

Twitter Files Reveal Government-led Censorship Network

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

✓ Fact Checked

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Over the past three months, a small group of independent journalists, including Michael Shellenberger and Matt Taibbi, have sifted through Elon Musk's Twitter Files, exposing the many ways in which social media platforms have censored Americans at the behest of the U.S. government, and spread fabricated propaganda intended to "debunk" truthful stories
- › March 9, 2023, Shellenberger and Taibbi testified before Congress, explaining how "a highly organized network of U.S. government agencies and government contractors has been creating blacklists and pressuring social media companies to censor Americans"
- › A long list of government agencies has special departments or teams whose duty it is to manage public censorship, in direct violation of the U.S. Constitution
- › The U.S. Department of Homeland Security justifies censorship by placing "misinformation" on par with a "cyberattack" on critical infrastructure, which makes it a threat to national security
- › Congress must immediately defund and dismantle the censorship-industrial complex in its entirety

Over the past three months, a small group of independent journalists, including Michael Shellenberger and Matt Taibbi, have sifted through Elon Musk's Twitter Files, exposing the many ways in which social media platforms have censored Americans at the behest of the U.S. government, and spread fabricated propaganda intended to "debunk" truthful stories.

March 9, 2023, Shellenberger and Taibbi testified before Congress, explaining how "a highly organized network of U.S. government agencies and government contractors has been creating blacklists and pressuring social media companies to censor Americans."¹ To say that their findings are shocking would be an understatement.

As it turns out, a long list of government agencies has special departments or teams whose duty it is to manage public censorship, in direct violation of the U.S. Constitution, which they swore an oath to uphold. In short, there's a secret "censorship-industrial complex" in the U.S., to use Shellenberger's term, and they are actively engaged in all-out information warfare against the American public.

Shellenberger and Taibbi are now calling on Congress to defund and dismantle this censorship-industrial complex in its entirety, and to do so immediately. We cannot afford to let this treasonous cancer to grow any further. If we do not put a permanent end to it now, we will lose this republic and all the freedoms we've enjoyed under it.

Shellenberger's Testimony to Congress

Shellenberger's testimony before Congress is 68 pages long, so I cannot review all the details here. You can [download and/or read it on his Substack](#).² Here's an excerpt from his opening remarks:

"The Twitter Files, state attorneys general lawsuits, and investigative reporters have revealed a large and growing network of government agencies, academic institutions, and nongovernmental organizations that are actively censoring American citizens, often without their knowledge, on a range of issues, including on the origins of COVID, COVID vaccines, emails relating to Hunter Biden's business dealings, climate change, renewable energy, fossil fuels, and many other issues ...

'If government officials are directing or facilitating such censorship,' notes George Washington University law professor Jonathan Turley, 'it raises serious

First Amendment questions. It is axiomatic that the government cannot do indirectly what it is prohibited from doing directly.'

Moreover, we know that the U.S. government has funded organizations that pressure advertisers to boycott news media organizations and social media platforms that a) refuse to censor and/or b) spread disinformation, including alleged conspiracy theories.

The Stanford Internet Observatory, the University of Washington, the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab, and Graphika all have inadequately disclosed ties to the Department of Defense, the C.I.A., and other intelligence agencies. They work with multiple U.S. government agencies to institutionalize censorship research and advocacy within dozens of other universities and think tanks.

It is important to understand how these groups function ... they are creating blacklists of disfavored people and then pressuring, cajoling, and demanding that social media platforms censor, deamplify, and even ban the people on these blacklists ...

These organizations and others are also running their own influence operations, often under the guise of 'fact-checking' ... In many instances, censorship, such as labeling social media posts, is part of the influence operation aimed at discrediting factual information ...

Importantly, the bar for bringing in military-grade government monitoring and speech-countering techniques has moved from 'countering terrorism' to 'countering extremism' to countering simple misinformation.

The government no longer needs a predicate of calling you a terrorist or extremist to deploy government resources to counter your political activity. The only predicate it needs is simply the assertion that the opinion you expressed on social media is wrong."

Disinformation Superspreaders

Shallenberger's full testimony reviews the roles of key organizations and individuals within the government's censorship network and provides specific examples of disinformation campaigns created and propagated by this network, including the Trump-Russian collusion conspiracy theory, the delegitimization of the COVID lab leak theory, and the Hunter Biden laptop conspiracy theory.

In the case of the Hunter Biden laptop, the FBI initiated the plot to quench the story. In collaboration with Twitter, Facebook and the Aspen Institute, the FBI held a tabletop exercise to practice the shaping of the media's coverage of a potential "hack and dump" operation involving Hunter Biden material,^{3,4} several weeks before the New York Post broke the story (which was subsequently censored everywhere).

Shallenberger also details how [Renee DiResta](#), who is part of the Election Integrity Partnership (EIP) – the nongovernmental side of the censorship network – helped derail Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore's campaign in 2017 by launching thousands of fake bots against him on Facebook and Twitter.⁵

DiResta is now a research manager and top lieutenant at the Stanford Internet Observatory, where she's directly connected to the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) censorship directorate. She's also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR),⁶ the goal of which is to bring about a totalitarian one world government.⁷ DiResta's work history also includes a stint of unknown duration with the CIA.⁸

While CISA, which is a sub-department of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), was originally tasked with defending the U.S. against foreign cybersecurity threats, it quickly morphed into a government entity focused almost solely on domestic censorship.

Chris Krebs, who oversaw CISA's transformation, was fired by President Donald Trump in mid-November 2020. Krebs then formed the cyber consulting firm Krebs Stamos Group together with Alex Stamos, director of the Stanford Internet Observatory and former

chief of security at Facebook. Krebs and Stamos are also leaders at the Aspen Institute, which was part of the FBI's exercise to train social media on how to censor the Hunter Biden laptop story.

Why Democrats Demand Censorship

In a more recent Substack article,⁹ Shellenberger shares his thoughts on why the Democratic Party are so supportive of and insistent on censorship. He believes it was triggered by "two seismic challenges to the postwar liberal order of 2016: Brexit in June and the election of Donald Trump as president in November."

"The two events shocked and frightened national security leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. Many openly said that the political threat to NATO and the Western Alliance was bigger than any security threat, a conclusion dramatically reinforced by the election of Trump in 2016, who had repeatedly criticized NATO and hinted at withdrawing the U.S. from it ...

Elites spent the following six years reacting to this blow to their control over the media discourse and, thus, their ability to manufacture consent. In January 2017, The Department of Homeland Security DHS quietly expanded its mission from cybersecurity to cybercensorship by arguing that 'misinformation' is a 'cyberattack' on US critical infrastructure.

On January 6th, 2017, in his final act as Director of DHS, Jeh Johnson declared elections 'critical infrastructure.' The concept of critical infrastructure went from physical things like satellites and dams and federal buildings to events like elections or public health campaigns."

So, the DHS basically justified censorship by placing "misinformation" on par with a "cyberattack" on critical infrastructure, which makes it a threat to national security. Shellenberger goes on to review the unique role of the EIP, which consists of the Stanford Internet Observatory, Washington University's Center for an Informed Public, The Atlantic Council's Digital Forensics Research Lab and Graphika.

The EIP and CISA entered into a formal partnership to censor election misinformation in late June 2020, and as explained by EIP leader Stamos himself, the purpose of the partnership was to do the censoring that the U.S. government could not do due to lack of legal authority.

Ever since then, the EIP has acted as a bridge between government and social media platforms, monitoring and instructing social media on what to remove on the government's behalf.

When censorship of COVID information first became apparent, I warned that it wouldn't stop there, and it hasn't. Denying manmade climate change is now an offense that will get you axed, and as reported by Shellenberger,¹⁰ CISA in June 2022 "announced that it would also demand censorship of information relating to the financial world."

Domestic Censorship Superweapons

We cannot wait until the day when merely stating the obvious — that we're in a recession — will get you booted off social media. CISA and all other government departments and teams engaged in censorship must be defunded and abolished.

We must also open up a conversation about the use of artificial intelligence and quantum technologies to improve and automate censorship capabilities, because that's precisely what the National Science Foundation (NSF) is doing — and this work is being funded by the U.S. government. As reported by the Foundation for Freedom Online:¹¹

"In the promo video below, National Science Foundation (NSF) grant project WiseDex explains how the federal government is funding it to provide social media platforms with 'fast, comprehensive and consistent' censorship solutions.

WiseDex builds sprawling databases of banned keywords and factual claims to sell to companies like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. It then integrates this banned-claims databases into censorship algorithms, so that 'harmful misinformation stops reaching big audiences' ... And the Biden Administration,

via the NSF, is providing start-up capital for tech tools to get social media platforms to censor more aggressively."

'Course Correct' – Another Censorship Superweapon

Another NSF censorship superweapon under development is called Course Correct. According to the promo video (above), they are:

"... building the core machine learning data science and artificial intelligence technology to identify misinformation, using logistics, network science, and temporal behavior, so that we can very accurately identify what misinformation, where misinformation is spreading, who is consuming the misinformation, and what is the reach of the misinformation ...

Course Correct has pioneered experimental evidence showing that the strategic placement of corrective information in social media networks can reduce misinformation flow ... Course Correct can tell journalists the most effective ways to correct misinformation in the actual networks where the misinformation is doing the most damage."

Basically, what they've discovered is that the most effective way to shut down an undesirable counternarrative is to strike it down when it first appears. If the first instance is deleted, then the idea can't "gain legs."

This means that the primary "enemies of the state" are thought-leaders, people who share ideas, positions or viewpoints that differ from the official narrative. Without doubt, I'm already on that list, and unless Congress takes swift action to rein in this madness, things are only going to get more dangerous from here.

And, as disturbing as all of that is already, WiseDex and Course Correct are just two of about a dozen or so censorship tools being developed by the NSF with government funding!

Military-Grade Information Weapons Are Being Deployed

By now, it ought to be apparent that our government is at war, and the enemy is we the people. The fact that it's an information war doesn't make it any less serious. As reported by Foundation for Freedom Online:¹²

"One of the most disturbing aspects of the [NSF's] Convergence Accelerator Track F domestic censorship projects is how similar they are to military-grade social media network censorship and monitoring tools developed by the Pentagon for the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism contexts abroad."

The mere fact that the government is developing and deploying military-grade censorship and propaganda weapons at us — the very people paying their salaries with our hard-earned tax dollars — is telling and does absolutely nothing to instill trust.

Government Decommissions FOIA Website

Eroding public trust even more, the federal government recently announced it will decommission FOIAonline as of September 30, 2023.¹³ This is the website where all Freedom of Information Act responses were made available to the public.

Now, the only way you can view the documents a government agency has released in response to a previous FOIA request is by re-requesting them for yourself, which can be both time-consuming and costly, or somehow obtaining them from the original requester, if you know who they are.

Thought Police Ties to Big Pharma and DOD

As of September 2021, the U.S. Department of Defense has also paid NewsGuard \$749,387 to censor and suppress conservative media,¹⁴ a fact that again highlights the military nature of all this censorship.

[NewsGuard](#), which claims to rate news websites for reliability, accuracy and trustworthiness, was founded in 2018 with seed money from the [Publicis Groupe](#), one of the largest PR companies in the world that services several of the largest drug companies on the planet. As noted by The Gateway Pundit:¹⁵

"NewsGuard has consistently attacked The Gateway Pundit on COVID, the Hunter Biden laptop, and vaccines that have all been proven to be accurate. NewsGuard has NEVER criticized the mainstream media for lying about Trump-Russia collusion, the Hunter Biden laptop, COVID and vaccines. So why is the federal government funding this radical censorship outfit?"

Needless to say, I've been a constant target of NewsGuard, whose so-called "fact-checkers" can't seem to get their facts straight no matter how many references you give them. Nor do they have the expertise to evaluate the evidence.

Here is the latest [exchange my team had with John Gregory, a "health editor" at NewsGuard](#). He contacted us March 9, 2023, saying they were updating their existing review of Mercola.com content and had questions about our editorial practices. The exchange starts at the bottom, so you'll have to read it from bottom-up.

Twitter Files Have Opened a Can That Cannot Be Closed

The Twitter Files have really opened a huge window into the U.S. government's illegal censorship of American citizens, and the extent of this censorship network is far greater than anyone previously suspected. Is this really the government we want? Should the DOD be allowed to use military-grade social engineering and propaganda tools against the American public?

“ Congress must immediately defund and dismantle the censorship-industrial complex in its entirety. ”

I, for one, second Shellenberger's statement to Congress:¹⁶

"Congress should immediately cut off funding to the censors and investigate their activities. Second, it should mandate instant reporting of all conversations between social media executives, government employees, and contractors concerning content moderation. Third, Congress should limit the broad permission given to social media platforms to censor, deplatform, and spread propaganda."

The government censorship machine must be dismantled, now, before it's too late.

Sources and References

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- [5 Foundation for Freedom Online November 9, 2022](#)
- [6, 7 Wakeup-World August 31, 2016](#)
- [8 Foundation for Freedom Online March 9, 2023](#)
- [9 Michael Shellenberger Substack March 13, 2023](#)
- [10 Twitter Michael Shellenberger March 13, 2023](#)
- [11, 12 Foundation for Freedom Online January 29, 2023](#)
- [13 Twitter Joseph Mercola March 12, 2023](#)
- [14, 15 Gateway Pundit March 9, 2023](#)