system of governance.

(i) Pick one of the following issues (and if relevant, the geography):

- Platform liability for user-generated content
- End-to-end encryption
- Data portability and interoperability

(ii) For your topic, select one stakeholder group from the list below to analyze:

- Users
- Shareholders
- Executives
- Regulators
- Politicians
- Employees
- Media
- Other citizens

(iii) In 1,200-1,500 words in total, start with a general description of the significance of the issue and the status of the debate. Then answer briefly the questions below for the stakeholder group you chose. Your analysis should be structured around the general governance theme of the course and conclude with a brief summary of your observations and any insights you may have gained.

- How well informed is this stakeholder group on this topic?
- What does this stakeholder group generally want? (Do all group members agree?)
- Who among other stakeholders is a potential ally and who is a likely adversary to this group? (Comment on at least three other stakeholder groups.)
- How could members of this stakeholder group get what they want? What power do they have to achieve their objective (i.e., to maintain the status quo or change it in their preferred direction)?
- What strategies can they use to advance their goals?
- What challenges are they facing or likely to face?

Note that your selected stakeholder group might be large and heterogeneous. If so, you can comment on the diversity of views within the group and focus your analysis on a specific subset of it, for example the majority, or a particularly influential subset.

You do not need to take a personal position on the issue. The goal is to deepen your understanding of the complexity of the issues and the interactions between and within stakeholder groups.

Please cite any materials that you use in a consistent style of your choosing.

(iv) To get you started in your research and thinking, we compiled a list of readings below. You are encouraged to do your own research. Please send us any interesting articles you come across that are not on this list.

(v) Submit your papers by Friday, April 26, 2019 at 7 pm. Reach out to the teaching team if you have any questions about the assignment or if you would like to request a brief extension of the deadline.

Background Readings for Final Assignment

The list below is intended to be a resource for your final papers on one of the three topics below. We may add articles as we find them, and you are encouraged to do your own research. Please send us any interesting articles you come across that are not on this list.

Internet platform liability for user-generated content

- “Pelosi puts tech on notice with warning of ‘new era’ in regulation,” Emily Birnbaum, The Hill, April 12, 2019 <https://thehill.com/policy/technology/438652-pelosi-warns-its-a-new-era-for-regulating-big-tech>
- “Section 230 Is the Foundation of the Internet, So Why Do Republicans Want to Change It?” Dell Cameron, Gizmodo, March 29, 2019 <https://gizmodo.com/section-230-is-the-foundation-of-the-internet-so-why-d-1833590565>
- “The social networks are publishers, not postmen, John Thornhill, Financial Times, March 25, 2019 <https://www.ft.com/content/13722f28-4edf-11e9-b401-8d9ef1626294>
- “A new law intended to curb sex trafficking threatens the future of the internet as we know it,” Aja Romano, Vox, July 2, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/culture/2018/4/13/17172762/fosta-sesta-backpage-230-internet-freedom>
- “Social media bosses could be liable for harmful content, leaked UK plan reveals,” Heather Stewart and Alex Hern, The Guardian, April 4, 2019 <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/apr/04/social-media-bosses-could-be-liable-for-harmful-content-leaked-uk-plan-reveals>
- “9th Circuit’s Bad AirBnB Decision Threatens Basic Internet Business Models,” Cathy Gilles, TechDirt, March 28, 2019 <https://www.techdirt.com/articles/20190327/13594141883/9th-circuits-bad-airbnb-decision-threatens-basic-internet-business-models.shtml>

End-to-end encryption

- “Don’t Panic Making Progress on the “Going Dark” Debate,” Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University, 2016
https://cyber.harvard.edu/pubrelease/dont-panic/Dont_Panic_Making_Progress_on_Going_Dark_Debate.pdf
- “Lessons from Apple vs. the F.B.I.,” John Cassidy, The New Yorker, March 29, 2016
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/lessons-from-apple-versus-the-f-b-i>
- “Facebook just made some big privacy promises, and they all hinge on encryption,” Rob Verger, Popular Science, March 8, 2019
<https://www.popsci.com/facebook-end-to-end-encryption>
- “WhatsApp is at risk in India. So are free speech and encryption,” Kurt Wagner, Recode, February 19, 2019
<https://www.recode.net/2019/2/19/18224084/india-intermediary-guidelines-laws-free-speech-encryption-whatsapp>
- “Apple and Facebook Fighting International Encryption Battle,” Robert McMillan and Dustin Volz, Wall Street Journal, February 26, 2019
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/apple-and-facebook-fighting-international-encryption-battle-11551177000>

Data portability and interoperability

- “Tech’s ‘Dirty Secret’: The App Developers Sifting Through Your Gmail,” Douglas McMillan, Wall Street Journal, July 2, 2018
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/techs-dirty-secret-the-app-developers-sifting-through-your-gmail-1530544442>
- “A Way to Own Your Social-Media Data,” Luigi Zingales and Guy Rolnik, New York Times, June 30, 2017
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/30/opinion/social-data-google-facebook-europe.html>
- “Facing Facebook: Data Portability and Interoperability Are Anti-Monopoly Medicine,” Bennet Cyphers and Danny O’Brien, EFF, July 24, 2018
<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2018/07/facing-facebook-data-portability-and-interoperability-are-anti-monopoly-medicine>
- “Facebook Shouldn’t Block You From Finding Friends on Competitors.” Josh Constantine, Techcrunch, April 4, 2018
<https://techcrunch.com/2018/04/13/free-the-social-graph/>

- “Zuckerberg’s Call for Data Portability Highlights Security Risks” Daniel R. Stoller and Sara Merken, Bloomberg Law, April 1, 2019
<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/privacy-and-data-security/zuckerbergs-call-for-data-portability-highlights-security-risks>
- “We Need Mandatory End-user APIs for Social and Search Systems.” Albert Wenger, Continuations (Personal Blog), March 30, 2018 video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3EBcmQZCZw&feature=youtu.be&t=6m40s> blog post: <https://continuations.com/post/172413445510/we-need-mandatory-enduser-apis-for-social-and>