# AI-fuelled social media algorithms deepen divisions and threaten democracy



The rapid push to incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into social media platforms is fundamentally reshaping how information is accessed, how people communicate, and how reality itself is perceived. Far from being a force for good, this technology is increasingly serving the interests of powerful tech giants and ideologically driven elites, often at the expense of the truth. While AI promises to democratize access to information, it more frequently facilitates misinformation, social division, and the erosion of democratic accountability.

Proponents claim AI can improve content moderation and personalize user experiences, but the reality is more troubling. These algorithms are optimized for engagement—a metric that rewards sensationalism, outrage, and divisiveness—regardless of the truth or social consequences. As a result, false narratives flourish while factual, balanced content gets drowned out. This manipulation isn’t accidental; it's an intentional design feature of a system that prioritizes profitability and user retention over societal well-being.

The consequences are dangerously visible in countries like South Africa, where recent social unrest—sparked by misinformation—has led to tragic loss of life and economic destabilization. The proliferation of divisive content, amplified by algorithms that have little regard for social responsibility, has fueled xenophobic violence and social discord. The danger is clear: these AI-driven echo chambers can deepen divisions, undermine social cohesion, and threaten the fabric of democracy itself.

Global efforts to regulate and oversee AI are inadequate and riddled with conflicts of interest. International institutions such as the G20 have started discussing the ethical development of AI, but meaningful action remains elusive. The risk of authoritarian regimes exploiting lax regulation to manipulate democratic processes is high, especially if regulations are misaligned or ineffective. Without firm standards—such as transparency in algorithmic operations and clear identification of AI-generated content—these tools will remain in the hands of those who wish to distort truth and manipulate public perception.

In the UK, the new political landscape underscores the urgent need for a populist opposition that challenges this hegemonic tech-driven narrative. Instead of allowing corporations and global elites to shape the digital space, there must be a push for robust, transparent oversight and safeguarding of democratic values within AI development and deployment. A responsible approach would include empowering citizens with AI literacy, establishing independent bodies to monitor media integrity, and rejecting the influence of big tech that often serves a globalist agenda rather than national interests.

The current trajectory favors a technocratic elite that can manipulate perceptions at will, undermining sovereignty and democratic choice. Without immediate action to introduce stringent regulation aligned with national priorities, society risks ceding control to those who see social cohesion and traditional values as obstacles to their power. Civil society, independent media, and policymakers must unite to promote verification, media literacy, and oversight—tools essential to resisting the corrosive influence of AI-fueled misinformation.

The stakes couldn’t be higher. The unchecked growth of AI in social media threatens not only the truth but the very foundations of democracy. Efforts to regulate and harness this technology must be driven by a commitment to national sovereignty, social cohesion, and the preservation of our cultural institutions. Allowing these powerful tools to run amok—guided chiefly by profit and geopolitical interests—could lead us into a future marked by social fragmentation and democratic decline.

This issue transcends borders; it demands a coordinated, national response rooted in defending a free, fair society. As watchdogs and policymakers fall short, it’s clear that only through deliberate resistance and strong oversight can we prevent AI from becoming a tool of social and political destabilization. True leadership requires putting the interests of citizens first—resisting the corporate-driven narrative—and ensuring that our digital future does not become a battlefield for manipulation and control.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/2025-06-10-ai-and-social-media-a-double-edged-sword-that-demands-responsibility/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/520f22de269ba1eff24d1544ca38d569> - As the 2024 election approaches, Democrats, including President Joe Biden's campaign, are striving to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) to match the GOP's use of the technology. AI's potential transformation of elections comes with risks, primarily its capacity to spread misinformation. Democrats are particularly cautious given their past experience with Trump's social media strategies. AI is used mainly to identify voters, combat deceptive content, and streamline campaign efforts. While Republicans have also employed AI to create impactful political ads, both parties recognise the need for legislative action to regulate AI despite some voluntary commitments by tech companies. Democrats emphasise ethical use to avoid spreading disinformation, with strict rules in deploying AI to prevent misleading voters, spreading disinformation, and deepfakes. The campaign's legal team has created a task force to respond to misinformation and disinformation, focusing on AI-generated images and videos. The Democratic National Committee has also adopted AI to analyse voter registration records and generate fundraising email text, aiming to enhance campaign efficiency while adhering to ethical standards.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/c40924ffc68c94fac74fa994c520fc06> - On February 16, 2024, major technology companies signed a voluntary pact to adopt 'reasonable precautions' to prevent artificial intelligence tools from being used to disrupt democratic elections worldwide. Executives from Adobe, Amazon, Google, IBM, Meta, Microsoft, OpenAI, TikTok, and others gathered at the Munich Security Conference to announce a new framework for responding to AI-generated deepfakes that deliberately trick voters. The accord focuses on detecting and labeling deceptive AI content, sharing best practices, and ensuring swift responses. While lacking binding requirements, the pact highlights companies' commitment to preventing AI misuse in elections. Political leaders emphasised the urgency of combating AI-fueled disinformation, which could undermine democracy. Signatories, including X (formerly Twitter) and other AI developers, represent a broad coalition of industry players taking a stand against nefarious uses of AI in electoral contexts.
4. <https://time.com/6848922/ai-regulation/> - The United States faces a unique challenge in regulating AI, needing to maintain its global leadership while mitigating risks. Unlike the EU and China, whose regulations may hamper innovation, the U.S. must craft regulations that protect against harm without stifling growth. Legislative action, beyond executive orders, is essential for a lasting regulatory framework. As AI evolves rapidly, U.S. regulations must be flexible and adaptive, balancing safety and innovation. An independent agency may be necessary to keep pace with AI developments. Ensuring open competition and potentially leveling the playing field through resources for smaller entities is crucial. Globally, the U.S. must cooperate with other nations, notably China, to address AI risks while promoting a model that aligns with democratic values. The Center for a New American Security has initiated an AI Governance Forum to create a balanced, innovative, and safe American AI policy.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/a02adae5-5f85-4bf5-a2f7-b23b1bc03767> - Anita Schjøll Abildgaard, Chief Executive and Co-founder of Iris.ai, responds to SAP's Christian Klein's concerns about overregulation of artificial intelligence. She emphasises the importance of a balanced approach to regulation, arguing that while innovation should not be stifled, ethical and thoughtful regulation is essential for building public trust and ensuring sustainable AI adoption. Europe's approach to AI governance, which focuses on ethical principles and oversight, helps foster public confidence, encouraging more receptive integration of AI. Abildgaard advocates for collaborative regulation-building involving diverse stakeholders to create practical and principled frameworks. She suggests that strong regulations can be a competitive advantage for Europe, positioning it as a hub for responsible AI development. Thus, she calls for a view of regulation as an opportunity to foster a sustainable AI ecosystem where innovation and public trust coexist.
6. <https://qa.time.com/6325786/ai-progress-safety-democracy/> - This article examines the current discourse on AI regulation, emphasising that the perceived trade-offs between AI progress, safety, and democratic participation are not as irreconcilable as often portrayed. At the upcoming AI Safety Summit, leaders are encouraged to consider policies that balance these three core values. The authors propose four policy goals to achieve this balance: investing in innovative and beneficial uses of existing AI, boosting research on trustworthy AI, democratising AI oversight, and setting up procedures for monitoring and evaluating AI progress. By doing so, it is argued, society can foster AI progress safely while ensuring democratic governance.
7. <https://apnews.com/article/1d766b1ecbc4e880b61a7dcbb291565d> - With the upcoming shift to a Republican-controlled government and President-elect Donald Trump's anticipated rescission of President Biden's AI executive order, the future of AI regulations in the US is uncertain. Trump's administration is expected to focus on reducing regulatory red tape, raising concerns about the absence of necessary safeguards, especially regarding the use of AI deepfakes in political campaigns. While enhancing AI's integration into national security and curbing non-consensual explicit images remain bipartisan interests, measures against AI-driven misinformation in elections may be deprioritised. Republican lawmakers emphasise balancing innovation with preventing harm. Despite the current legislative gridlock, there's hope for bipartisan progress on some AI issues. AI industry lobbyists advocate for federal regulations to foster safe and innovative AI development. Concerns persist about Trump's AI policies potentially being influenced by individuals with vested interests, like Elon Musk. The AI community stresses the need for regulations to establish clear guidelines that protect public interests while enabling technological advancements.