

Brief submitted to the Heritage Committee on Bill c10

Submitted to the Committee name clerk ????

Date Feb 10th 2021

Submitted By Guy Annable , as a freelance journalist, Facebook user/product for over a decade and as a Private Citizen.

To the Chair, Members of the Committee, Facebook Canada Staff specifically Mr. Kevin Chan and all those who are working on Bill C 10 as a way forward to provide Canadians to create a cohesive framework and regulations surrounding social media and in a larger context of our responsibilities as Canadian Citizens regarding our responsibilities and our rights towards On line Free Speech. i thank you for allowing me to appear today and address the committee .

I wish to address 3 specific areas in my time allotted and hope i will be given the time to address the committee virtually and to answer any resultant Questions and share any ideas that potentially could evolve from my submission.

The First area of comment and the biggest overarching issue facing this Committee and legislation is how do we balance What is free speech and What is Hate Speech and create the mechanisms to recognize it , retract it and regulate it when it does occur.

'because it is the Speech that you may hate is in fact and may in fact not be hate speech to someone else

As I quote Mark Steyn' exact comments on this subject to the Justice Committee on free speech made almost 2 years ago and which i also followed very closely at that time . Equally articulate submissions were made by Dr John Robson and Lindsay Shepperd herself embroiled in a free speech debate within her own educational institution, a supposed longtime bastion of free speech in any western democracy. This 2018 Justice Committee and Its' work made us all think much more closely about "what exactly is Hate speech, who defines it , who controls it and obviously who will now regulate it on social media platforms and thus why we are here today .

The road ahead for this Committee and the impact Bill c 10 will have will forever change the landscape in Canada for free speech and what social media platforms must do to ensure "hate speech" and otherwise deemed unworthy content regulated by this legislation should not be published to the public on said platforms. But how?, how should be removed and by whom , how quickly, and the resultant penalties to the user (or product as some have called us) and to inform the platform when incidents occur and are not dealt with in a timely manner. Sounds easy, But it will not be at all easy , and this legislation needs to first and foremost respect the rights of all Canadians granted under the current Charter of Rights and Freedoms Act. However, we can also all agree that certain content need to be placed in the "hate speech Bin" category as John Robson Also said to the Justice Committee in 2018 " sunshine is the best disinfectant, when you do not allow certain views which may be distasteful to not be exposed for what they are , clear hate , you drive them in to the deep darkness of the Web .

i encourage all members of this Committee to take about 30 minutes and review the submissions from Miss Sheppard , Mr Steyn and Dr. Robson, on the matter of free speech made to the Justice Committee in your considerations when forming your final legislation. Our free speech depends on It.

The second key topic i wish to address to the committee is the disruption that has occurred in our print media Industry here in Canada and around the world. I hope that this committee which is considering many models for the proposed legislation in the “ fair treatment of the sharing of news articles and publisher content on the news of the day” this is a huge part of the reason, I myself use social media and the model must change. This committee is examining many models being considered by other foreign governments in remedying the clear disruption and current imbalance that has allowed to fester. Particularly, i would like to focus on the Australian Model . Without going into any great detail , as you all well know it better than I , i highly recommend the use of this model in a Canadian context and recognizing with 2 official Language uniqueness and recognition of first nations in Canada.

Let me be clear, in the early days of Facebook before 2010, the main reason i used Facebook was to read, share, discuss and debate with my own social community the news and opinions of the day as told by “a once” strong Journalism industry in Canada . That industry is withering fast , and no amount of government subsidies will save it. this is the exact time and opportunity for this committee to set up a revenue sharing regime that Facebook will have to create a audited tracking mechanism to , record and count and report back to the government on each news article from accredited news agencies that are being widely shared , liked and widely distributed , I call it ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY for Journalists everywhere and as many policies the Aussies have embarked on I feel they are on exactly the right track in this instance.

We know the Currency of social media reach and success is measured in likes and shares and the length of comment threads in any platform, Therefore, a revenue stream is easy to set up that rewards each news outlet for the work and reach they are creating for the social media platform. For over a decade, the social media platforms like Facebook but not limited to Facebook have been enjoying a free ride on the backs of news outlets everywhere allowing them to amass data on what points of view certain Users/product shares and likes. They then sell this data to advertisers and even Political Parties to Micro target certain audiences or products. It is the model I feel it is imperative and the most important part of C 10 is to rebalance the playing field and realize the wealth that Facebook has derived from the use of their algorithms combined with the free distribution of news publications content freely across their network and create much of the shareholder value on the backs of the news Industry. If we lose the Media, We lose so much more in a democracy, maybe some even welcome this demise in some respects, I certainly do not. if this legislation has any moral compass it will institute a revenue sharing plan that recognize and rewards the activity that flows from the social media platforms back to the news outlets and publishers that have been using their content as a free ride to attract users/product for over a decade.

I have read polls that over 65% of people that use Facebook, also use it as their primary news source. Well that means you, as a product, have to be on Facebook to see the NEWS YOU LIKE , and with it you get a flurry of sponsored ads that generate billions annually for social media platforms..... We need to re-balance this clear inequity. I hope this will come out of this legislation and help foster the rebuilding of the news industry in Canada.

The 3rd and final area of interest i would like to speak to the Committee today is to open a great quote from Mr. Tim Cook president of Apple and originally derived from the excellent movie "the Social Dilemma " on Netflix. If anyone on this committee has not seen the movie, i highly suggest you watch it for your deliberations on this legislation. Tim said a few weeks ago, "If you are not paying for the product , you are the product", referring to users of Facebook and many other platforms that use the 2 decade old now model of selling data on their users to advertisers thereby we, the user, are herein also known as "the product".

The reason I focus on this quote is to ask Mr. Chan a few questions on his role as Senior Leader of Facebook Canada and a direct report to Mark Zuckerberg to pose two questions. "what if we purely did not see our users as a data product but as subscribers paying a small monthly fee to unleash the immense power of the platform in so many ways you have confined and constrained us in silos over the last 4 years in the homing of the algorithms". I will mention silos more in the closing comments as a suicide mechanism that Facebook is starting to experience and how it is a huge issue of the user community for this practice to allowed to be continued. For now however, BACK TO ME BEING A SUBSCRIBER not A PRODUCT, and a brief backstory. in 2018 Facebook launched " Live", it took off like wildfire , it was so popular and changed the way many self enthused broadcasters, myself included, shared their Live on camera messages out to those in their "Social Silo" created by and controlled by Facebook. LIVE flourished and they knew they had a hit on their hands, it was like having a live youtube inside Facebook. Then Facebook added the user/products ability to bring in a guest and have a discussion on whatever topic. Features were then added to allow users/product ability to reach large swaths of people with these new features, for example providing an impactful 2 shot broadcast as i would call them .THEN in 2019 around September FACEBOOK REMOVED THE ABILITY IN LIVE to do a 2 shot broadcast, thus not expanding the functionality of this wildly popular new tool in the User/product tool kit , but relegating it back to a 1 person monologue oration with no possibility for debate or interaction . Why ,Why Mr Chan did Facebook REMOVE the 2 shot functionality of Facebook Live ? could you provide an Answer..... i would love to hear it directly from you,in plain language.

This left an open opportunity for companies like Streamyard and StreamLabs and Restream to develop products that integrated as developers into Facebook to do exactly what Facebook had removed from the platform, Again, i simply ask, WHY, why did facebook not see this opportunity of what live broadcasting could do to enhance the platform , but actually reverses innovation and evolution of the platform and allow others to gain when Facebook retreated..... i discussed this head scratcher with many in the know in Technology and the answer was clear, Facebook wants to limit the open sharing of free speech and ideas and LIVE 2 shot was disrupting the sheep into actual debate and causing chaos. Let me suggest what an alternate route Facebook could have done and the reason for this long story. IF FACEBOOK WOULD STOP TREATING ME AS AND ALL OF US as a Product and think of us all as unique subscribers who use the platform different to meet and mirror or mass target audiences , the revenue potential for Facebook could be enormous. if Facebook took a page from who their users are and how do they use face book and the Big Question, WOULD USERS NOW BE WILLING TO PAY FOR ENHANCED SERVICES TO REACH THE SAME PRODUCTS THAT WE NOW SEE AS SUBSCRIBERS , willing to pay a small pittance extra for example the ability to broadcast live , the ability to bring in guests and conduct a panel discussion and share content screens , LIKE these third party streaming services are doingand now eating facebook for breakfast on a feature Facebook removed . This was a perfect example of how

Facebook is killing it self by not seeing us as different unique needs of subscribers with different ways we could use the platform. i am sure a 80-20 rule would again apply here, 20% of users would pay for enhanced services (musicians especially) to use the platform to spread their messages and music. 80 Percent of users are happy paying nothing and watching cat videos and food demos , i love food ranger by the way, it is all about giving people the content they want and you think you have the Algorithms honed and sharpened , but you don't. you have created silos and limited many to only 25 of the top followers to see most posts, in fact your limiting of a wide dispersal of shared content that took place in 2017 was the start of the downward spiral for many and if you continue on this policy of shirking peoples silos and reach you will ultimately commit " Hari Kari" to the platform if you continue this practice.

In closing, I would again like to thank the committee chairman and clerk and its' members for allowing me to present a perspective on one users experience and thought on creating solid legislation that will serve all Canadians well in the evolution of social media in Canada , while maintaining our ability to speak freely under our Charter Rights as a progressive leader around the world for those principles and values.

Thank you for your time today

Guy Annable