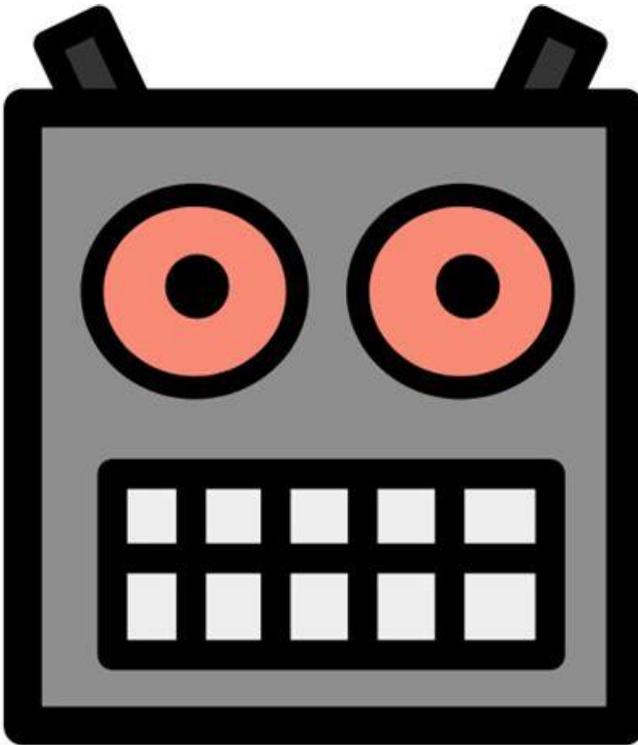


Is Big Tech Bad?

By Rod Fraser



It seems clear, over recent years, that 'Big Tech' has become a colossus with the ability to strip individual citizens of their right to express their views online. If it can deplatform a sitting U.S. President as it did with Donald Trump on January 8, 2021, it can do the same to you.

It is true that Trump was a President on his way out: his term was to expire in 12 days. Nevertheless, he was still a sitting President, when 'Twitter' felt bold enough and powerful enough to strip him of a platform he had used so successfully to win the election in 2016, and to broadcast his views to the world during his four years in power.

As Donna Laframboise writes in her recent article ['Big Bad Tech: When Censorship goes Corporate'](#),

"The internet now bears no resemblance to the early ideal of being open to all and controlled by none. YouTube channels, Twitter accounts, and Facebook groups are routinely vapourized. The list of opinions that violate Big Tech's 'Terms of Service' and 'Community Standards' grows ever longer...."

"Google ... is the most visited website on the internet. YouTube, owned by Google, is the second most visited...."

"When Facebook deletes an election discussion group, when YouTube zaps entire video channels, they aren't merely shutting down debate; they're vapourizing parts of our collective heritage...."

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These are serious criticisms, although I have some reservations on the cost and efficacy of 'Big Tech'

preserving all content. Clearly some of it deserves to remain on the cutting room floor. But it shouldn't be Google, YouTube or Facebook that make the decisions on what to keep, and what to delete. The owners of the content are quite capable of doing that for themselves.

Although Laframboise's article is a wake-up call, pointing out in detail the many examples of Big Tech's "punitive and spiteful" behavior, I'd like to explore a number of practical ways to free ourselves of Big Tech's mission to change our world for the worse, and to limit our ability to freely speak with one another.

Those of us who object to 'Big Tech' should find alternatives to Google, Facebook, YouTube and other media organizations with monopoly power. Why? To reduce their profits and diminish their influence. Will it work? Well, we'll never know unless we try. Boycotts have been effective in the past, and they may work now, if enough people change their online behavior.

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I freely admit I am not a technology expert. Most of the suggestions I note below are those I've picked up from a careful reading of online literature. While there might be better alternatives – these ideas are

certainly well suited for an initial discussion.

The easiest way to get rid of Google on your computer, is to replace it with a privacy-oriented browser, such as 'Brave'. It will protect your online privacy. My own experience suggests it works very well. It's easy to find and download and I report no difficulties with its operation.

I followed the same procedure with my cellphone with one small glitch. I wasn't able to get rid of the google search engine, but 'Brave' is now included as an alternative. When I use my cellphone to search the web, I merely click on my 'Brave' browser (rather than Google) and I'm good to go.

If you couple 'Brave' with 'DuckDuckGo' — as your search engine — you're doubly protected in the privacy of your searches. As an additional bonus, Brave eliminates advertisements. Of course, if you wish to see the advertisements, Brave offers that option, with a flip of the switch.

If you want Google completely out of your life, you'll have to give up your 'Gmail' account. Email is the most private of communications, and yet Gmail users willingly provide their data, correspondence and contacts to Google — to do with as they will.

Donna Laframboise suggested that Gmail users switch to Proton Mail for their email. This is good

advice. It seems to be secure and many people are now using it. I use 'mail.com', which I like for a variety of reasons. It's a reliable, secure platform which I've been using for a number of years. And it's not Gmail.

She also suggests that 'Rumble' is a good alternative to YouTube. Quite so. As is BitChute, which a number of my friends use. One close friend is taking a number of YouTube videos, improving the audio quality, and posting them on BitChute as a public service.

Over the past few years, I've used Amazon 'Prime' to stream movies and TV shows for home entertainment. While it works well enough, I'm increasingly uncomfortable with the censorship of Amazon. I'm searching for an alternative. My friend Ray recommended BritBox and/or Acorn. I plan to subscribe to these services when my annual subscription to 'Prime' runs out.

I'm not on social media, such as Twitter or Facebook, but I did sign up for GAB recently. I don't post much (hardly ever), but I find their news feed interesting and I often like to read their more prolific posters.

GAB is open to all opinions, but it's dominated by political chit chat. If that's your cup of tea, by all means, sign up. But you can easily eliminate this

type of social media from your life and be all the better for it.

Many of my friends who have hobbies, or belong to groups, use Facebook to exchange information and keep in touch. I haven't found an inexpensive alternative to suggest to them, and that's a pity. But an alternative might well appear in the future.

In the meantime, for a small cost – and the time taken to develop a word press website – many groups would be well served by having their own website, which is not easily cancelled.

This article is posted on my personal website (rodster.ca), and although I'm not a computer expert, I found it easy enough to set up, organize a WordPress website and post to it regularly. If I can do it, you can too.

In future months, I'd like to expand this article to a fuller discussion of how to diminish the influence of 'Big Tech' in our lives. I'll need some help. If readers pass on their ideas, I will update this information regularly over time.

July 31, 2021

Addendum to above Article

August 4, 2021 – I received an email from a reader

telling me of a number of secure email providers, most of which are centered in Europe. Click [here](#) for a link to a website which sets out their pros and cons. One such service, based in Canada, is called [Thexyz](#). It is featured among the twelve most recommended email services. Interestingly, **Proton Mail** is number one on their list.

August 10, 2021 – I just switched my Apple TV (No. 3 unit) for a new ROKU device. I planned to sign up for BritBox, but I've noticed a lot of free content on my ROKU device – including Hoopla – enabling me to access good shows at no cost. I'll save the cost of my ROKU device in about six months, free myself of Amazon Prime, and access a host of good shows. It looks like a good move, so far ...