A Better Web for a Better World: Our Manifesto

The Truth

Big Tech and social media giants are inflicting profound damage on our society.

We do believe in the promise of technology to lead us to a new era of human progress and prosperity. We also believe technology can deliver unimaginable destruction and harm, accelerated by the power of AI.

We believe the internet was created over half a century ago to connect machines to machines and data to data, not people to people. Its outdated design has reduced people to users. It has become a techno-capital engine, incentivized to stalk, manipulate, and prey upon people – and it has dehumanized us.

We believe it has become an insatiable machine that harvests our identities to generate enormous wealth for tech and social media Goliaths. We cannot unsee the price the world is now paying for their profits.

The Harm Is Real

We believe the breakdown of civility and democracy, our cultural and political polarization, the radicalization of our neighbors, the censorship of free speech, the increase in mass shootings, our inability to agree on what is good and true, the displacement of parents from their rightful role in protecting their children, and AI's threat to millions of livelihoods are all in large part consequences of our digital dehumanization.

We believe our children's mental health is under attack by a system that so powerfully exploits their vulnerabilities and self-doubts that their brains are being altered. Children are harming themselves and ending their lives at record rates.

We believe our society and democracy cannot survive such autocratic, centralized technology.

We Are More Than Big-Tech's Data

We believe people have been stripped of their rights on the internet because it doesn't see us as human beings at all. It sees us only as data, which Big Tech manipulates and monetizes. Until we are recognized as people, not just producers of data, we will not reclaim our voices or our rights.

We believe a small group of techno-capital innovators have been incentivized to rule as kings, exploit us, and rationalize our exploitation as progress.

The Techno-Optimists will say everything is fine. They mean, "Don't touch the money we are making from your data."

We believe millions of Davids can regain their voices, overcome these Big Tech Goliaths, and bring a better web to life.

Urgency

We believe owning your own data is the first, indispensable step in creating a better internet and a healthier world.

We believe you should own you. We believe you, not Big Tech, should own your data.

We believe the modest reforms tech giants have touted are deceptive band-aids that allow them to continue to profit from exploiting children and society at large.

We believe our need to act is urgent. AI is a powerful accelerant. If we do not put people at the center of the internet, AI will pour gasoline on the digital fire that is already searing our children, communities, and workplaces. The bright promise of generative AI will not be worth the human cost.

The Future

We believe it doesn't have to be this way. We don't have to settle for today's dehumanized digital world.

We believe people have inalienable rights. We do not surrender these rights merely because we are active on the internet. We must take back what is ours: We should own our identities, whether in the physical or digital world.

We believe a better web is not only possible; it is happening now.

A Uniting Purpose

We believe a healthier and more human internet is not a cause belonging to any political party or ideology. It is the uniting purpose of everyone who imagines we can do better.

We believe "moving fast and breaking things" must have a limit: Tech elites should not profit from destroying democracy and breaking human lives.

Liberating Ourselves

We believe a better web will empower people, not soulless digital machines.

We believe we can revive innovation, competition, and capitalism by building a better digital ecosystem, not by expanding the broken one. We believe you should have a voice in governing the platforms that use your data. We believe you should have a stake in the profits your data generates.

We believe the ability to own and control your data, the essence of who you are, is the digital age expression of liberty. We believe we should be free digital citizens, not Big Tech's digital serfs.

We can build a better world where technology is celebrated for uniting us rather than rewarded for breaking us.

A new and better web is being built now. Join us. Demand to own your data and take back your digital rights.

Respectfully,

Frank McCourt
Founder of Project Liberty

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