

91598R



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD  
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## Level 3 Social Studies 2021

### 91598 Demonstrate understanding of how ideologies shape society

Credits: Four

## RESOURCE BOOKLET

Refer to this booklet to answer the questions for Social Studies 91598.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

**YOU MAY KEEP THIS BOOKLET AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

## THE INFLUENCE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH ON SOCIETY

### Examples of ideologies

<b>Authoritarianism</b>	The idea of enforcement or advocacy of strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom.
<b>Liberalism</b>	The idea of emphasising the rights and freedoms of the individual, usually with government guarantees for those rights and freedoms.
<b>Libertarianism</b>	The idea of emphasising the liberty of the individual, with as little intervention from the state as possible.
<b>Social responsibility</b>	The idea of businesses / organisations, in addition to maximising value, acting in a manner that benefits society.

### Social processes

Social processes are the means by which culture and social organisation change, or are preserved. For example, social processes are evident in the following:

- legislative and political reform
- changes in cultural and behavioural norms
- shifts in business practice
- evolving community practices
- demographic change.

## INTRODUCTION: What is freedom of speech?

Freedom of speech is a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or a community to articulate their opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal sanction.

Freedom of speech is not absolute, and common limitations or boundaries to freedom of speech relate to, for example:

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With the evolution of the digital age, application of freedom of speech becomes more controversial as new means of communication and restrictions arise.

## RESOURCE A: Social media censorship in the UK

### Regulating social media content

In early 2020, UK government Digital Secretary Nicky Morgan and Home Secretary Priti Patel recommended that Ofcom be appointed as the official online harms regulator. Ofcom is the regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries. It regulates the TV and radio sectors, fixed line telecoms, mobiles, postal services, and the airwaves over which wireless devices operate.

Research from a joint study by Ofcom and the Information Commissioner's Office in 2019 suggested internet users in the UK were increasingly worried about being online, with around four in every five harbouring concerns.



The ten biggest online harms in the UK according to Ofcom.

Social media firms wanted to stay self-regulating, but given this would mean little or no regulations at all for some companies, or simply that money, fame, or power would allow for what regulations there are to be bent, UK government ministers felt the time was right for “enforcing a statutory duty of care to protect users from harmful and illegal terrorist and child abuse content”. This move is said to be following through on the government’s pledge to make the UK “the safest place in the world to be online”.

As such, Ofcom has been given new powers to carry out its extended responsibilities. Nicky Morgan said that Ofcom would provide a “proportionate and strong regulatory regime,” to nurture a thriving digital economy that is trusted and protects all users. Morgan dismissed concerns that this outside regulation could stifle the vibrant and open internet, and Priti Patel said that a strong regulator would “ensure social media firms fulfil their vital responsibility to vulnerable users”, and would help stop criminals from using social media for their benefit.



**What is the difference between online free speech and online hate speech?****Definitions of hate speech**

In December 2020, the UK Equalities Minister Liz Truss warned, a “fashionable” focus on race, gender, and sexuality had narrowed the debate on equality. A Tory (UK Conservative) Minister of Parliament Iain Duncan Smith added, “We are drifting into a totalitarian ‘woke’ state where nothing can ever be said for fear that somebody will be offended. It’s madness, and it’s driven by a small minority. Most people don’t care”.

Ofcom said the changes would not prevent criticism of an opinion but guard against inciting hatred towards the person holding it.



According to the code, broadcasters can interview those with “extreme or challenging views” in news and current affairs coverage where it is in the public interest.

**RESOURCE B: Social media censorship in the US****The free speech rights of all Americans**

On 26 May 2020, President Trump tweeted that – contrary to all available evidence – mail-in voting is plagued by rampant voter fraud. Twitter placed a fact check label on the tweet, linking to information demonstrating the falsity of Trump’s claims.

On 28 May 2020, by the authority vested in him as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, Trump signed an executive order preventing online censorship, proposing sweeping changes to protections afforded to social media platforms under US law.

Excerpts from Section One read as follows:

“Free speech is the bedrock of American democracy. Our Founding Fathers protected this sacred right with the First Amendment to the Constitution. The freedom to express and debate ideas is the foundation for all of our rights as a free people.

Twitter now selectively decides to place a warning label on certain tweets in a manner that clearly reflects political bias.”

### **Libertarian speech or authoritarian rule?**

*The Conversation* (a network of not-for-profit media outlets that publish news stories on the internet written by academics and researchers) reported in 2020 that Trump's attacks on social media platforms and the press revealed his true intention, which was not to protect the free speech rights of Americans.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In *The Conversation's* opinion, the president's efforts to undermine free speech and to misinform the American public represented a serious threat to American democracy that should not be lost in the noise surrounding contemporary political conversation in the US. While alarm bells were ringing, not enough people heard them.

## RESOURCE C: Social responsibility

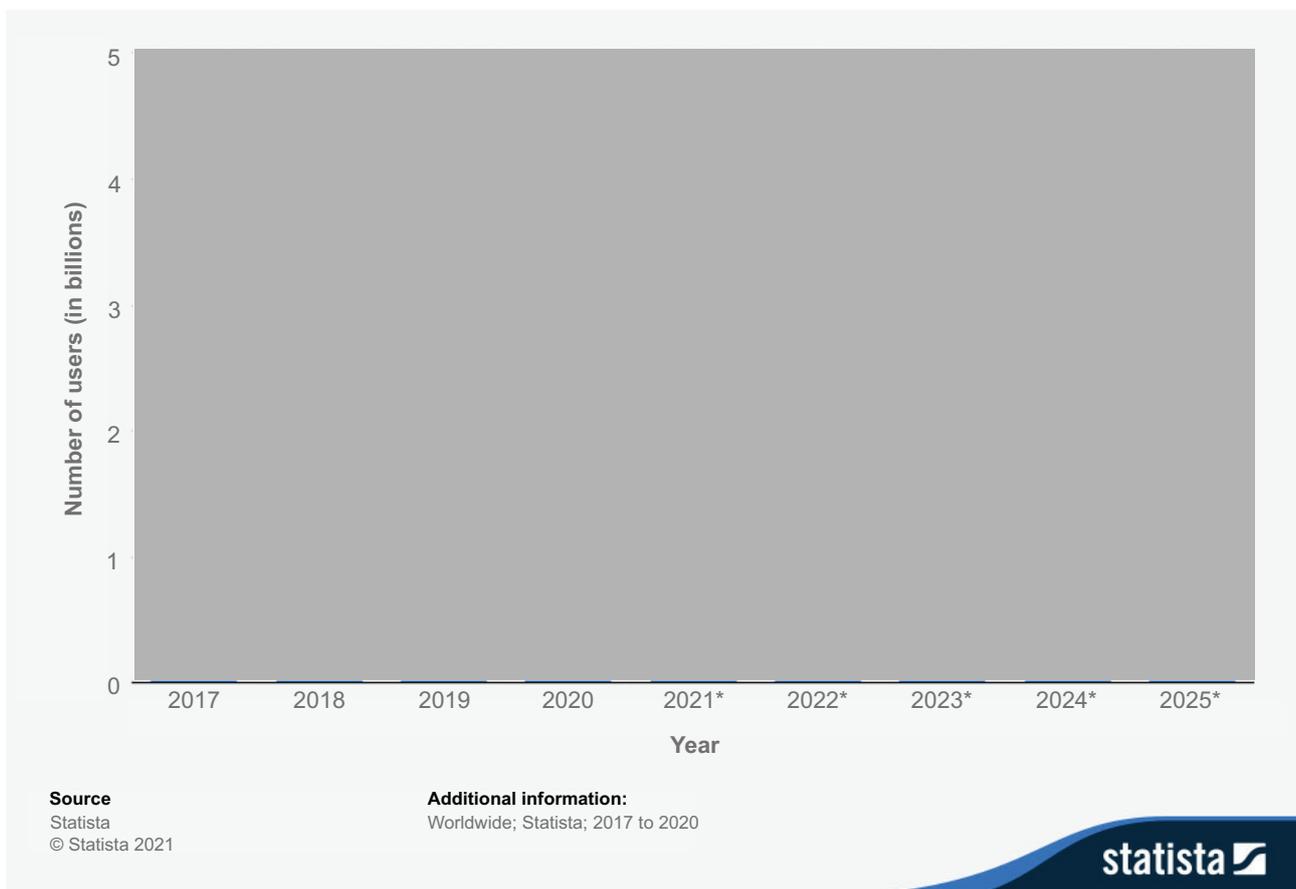
### The future of free speech on social media

Few companies have experienced such a rapid rise and sudden fall in public trust as the social media giants.



According to Statista (a German company specialising in market and consumer data), the number of social media users worldwide will continue to increase (see graph below). It is therefore important to consider how social media can affect certain rights, such as the right of expression and freedom of speech.

### The number of social network users worldwide from 2017 to 2025 (in billions)



\*Forecast (Internet users who use a social network site via any device at least once per month).

### Twitter changes

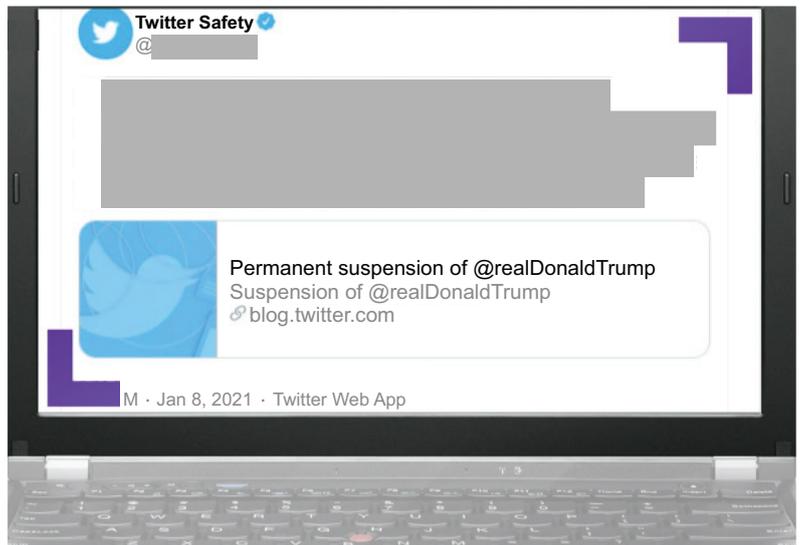
“Twitter is a global service and our decisions reflect that ... We take the learnings from every recent election around the world and use them to improve our election integrity work.”

In 2019, Twitter announced it would no longer allow political ads, differentiating itself from its much larger rival, Facebook.

Twitter has since taken several steps to protect users and the platform.

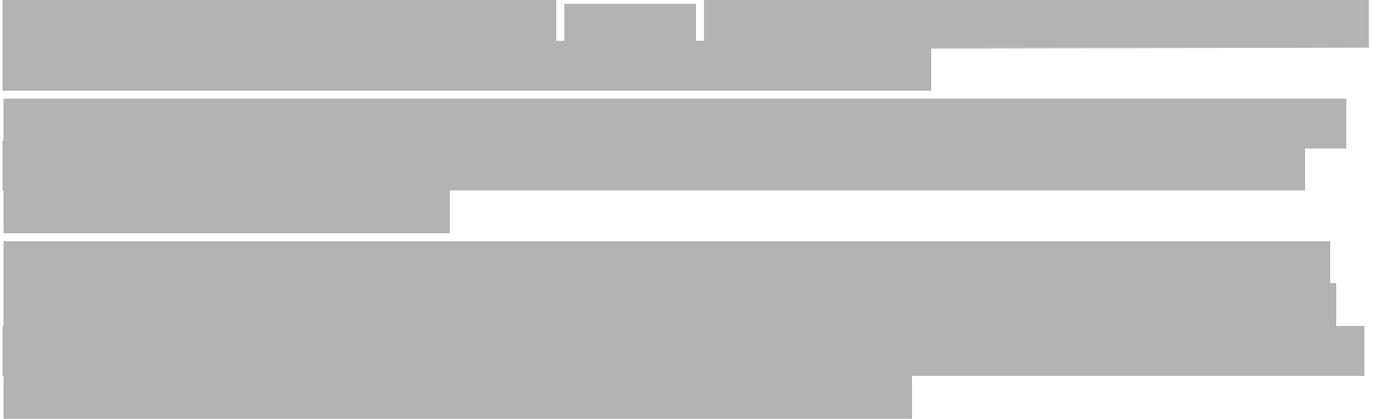


In an extraordinary decision, Twitter permanently suspended Trump’s personal account on 8 January 2021, citing his repeated violations of the company’s rules and risks, including the “further incitement of violence”. The company determined two tweets on 7 January 2021 were “highly likely to encourage and inspire people to replicate the criminal acts that took place at the US Capitol on 6 January, 2021.”



**RESOURCE D: Divided opinions****The right thing to do**

Twitter's decision sparked huge debate about free speech and whether big technology companies – or to be precise, their billionaire chief executives – are fit to act as judge and jury in high-profile cases.



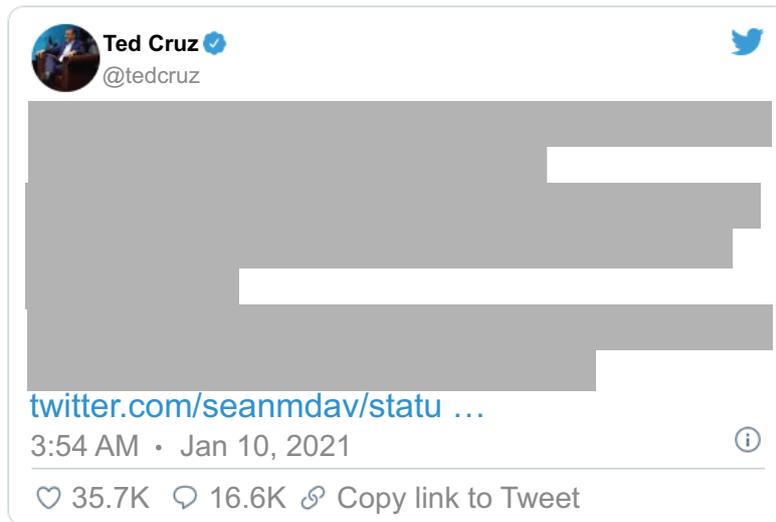
Several Democrats also argued the platforms had the legal right to ban Trump and that the decision was long overdue, with US Senator and Democrat Richard Blumenthal tweeting that it took “blood and glass” in the halls of Congress for tech companies to recognise the threat of Trump.



## A violation of rights

In contrast, many believe there is a conversation to be had about the power of social media platforms, with Twitter's suspension of President Donald Trump's personal account for violating the platform's rules leading to online claims of censorship and a violation of First Amendment rights in the US.

Republican senators also criticised the platforms for their bans, including Senator Ted Cruz, who tweeted "why should a handful of Silicon Valley billionaires have a monopoly on political speech?"



In New Zealand, Privacy Commissioner John Edwards joined the debate in early 2021 as well, questioning Donald Trump's permanent suspension from Twitter, and calling for urgent regulation of social media platforms.

"We should not be abdicating responsibility for the tough policy decisions required, and delegating responsibility for our community standards, to conflicted corporates," Edwards added.

## Acknowledgements

Material from the following sources has been adapted for use in this examination (accessed 24 June 2021).

### Ideologies

Page 2: Authoritarianism. <https://www.lexico.com/definition/authoritarianism>  
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### Introduction

Page 3: Freedom of speech. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom\\_of\\_speech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_speech) (text)

### Resource A

Page 4: Tyson, M. (2020, February 12). *Ofcom given new powers to regulate social media content*. Hexus. <https://hexus.net/business/news/internet/139727-ofcom-given-new-powers-regulate-social-media-content/> (text and image)

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Page 5: Stop Hate UK. *What is the difference between Online Hate and Free Speech?* <https://www.stophateuk.org/difference-between-online-hate-and-free-speech/> (graphic)

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