# Hate Speech on the Internet Should be censored

The Internet age is characterized by increased communication and self-expression. However, with it came a new twist to speech and as such, evoking fierce debate on the need to regulate online speech. The currently hotly debated issue is whether the government should impose control on speech deemed inciting, more so on ethnic, religious hatred as well as the speech contents promoting bullying. Opponents of government censorship on internet hate speech would cite the constitutional provision on the right of expression or freedom of speech. Conversely, given the harm that hate speech brings to society, most governments in Europe have set the center stage by criminalizing hate speech. Hence, the same applies to the internet which is currently a new platform that sparks hatred. The subsequent debate supports the need for censoring hate speech on the internet because it does not undermine the first amendment on the freedom of expression by breaching peace or well-being of society, promotes violence and worse, is the reason for the severe psychological problems among the modern teens.

The need for censoring hate speech by the social media companies is that the act is currently not covered under the first amendment. The amendment provided people or citizenry with the right or freedom of speech (Osborne Jr. and Charles 331). However, there is always the blurred line between what hate speech is and what the constitution regards as incitement. Disciplining students for off-campus hate speech has a long history in the USA. For instance, the "Supreme Court's 1969 in Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District recognized and established that students are persons under the United States Constitution and should have free speech rights protected by the First Amendment"( Osborne Jr. and Charles 334). On the contrary, the first amendment equally states that freedom of speech also has specific limitations. If a particular utterance may lead to violence or harm to individuals, group or a country, then it is regarded as a breach of the law. In this case, censorship of hate speech of over the internet is necessary or called for, but this should equally be done within the confines of the law. When a particular statement deems to infringe the right of others or disturb the peace of society, then it should be censored. However, as of currently, most of the utterances and statements on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook are infringing on the rights of others and disturbing peace especially those targeted at a specific race, religious groups and political affiliation. Therefore, censorship of hate speech on the Internet is a necessity because the first amendment does not document hate speech as a crime but suggests that when freedom of expression brings harm to others, then it should be limited.

The need for censoring hate speech on the internet is the evidence confirming how reckless utterances can lead to violence. In most cases, when threatening comments become commonplace on the internet and go unchecked, people begin thinking that it is acceptable to spew hatred on others and promote violence. Accordingly, it does not seemingly take long before what the online community accepts becomes appropriate in the real world. Few pieces of evidence confirm how hate speech can lead to violence. For example, individuals who created Nuremberg Files, a site for anti-abortion, laid the claim that the individuals were entitled by the constitution to free speech protections (Brown 48). However, sometimes, those who are on the receiving end may retaliate through violence. The case of the Nuremberg Files showcased how the failure to censor the online content can mean harm to society by promoting or creating violence. The site is a living example of the necessity to control or censor hate speech because it documents the addresses, photos as well as personal data of the abortion providers. Although it operated and still functions as an anti-abortion campaign or site, the listings of the individual doctors purportedly to have been killed by anti-abortion activists were accompanied by the message that such anti-abortion violence is necessary or should be encouraged, an example being the James Charles Kopp case as he used the data to track down one of the performers of abortion. Hence, the actions and dealings of the Nuremberg Files is a clear indication that hate speech if left unchecked can promote violence as such statements become acceptable in the real world scenario.

Hate speech also needs to be censored owing to the severe psychological effects it leaves on the victims. Accordingly, it has been outlined that one of the major or inherent consequences of hate speech is on the mental health problems of the victims. The implication is that most of the victims of hate speech are most likely to self-harm themselves, or at a greater risk to become suicidal, suffer self-confidence and esteem issues. A word may have a simple meaning to a person, but to the other, it has serious ramifications, even mean worse to their mental health condition. Many people have the inherent belief that how their statements or words are interpreted should not be a problem. However, each individual bears the responsibility or ensuring that their words are not harmful or result in serious consequences. As of currently, evidence confirms the adverse effects on the psychological health of children. For instance, 3 million children miss school due to bullying and out of the 20% of the kids have suicidal thoughts from cyberbullying, with one in every ten attempting suicide (CyberBullyingHotline). Currently, 4500 kids are committing suicide on a yearly basis, and suicide has been ranked as the number three reason for the mortality rates among the US teens. Owing to the evidence of the psychological problems on children, it is accurate to infer that hate speech is a serious issue or concern that warrants censorship, especially the internet that has contributed to the problem through cyberbullying.

In summary, the debate has outlined or identified some of the primary reasons justifying the need for censoring hate speech. For one, hate speech is not recognized or documented under the first amendment but concerns the extension of the limits of the freedom of speech or expression. If a statement is deemed harmful and infringes on the right and peace of others, then it should be considered as a breach of the law. Conversely, violence has increased due to hate speech over the internet. In part, utterances become normalized and eventually accepted in the real world, for instance, spewing hate on groups, ethnicities or races becoming acceptable hence spreading violence. Finally, cyberbullying showcases the adverse implications of cyberbullying more so the young children. As they are exposed to excessive torture and tormenting words or cyberbullied, children end up with psychological, mental problems and more are likely to contemplate suicide. Therefore, hate speech on the internet should be censored.

## Works Cited

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