



# Preventing Misinformation

## Aslan Ahmed, Grade 9

Have you ever been in an argument with someone when you know for a fact that you were correct? Remember how frustrating it was? However, the person you were arguing with may have been a victim to misinformation. In fact, the wrong information spreads faster than the correct information on social media, so it is likely that you or people you know have been misinformed through social media. Therefore, humankind is desperately in need of a solution, and that solution is government regulation on social media. Government regulation can prevent misinformation, and as a result it prevents a number of other problems, including conflict and crime.

To begin, government regulation can prevent conflict between people with different information on social media. When two people or groups of people both think they have the correct information, conflict usually occurs. However, if everyone gets the same correct information through government regulation and monitoring, the number of conflicts that happen as a result of misinformation will drastically decrease. Author and Director of the American Press Institute, Tom Rosenstiel has the same ideas. Tom stated, "Misinformation is not like a plumbing problem you fix. It is a social condition, like crime, that you must constantly monitor and adjust to" (Rosenstiel). Therefore, constant monitoring and regulation is the proper and best solution to a problem like misinformation on social media. To continue, in the past there have been numerous examples of the wrong information being spread about a different country or culture, which can lead to destructive and violent events. An example of this is the Rohingya Genocide in Myanmar, where hate speech about the Rohingya people was spread on Facebook, leading to genocide and the deaths of thousands. In the end, conflicts and misinformation on social media happen daily, but with government regulation, both issues will be eradicated.

Second, government regulation on social media misinformation can prevent crime. Having the wrong information can lead someone to commit a crime and where they think they are doing the right thing. An infamous example of a crime caused by misinformation is the 'Pizzagate' incident. This occurred in December 2016, when false claims were made that the 'Comet Ping Pong' pizzeria was connected to a human trafficking and child molestation ring. This false conspiracy theory went viral on social media platforms such as 4chan and Twitter. As a response to this, a man from North Carolina went to the pizzeria with a gun and opened fire inside. Also, the pizzeria owner had received death threats from the conspiracy theorists. Fortunately, no one was harmed or killed during this incident, however it is still considered one of the most infamous crimes caused by misinformation. This event is exactly why government regulation should be used to prevent misinformation. Laksamana Sukardi, an Indonesian politician and banker, said, "A society that's misinformed is a dangerous society" (Sukardi). Thus, government regulation can prevent crimes in the future.

Although government regulation on social media to prevent misinformation is a good idea, some think that governments will be corrupt and will use this regulation for their own benefit. This is a possibility, however it is unlikely that most governments could use this regulation in a corrupt manner. With monitoring and moderation from global organizations like the United Nations, this problem can be prevented. And even still, without government regulation, false information is still spread. So give government regulation a chance which may end up being successful, or continue to live in the world of false information and lies. In brief, government regulation on social media is still a better option to prevent misinformation, even if governments are corrupt with it.



# Preventing Misinformation

## Aslan Ahmed, Grade 9

On the whole, government regulation on social media is the best solution to prevent misinformation, which in turn prevents a large number of other problems, including crime and conflict. And even if it may have a drawback, it is still ultimately a better alternative than what we have right now, which is nothing. American-Australian journalist Brianna Keilar puts this topic simply, "Misinformation is a virus unto itself" (Keilar).