

Rights, Responsibilities & Reactions

Intellectual Freedom Newsletter – November 2025

IFC Book Recommendation:

[Enshittification: Why Everything Suddenly Got Worse and What to Do About It](#)

by Cory Doctorow

When we think about threats to intellectual freedom, what often comes to mind are efforts to censor certain information or points of view. Doctorow highlights a more subtle (yet pervasive) form of censorship: tech companies manipulate our access to ideas, information, and people; not in order to primarily promote any particular point of view, but to increase profits.

The author argues that big tech companies operate as monopolies whose customers have no good alternatives to their services. Rather than focusing on aiding people in making the connections they ensure that we spend more time looking at the ads and products that generate income for them.

Doctorow's arguments are clear and often humorous. And he discusses possible solutions for this particular threat to intellectual freedom.

Check out the [book talk hosted by the Internet Archive](#) with Cory Doctorow (60 min). See also, this recent blog post from Asimov's Addendum on the [limitations of AI in improving the internet searches](#) (16 min).

Intellectual Freedom News

Author Sarah Weinman offers [praise for librarians](#) as they navigate a shifting and challenging landscape (Literary Hub, 8 min). The New York Times highlights how [rural libraries struggle](#) with current political and economic changes (9 min). A new study calls out the deeper [impacts of book bans](#) (5 min). **access**

The New York Times showcases how [bookshops serve as a refuge for ideas](#) in Russia as government censorship continues to impact publishers and sellers (New York Times, 8 min). Related, a look at how [censorship occurs at the publication level](#) with sensitivity to readers and editors (12 min). **censorship**

The movie ratings board [seeks to be more transparent](#) with how they assign a specific rating to films (New York Times, 7 min). In Texas, the book-rating law has been [blocked and deemed unconstitutional](#) (Texas AFT, 5 min). **censorship**

In New York, a new extreme ban for [access to materials for people who are incarcerated](#) has been implemented (WROC, 8 min). **access, censorship**

In Idaho, the [book censorship law](#) is being reviewed as unconstitutional (Courthouse News Service, 5 min). While in Massachusetts laws are being introduced to counteract book removals from school libraries (Boston Globe, 5 min) **censorship, legislation**

Surveillance cameras have become more [prevalent in the public sphere](#), but the data may not be accurate or lead to false accusations (Futurism, 4 min). The New Republic provides a deeper dive into one [company enabling surveillance](#) in cities across the U.S. (9 min). During a presentation at Portland State University, journalist Micah Lee provides a deeper dive into [technofascism](#) (33 min). **privacy**

Multnomah County Sheriff's Office tackles [smishing texts](#) claiming to be from the local sheriffs or police and that there is an arrest warrant (2 min). For more, see the Federal Communications Commission's page on [smishing](#) (2 min). **information literacy**

Roblox is in the news due to the [rollout of new age verification tech](#) to support child safety (6 min). Wired looks at how phone numbers on WhatsApp served as a key to one of the [largest data leaks](#) (11 min). **access, privacy**

AI Spotlight

404 Media looks at how [AI is supercharging the war](#) on libraries and human knowledge (12 min). **disinformation**

A copyright scholar provides a deep dive into the [ripple effects of recent AI lawsuits](#): (7 min). Another [copyright lawsuit involving AI has been settled](#) resulting in a

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collaboration between Universal Music Group and an AI music generation platform (Hollywood Reporter, 5 min). **copyright**

A policy update from OpenAI highlights the faulty output of its product and [places responsibility on users](#) to figure out if the response is reliable (Mystery AI Hyper Theater 3000, 4 min). Related, The New York Times examines issues around who is responsible for use of AI in a recent [defamation case](#) (9 min). **information literacy, disinformation, ethics**

Here are some insights on AI in terms of use and work: The Washington Post analyzed [how people use chatbots](#) (10 min). Tim O'Reilly argues for [AI as a tool, not a worker](#) (Asimov's Addendum, 19 min). Wired highlights the [pitfalls of relying on AI](#) to do freelance work (6 min). The Guardian provides an insider look at AI with [alarms raised by AI workers](#) (11 min) and a profile of [human trainers](#) (14 min).

An expansive look at the application of AI through the lens of safety and risk, see the latest update to the [International AI Safety Report](#) from the AI Security Institute. Electronic Frontier Foundation offers a [discussion of AI](#) that grapples with changes brought on by the use of AI ranging from ethics, privacy and more (65 min). **ethics, privacy**

These articles offer critical takes and delve into bias, disinformation and other limits of AI: The Conversation looks at [AI poisoning](#) (4 min). MIT Technology Review examines the [AI hype as a conspiracy theory](#) (x min). Related, Tech Policy identifies [4 types of political deepfakes](#) (x min). Scholar Renée DiResta unpacks how bias and [disinformation can unfold with AI-powered tools](#) (Atlantic, 12 min). Read the calls from scholars and researchers [to reject "uncritical adoption" of AI in academia](#) (Blood in the Machine, 8 min). Go further with this look from The Verge on how AI lacks the depth and [dynamic of understanding language](#) (12 min). **information literacy, disinformation**

Although geared toward tech developers, read the [key takeaways](#) from this recent talk by All Tech Is Human that reframes AI literacy in societal terms instead of as a tech skill (6 min). **information literacy**

Go deeper with these recent books on AI:

- [Empire of AI](#) by Karen Hao
- [Rewiring Democracy](#) by Bruce Scheiner and Nathan Sanders
- [If Anyone Builds It, Everyone Dies](#) by Eliezer Yudkowsky and Nate Soares

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Additional Resources

ALA Intellectual Freedom Blog: <https://www.oif.ala.org> A blog dedicated to intellectual freedom issues, and includes the [Intellectual Freedom News](#) –a weekly roundup of IF related articles

Oregon Library Association's [Intellectual Freedom Toolkit](#) (published February 8, 2022). A range of tools and resources relating to IF challenges and policies created by the OLA Intellectual Freedom Committee.

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