

The Tension of Platform Governance: Structural Operation and Social Risks of China's Internet Censorship Mechanism through the Lens of "Post Deletion, Account Suspension, and Muting" Phenomena

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Abstract

In China's internet ecosystem, post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction have become key mechanisms of platform content governance. This phenomenon reflects the institutional practice of state-oriented opinion management and reveals the inherent tension between platforms' social responsibility and users' rights. This paper reviews the legal foundations and operational logic of these practices, analyzing their structural causes, including government censorship outsourcing, platform profit incentives, and algorithmic moderation. The study finds that such governance mechanisms contribute to maintaining online order and curbing misinformation. Yet they also pose potential risks of power abuse and restriction of expression. Furthermore, the paper examines the evolving trends of shadow banning and traffic limitation as forms of implicit censorship, and proposes improvements in legislation, transparency, and algorithmic oversight to achieve a balance between "order" and "freedom" in internet governance.

Keywords

Network censorship, Internet governance, Freedom of expression, Algorithmic governance, Platform responsibility

Introduction

The current situation and problems of online "post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction"

Analysis of the phenomenon of post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction

(1) The current situation of "post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction" in China

With the rapid development of the internet, cyberspace has gradually become one of the primary venues for people to communicate, access information, and express opinions. However, in this open and seemingly free digital environment, online governance has become increasingly important [1]. In China, internet regulation involves multiple dimensions, including national security, social stability, and the protection of public interests; therefore, both the government and internet companies attach great importance to online management [2]. Especially in the current context, certain harmful information and remarks have been viewed as threats to social stability and harmony, making the phenomenon of post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction increasingly prevalent.

The term "post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction" refers to the measures taken by internet companies, in accordance with relevant regulations or policies, to delete posts, suspend user accounts, or restrict user speech when users engage in behaviors that violate laws and regulations, disrupt public order, or infringe upon the rights of others. This form of governance is very common in China's internet management. For instance, social media platforms such as Weibo and WeChat frequently suspend or restrict accounts that post non-compliant content, while also deleting posts that spread misinformation or rumors [3]. In recent years, several public opinion incidents have arisen within online communities because of post deletions, reflecting the complex dynamics of digital governance. Examining the mechanisms behind these occurrences is essential for gaining a clearer understanding of the operational principles of online society and for developing a more comprehensive framework for cyberspace governance [4].

From a positive perspective, such measures can

effectively curb harmful online information and discourse, thereby safeguard national security and maintain social stability. For instance, in 2019, WeChat conducted a large-scale suspension of accounts involved in disseminating pornographic content, which effectively purified the online environment. Similarly, suspending users who engage in malicious attacks or infringe upon others' rights serves as an appropriate punishment and acts as a deterrent to similar behavior.

However, this form of governance also presents several challenges and problems. First, some internet companies may abuse such governance mechanisms, deleting or blocking certain posts and information that are legally permissible but unfavorable to their own interests, thereby undermining freedom of expression. Second, since many online platforms lack clear and transparent standards for determining what constitutes "violative content," users may be erroneously banned or have their posts deleted, resulting in unnecessary inconvenience and loss [5]. Such practices seriously infringe upon citizens' right to freedom of speech and contradict the constitutional spirit that guarantees this freedom. Moreover, they undermine citizens' lawful rights to supervise and question the government, while also damaging the authenticity and fairness of online information.

(2) The current situation of "post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction" in Foreign Contexts As the influence of internet users has grown, their speech sometimes transcends legal and ethical boundaries, prompting countries around the world to place increasing emphasis on regulating cyberspace [6]. Although Western countries often emphasize freedom of expression, in practice they also implement a range of internet governance measures, including post deletion, to maintain order and protect public interests.

As the birthplace of the internet, the United States initially implemented relatively lenient online governance. However, following the 9/11 attacks, regulatory measures were significantly strengthened, particularly on social media platforms. The U.S. government adopts two main approaches to prevent the spread of harmful information: "guidance" and "interception." *Guidance* refers to media literacy education and public opinion steering, while *interception*

involves technical blocking and content removal [7]. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter explicitly reserve the right to delete illegal content in their terms of service and bear responsibility for user behavior. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has established monitoring centers to conduct routine surveillance of social media information [8].

In the United Kingdom, internet governance primarily relies on industry self-regulation, supplemented by legal regulations and technical measures. The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) is responsible for monitoring online content, requiring content providers to conduct content reviews and, when necessary, refer cases to law enforcement authorities [9].

These practices reflect a global trend of seeking a balance between maintaining security and protecting individual rights. Although the internet governance strategies of the United States and the United Kingdom differ in approach, both emphasize the importance of legal frameworks and public oversight.

Causes of the phenomenon of Post Deletion, Account Suspension, and Speech Restriction

(1) Government censorship outsourcing

The primary method of media regulation is content censorship, which also represents an important aspect of the government's role in social governance [10]. Currently, the main legal provisions governing internet management in China include the *Cybersecurity Law of the People's Republic of China*, the *Measures for the Administration of Internet Information Services*, and the *Regulations on the Protection of the Right to Network Dissemination of Information*, among others. The *Cybersecurity Law of the People's Republic of China*, which came into effect on June 1, 2017, includes provisions for the management of online information content, encompassing measures such as post deletion, speech restriction, and account suspension. The law stipulates that network operators must take actions to delete, block, or disconnect links to illegal information posted by users, and are required to retain relevant records of such actions.

The *Measures for the Administration of Internet Information Services* is a regulation issued by the State Council of the People's Republic of China to govern the conduct of internet information service providers.

According to this regulation, internet information service providers are responsible for managing and reviewing the content posted by users and must promptly delete illegal information or take other necessary measures [11]. In addition, there are other relevant laws, regulations, and rules, such as the *Regulations on the Administration of Internet News Information Services*, the *Regulations on the Administration of Internet Commenting Services*, and the *Regulations on the Governance of Online Information Content Ecology*, which also provide corresponding provisions for the management and handling of online information content.

Overall, the primary objectives of these laws and regulations are to maintain order and security in cyberspace, protect citizens' legitimate rights and interests, and prevent cybercrime [12]. In implementing measures such as post deletion, speech restriction, and account suspension, internet platforms generally adhere to the requirements and guidance set forth by these legal provisions.

In practical implementation, the government assigns censorship obligations to online platforms, thereby shifting the responsibility of internet regulation onto them and achieving a form of covert, delegated governance, commonly referred to as "censorship outsourcing". In executing these responsibilities, platforms focus on maintaining social stability and often formulate complex terms of service, aiming to operate discreetly behind the scenes. However, on socially sensitive topics, the circulation and amplification of public opinion cannot be fully controlled.

(2) Multiple stakeholder incentives

Regarding the act of post deletion, some studies classify the responsible actors into four categories: non-official individual deletions, network editors and administrators, cyber police deletions, and hacker-initiated deletions.

Regardless of who carries out the deletion, each type of post removal reflects distinct interest-driven motives: Non-official individual deletions refer to ordinary users deleting their own posts voluntarily. Network editors and administrators are responsible for filtering online content, and their deletions are motivated by commercial, administrative, or public interest considerations [13]. Cyber police perform post deletions as part of efforts to combat online crimes while also removing harmful information. Hacker-initiated deletions are usually

associated with commercial interests.

The motivations behind these different types of deletions are complex and often influenced by administrative or commercial incentives. Moreover, paid post deletions aimed at protecting individual or organizational interests have become increasingly prevalent, posing a serious threat to the integrity and order of the online environment. In maintaining order on online platforms, account suspension and speech restriction measures are not merely a supplement to post deletion; they involve complex, interest-driven considerations. Platforms typically employ account suspension and speech restriction as management tools with the dual objectives of ensuring orderly platform operations and enhancing user experience [14].

However, behind these measures lie numerous interest-driven factors. For example, in a labor rights case encountered by one of our team members, a worker posted information online advocating for their rights but faced retaliation from the involved company. The company reports by hiring many "water soldiers", ultimately resulting in the worker's account being suspended by the platform. This case illustrates that even when platforms implement censorship mechanisms, there remain vulnerabilities that can be exploited.

The role and responsibility of platforms

Online platforms play a crucial role in the governance of post deletion, speech restriction, and account suspension, encompassing key technical, specific policy, and strict legal dimensions. In this complex regulatory process, internet platforms function simultaneously as core regulators and supervised entities being regulated, bearing significant responsibilities for enforcing detailed rules while also earnestly complying with external official oversight from relevant authorities.

Platforms need to enhance content moderation efficiency through technical measures, establish standardized management systems, and strengthen cooperation with relevant authorities, while simultaneously complying with laws and regulations and fulfilling their corporate social responsibilities [15]. Only with comprehensive support across technical, policy, and legal dimensions can internet platforms more effectively carry out their governance responsibilities, maintain a well-ordered online environment, and promote the healthy development of the internet.

From a technical perspective, internet platforms need to establish robust content moderation mechanisms and tools. By employing manual review, automated filtering, and other methods, platforms can monitor and screen user-generated content, promptly identifying and addressing violative information. With the continuous accumulation of platform management experience and advancements in technology, certain content management techniques have matured, achieving high levels of automated governance. For example, Toutiao's Lingquan 3.0 model has reached an accuracy rate of 91% in detecting pornographic, violent, and vulgar content.

At the same time, platforms can leverage big data analytics and artificial intelligence technologies to further enhance the efficiency and accuracy of content moderation, effectively combating the spread of malicious information and online harassment.

At the policy level, internet platforms should formulate clear management standards and operational procedures, accompanied by comprehensive user rules and community guidelines. These guidelines must explicitly define acceptable user behavior and the consequences of violations, ensuring order and safety in cyberspace [16]. Moreover, platforms ought to enhance collaboration with relevant authorities to promote internet governance jointly, cultivating a mechanism for multi-stakeholder participation and cooperative regulation.

From a legal perspective, internet platforms are required to comply with national laws and regulations and fulfill their corporate legal responsibilities. When implementing measures such as post deletion, speech restriction, and account suspension, platforms must act in accordance with the law, avoiding abuse of power or infringement on users' legitimate rights [17]. At the same time, platforms should actively cooperate with law enforcement authorities, assisting in the investigation and handling of online illegal activities, thereby contributing to cybersecurity and social stability.

The actual needs and social risk analysis of the behavior of “post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction” on the Internet

The definition of online “post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction” is that to maintain network order and regulate bad information, online media or related interest groups delete information by

themselves, and if necessary, impose a penalty of blocking words on related accounts. Online media is being seriously eroded—take the negative role of online post deletion people as an example. With the rapid development of the Internet, maintaining the network environment is a long-term solution for the healthy development of the Internet, and at the same time it will face social risks of improper handling.

“Post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction” practical needs

(1) Safeguard citizens' legitimate rights and interests and regulate citizens' bad behaviors

According to the provisions of Articles 38 and 51 of China's Constitution, it is forbidden to insult, slander and falsely accuse citizens, and at the same time, it is forbidden to use speech to harm the interests of the state, society and the collective, as well as the legitimate freedoms and rights of other citizens.

In many network incidents, victims can protect their rights and interests by means of alarm, and publish information on the network to dispel rumors, to prevent the spread of rumors. Through proper content control measures such as deleting posts, account suspension, and speech restriction, the publishers of rumors will be punished as they should.

(2) Purify the network environment and improve the user experience

Proper forbidding on the Internet can regulate users' bad comments and avoid excessive information disturbing other users, to maintain a good network atmosphere. Games such as “the glory of the King” and “League of Legends” will punish players who are involved in sensitive words and repeatedly send the same message. Self-media platforms such as “Weibo” and “Little Red Book” restrict users from posting inappropriate posts, which is equivalent to banning users in disguise.

Social risks of “post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction”

(1) Infringement of citizens' right of expression

In the face of serious social crisis, expressing demands through the Internet has become a quick and effective way for citizens to protect their legitimate rights and interests. However, affected by the sensitivity of events and the content supervision of online platforms, citizens may find their voices suppressed, and thus cannot

effectively defend their own interests. Article 35 of the Constitution of People's Republic of China (PRC) clearly stipulates: "People's Republic of China (PRC) citizens enjoy freedom of speech, publication, assembly, association, procession and demonstration". If citizens are not guaranteed to express their demands in a timely and proper way, they may turn to a more radical way and use alternative words to avoid sensitive words, which will not only aggravate the fermentation of public opinion, but also lead to the lack of trust of citizens in the mainstream media.

(2) Weakening citizen supervision

Take the paid deletion of posts as an example: the supervised person uses illegal deletion of posts or paid deletion of posts to escape the public's supervision vision and suppress different opinions or critical voices, which violates the principle of fairness and justice. There are three types of customers at the top of the gray industry interest chain:

- (1) Officials who are reported online.
- (2) Listed companies with negative information online.
- (3) Star actors or public figures with negative information online.

Such people often need the public's supervision most, and illegal deletion of posts or paid deletion of posts will infringe on citizens' supervision rights.

Shadow ban-mild version of "post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction"

Shadow ban, also known as secret shielding or current limiting, is a means of censorship for users in online communities. Its characteristic is that the content published by users is invisible to other users, but the users themselves are unaware that it has been blocked. This practice can be traced back to the bulletin board service in the 1980s, when it was mainly used to restrict the rights of users who did not comply with the regulations.

Today, this censorship method has been widely used on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, WeChat and Tik Tok. Between 2014 and 2015, Twitter secretly blocked more than 4 million tweets in Turkey; WeChat was exposed in 2016 to secretly block messages containing specific keywords. Although Instagram did not officially use the title of "shadow ban", when a user's post does not meet its algorithm recommendation rules,

the platform will reduce the exposure of the post.

The influence of shadow ban should not be underestimated. It will not only reduce users' popularity and account weight, limit the spread of content, but also weaken users' participation and influence. On the TikTok platform, the shadow ban may lead to a significant decline in the number of video views and sharing by users, the limitation of tags and discoverability, and the obvious reduction of interaction. Although this practice is quite effective in controlling the spread of inappropriate content, it has also triggered a wide discussion on the transparency and accountability of the platform.

In China, many media outlets also suffer from "account flow limitation". Account flow limitation refers to the network platform restricting the content exposure, dissemination scope or interactive ability of a specific account through a series of algorithms and mechanisms, thus making the content of the account unable to obtain normal traffic and attention.

Shadow ban, "flow restriction" and "post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction" are all strategies used by network platforms to regulate content dissemination. Among them, post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction is undoubtedly the most direct and immediate way, but such tough means are often easy to arouse users' resentment and quickly attract widespread attention. In contrast, shadow bans and current restrictions are more moderate. They adopt a hidden way of "post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction", which virtually limits the circulation of information by reducing the exposure rate of specific content on the platform. Although these two practices have their own development in different cultural backgrounds and policy environments, their essence is a restriction on users' right to speak, and may also evolve into an infringement on citizens' legitimate rights and interests.

Legal and policy suggestions

Freedom of speech in the Internet age

Article 35 of the Constitution of People's Republic of China (PRC) stipulates that citizens shall enjoy freedom of speech. Freedom of speech includes oral and written expression, covering politics, business, art, academics and religion. The core of freedom of speech is equal right to speak and legal content without interference, but it is

not unlimited, and it needs to abide by laws and social ethics. In our country, freedom of speech is bound by law, and it is forbidden to be used for incitement, slander, invasion of privacy and other illegal acts. In practice, freedom of speech also needs to abide by the principles of morality and discipline, and is always based on the law. Freedom of speech in the Internet age is different from traditional freedom of speech. In the Internet age, people's freedom of speech has diversified forms and wider space. At the same time, the content of freedom of speech in the Internet age is more common to others. Internet has broken the traditional way of information transmission in promoting information exchange. People can not only get information anytime and anywhere, but also transmit information through free speech. Under the network environment, people can express their opinions anonymously, so that people can express themselves more freely and improve citizens' sense of autonomy. The government can also use the network to pay more attention to and obtain public opinion. People's free speech on the Internet can sometimes play a role in cracking down on crimes and exposing corruption, and it is of great significance for social development to work together. However, freedom of speech is limited in any country and at any time. The traditional limit of freedom of speech is that the personal rights and personal dignity of the person under discussion shall not be harmed. This limit is also applicable to freedom of speech in the network age.

How to balance platform management needs and users' rights and interests

(1) Clarify the source of rights

The balance between Internet laws and regulations and users' rights and interests is a complex process, involving legislation, law enforcement, justice, platform supervision and social education. At present, the self-management mode of network platform combines automatic procedures and manual audit, and implements management means such as deleting posts, sealing titles and banning words according to the regulations reached between the platform and users. Under this mechanism, once users are dealt with above, they can hardly effectively complain to safeguard their legitimate rights and interests.

At the beginning of user registration on the platform, it is necessary to check and agree to the user guidelines

formulated by the platform, and the user guidelines are mostly formulated by the platform side, and users and public authorities are not involved. In this case, the source of users' rights is vague, and the platform has the power to manage the content published by users. Studies have shown that at present, there is no complete legal system to regulate the autonomy of online platforms, and the power of platforms mainly comes from policy support and some scattered mandatory legal provisions. This makes the boundary of platform autonomy unclear, and the supervision mechanism of the platform is not perfect, which may lead to the excessive expansion of platform power, thus making the abuse of power more frequent.

(2) Balance between platforms and users

With the rapid progress of Internet technology, we have witnessed the rise of oligopoly platforms such as Weibo, Tik Tok and Baidu. These platforms are managed by professional teams of large enterprises, which makes users often face many difficulties when their rights are infringed, and they must make great efforts to safeguard their legitimate rights and interests. Furthermore, the user agreements agreed by users when they join these platforms are usually independently formulated by the platforms, and these agreements are often beneficial to the platforms, thus intensifying the challenges of users on the road of rights protection. In view of this, how to find a balance between platform power and users' rights and interests to minimize the cost of users' rights protection and improve its convenience has become an urgent problem.

(3) Technical power balance

With the progress of artificial intelligence technology, algorithms have become the mainstream tools for managing content in major platforms. Compared with manual audit, the algorithm can take the lead in screening information, which greatly improves the governance efficiency with its advantages of high efficiency, low cost and all-weather operation. However, with the wide application of algorithms, the concept of "algorithm black box" has also emerged. This concept originated from Frank Pasquale's exposition in his works, pointing out that American society is being secretly influenced by algorithm manipulation in high-tech and financial industries, in which the rules, parameter settings and privileges of algorithms are opaque and hidden in the

“black box”.

First, due to the high-tech nature of the algorithm, it is often difficult for ordinary users to gain insight into its complex operational logic. Secondly, the algorithm of the platform is usually opaque, which makes it difficult for users to identify the possible irrationalities, and then it is difficult to effectively supervise the speech management based on the algorithm. At the same time, the algorithm may be used by the platform as a cover for illegal activities. The complex technical appearance and seemingly scientific and fair appearance of the algorithm easily make users trust, thus ignoring potential problems. At present, content management often combines the dual mechanisms of algorithm automatic review and manual review, in which the algorithm standard mainly caters to the preference of the platform. Under the shadow of “algorithm black box”, how to ensure the development of technology can better protect users’ rights and interests has become an important problem to be solved.

Improvement measures

(1) Improve and refine the laws and regulations

With the rapid development of Internet technology, the existing laws in China are insufficient to regulate the new illegal acts of “post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction”, and there are still many gaps in legislation. It is necessary to constantly improve relevant laws and regulations to meet the needs of the new situation. Special internet laws can be formulated to clarify the management principles, responsible subjects and law enforcement mechanisms of the Internet.

Take the management of short video content on the Internet as an example: after searching for keywords on the legal information network of Peking University, some studies found that the higher legal norms, including *The Law of the People’s Republic of China on Network Security*, *The Regulations on the Protection of Communication Right of Information Network (revised in 2013)* and *The Measures for the Administration of Internet Information Services (revised in 2011)*, did not clearly stipulate the management of short video content. On the contrary, those laws and regulations directly related to the management of short video content usually have a low level of effectiveness and are often only industry regulations [18]. In China, the current situation of short video content management is the lack of high-level legal and administrative norms, while low-level

rules and normative documents are scattered. This situation makes it difficult for regulatory agencies to follow the law, cross or conflict the exercise of power, and thus affects the effect of short video content supervision.

(2) Restrain the platform power and optimize the supervision mechanism

On the one hand, it is necessary to delimit the red line and lower limit of platform review to prevent the abuse of platform power. General content censorship standards should be formulated to prevent the platform from abusing censorship power, avoid data monopoly, and strictly limit the content censorship authority within the scope of content governance. At the same time, the platform should also be required to protect users’ rights and interests in the process of user agreement and content review, and consider users’ reasonable suggestions when formulating and modifying review standards.

On the other hand, we should build a multi-party ecological governance mechanism for online content, provide a channel for users to make suggestions and complaints, so that they can give feedback on the content review rules of the platform and share this information with public authorities in real time. The implementation of this move is not only convenient for administrative organs and procuratorial organs to grasp the content review status of the network platform in time, but also helpful to safeguard the rights and interests of users and enhance their participation and satisfaction. At the same time, it is suggested that procuratorial organs should explore illegal clues by analyzing user complaints and build a public interest litigation mechanism within the scope of network platform governance.

(3) Strengthen international exchanges and cooperation

In the process of optimizing the network supervision system, China can enhance cooperation and exchanges with other countries and regions to jointly meet cross-border network security challenges. At the same time, actively participate in international Internet governance and promote the construction of a fairer and more reasonable global Internet governance system.

For example, American government departments have passed more than 130 bills related to Internet management, which cover almost all aspects of Internet management, with detailed provisions and severe penalties for violations. Germany’s “Multimedia Law”

classifies network service providers in detail and stipulates the corresponding responsibilities for all kinds of providers. France's "Creation and Internet" and "Information Society Act" have made detailed provisions on protecting citizens' rights and strictly restricting illegal post deletion. In two Internet-related laws promulgated in 2000, South Korea stipulated the legality of information content filtering of Internet service providers, that is, legal post deletion was confirmed, and a network management classification system was established. The network real-name registration system of the Basic Law on the Protection of Information and Communication has effectively curbed the improper deletion of posts in the network, timely and effectively determined relevant responsibilities through identity authentication, and improved judicial efficiency [19].

China's network management strategy was influenced by western countries during its development. With the continuous evolution of the international situation and the spread of the threat of terrorism, strengthening the supervision of network information has reached a global consensus. Western countries' network management model, its practices in balancing multiple interests and preventing excessive intervention, provides China with experience that can be used for reference.

(4) Introducing supervision mechanism

To ensure the transparency and fairness of network management and prevent the abuse of management power, it is suggested that the network platform should establish an independent third-party supervision institution or build a user-autonomous supervision system in the form of "small court for salted fish" and "small court for the US Mission". Through these mechanisms, we can start the user review process for controversial content, effectively absorb and give play to the wisdom of the vast number of users, to achieve the purpose of maintaining network order. While maintaining network security, ensure that the rights of network users are not disturbed.

(5) Fault-tolerant mechanism and complaint channel

In view of the rapid changes of the Internet, the network platform should set up a fault-tolerant mechanism to allow users to raise objections to management decisions and seek review or remedy through complaint channels.

Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages of Internet management measures

"Post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction" is an internationally accepted means of network control. The network is virtual, anonymous and widespread, which provides a stage for the public to express themselves, but also becomes a hotbed of evil. The anonymity of the internet provides extremists with a channel to spread their ideas, which obviously abuses freedom of speech. If the internet is full of terrorism, hate speech, reactionary views and bad information, these contents will not only pose a threat to the healthy growth of teenagers, but also have a negative impact on national security and social harmony. The popularity of network robots and algorithm operations makes online public opinion easily manipulated, and sometimes it can even intensify public sentiment and affect the political process. Therefore, the international community generally calls for building a civilized and rational network environment, and the key to realizing this vision is to strengthen the effective management of network content, and it is necessary to clean up some harmful information in the process of governance.

However, the anonymity and virtual characteristics of the Internet weaken the traditional advantages of government supervision. At the same time, the network platform with big data technology gradually shows its importance in the governance process, which leads to the transformation from the traditional two-party governance model to a more complex multi-party game pattern. In this change, the dominance of Internet governance is also shifting to the network platform with private rights. China Internet has entered a "jungle age". Internet has evolved into a complex stage, where various interest groups consciously influence and control public opinion, and they are playing a fierce game. Some studies have been found in the investigation of user protocols of mainstream network platforms. Except for a few samples, the user agreements of most websites have expanded the scope of statutory content review, which may undermine users' freedom of expression, damage data interconnection and lead to platform ecological monopoly. In addition, the platform may implement behaviors that affect the normal display and dissemination of information through technical

empowerment and become the absolute authority of information push. Rules to measure whether posts are deleted, titles are sealed and words are forbidden are all written by online platforms, which not only infringes on users' freedom of expression, but also undermines the interconnection of data and information, which may make user protocols and intelligent technologies become the sharp weapon of platform ecological monopoly and pose a threat to the healthy development of Internet ecology.

Unavoidable "sensitive content"

According to CNNIC's 53rd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, by December 2023, the number of netizens in China had reached 1.092 billion, 24.8 million more than that in December 2022, and the Internet penetration rate was as high as 77.5%. At the same time, the amount of information generated every day is as high as tens of billions. The public has different views on different events, so it is difficult to clear all the "sensitive information" both in theory and in practice. In addition, for those contents that can stimulate netizens to express their desires, even if they are deleted, there is a high possibility that they will be transferred to other platforms for publishing. In this environment, continuous vigilance and censorship may not have substantial effect, but limit people's right to express freely.

Psychologist Allport and others have put forward the formula of rumor spreading, which emphasizes the influence of fuzziness and importance of events on rumor spreading opportunities. In short, when the information provided by the government is insufficient to meet the information needs of users, rumors and rumors will take advantage of it and automatically fill this information gap. In recent years, the management behaviors such as "post deletion, account suspension, and speech restriction" in the network have gradually evolved into a public opinion trend. The removal of relevant information has not reduced its spread, but promoted its wider spread, which in turn triggered huge social risks. These risks are not only reflected in the immediate impact of the actual transformation of online public opinion, the obvious social risks and the superficial social contradictions, but also in the fact that the behavior of deleting and restoring posts has gradually become a part of online history. This kind of behavior not only shapes the narrative way of history, affects people's

long-term views, but also may trigger the public opinion reaction of similar events in the future, especially in sensitive areas such as personal safety, world pattern and survival value, which users are highly concerned about.

Future Outlook

When discussing the future direction of network content management, we must realize that with technical iteration and social evolution, the governance of cyberspace is constantly encountering new challenges and meeting new opportunities. A sound network content management system should not only solve the current problems but also foresee and deal with the possible challenges in the future. This requires us to consider the overall health of the network environment and the long-term interests of society while safeguarding users' rights, and strive to achieve a balance between protecting users' freedom of speech and information security. Strengthen the effective management of network content, clean up harmful information, maintain network order, and promote the lasting and steady development of cyberspace by perfecting laws and regulations, introducing effective supervision mechanism, setting up reasonable fault-tolerant mechanism and establishing smooth complaint channels. At the same time, strengthen the communication and cooperation among the government, network platforms and users, and jointly build a civilized and rational network environment.

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Conflicts of Interest

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