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**E-politics, Ethics and CSR – The Podcast**

**Coronavirus, health outbreak and internet censorship.**

**Wanice Alfes  
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**Transcription**

**Speaker 1: Wanice Alfes 00:00:00**

Welcome to Social Pad is the podcast that addresses today's significant social issues. Today, we bring up a susceptible topic: the Coronavirus Outbreak and Internet Censorship. To what extent does freedom of speech go regarding public health? Is the Internet contributing to mass misinformation? And what are the impacts of online communications during the COVID-19 pandemic on citizens' lives? So, to approach all of the themes, Wanice Alfes and Anna Kazakova will exchange opinions based on scientific studies from an ethical perspective. Good morning, Anna. It is a pleasure to discuss this topic with you. So, regarding ethics in cyberspace, what are your thoughts on the cyber guidelines for disseminating information about COVID-19?

**Speaker 2: Anna Kazakova 00:00:54**

First of all, let's determine what cyber ethics is about. For me, it's just about social responsibility in cyberspace, as simple as that. The Western concept of autonomy entailed freedom of thought and expression. And of course, the freedom of expression and opinion is considered one of the basic human rights and declared in U.N. statements or in the Article 19. However, since the beginning of the pandemics, we've seen that social media platforms, which are normally considered a means of expressing these few opinions created, are also a platform for spreading skepticism in getting vaccinated by spreading misinformation. So my question is the events which we see now when, for example, Facebook was a force that recently YouTube as well to take down all the videos which are stating that it rules vaccines can potentially cause cancer, all cheesman infertility. So perhaps this sort of action should have been implemented earlier by governments and

certain censorship, even though he's a very sensitive question for any liberal society. However, perhaps censorship should have been implemented during this particular pandemic. What do you think?

**Speaker 1: Wanice Alfes 00:02:25**

Ahm, I'm against censorship because we are going to authoritarian ways. This reminds me of Stalin's style, and we have better ways through science. So, we are evolving to inoculate theory, for example. We inoculate, and we immunize people against fake news. But it's not only over social media the responsibility to conduct and control misinformation and what is not. Fact-check what is not. A study, for example - and this also surprised me - A survey from Vyas et al., from the current year, about investigating filtering of COVID-19 in websites, discovered that not only the authoritarian, or that we take from authoritarian countries like China, Iran, Kazakhstan was blocking and persecuting journalists, ahm, really trying to avoid all kind of information about Covid-19, but also at countries, nations, taken as very democratic, like Switzerland and Croatia. So, in the middle of a pandemic, and together, when we have panelling, we still understand how online communication works and the cyber guidelines that we need to have to get proper communication online regarding freedom of speech; we are involved in different positions. The countries are doing the same as social media, sometimes promoting misinformation and sometimes blocking freedom of speech, which we need the most protection from.

That proves that viewpoint. So, what do you think of corporate responsibility, the law, and the communication used by them, as defined by the Corporations Act?

**Speaker 2: Anna Kazakova 00:04:15**

That proves that viewpoint. So, what do you think of corporate responsibility, the law, and the communication used by them, as defined by the Corporations Act?

**Speaker 1: Wanice Alfes 00:04:27**

So, let's relate this to COVID-19 because it's our topic. Because it's a comprehensive point, we have perceived a high movement towards philanthropy during the pandemic from lots of corporations. But at the same time, when we think about pharmaceuticals, it's paradoxical and complex that we understand that they are doing good when, at the same time, they need to profit from the medicines and the new vaccines. And this is a very sensible situation. In summary, we need to perceive that they were moving toward helping other countries, but at the same time, we also perceived complex emotions they were taking, protecting, well, how can I say that, protecting their guidance of medicines production. But, ah, what do you think about this?

**Speaker 2: Anna Kazakova 00:05:27**

Yes, yes, I agree with you. It's it's always a paradoxical situation of it now profitable and charitable. First of all, the Internet played a significant role in the change of communication of corporate social responsibility before the stakeholders were fostered, but he was an information. Now that you've sent the information, we're discussing the change from information control to knowledge sharing, hopefully bringing transparency and thinking about philanthropy or profits. For example, I found Oxfam, a website that is one of the most prominent international charity organizations, and it is a statement against the big pharmaceutical companies that refuse to share their formula for new medication or

vaccines with the World Health Organisation. And by doing that, many lives were lost in many countries because people couldn't access them. But it's not only about that; it's also about online communication, like in the political sphere. I'm also involved in October 19, like some propaganda tools. So what do you think about that?

**Speaker 1: Wanice Alfes 00:06:47**

So yes, we see an exciting situation relating to their positions in online communications during this pandemic. At the same time that we experience democratic countries, or most of the democratic countries, trying to fact-check and to be aligned with the Health World Organization, we see at the same time that other countries that are moving toward authoritarian positions are doing the opposite, trying to promote over, generating, what we say, the fearmongering in the society, and creating polarization, at the same time, and not only within the society but against countries. So, it is a shame, but as I am from Brazil, I need to point out Bolsonaro, as an example, who tried not only to polarize within the country but also against China, for example. This is an impairment against what we are trying to achieve in this international online communication: we need to align rules; what do you also think about this?

**Speaker 2: Anna Kazakova 00:08:02**

I agree with you. I can say that the creation and dissemination of information using social media to reshape public opinion many times during this pandemic; of course, because of digital political communication utilizing emotive messaging, they also used specific manipulation of the events, debating which audience and what time they're trying to influence. A good example is now, for instance, the anti-vax propaganda by conservatives in the USA always presses freedom of choice over the common good, but eventually will. Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia praised Mr. Trump for saving lives with the vaccines. Literally a few months later, she urged Americans to say no to the vaccine, using Nazi-era imagery to criticize the Biden administration. People have a choice. She tweeted that they don't need your magical ground shorts showing up at their door wielding vaccination. So here we go. It uses a specific symbol and certain emotional messages in a particular context to influence the public.

**Speaker 1: Wanice Alfes 00:09:14**

And exactly this point. I'm sorry to cut you down, but precisely this point. What would it be interesting to have as a principle in cyberspace provenance?

**Speaker 2: Anna Kazakova 00:09:26**

Yeah. Well, the moment will read, you said a few times. We definitely lack some general principles governing cyberspace, and many people are scared of that because they think we're talking about the global government. We're not talking about global government, but global governments, which means the cooperative efforts of states, international organizations and non-state actors to address our common challenges. And those challenges often transcend the. National borders, like we have known pandemics, are global events. Also, the multilateral governments created a body within you and failed. So maybe some airports that use artificial intelligence could be implemented. What do you think?

**Speaker 1: Wanice Alfes 00:10:19**

Yes, definitely. With artificial intelligence, we have much better measurements and much more proof and facts that show precisely how we are moving. And this is also the point because when we have intangible values, it is tough for people, societies, and governments to understand. But when we have, we can measure that statistically and show facts. However, we also know that emotions play a significant role in the game; Justice Scalia and the chill factor, although we also know that emotions play a role game, in our hearts everything. But I am also talking about governance; we need to retrace, to go a little, ahem, to move a little bit back, because it is interesting what Professor Laurence Lessig, from Harvard, says that the Internet was built for research, not for commerce. We are experiencing this point because we have yet to evolve from information exchange, information access, and research exchange to commerce. And when neoliberalism, this new capitalism, comes into the system, we leave for the profit; we start to live for the information to seek the truth. In this situation, most nations, actually the nations, must be aware of how to promote proper cyber guidelines based on this situation.

**Speaker 2: Anna Kazakova 00:11:53**

I agree with you. It's, again, a charming approach from an ethical point of view. However, as we also have to talk more about the internal influence on organizational political processes, I would call it dirty childhoods. In his book Digital Versus Human, he says the early dream of digital democracy is sound because it turns out that the complete democracy of expression attracts stupid and angry voices with much time on their hands. So basically, unfortunately, the Internet often helps opinionated Internet users reinforce their ideological predispositions. They need to create more open debate.

Another example is Russia, where a government lauds the Internet with interviews and videos about different conspiracy theories, which helps to protect the local political regime. However, it creates much anxiety in the population because people lose trust in everybody: the state, doctors, journalists, and everybody. And that's another example. As you said, many fake videos are also commercialized on the Internet. And that's not controlled, either.

**Speaker 1: Wanice Alfes 00:13:17**

Yeah, because this is the point of our last question. This leads us to the role of the Internet in political and organizational processes. What is the role of the Internet in all of these processes? How can we put this in an organization that improves society? What do you think about it?

**Speaker 2: Anna Kazakova 00:13:40**

Yeah. Well, that's as I already elaborated about the unfortunate event when the Internet became like a battlefield over all sorts of political crime with the interests purely entertainment reasons. And it became one of the big for-free without any guidelines, which made it more difficult during the pandemics during this pandemic. It made it more difficult for governments to rule the country to help people with the correct and needed medical care. It also made it more difficult for individuals to form an informed opinion about what is good for them, whether it's vaccination or a lockdown, for example, language.

**Speaker 1: Wanice Alfes 00:14:35**

So, the Internet is a force on its own. But indeed, it's subject to political and social forces. So, we can still give this guidance to the Internet, but with the help of co-participations and coauthors, because governments are not omnipresent nor omnipotent enough to do that alone. On Northern Ireland by themselves. We have a cross-culture, cross-nation cultures, cross-nation rules, regulations, and about ethics, we are, actually, on very few points, internationally speaking, so this is the point: we have the power to control and to create this guideline, this international position, with coauthors, we can not do that just with governments, otherwise also we will lose our democracy and freedom of speech.

**Speaker 2: Anna Kazakova 00:15:30**

so we use our social responsibility as individuals. Yes, the new guidelines will help us. Yes, it was an exciting topic with you, and we're running out of time. So, I hope we continue our discussion later on. Sure.

**Speaker 1: Wanice Alfes 00:15:48**

In the next episode of Social Pad. Bye.

**Speaker 2: Anna Kazakova 00:15:53**

Bye, bye, bye.

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