

A Conversation with Mark Zuckerberg

Jamie Miller: My name is Jamie Miller and I'm a vice president for public programs at the Aspen Institute. And it's my great pleasure to welcome to our stage Facebook founder, chairman and CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, who will be interviewed by Cass Sunstein, professor from Harvard University.

Speaker 2: [inaudible].

Jamie Miller: It's great to have professor Sunstein back at the ideas festival and we are so pleased and excited to welcome Mr Zuckerberg to the ideas festival for the very first time. Thank you both.

Cass Sunstein: So it's challenging to follow an Emmy Award winning artist. I do have a song that I'd like to sing that I wrote.

Cass Sunstein: Okay, well we'll wait on the song, um, by interest in these topics. As mark knows, uh, came from a book that I wrote called Hashtag Republic, which is actually very concerned about democracy and social media. And I found myself on a train getting a call from one of Mark's, uh, employees saying, you know, we're also concerned about social media and democracy. Uh, might you be willing to talk to us? And I found that a great honor, and I've had two occasions to work on specific projects as a consultant with Facebook. And, uh, the opportunity to explore. I think our topic is the future of the world. Is that what we agreed to? Uh, uh, let's just, we can fit in 40 minutes in 40 minutes. Um, so, uh, lightning round, uh, the first issue, which is I think very salient in many nations, is that the governments have been thinking about regulating social media. The United States has affirmed tradition of freedom of speech, and it's not exactly usual. I did empirical research, courtesy of a online research strategies at, it's not usual. I can confirm to find the heads of companies calling for regulation of their own companies. Uh, but you have done exactly that called for government regulation. Can you say a little bit about what inspired that and what areas you'd like to see regulation in?

Mark Zuckerberg: Sure. So, you know, I've spent most of the last few years focused on trying to address some of the biggest social issues facing the internet. And you know, that our company in particular, is it the center of the four big ones that we focused on our election security and preventing election interference, free expression. And while harmful content, uh, privacy and making sure that we get those issues right. And one that's gotten a little bit less attention, but I think is as important is portability and interoperability and being able to move between services to increase innovation and competition and enable research. So through working through these issues, we met a lot of progress on, on each of them. We've built up our systems internally in elections, which I'm sure we'll get into in a bit. Uh, there've been many elections around the world over the last

couple of years. The results have been, um, a lot cleaner online due to a lot of the work that, uh, that we and others have done in partnership.

Mark Zuckerberg: Uh, but one of the things that I've kind of come to after a few years of, of really spending most of my time working on these issues is that in order to solve these issues, you get down to some fundamental trade offs and values that I don't think people would want private companies to be making by themselves. Right? So questions like, how do you balance what the line is between free expression? On the one hand and safety from content on the other hand and privacy about what people are allowed to say. Ah, human dignity and decency. You know, those are really hard questions to answer. And you know, as a company we try to do the best that we can. But I think that if, if as a society, if we were rewriting the rules of the Internet from scratch today, it is not at all clear to me that what we would want to do is have private companies make so many of these decisions by themselves and in a lot of these areas around, for example, what constitutes political speech and what should be acceptable advertising around an election.

Mark Zuckerberg: Um, I, I really don't think that as a society we want private companies to be the final word on making these decisions. So we're, we're, we're, I've come out is look in the absence of regulation, um, on some of these things, we're going to do the best that we can and build up very sophisticated systems to be able to handle these issues. But at the end of the day, I, I don't think that that is necessarily the ideal state that we all want to be in. I think we would be better off if we had a more robust democratic process setting the rules on how we want it to arbitrate and draw some of the tradeoffs between a lot of these values that we hold dear.

Cass Sunstein: Okay. Let's talk about the integrity of the electoral process and foreign interference with elections. A lot of people in the United States are of course concerned about that. Can you say a little bit about what you've done specifically? Oh, since 2016 to reduce the risk and what you'd like to see, say Senator McConnell and Senator Schumer agree on, in the next few years on the regulatory front?

Mark Zuckerberg: Yeah, so, so I think getting election integrity right is probably the highest priority of the, of, of these issues. And we, there's no single silver bullet. Um, but there are a number of different strategies that we've taken as a company, uh, to prevent state actors. Like what we've seen Russia do and tried to do in the 2016 elections from being able to do that again and elections around the world, including the 2018 midterms and upcoming the 2020 election. So the things that have made the biggest difference are, one is building up really sophisticated technical AI systems and, um, hiring a whole lot of people. We have 30,000 people at Facebook who work on, on, um, on, on content and safety and safety review to be able to find these networks of bad actors to be able to take them off the systems before they have the opportunity to, um, to spread propaganda or misinformation or whatever they're spreading.

Mark Zuckerberg: Um, we've gotten much more sophisticated at that. It's an arms race. Uh, Russia and other folks have also gotten more sophisticated in their tactics. Every election we see a new tactics, but through a big investment in this, we're able to stay ahead and keep the progress going on that. Um, we've also upgraded the policies. So now anyone who wants to run political ads, uh, or issue ads or run a page that gets a lot of distribution, needs to verify their identity with us with a, uh, with a, with a valid government id and we've rolled this out in the u s and we rolled it out across the world, cetera. It's a quite a large operation to be able to do that because we have 7 million advertisers. Um, overall, uh, not all of whom are trying to engage in political or issue ads, but, but that's a big deal.

Mark Zuckerberg: But that that would prevent people from other countries from being able to advertise in elections where the law might prevent them from doing that. Um, we've also instituted a bunch of transparency requirements where now anyone who runs political ads, um, that those ads are going to go into an archive that's going to be visible for, uh, seven years. Uh, so that way, um, seven or eight years. So that way anyone who wants a is a journalist or an academic is going to be able to study what every political advertiser did, who they targeted, how much they paid, what else they said, two different audiences. Uh, and that's really important I think for keeping people honest, right. To make it so that not only bad actors, but you know, common actors in, in the political system can't say different things to different people without, without getting called out on it.

Mark Zuckerberg: And, um, and there's a number of other things that just an in partnership with, uh, with working with intelligence agencies and, uh, election commissions around the world. Again, this isn't an American, uh, only issue. I mean, we just had the big elections in the, in the EU for example, and there's a big election in India, uh, and you know, the EU parliament, uh, president and it came out, I did a, I went and testified in the EU, similar thing to what I did here in, in Congress in the u s and m and the EU parliamentary president after the you elections came out and said, uh, that, you know, Facebook basically that we were able to deliver on what we said we were going to leading up to the elections and that he thought that it was a relatively clean election because of that. So there are reasons for optimism, but we can't rest on our laurels because this is certainly an area where the adversaries are sophisticated and they have a lot of resources and we'll just keep on trying to get better and better.

Mark Zuckerberg: So, you know, from a regulatory perspective, what would I want to see? One is, you know, there's this honest ads act, which I think is a good floor for what should be passed it. We actually are doing all of the things that are in it already. A lot of it is the verifying political advertisers. It's transparency around who's advertising. But you know, I wouldn't just want those policies to be enforced on Facebook. I think you want them enforced across the whole Internet. So, um, so having a bill like that past as the floor I think would be positive. Um, there were other types of laws around the world that I think would be positive as well. Um, you know, for, for example, you know, we had an issue in, um, this is not an

American example, but we had an issue in Ireland. Um, in the last year, there was a referendum on, on abortion.

Mark Zuckerberg: And during that election, leading up to that referendum, uh, a bunch of, uh, prolife American groups advertised in this Irish leading up to this Irish election, um, to, to try to influence public opinion there. Then we went to the Irish and, and asked folks there and say, well, how do you want us to handle this? You have no laws on the books that are relevant for whether we should be allowing this kind of speech in your election. And really this doesn't feel like the kind of thing that a private company should be making a decision on. Um, and their, their response at the time was, you know, we don't currently have a law, so you need to make whatever decision you want to make. We ended up not allowing the ads, but at the end of the day, that feels like the kind of thing around the world in different democracy is that you'd really want the local countries to be deciding for themselves what kind of discourse they want and what kind of advertising they want in their elections, not a private company.

Mark Zuckerberg: So that's, that's kind of a flavor of this. But, but I mean, overall, um, the, the laws around election advertising are very out of date. Right. And what we, what we've seen, you know, a lot of laws around elections today are basically they, political ads are defined as ads around a candidate or an election specifically. That's not really what we saw Russia do primarily in 2016. They tried to get people agitated around different issues. Um, so you know, if, if you want to, if you want to play and prevent that, it's actually, it's more important to broaden out the law of the laws to focus on things that are more issue oriented and not just around elections and candidates specifically. And also the nature of elections now is there, they're kind of permanent campaigns, right? So a lot of countries have laws that limit what candidates are folks can do in the time period before an election. And um, and I just don't think that that reflects the modern threats that we see around the world. I think you want stuff that's more ongoing. Okay. So my suggestion is that it's worth considering

Cass Sunstein: either for you or for regulators, something that would be a zero tolerance policy and that transparency is a good first step, but not adequate. If people have to do a little work to get what's transparent or if they've done that work and they've still seen the ad, which suggests that some parts of America are evil and other parts of America are worse than evil, or that some political candidates are systematically crime committers when they actually aren't. And this is all coming from someone who's transparent. A, wouldn't it be better to have something that would be a zero tolerance policy that specified the categories with particularity beyond the call it, beyond transparency?

Mark Zuckerberg: Well, I think that the challenge here is that a lot of the messages that are being sent, our speech that would be acceptable if it were Americans doing it, participating in American elections. So you know, a lot of what we saw, for example, was simultaneous running of campaigns on both sides of an issue. Take immigration for example. So you know, there would be a campaign to

argue for immigration reform and a campaign to argue against immigration reform and the campaign for immigration reform might look a lot like what someone in the u s advocating for immigration reform would do. Um, but it's, if it's done through a network of, of fake accounts created outside of the country, um, then that's not allowed in, in our, in our political discourse. So we then have the means to go and take that down. But a lot of the time it's not actually the content that's harmful, which is why it's so important to act upstream of the content. I'm sorry. It's not that the content isn't harmful. It's not that the content itself would be, would be prohibited. It's the actors and the way that they're engaging that that is prohibited, which is why the partnerships with the intelligence community, um, and election commissions are so important because that's how we get the signals to say, hey, there's something going on over here that we should look into. This is a network of fake accounts. Let's go take that down before it gets closer to an election or a sensitive time where something might happen.

Cass Sunstein: I'm worried that America's enemies aren't quite worried enough yet. So, so the, the idea that we'd have transparency and take down things that were lying about their sources, that's very important. Uh, would it be good for you to have as part of your standards, a specified list of things, which wouldn't be limited to, you know, during campaign ads, but would be, as you say, ongoing campaign efforts to sow division. And if it's being done by an American as an effort, let's say, to be pretty provocative about what the other side thinks, that's fine. But it's effort by someone who's not particularly friendly to us to put us apart from each other. Like in a twilight zone episode, maybe that would be part of the prohibited community standard.

Mark Zuckerberg: So, yeah, I mean, the, the tools are constantly evolving to find the bad actors and take them down. And that's an ongoing partnership with the security community. But I think you're pointing to an interesting, an interesting point, which is that as a private company, we don't have the tools to make the Russian government stop. Right. Or for, you know, don't, I mean, we can defend as best as we can, but our government is the one that has the tools to apply pressure to Russia, not, not us. Right. So, you know, one of the mistakes that I worry about is, you know, after 2016, um, when, when the government didn't take a, any kind of counteraction, um, well the signal that was sent to the world was that, okay, we're open for business. Countries can try to do this stuff and, and our, our companies will try their best to try to limit it.

Mark Zuckerberg: Um, but fundamentally there isn't going to be a major recourse from the American government. So since then we've seen increased activity from Iran and other countries and we are, are very engaged in, in, in kind of ramping up the defenses, our, the amount that we spend on safety and security. Now as a company, it's billions of dollars a year. It is greater than the whole revenue of our company was when we went public earlier this decade. Right. So we, we've kind of, we've ramped up massively on the security side, but there's very little

that we can do on our own to change the incentives for nation states to act. That's something that is a little bit above our pay grade.

Cass Sunstein: Okay. Let me ask a question that uh, is connected with the election interference one but involves domestic as well as foreign actors and that is defects. Yep. And you can think of deep fakes as literal the technology that is increasingly available by which anyone for whom there's been a photograph taken can be portrayed, you know, singing a song or saying that communism is great or endorsing a political position that they are poor or it could be an altered video that portrays someone as drunk or crazed or thinking something. I pour it. So my question for you is then this is obviously connected with the speaker of the house, Nancy Pelosi's altered video. Why aren't in the policy as of to say tomorrow be that if reasonable observers could not know that it's fake, that it will be taken down and disclosure isn't enough.

Speaker 2: [inaudible]

Cass Sunstein: that's the first time I've ever gotten applauded.

Mark Zuckerberg: Thank you. So okay, this is the area around deep fakes in particular is something where we're currently evaluating what the policy needs to be. We have a number of different policies for how we, how we treat content. So if something is spam, we take it down. If it's misinformation, what we do is we say, okay, we don't think that it should be against the rules to say something that happens to be false, uh, to your friends. Right? But we don't want it to spread and go viral, right? I mean, people, people get things wrong, right? I don't think that that's, that people would want us to be censoring that in saying it is, it is against the rules on this service to, to, to write something that is factually inaccurate. But what we're going to do is we prevent it. We work with independent fact checkers.

Mark Zuckerberg: If they mark something as is false, we prevented from getting any amount of significant distribution once we get that rating. And we also market as false within the service. Um, so anyone who sees that content sees that the content is marked as false and we show related content that is more accurate. It's that way people can get pointed towards something that would, that would educate them. Um, and I think that that's important because otherwise if you're just hiding things that are, that are rumors, um, than then how are people going to refute them? Right. In. And you know, I do think it would be an overreach to say, hey, you shouldn't be able to say something that, um, that is not correct to your friends. Um, now there was a question though about whether misinformation, whether, whether these deep fakes are actually just a completely different category of thing from, from normal kind of false statements overall.

Mark Zuckerberg: And I think that there's a very good case that they are, which is what you're saying. And now w when we put this into place, when we think through our

policies, we need to be very careful because you know, across our services there are about, you know, more than a hundred billion pieces of content a day flowing through the systems. And we want to make sure that we can define things in a way that is precise enough that we can actually go have the 30,000 people I mentioned a second ago, apply the rules in a consistent way across all of this content. So, you know, I do think that that saying deep fixer different from misinformation I think is a reasonable perspective. I think that we need to make sure in doing this, um, that we, that we define what a deep fake is very clearly. So is it AI manipulated media or manipulated media using AI that makes someone say something that they didn't say?

Mark Zuckerberg: I think that that's probably a pretty reasonable definition, but if it's any video that is cutting away that someone thinks is misleading, then well, you know, I mean, I know a lot of people who have done TV interviews are different interviews that had been cut in ways that they didn't like, right in that, that they think changed the definition or the meaning of what they were trying to say. Um, and I think you'd want to make sure that you're scoping this carefully enough that you're not giving people a grounds or precedent to argue that the things that they don't like that change the meaning somewhat of what they said when they were doing an interview get taken down. So I'm generally, I mean I'm kind of giving, this is a little bit of the sausage making here because we're going through the policy process of, of, of thinking through with the deep pay policy should be, we don't do this in isolation where we're currently going through the process of, of talking to a lot of different experts as we do for setting all of these, all of our policies. But this is a certainly a really important area as the AI technology gets better and one that, that, that I think it is likely sensible to have a different policy and to treat this differently than how we just treat normal, uh, false information on the Internet.

Cass Sunstein: Wouldn't it make sense to go a little broader than that? So that things like the Nancy Pelosi video, which aren't like showing the Beatles singing a Taylor swift song or [inaudible], which would be interesting and obviously not true. Uh, so please leave that up. But if it's showing a political actor in a way that would be credibly taken by observers to be real and it wouldn't be AI, it would be just, you know, whatever they did there, take it down.

Speaker 2: [inaudible]

Mark Zuckerberg: I just think you want to be very careful about what it, what you're defining as misinformation. Because a lot of people, this is a topic that can be very easily politicized. People who don't like the way that something was cut. Um, often we'll, we'll, we'll kind of argue that, that, that it did not reflect the true intent or was misinformation, but we exist in a society where people were, were we value and cherish free expression and the ability to say things and including satire. Um, and, and, and, and I'm telling stories, uh, with using anecdotes and stories that resonate, uh, but are, and are often grounded in truth. And I just think that we need to be very careful. And I think in our policy is if something

goes wrong, in fact checkers say it's false, um, we, we don't want it to go viral or we get a lot of distribution.

Mark Zuckerberg: Um, you know, one of the issues in, in the, the example of the Polosi video that you, that you, that you mentioned, which was an execution mistake on our side was it took a while for our systems to flag that and for fact checkers to rate it as false. Once the fact checkers sought and radio, they were able to rate it within an hour, but it took more than a day for our systems to flag it. And during that time it got more distribution than our policies should have, should have allowed. So that was an execution mistake. Um, I think that what we want to be doing is improving execution, but I do not think we want to go towards so far towards saying that a private company prevents you from saying something that it thinks is factually incorrect to another person. That to me just feels like it's too far and goes away from the tradition of free expression.

Mark Zuckerberg: And being able to say what your experiences through satire and other means, much more than than, than at least feels it feels right given where things are today. But the policies continue to evolve. As technology develops, we, um, we continue to think through them. I definitely think there's a good case that deep fakes are different from traditional misinformation, just like spam is different from traditional misinformation and should be treated differently. But I do think that you want to approach this with caution and by consulting with a lot of experts and not just acting hastily and unilaterally

Speaker 2: [inaudible].

Cass Sunstein: Okay. Can we talk a little bit about two issues that, uh, kind of mirror images that is a privacy and data portability. So the, my suggestion for you that I'd like you to react to is with respect to privacy and data portability, there should be one governing principle, which is user control. Uh, we can even call it user sovereignty. And that would mean that how your data is used is up to you. And that would mean that you would be an active agent with respect to a specific choices for everything. And with respect to data portability exactly the same as so. So individuals would make a tradeoff if there is one, and maybe you can explain that if there is one between privacy and port data portability and it would be an individual sovereignty rather than a complexity or a default rule driven system.

Mark Zuckerberg: Well, you know, I don't think that the controversial part of this is choice. I think that the harder part to define as your information, right. So I think that, you know, take it in the context of a social system. Um, you know, one of the things that Facebook does is it shows you your friends' birthdays, right? So it can remind you of your friends' birthdays. Okay. We try to enable a developer ecosystem so that way people can, can, um, can bring their information out to other developers. I don't think anyone, I would be very surprised if anyone in this room disagreed with the notion that you should be able to take your information from a service to, um, to another service. Right? I mean, that's

controversial. The question is, all right, I have my friends on Facebook. You know, you're my friend, you share with me your birthday.

Mark Zuckerberg: Facebook reminds me of that. Am I allowed to take that birthday, um, and put it in my calendar App and, and should Facebook enabled doing that so that now my other calendar that I use can remind me of my friend's birthdays. Is your birthday my information or yours? Who, who gets to decide that if I want to export my friend's birthdays to a calendar, do I need to ask every single one of them for their permission? Because if I do, then that APP probably isn't gonna get built because that's a lot of friction. Or, or let's, let's talk about another example. Um, newsfeed, right? I mean, one of the things that, that people have talked about for awhile is, hey, wouldn't it be nice if I could bring my newsfeed? What would I, the content that I see for my friends to another app, um, either so that there can be competing newsfeeds, right?

Mark Zuckerberg: So another, another company could innovate on top of that or, um, or academics could do research on top of that. I mean a lot of people want to be able to have people come in for studies and say, all right, can I see what's in your feed? Um, and can I, can I pull that data and then, and then do a study on the content that's there, you know, including for reasons like the election issues are, and there are a lot of academics who want to study this stuff. Same issue. You know, the, the content that you see in your feed, it's photos and links that your friends have shared. Is that your information or theirs. And if it's theirs then and it, and you give them a choice over whether you're allowed to pull it out and let's say, let's say we're overwhelmingly successful, say that 90% of people opt in and say, I'm willing to let my friends share that information, then, um, you know, it's, are the studies that are done on that going to be valid, you know, is, is, are you really gonna be able to build a competitive newsfeed if 10% of your friends, most interesting information is not there?

Mark Zuckerberg: And the only way to get the full experience is through Facebook. These are really hard questions I think. Right? It's, it's very, I actually come out more on the side of where, where, where you are that this should be left to individual choice, but I don't want to leave the impression that these are obvious choices that don't have competing equities, that we both, we all value greatly if, if your, your paramount concern is around innovation and competition and research and data portability. And then that it's not clear that you want to give every individual the right to say, I don't want my information to be able to be taken to another service. So I think that this is very connected to the set of privacy debates and things that were, that we're having as well. Um, there's, there's no question in my mind that people need to have the right to be able to say who has access to their information.

Mark Zuckerberg: But I do think that as a society there is, we need to decide where we want to be on the spectrum between asking companies to fully lock down people's information. And on the other hand, making it portable because right now I actually, I think that this might be a reasonable balance for us to be at. Um, all

of the discussion that we're having is around privacy, which I think is good and is very important and needs to, we need to emphasize privacy more, but without inappropriate emphasis. Also on data portability, I worry that all the incentives that we give to the industry that are locked down information and not make it so that people can bring it between services easily.

Cass Sunstein: Okay. I hear you. I'll tell you what I'm concerned about that when people go on Twitter or Facebook or other social media platforms, uh, what data portability there is and what privacy control they have. A isn't transparent unless they do a lot of work so they can get access to stuff to figure it out. But, um, my guess is if we did a survey of Twitter and Facebook users, the number of people who nailed what their privacy and portability selections actually were would be relatively low. So the suggestion is, would it be kind of trendsetting and fantastic for you as a company to have a consumer sovereignty principle with respect to both of these and to acknowledge maybe as part of the information provision that if you don't provide data portability, you're going to lose something may be, or researchers are and put it in in everyone's individual hands. What would be wrong with that? A is your policy and be as, uh, the consumer sovereignty act of 2020.

Mark Zuckerberg: So I think giving people choices generally the right answer, but multiply what you just said by every question that we face. And that is our settings, right? So we, we offer people choices. But part of the issue today is that we offer people so many choices over so many different things and so many controls that it ends up not feeling accessible. And a lot of the time, in order to design simple products that people understand you, you actually just kind of want to make choices for people, um, that, that reflect what you think their best interests are. Or You have regulation in a society that helps balance these competing values and interests. And in the case of privacy and data portability, we're, we're, I think we're at is I think that this is an area where we should have regulation. I think we should have regulation on privacy saying what companies need to do.

Mark Zuckerberg: And I think we should also at the same time have regulation on data portability saying what the line needs to be. And I think that that can simplify some of that, make it so that people know that they have a consistent experience across all of the services that they use and that it's not. Then, you know, the, the, the flip side of sovereignty, like you're saying and giving people controls that then people need to go understand every one of the hundred choices that they, that they have the chance to make. Which isn't, isn't necessarily bad, but a lot of people, you know, they, they show up to Facebook and Instagram and you know, their goal is to see what's going on with their friends and to share a moment from the day not to go dig around in settings and try to engage in something like this.

Mark Zuckerberg: So I think we just need to, the point that I'm making is that these are complex equities. Um, I tend to agree with where the positions that you are stating on, um, on giving individuals choice. And I think that that's how we got to some of

the positions that we're in now where we were. Some of the settings are relatively complex. Um, but, but I, I just think that the equities and values that are at stake are so important, uh, to, to our society and you want the principals to apply across the whole industry that regulation is appropriate. And that's why I've been calling for it.

Cass Sunstein: Okay. So I want to underline two major points that have emerged. So one is that there's a call from the head of Facebook for a federal statute, I guess to handle electoral integrity that would build on it seems the best practices that are now existing, but that might be more aggressive, that might have a no tolerance component. Supposedly we can define what no tolerances with respect to and also federal legislation that would increase consumer control over privacy and increased control for consumer control over data portability. Acknowledging that there are costs with respect to some of the things that social media are good for a if you do that without informing consumers of those costs. So that's quite major two initiatives. There's another idea which I think you're not going to embrace. Uh, the former editor of the new republic, your friend, and he's very clear, he considers you a friend Chris Hughes, who, uh, was a partner of yours also. I understand and who is calling for a breaking up Facebook and I understand it. His call for breaking up Facebook, uh, to have two components. One is about political power. So he's making a kind of a democratic small d claim about bigness. Going back to justice Brandeis and also there's a kind of economic claim about innovation suggesting that if, uh, uh, messenger and whatsapp and Instagram are not part of Facebook, that we will have more creativity and there's going to be more, uh, inventions. So what do you think?

Mark Zuckerberg: I don't agree with that one.

Mark Zuckerberg: Look, I think that there, there are major social issues that we've been talking about, right? I think that the election integrity is a really critical one. Um, removing harmful content and managing that as is an important one. We talked about that. Um, privacy is important and of course ensuring innovation and competition and research is important too. Now [inaudible] and so doing things like data portability, the question that, that I think we have to grapple with is that breaking up these companies wouldn't make any of those problems better, right? So the, the ability to work on election integrity or content systems, um, you know, we have an ability now because we're, we're a successful company and we're, we're large to be able to go build these systems that I think are unprecedented. And I think we're, we're, we're at this point leading on the, on the Internet, where are the systems are in many cases more sophisticated than one what a lot of governments have.

Mark Zuckerberg: And we can build that once and we can have it apply to Facebook and Instagram and whatsapp and Messenger. And you know, like I, I was, I mentioned this point before that, you know, the, the amount that we're investing in safety and security is greater than the whole revenue of our company was earlier this decade when we went public. So it just would not have been possible to do the

things that we're doing at a smaller scale. Now, you know, there's one of the counter arguments that people like to give to this is, well no, the, the, they say the problem is because you're, you're so big. So if you weren't so big that you wouldn't have these problems in the first place. So you can argue that that being big helps address them. And you know, the reason, the proof point that shows that that is wrong is that, you know, you can look at the other social media companies out there, look at Twitter, look at Reddit, um, you know, all these different services.

Mark Zuckerberg: Um, youtube is, is not much smaller than us but, but you know, Twitter and, and read a Dar, you know, they have hundreds of millions of people instead of billions. But did they face qualitatively different issues? You know, we're the same kind of, um, misinformation questions or election interference is, are they not suffering from those two? They absolutely are. So it's not the case that if you broke up Facebook, um, into, uh, a bunch of pieces, you, you suddenly wouldn't have those issues. You would have those issues. You would just be much less equipped to deal with them. So, you know, I think you kind of need to think through what are the issues that you really care about and are trying to solve and then how are we best equipped as a society to do that? That's why I'm for regulation. I think the answer for to those issues is I think we want to make sure that, um, that everyone has to follow the same rules on election integrity.

Mark Zuckerberg: So that way that's much more regulated. It's not just that we're doing it unilaterally, but that it's the whole industry is doing it on free expression and taking down to harmful content. I think having more rules around having systems in place to build to do that would be good. Not just on Facebook, in our services, but on all these others as well. Because, because we all kind of have have similar, similar issues on that, on privacy, I think you want common standards so people can trust the whole Internet in the industry. And I think that that's the answer, right? I think that that's how you actually address the issues that we're struggling with and I can kind of get why politically saying that you want to break up the company's feels nice, right? It's like, okay, there are issues. Let's just take a big hammer and go do it. But I just think the reality is we want to be, we want to make sure that the things that we do actually address the problems.

Cass Sunstein: I read on Wikipedia, that there used to be a company, it had three letters at t and, t it may in some sense exist. And, uh, the thought in Wikipedia tells me was that a t and t had a lot of capacity to solve problems by virtue of its size, but that it was, um, an obstacle that innovation and that the successful innovation that's succeeded comes from the fact that we have a lot more competition now. So one version of the argument that Chris Hughes makes and that Senator Warren's interested in is that a mess, messenger or whatsapp or, um, Instagram might be doing all sorts of stuff that is really on the horizon if they were independent of a large entity that's all working together. That's the kind of, uh, market competition argument. What's wrong with that? Well,

Mark Zuckerberg: I, I understand the argument and I think in some cases it can be right, right. I mean sometimes having large companies and some mergers, uh, reduce competition and innovation, um, which is why some mergers and some things are blocked. But if it were always the case that, that mergers, um, we're, we're bad for innovation, then we would not allow any mergers in our society. So I actually think what you want to do is, is look at the specific cases, um, and, and understand, uh, what actually happened, right. So, you know, if you go back to when we acquired Instagram for example, it's, it's, it's so hard to, to kind of remember how, what the state of it was at the time. It was, I think it was 13 people. Um, it had not yet launched an android APP. It had, it had one APP on, on one platform.

Mark Zuckerberg: It was very controversial when we bought it. I remember, I think Jon Stewart or I remember this very clearly, the, the night that it was announced that we did the acquisition, his quote on his show is you bought into Facebook, but in Syria for \$1 billion of money is that's an app that takes your photos and makes them less good. Right? And it's at the, at the time, you know, people were, you know, a lot of people thought about Instagram is an APP that helped, um, you know, that was great for filtering photos and you know, the, the reality is it at the time that a lot of spam issues. Okay, so what happened, right? So Instagram joined us and, and um, the first thing we did was we plugged in our spam systems to make it so that all the spam basically you got cleaned up or a lot of it did, it got a lot better.

Mark Zuckerberg: Then we made it so that they were having a bunch of infrastructure scaling issues that were holding them back, which is also pretty common in the industry. That execution is hard. Right. And if you look at a lot of the companies, a lot of companies hit walls and it takes them a while to to execute and work through them. And we helped scale and, and do better there. And over time we've launched all these things that, um, by, by basically having all the resources of Facebook behind it, um, I think the, the founders of Instagram and all the folks who work on it today would say that it has grown into a much richer platform and has reached many more people than, than it would have ever before. Right. And so, okay. I think it would be very hard to make the counterfactual case with it with respect to Instagram that there would have been more innovation somehow.

Mark Zuckerberg: Um, if it weren't a part of Facebook. I think you just look at the history and in the innovation has been amazing. Uh, whatsapp similar deal. Wait, first thing that we did, Yo, what's up? Used to charge a dollar for people who use the service. Um, first thing that we did when, when whatsapp joined took the dollar fee away so more people can use it, which by the way credit a lot more competition because you know, I mean, I don't know how many of you remember when, when your, your telephone carriers charged you for text messages, right? Not Anymore. Right. That is because now you can, you can do over the top messaging for free and WHATSAPP has helped to drive a lot of that

trend. What's up isn't as big in the u s yet, but, but around the world it definitely has been on the leading edge of, of, of changing it.

Mark Zuckerberg: So it's driven innovation, it's driven lower prices, more competition and the whole broader ecosystem. And again, I think, um, you know, bringing all the resources that we've had to bear on that. You know, it's, I do think that if the founders of whatsapp would probably agree with this, that if what's happened remained an independent company would've focused on texting and it would have been good for that. But now as part of, of, of our company, it's, it's developing into a much broader private platform for all of the different ways that you might want to interact privately. It's um, you know, we launched what's up status, it's the biggest of femoral stories product in the world. I don't think that necessarily the WHATSAPP team would have built that on their own and we're working on launching payments. I don't know that the team would have wanted to or would have build that on their own given the, the, the, the, the direction that they were on in the resources they had. So I just think you want to be careful with being overly broad in these, in these analyses. Yes. Some mergers can be bad for innovation. These weren't, and I think it would be very hard to make the case that, um, that, that any kind of innovation or kind of competition in the broader ecosystem was decreased because of the work and the innovation that we've brought to bear on this.

Cass Sunstein: Okay. So one thought I have as you talk is that there's regulation related to our issues of democracy, privacy and portability. There's your own standards currently. And there's also the future of self regulation. And a lot of the action is really in the future of self regulation. And there are three areas there that are currently really salient. One is Libra, the currency, uh, one is the independent oversight entity, uh, where the issue of trust and binding, this is obviously relevant. If this isn't clear, the oversight board may be have binding authority over Facebook, which would be the first time. And so that's what you're anticipating. And then there's the issue, I guess you call it a privacy pivot, which should be a conception of privacy, which is kind of privacy on steroids compared to what we've discussed so far. So can you say a bit about the relationship between trust, self regulation and these through three very ambitious future paths?

Mark Zuckerberg: Yeah. So on all these things that are socially important. I think whether the regulation comes in the form of a democratic process and legislation or, or regulatory agency or industry self regulation, I just think on, on, on each of these questions, um, we're past the point where, um, where it makes sense for Facebook to unilaterally make decisions on so many of these things that are socially important. So you mentioned the Independent Oversight Board for content we're putting in place in appeal system where basically if, if, um, you know, if we make a decision on your content to take something down that you think, um, we, we took down, it shouldn't have been, you'll be able to appeal that and we'll handle the first appeal internally for now. But then if you still

don't like the, the answer after the appeal, you'll be able to appeal it to this external board.

Mark Zuckerberg: Um, kind of a, it's, it's like a, an overall appeals process and it will be independent to Facebook. Those aren't going to be Facebook employees. And if they say, hey, you know, that content is fine, it needs to stay up or, or know that content that Facebook said should be up actually needs to come down. Um, and you need to work on different policies, their decision's going to be binding. So, um, you can kind of think about it as almost like a judicial analog in creating some separation of powers and, and some industry, right yourself, self regulation. We're starting this as a is a project just for Facebook. But over time I could see this expanding to be something that I'm more of the industry joins or send something up together as well. Similarly with Libra, um, w we just announced with 27 other companies, cause this wasn't just us doing this, the foundation of the Libra Association to help build a cryptocurrency and a financial infrastructure to help, uh, give financial inclusion and more access to the financial system, to the billions of people who don't currently have access to a bank account or, or the ability to do payments easily from their phone.

Mark Zuckerberg: And who really would benefit from, from having the ability to do that. You know, building a financial system is not the kind of thing that a company can do by itself. Right? So that again, you know, we helped and played a role in helping to stand this up. But the Libra Association as an independent organization and you know, we will have one vote in it out of, you know, by the time it launches, hopefully we will have a hundred co founding companies and we'll be one of the voices. So, um, I do think that we need to, in addressing more of these issues, um, help stand up more independent processes. I still think that over time, um, regulation and kind of a robust democratic processes the right way to handle a lot of these issues, but we also aren't going to wait for that to happen because sometimes that takes awhile. So doing more independent structures ourselves on this, um, is that something that I think is going to be increasingly important?

Cass Sunstein: Great. The last words go to Benjamin Franklin, who in 1787 asked what in Philadelphia had been given to the American people by the delegates to the constitution said, and these words should never be forgotten. A Republic, if you can keep it, and to our discussion has been centrally about, if we can keep it a heartfelt thanks to mark Zuckerberg and ask

Speaker 2: [inaudible].