

Internet Media and Tribal Sovereignty: Some Thoughts on Rapidly Changing Perceptions

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In today's mass media environment, rapid technological, social and political change has driven people of all cultures to wonder whether the communications media we rely upon for accurate, accountable information can remain the basis for political action. The generations-long development of First Amendment guarantees seem almost meaningless in a global mass media environment where truth itself is no longer the guiding principle of journalistic and social development. In internet media, especially, prevailing commercial interests seem to co-opt values of truth and honesty as information is manipulated to meet priorities based upon data-gathering and analytical algorithms so easily captured by digital extraction. Can today's indigenous peoples in the US and elsewhere find a way to assure that media policies include their desires for self-government and decolonization? This author will attempt to help formulate options indigenous people can consider as cyber communications values continue to develop under the current regime of surveillance capitalism.

Keywords: Tribal Sovereignty, tribal and mass media, U.S. mass society and indigenous communities, communications and journalism, advertising, public relations, media policymaking

After nearly 50 years of building upon federal policies of Indian Self-Determination,¹ American's indigenous peoples continue to rely upon and participate in processes of mass media as they pursue appropriate degrees of de-colonization in social, political, economic and cultural development. The key principle of popular sovereignty, as a long-standing principle of tribal cultures, especially among the Haudenosaunee, remains crucial to their continuation as "peoples" and as indigenous political entities on today's global stage. Sources of accurate, accountable information from reliable sources remain crucial for exercising their sovereignty knowledgeably, just as it is for all Americans living in the mass society. The dramatic stories of each tribal nation's expressions of popular sovereignty amidst the burgeoning mass society that surrounds them remain truly remarkable testaments to their creative applications of traditions and perceptive indigenization of selected elements of other cultures.

In adapting and reinforcing tribal identities since first contacts with European colonization, communications media among tribal members have played a crucial, re-vitalizing role. In both face-to-face and in the technologies of mass communication, of course, tribal members have had to deal with some challenging elements of both the American mass society and its attendant mass media for many years. From the perspective of Native Americans intent upon maintaining their voices in the mass media and in communicating among themselves and others about their hopes to flourish as distinct peoples, emerging media developments provide some crucial tools and some daunting challenges. Yet the current struggles in mass media and journalism in the mass media present some momentous challenges to Native nations and individuals, who have only relatively recently emerged from the atomizing ravages of colonialism.

In the current confusing internet media environment, indigenous initiatives face some unprecedented technological and societal transformations that have come to dominate the "marketplace of ideas"² that is sometimes referred to as the locus of communications in a democracy. Native individuals play a fascinating role among a diverse society of ethnic, political and economic entities as "dual citizens,"

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members of their tribal nations first, then as citizens of local, state and national governments of the US.² In their responsibilities as sovereign peoples, then, tribal individuals have a special role to play in the development of communications policies on tribal lands and even as citizens of the larger United States and its system of state and local governance. Rapid changes in communications technologies have now forced many of the older “legacy” systems of journalism under the U. S. Constitution’s First Amendment into conditions of unprecedented change, forcing all citizens who use mass media to find new perspectives on the need for accurate, accessible and accountable information upon which to exercise their sovereign rights. Threats to journalistic values have arisen from a number of sources, especially from largely unregulated economic forces that have usurped many of the powers of the people in internet communications, supposedly constitutionally protected.

Those corporations with economic control of technologies of the internet, especially, have, in just a few decades, nearly extinguished the economic niche where daily print newspapers once proudly served the information needs of citizens in highly predictable, convenient ways. The authority as providers of accurate, accountable information that newspapers wielded until very recently has vanished into a far less accountable cyberspace where competing sources of information are difficult to assess for accuracy, much less as trustworthy servants of the people’s sovereign authority to direct their own lives with confidence. In an earlier paper presented in the American Indian Studies Section of the Western Social Sciences 2018 annual conference, this author documented the decline of American newspapers in the age of digital news.³ The very serious threat to First Amendment values in journalism remains a key problem facing communications in the United States and globally. Survival of newspapers has forced news publications to migrate to the internet under extreme economic pressure as advertising revenues have had to be completely reconfigured. For instance, among the more obvious but often overlooked impacts on journalistic principles is the creating of “news feeds,”⁴ the pre-selection of articles by internet services that are “personalized” to specific readers. While that sounds convenient, it does limit the breadth of coverage of news one may receive from that feed. The creating of aggregate new stories, too, where algorithms select details of events and other news and concoct their own stories, obviates the values of attribution of information, a major value in pursuing objective truth in journalistic reporting.

In fact, that new reconfiguration of news media economics has matured into a further threat to both the free press functions and to the very rights of citizens who are supposed to be the basis of sovereignty in a democracy. The resulting “death of truth”³ in the media has opened the door for illegitimate forces to subvert the people’s right to know with accuracy what their options are in directing the future in their own government. Into the gap in trust created by that process, rumors and cult-like personalities have attracted large numbers of citizens to actions that threaten the very functions and structures of government.

Of greatest concern for the purposes of this paper, though, are the ongoing forces of what Shoshana Zuboff calls “surveillance capitalism”⁴ in internet media which now reaches into other aspects of

² Rickert, Levi, “The Two Sides of Our Citizenship: Tribal and American,” *Native News Online*. <https://nativenewsonline.net/opinion/the-two-sides-of-our-citizenship-tribal-and-american>. March 21, 2021. Accessed 21 March, 2021.

³ Wheelock, Richard M. “Native and Indigenous Scholars and Journalists in the ‘Post-Truth’ Communications Environment,” American Indian Studies Section, 59th Annual Conference, Western Social Sciences Association, San Antonio, Texas, April 6, 2018.

⁴ Martin, Nicole, “How Social Media has Changed how we Consume News,” *Forbes.com*. Nov 30, 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicolemartin1/2018/11/30/how-social-media-has-changed-how-we-consume-news/?sh=16958e2b3c3c>. Accessed 21 March 2021.

American life far beyond the hoped-for democratization of home computer access. What Zuboff terms the “prediction imperative,” is the desire of third parties to use private data about internet users for advertising and to affect public policy. That voracious appetite for predictability threatens the privacy of citizens who are overwhelmed by corporate data-gathering and algorithms as corporate algorithms mine and digitize all aspects of human nature from user data for their potential value as advertising revenue, with the aim of manipulating human behavior. It is a shocking development to many citizens after years of hearing only hopeful forecasts of a kind of computer wonderland to come that will serve every desire of users at a price they can afford.⁵ Instead, Zuboff reveals, huge internet and computer corporations have often circumvented even their own user agreements in order to enrich themselves, exploiting personal data at little or no cost for sale to advertisers and even to political campaigns.

In the race to exploit a new kind of certainty in advertising, the veracity of information is increasingly manipulated to modify the behavior of citizens in order to steadily improve profit margins from advertising and sales and to assure their obedience to cues in the marketplace. The sense of democratic control of society among citizens is not only in jeopardy, but the existing relationships among people and peoples are in danger of being abandoned, Zuboff claims. In the new environment, the trust among “the People” necessary for democracy in making decisions for the future is clearly threatened.

Print and broadcast journalism, already weakened by years of development under commercial corporate values, have become ever more beholden to the powers of neo-liberal economics, where the focus upon the bottom line, mostly determined by advertising revenues and the justification for maximizing stockholders’ profits, has become the exclusive criterion for survival. Other neo-liberal economic values which seem to influence current internet economics in general show that the term “neo-liberal” is far from what many people think of as some form of new liberalism.⁶ It is the basis for much of the right-wing thinking in politics today that seems intent on actually destroying effective government, thereby reducing or even ending government regulation in the name of business efficiency. In the global economic arena, neo-liberalism’s anti-regulation values have been documented by indigenous people and others as a primary force of another round of colonialism, one that actually displaces not only the indigenous people whose resources are sought by transnational corporations but threatens the sovereignty of what were once called third-world countries.

Jerry Mander wrote in 2006 of the impacts of specific policies supported by funding from the United Nation’s World Trade Organization, ostensibly to assist poor countries to develop their resources. He explained neo-liberalism in light of the WTO’s General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, as well as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund plans. In order to receive funding from these global organizations, nation-states were required to reduce barriers to free trade such as environmental restrictions, taxes, labor and health laws and allow almost free access to resources for transnational corporations. Private ownership of resources was to be transferred to corporations, including genetic structures of plants and humans, along with most of the formerly “public commons”: forest lands, fresh water, energy resources and public services like education, public broadcasting, welfare services, drinking water and sanitation. In short, deregulation under neo-liberal economics does not encourage corporate responsibility. Further, structural adjustments were required for countries to remodel their economies to suit corporate growth. Export-oriented growth was greatly favored over small-scale business, replacing local economies. Free movement of capital was also required so investors could move their money in and out of countries without restrictions.⁷

If one were to “follow the money,” which was a popular phrase, supposedly uttered by “Deep Throat” during the Watergate controversy in the 1970’s, it becomes clear that those values are still a guiding principle of exploitive economic development today in the neo-liberal, corporate world. For tribal nations and indigenous individuals, exploitive economics as a basis for unrestricted corporate access to “scrapings” of personal data of users on the internet should seem consistent with their generations-long experiences with colonialism. In the sense of entitlement that internet corporations now exhibit in their supposed right to harvest massive amounts of data about patterns of personal use by individuals of the internet, the story of neo-liberal corporate priorities continues.

Implications of Surveillance Capitalism Upon Democracy – Mass Society

Many journalists and scholars have long realized the seriousness of the crisis now facing democracy created by powerful economic interests who own much of the mass media, especially in the digital realm. In 2010, progressive writers Robert McChesney and John Nichols joined many others in their call for action against the gutting of the professional journalism, even as they acknowledged that journalists have not always been the perfect paradigms of truth and vigorous coverage of the events, issues, conditions and opinions that shape the lives of the People.⁸ In a 2010 book, the McChesney decried what he called “hyper-commercialism,” writing

In hyper-commercialism, corporate power is woven so deeply into the culture that it becomes invisible, unquestionable. The type of “democracy” that grows out of our current commercially drenched culture – at its best – is one with little room for participatory governance. In it people have the “freedom” to pick from commercial options provided to them by marketers.⁹

His comment follows a long listing of failings of journalism,¹⁰ largely the result of a merciless race among advertisers to market products and even influence media content to assure larger audiences. His solutions at the end of his book point to what he calls the “uprising of 2003” where he championed discussions of media policies in Congress, and where significant issues arose, and seemingly useful proposals were made. Writing about the first National Conference on Media Reform attended by some 2,000 journalists, he claimed that “A whole cohort of media activist groups entered 2004 energized. They drew up media reform proposals that were proactive, and not merely defensive, and that covered a broad range of issues.”¹¹ McChesney’s optimism seems to have been unfounded, though, since the ensuing rush to the internet with its new advertising imperatives soon obviated many pathways to reform in journalistic media.

As journalism migrated to the internet, with its inclusion of print, audio and video, new challenges of evolution quickly became evident. Revenues from advertising now occupy the private internet media in ways that make them especially subject to a kind of economic censorship that flows from economically powerful entities that support specific political viewpoints, too. The ability to conduct demographic studies of readers that was so difficult in prior times is now a system that immediately measures feedback in terms far more invasive than a mere count of “hits” and “likes.” Algorithms can be quickly designed to closely target and satisfy, then manipulate the viewpoints and even emotions of specific users, often while also providing access to those users’ personal data to others, further focusing the corporate intention of gathering ‘Big Data.’ Those data can then be again processed by algorithmic analysis by advertisers themselves into profiles of both the overall user segment and, increasingly, of individual users. Human nature itself can be assessed as proprietary programs reduce human experience and preferences into

economic categories for sale to third parties, like advertisers and political organizations. Even the hopes and fears of users can be assessed, giving advertisers increasingly accurate clues about how to approach future advertising campaigns with unprecedented precision. As Zuboff points out, large corporations like Google and Facebook have applied analytics to vast amounts of user contact data to provide marketable products that not only give advertisers insights on customers, but can actually influence behaviors of users by manipulating information about their emotions, feelings, desires and even their personalities.¹² They can then limit choices for user responses to not only commercial products, but for practically any decision they might make in life.

All this is done with very little ability of users to protect their private information. Indeed, privacy rights are given almost cynical inattention by these corporations and even online news publications as user agreements tend to be lengthy, and obtuse.¹³ They are also provided as terms of service agreements in extremely inconvenient moments as users are forced to agree to terms of use of their own data in the moment of accessing a needed program or service in the midst of other internet communications.¹⁴ Zuboff notes a 2008 calculation by two Carnegie Mellon scholars that for business internet users "...a reasonable reading of all the privacy policies that one encounters in a year would require 76 full workdays at a national opportunity cost of \$781 billion."¹⁵

Since laws have not been an adequate protection of user privacy, large corporations can simply maintain huge, secret data as a part of their "proprietary" functions as businesses. This process is taking place now, meaning future uses of user personal data is likely to accelerate into the "internet of things" where new technological products like smart phones, home security systems, children's toys and exercise equipment already surreptitiously gather data on a person's behavior. While corporations make it seem that they are only gathering "aggregate" data, such data cannot be separated from the identification of individual users and could be used later to target individuals. Since resale of personal data is not often restricted, one can imagine unscrupulous players using that data to blackmail or otherwise harm users who do not realize the danger surveillance capitalism poses in the area of user privacy. Zuboff documents the fact that users oppose the use of their information without meaningful consent once they are made aware of it via surveys that ask them about such abuses.¹⁶

In the political realm, unexpected outcomes resulted when similar unethical data-gathering and analytical methods were applied to election campaigns. In the 2016 general election, using data from social media giant Facebook, Cambridge Analytics is said to have created a groundswell of misrepresentation and skewed information, targeting people's vulnerabilities, using algorithms and vast amounts of personal data. The fact that Facebook users were mostly unaware of the attack on their private information for such a purpose triggered a controversy over social media privacy and resulted in some Facebook users closing their accounts.¹⁷ Cambridge Analytica serves conservative causes like the Trump Campaign and the Brexit-Leave candidates in Britain. Its analytics and targeted messaging, combined with data-scraping methods of Facebook, relied upon data of some 87 million Facebook users for the purpose of influencing the 2016 US general election in favor of Donald Trump. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg was summoned before the US Congress as part of the investigation into how Facebook facilitated Cambridge Analytica's unethical influence, where he apologized for the company's delay in removing Cambridge Analytica from its platform. In 2019, the Federal Trade Commission fined Facebook \$5 billion for its part in providing data to Cambridge Analytica.¹⁸ The FTC also imposed six regulations on Facebook that reveal the depth of the "scraping" of Facebook user's private information:

1. *"Facebook must exercise greater oversight over third-party apps, including by terminating app developers that fail to certify that they are*

in compliance with Facebook's platform policies or fail to justify their need for specific user data."

2. *"Facebook is prohibited from using telephone numbers obtained to enable a security feature (e.g., two-factor authentication) for advertising."*

3. *"Facebook must provide clear and conspicuous notice of its use of facial recognition technology, and obtain affirmative express user consent prior to any use that materially exceeds its prior disclosures to users."*

4. *"Facebook must establish, implement, and maintain a comprehensive data security program."*

5. *"Facebook must encrypt user passwords and regularly scan to detect whether any passwords are stored in plaintext."*

6. *"Facebook is prohibited from asking for email passwords to other services when consumers sign up for its services."¹⁹*

Cambridge Analytica employee Christopher Wylie said in a 2018 interview that "...we exploited Facebook to harvest millions of people's profiles. And built models to exploit what we knew about them and target their inner demons."²⁰ To get an idea of just how thorough algorithms can be in affecting human behavior in elections once huge data sets are gathered from social media, one can watch a YouTube video entitled "Cambridge Analytica Uncovered: Secret Filming Reveals Election Tricks," a Channel 4 British Public Broadcast service production.²¹ Once one understands the overwhelming psychological campaign that resulted, one can see how targeted users might unite under such strange movements as the Q-anon theory cult once they were subjected to such messaging!²² Cambridge Analytica declared bankruptcy in 2018, but many of its executive officers have since found employment at other companies or have created companies with similar profiles as Cambridge Analytica.²³

According to Jaron Lanier, a "virtual reality pioneer,"²⁴ "There is no evil genius seated in a social media company performing calculations and deciding that making people feel bad is more 'engaging' and therefore more profitable than making them feel good. Or at least, I've never met or heard of such a person."²⁵ His point is well taken, of course, from the perception of an insider in the industry. He does not imply that users should assume that those who gather and process personal data online have the best interests of users in mind, though. In fact, his book is an indictment of the overall negative impacts of social media's use in general because of its reliance upon machine intelligence in processing human interactions.

Manipulation of users' behavior, including in the subconscious realm, is clearly a goal of surveillance capitalism. The potential uses of data products produced by those same algorithms produced ostensibly to serve legitimate purposes are subject to use by third parties who can purchase them, creating the largest profit-making sector for companies like Facebook, Google and their many affiliates and competitors. Competition for that revenue is intense and success in surveillance capitalism can be extremely lucrative, as Zuboff points out.²⁵ Future expansion of that capitalism across the internet seems certain as a result. Alphabet, Google's holding company's financial statement for 2020 shows revenue/sales of \$182.35 billion,²⁶ much of it from its many advertisers and from products that contribute to data-gathering on users. Zuboff noted that in 2016, 89% of Alphabet's revenues were from targeted advertising,²⁷ which suggests that that at least that percentage is likely to also apply to the 2020 revenues. Facebook's 2020

⁵Lanier, 19.

revenue/sales were \$85.97 billion.²⁸ Microsoft, Apple and Amazon have all begun to delve deeply into the practices of surveillance capitalism as have many smaller, less known companies in many fields. Since so much of the “proprietary” information about the actual nature of accumulated data and uses of data and algorithms is secret, there seems to be little the average user can do to protect the massive amount of personal information already captured in these processes. These companies are unlikely to ever willingly forego the very basis of surveillance capitalism and, instead, strenuously protect their pathway to profits from any attempts to regulate them.

One way to quickly perceive the scope and volume of the invasive and secretive processes of data harvest, likely algorithmic processing and sale of personal information emerges from a reading of Ethan Zuckerman’s 2018 article which broadens the discussion of Facebook’s and others’ unethical behaviors in the Cambridge Analytica scandal: “As you read this article on *The Atlantic*, roughly three dozen ad trackers are watching you, adding your interest in this story to profiles they maintain on your online behavior.”²⁹ Zuckerman continues in the article to make the point that the Cambridge Analytica scandal reveals only the tip of the iceberg that is surveillance capitalism and the behavior of “bad actors” across the global internet. “Never before have we had the technological infrastructure to support the weaponization of emotion on a global scale,” Zuckerman points out.

The controversy over data scraping, privacy rights of users, and uses of unethically obtained information continues, highlighting the dangerous levels of surveillance that continues in social media and in other internet services like the massive Facebook and Google operations. It is unclear whether the rest of the industry can or will comply with similar restrictions as those imposed upon Facebook. After all, the highly profitable methods of data gathering, algorithm processing and production of products for sale to advertisers and others who can purchase them began with Google and have spread to Facebook and Amazon, among many other internet media organizations.³⁰

Surveillance Capitalism: Vulnerabilities of members of a Mass Society

In earlier advertising before the rise of the internet, the goal seemed to be for advertisers to find the “magic bullet,” that would spur immediate purchases of specific products from the greatest possible portion of the public. In paraphrase, its principal concept is that passive mass audiences could be influenced to uniformly obey commands from widely respected authority figures, using highly crafted, deeply emotional messaging. The idea was based upon a now largely discredited theory that arose from studies of propaganda in World War II and from, remarkably, the infamous “War of the Worlds” broadcast in the 1930’s.³¹ It seems a primitive, overly simplified theory of mass communications today.

The idea has been widely debunked but seems to offer some surprising evidence of confirmation in the currently developing, largely secret development of targeted messages based in algorithmic Big Data applications. As one rather obscure research paper claims, the new technologies and the rapid development of ingenious applications have created a very unprecedented relationship between individual sometimes passive internet users and messages they receive, one which seems to make the Magic Bullet idea uncomfortably valid.³² In certain cases, where Big Data has allowed those crafting the messages to select very specific segments of a huge mass audience who are likely to be susceptible either subconsciously or consciously, significant numbers of individuals can be targeted, isolated and even marshalled into opinion groupings using gamification messaging they find irresistible. These groups may be especially susceptible to cult-like behavior when they continue to be guided consistently by ingenious programmers.³³

The previous paragraph delves beyond what science has documented at this time, but the very rapid development of what Zuboff calls surveillance capitalism certainly gives one pause as to why targeted messaging is so predictably effective. In large populations, it must be remembered, even if a personalized, targeted, emotion-laced message succeeds in just 1% of the mass population using the internet, many millions can be affected, either for advertising purposes or for political or even revolutionary economic purposes. Actual accuracy of information expressed in messaging is not required so long as receivers are motivated to act upon it. That 1% can then be encouraged to interact online forming impressive pressure groups when political, economic or other controversies are in progress. Whether and how victims of such messaging can be “de-programmed” is another issue, one that seems to require a re-awakening of a victim’s sense of skepticism, a kind of re-booting of their rational mind from the mental numbing that seems to be an outgrowth of long-term, hours-long submission to the internet’s attractive environment.

It is important to acknowledge the generations of change our mass society has experienced since much more local, kinship-based societies were the basis of experience for humans.

In fact, since World War II, American society and much of the rest of the world has been in some version of modernization, often at the expense of laborers, indigenous peoples and other minorities and the environment.³⁴ Since the 1940’s, American society, for example, has developed what this author contends is the epidemic of a “mass society” that greatly emphasizes the isolated individual. A 1998 book chapter by this author considers the dramatic, long term changes society has undergone in its very structure, especially since the 1940’s.³⁵ Tribal societies, too, have had to adapt or die in the society of individuals created by mass society. Their dramatic story of survival remains important background to the purposes of this paper. While it is not practical to restate here the five selected elements of a tribal society vs. five elements of a mass society, it is hoped readers can access the cited chapter for clarity on the use of the terms used in this paper. I will only contrast a few of the five elements of each here in as brief a manner as possible to keep the focus on elements that are crucial to understanding the impacts of surveillance capitalism on today’s evolving mass society and tribal nations. I will paraphrase and quote extensively in the following paragraph with the hope that readers can comprehend the rather vast differences in worldviews involved. Again, I am only selecting some of the elements of tribalism and mass society.

American mass society has come to rely upon an impersonal, bureaucratic structuring of society as opposed to the extended kinship system of most tribal nations. That is because distribution of services and opportunities cannot be accomplished via a kinship in this diverse society. People tend to be ranked as individuals in categories or roles to gain fair shares of goods and services mass society and capitalism provide. That fact also requires that society be governed by laws created by secular processes. One’s responsibilities to other humans requires formal, sometimes coercive law and policy, since individuals must cooperate with many strangers daily. In such an impersonal society, neighbors rarely need to interact and even relationships within nuclear families are often superseded as children spend their days in schools and adults take on work and career roles. Individuals are frequently anonymous as they pass through many public places. Information media dominate thought patterns, providing a greatly expanded system of mass communication. Community is not generally based upon interactions of kinship groupings, but instead, people can become “residents” simply by moving to a locale and living there for a specific, legally defined length of time and maintaining a home there. Solidarity among groups, often based upon similar interests and backgrounds is difficult to maintain for the long term because of “...social differentiation, impersonality and distrust due to psychological alienation, the breakdown of meaningful social ties and increasing anomie among the members.”³⁶

The idea of “anomie” is important here. It is an older term, less prevalent in today’s research on mass media, but still holds potential for understanding the impacts of surveillance capitalism. In today’s sociological usage

People who live during periods of anomie typically feel disconnected from their society because they no longer see the norms and values that they hold dear reflected in society itself. This leads to the feeling that one does not belong and is not meaningfully connected to others. For some, this may mean that the role they play (or played) and their identity is no longer valued by society. Because of this, anomie can foster the feeling that one lacks purpose, engenders hopelessness, and encourages deviance and crime.³⁷

While users of internet media have not completely entered a state of anomie by any means, one can see that some people, perhaps some known to readers of this paper, seem to be prone to the mental depression that can lead to anomie. But as our society faces threats to democracy, the Corona Virus pandemic, economic recession, and global and domestic terrorism, anomie seems to be an important precursor to manipulation by such organizations as Cambridge Analytica.

Though concepts like the “magic bullet,” “anomie” and even the existence of a “mass society” have not been fashionable in media research in recent times, all three concepts have value in assessing the processes that make surveillance capitalism so successful. Individuals spend huge amounts of their daily lives online in isolation,³⁸ some six hours and 31 minutes on average in the U.S. and six hours and 42 minutes on average globally. Usage is rising as this paper is written, the report cited here claims. The numbers dwarf what was once considered a dangerous addiction to watching television. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports average TV viewing is now about 2.8 hours a day among employed Americans.³⁹ Though one should note that these data report use among slightly different and overlapping populations, the patterns of extremely high usage of the world wide web are imposing. The simple time spent online instead of in other modes of “reality” give special impetus to further studies of the impacts of surveillance capitalism. Clearly, those who gather personal data, Big Data, as it is often called, have vast opportunities to craft algorithms that help them design advertising that can influence individuals on a vast scale. Online users simply spend so much of their time online that one would have to conclude that the internet is a major socializing environment in today’s mass society. Again, Zuboff has shown, there is very little meaningful regulation on how data is gathered or used by major corporations or political organizations.⁴⁰ For members of a mass society, that fact should be troubling.

Perceptions and Solutions: Options for Internet Media Use by Sovereign Peoples

So how should we, the People, view this situation of unrelenting invasion of our private information and the targeted messages we receive on our computer and smart phones each day? How serious is its potential for sweeping us or people we know into cult-like behaviors? Do we feel powerless, numb to the constant barrage of commercial advertising battering our conscious and subconscious perceptions of the world at all hours? Can our traditions and our community help us deal with those attacks on our very individual selves? In our unique legal status as indigenous peoples, we have become dual citizens, members of our tribal nations with all the values of kinship, community and the sovereignty that go with it – and citizens of the United States and, for that matter, of the world in so many ways. How do we deal with what is a vital issue of sovereignty and democracy in that multi-level milieu? Is this unprecedented,

invasive power of internet media an insurmountable agent of atomization that will slip into our lives and usurp our autonomy to deal with the personal struggles to fulfill ourselves and meet our responsibilities?

In the mass society that engulfs Native people as dual citizens, the currently offered advice and some of the proposals for regulation of the industry seem insufficient. In the realm of what Zuboff calls surveillance capitalism, there seems to be little hope of immediate remedies to the disempowering juggernaut that seems intent upon selling our aggregate data to those who would rule the future. Zuboff warns against the numbness that can emerge when we believe that nothing can be done to challenge that dystopian future, saying its continuation is not inevitable.

Jaron Lanier, too, warns that we cannot give in to what he calls the BUMMER machine, defining the same industry that Zuboff calls Surveillance Capitalism by using an anagram he labels the “BUMMER machine:” Behaviors of User Modified, and Made into an Empire for Rent.”⁴¹ His perceptions of its flawed business model come from his years of experience in creating virtual reality programming and writing a number of books about artificial intelligence, while Zuboff’s conclusions flow from her long experience as an author of three books about computers and their historic impacts on society.⁴² Shoshana Zuboff has obviously begun the fight against what has been nearly invisible to most internet users in her exposé of surveillance capitalism. Her analysis of solutions and the barriers to implementing them are also clearly useful.

These two authors, cited throughout in this paper, are reintroduced here to give some authority to the possible solutions sovereign peoples should consider in taking action on the dangerous outcomes of the BUMMER machine. I encourage internet users of all stripes to familiarize themselves with their books cited in this paper, as useful and stimulating primers on the issues. I will refer to their ideas frequently in considering very briefly how we can begin to remake the social media landscape.

I think it is best to consider briefly the possible initiatives that can be undertaken by individual users first, then by the internet corporations via self-regulation, then by workers in those industries, then by advertisers and political organizations who purchase the processed data and may often subject data to their own algorithmic processes, assuming they might undertake self-regulation processes as well. I will then quickly list the options of national and even international regulation via legislation and regulation. Finally, in keeping with the main purpose of this paper, I will consider how tribal individuals and nations might perceive and deal with surveillance capitalism. Of course, in a short paper intended for an annual conference, the coverage here will only touch upon the many alternative courses of action that might be possible in the near future.

Solutions for Individuals in Striving for Change in the Business Models of Surveillance Capitalism

Both Shoshana Zuboff and Jaron Lanier focus much of their analyses of the current crisis in social media economics on the business model followed by, especially, Google and Facebook. To be clear, that model is flawed because it violates some very basic principles of ethical capitalism, if such a concept exists in today’s neo-liberal context. It can always be argued by those who favor unregulated capitalism – neo-liberal economics – that the market should be the deciding force here, and that applying ethical standards via some form of regulation is inefficient and therefore evil, since regulation distorts markets. But the fact remains that the current model of surveillance capitalism is this: instead of providing a service to consumers at a price they can afford, these companies offer them the service for “free,” provided users agree to allow their personal data to be exploited in ways they cannot even imagine. They then sell that

incredibly personal information to third parties, advertisers and others who hope to not only market other products to the users, but who plan to manipulate their behavior using cyber-programs that can actually learn within certain parameters within the program to twist elements of human nature, convincing users, often in subliminal ways, to act in ways the third party wishes. Of course, there are complexities in that process and some likely unexpected outcomes since the programming part is constantly changing and adjusting to meet those complexities, but the final outcomes provide third parties with a very high level of predictable certainty in their advertising or other attempts at manipulating public behavior.

Again: Company provides free service to consumer. Company then uses the service itself to exploit privacy of consumer, collecting profile data. Company sells algorithmically processed profile data at great cost to third parties who also use algorithms to enhance the data's value to the third party. Third party calculates likely outcomes and designs advertising, using manipulation processes which they have developed in public relations and advertising for many years in addition to new tweaks emerging from algorithms. Third party applies those manipulative messages into the same internet-based platforms where the data came from, paying advertising rates determined by the original internet company, completing a circular system where users now purchase products, often online, at far more predictable rates than ever before seen in capitalism. That predictability, perhaps a percentage of possible marketing targets, makes this as close to a sure thing as possible. It is also a dishonest, extremely exploitive distortion of basic economic processes, where the relationship between consumer and marketer is secretly used by third parties.

So, how should we, the consumers, respond? First, there are some powerful suggestions that emerge from the experience of those directly involved in creating algorithms for use in computer internet programs. Jaron Lanier suggests that individual users themselves take charge. In his book *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now*, he documents the impacts of social media on users themselves in no uncertain terms. Though his focus is upon those impacts on individual users and only tangentially deals with the larger issue of surveillance capitalism in its many other forms, his suggestion that individual users take action to live without social media is instructive, especially since in the 1990's he was himself the "chief scientist of the engineering office of Internet2, the consortium of universities charged with solving the problem of how to make the internet continue to function as it became giant."⁴³ His insider's view of social media reminds us of how dominant social media has become and how its users become engaged to the point of losing their free will and becoming personalities they should despise.

For individuals immersed in the mass society, including indigenous people living outside the boundaries of their homelands today, Lanier offers what I believe is the best option. His book focuses rather narrowly on users of social media accounts even though other services, like email providers, also are involved in "scraping" data from users. His suggestion is that users simply delete their social media accounts as quickly as possible to avoid behavior modification's effects. He acknowledges that such an action is a bit more difficult than it sounds, since so many users have become addicted to the reinforcements that social media, especially Facebook, provide regularly. People would also have to find other ways to communicate with friends and relatives, of course, but would no longer be involved in the asymmetric transaction of getting a "free" social networking service by providing nearly unlimited personal information for the purposes of resale to third parties. Since that personal information may well be used in ways that are not in the users' best interests, this seems to be the best course of action. Interestingly, near the end of his book, he relents just a bit on the idea of deleting social media accounts. He says that he didn't name his book *Delete Your Social Media Accounts Forever*; instead, he advises us to "...detach from the behavior-modification empires for a while – six months, say... After you experiment, you'll

know yourself better. Then decide.”⁴⁴ His suggestions seem to be aimed at younger users, yet everyone can use a little time for experience that is not mediated by agents of behavior-modification.

Lanier says that since his book was published, there are estimates that 10% of Facebook users deleted their accounts in 2018.⁴⁵ He goes on to say the actual number is not known, since, again, Facebook does not report those numbers since they claim it is proprietary information. Lanier urges users to also suggest to others they know, especially those who were “friends” on Facebook, to also delete their accounts. He suggests other avenues of communication on the internet, though, since he is decidedly NOT suggesting any wholesale rejection of internet communications. There are, though, complications to his suggestion. Simply writing to one’s former “friends” on Gmail, for instance, simply transfers one’s exposure to data scraping to another voracious data scraper, Google. For novices in the internet, like me, it would be helpful to find a listing somewhere that shows which services do not violate their users’ privacy! I can often see instances in my own searches that I am followed, despite my use of DuckDuckGo, which claims my searches cannot be used in that fashion. I suspect accessing websites, even via DuckDuckGo, subjects me to abusive data scraping, but am uncertain whether there are ways to protect myself. Google and Facebook are the two whose business plans are most dedicated to the practice, but many others must be guilty in at least portions of those practices. We need more reporting on just which internet sites and platforms are gathering data for resale to third parties or are themselves surreptitiously profiling those who use their services.

One important point needs to be made about the power of users themselves to make an impact on the current asymmetry of power between themselves and the platforms that seek to exploit their personal data: Users become loyal to those services to the point of addiction. Convincing other users that they need to take action can approach the level of the deprogramming of cult members. Even suggesting such actions is likely to incite extreme resistance in those deeply attached to the services of Facebook or Twitter, two of the major players in data scraping. As Steve Hassan, recognized as one of America’s leading cult and mind-control experts, points out, “Mind control is not an ambiguous, mystical process but instead a concrete and specific set of methods and techniques.” In his book *The Cult of Trump*, he provides us with details about his BITE model for understanding mind control.⁴⁶ The elements he delineates fall into his four categories: Behavior Control, Information Control, Thought Control and Emotional Control. Reading the page-long bullet points under each of these elements shows much congruence with Zuboff’s and Lanier’s analyses of how users are affected by social media. Hassan notes that when working to reclaim cult members

...attacking a person’s beliefs is doomed to fail. When I first began confronting this reality, I realized I had to develop a process to help people recover their individual faculties and, ultimately, their true, or authentic, selves. I found that to reach that authentic self, I needed to encourage a positive, warm relationship between cult members and families – essentially, to build trust and rapport – while raising essential questions for cult members to consider.⁴⁷

Hassan’s BITE approach seems like good grounding to those who hope to convince their friends and relatives that using social media encourages cult-like states of mind in users. It also reminds us that people of a mass society, discussed earlier in this paper, are susceptible to the attraction and disciplining of users of data-scraping social media as they are led into an asymmetrical relationship with the computer learning algorithms that accompany their internet interactions. Their already isolated lifestyles and frequently anonymous experiences make them prime targets.

Perhaps another approach for individuals to take is some form of direct action, like user strikes. Instead of deleting one's accounts, users could select a date or week or even longer when they would avoid using their accounts in concert with others, publicizing their efforts as broadly as possible. Such an approach might at least get the attention of advertisers and would provide a chance to educate the public of the dangers of the near-monopoly power companies like Facebook and Google have to violate users' rights. Also, the shared camaraderie of other individuals might lead to further innovative approaches to making users' voices heard in the efforts to rein in data scraping. In addition, advertisers might be approached via online "public shaming" techniques, though it may take some research to select appropriate advertisers. Such efforts would need to be seriously investigated to minimize collateral damage and unintended consequences. Individuals can, of course, advocate or participate in actions at the other levels discussed below.

Solutions for Corporations Whose Business Models Rely Upon Surveillance Capitalism

Of course, corporations like Facebook and Google could continue to "self-regulate" by actually voluntarily changing their business models. Unfortunately, it is highly unlikely they would drastically change their model, since their *raison d'être* is deeply entwined with gaining the incredible revenues that accrue from data gathering and processing. It would take quite an internal move for their stockholders to accept the lesser revenues they would be likely to gain from selling other kinds of internet products or limiting their revenues by reducing lucrative data gathering. Currently, Facebook is reviewing its user agreements as part of the settlement in the Cambridge Analytica scandal to strike a more forthcoming approach, but it would seem little can be expected in voluntary self-regulation that would actually end their predatory practices. Their practices are much more likely to be impacted through legislation or regulation from governments, as will be discussed below.

Solutions for Advertisers and other Organizations who purchase Surveillance Data

Advertising, Lanier points out, has "morphed into mass behavior modification."⁴⁸ That behavior would be indefensible to many users, but advertisers and political organizations have been able to hide many of their practices behind the veil of "proprietary information." Much of their business models are "opaque," invisible to all but those involved in the transaction between data gatherers and clients. We cannot know about the algorithms or the precise uses of that processed data because corporations like Google, Facebook and Twitter claim that information as proprietary as do advertisers and other clients. Nonetheless, some advertisers and other clients can be approached "after the fact," when their actions clearly show they have participated in the processes as clients and advertisers. The need for some kind of good will effort on the part of large advertising companies to express and practice high ethical standards might even be good public relations, especially if surveillance capitalism's excesses became more visible because of user strikes or publicity campaigns. They and their stockholders would have to be convinced that such a change in their practices is both honorable and a good business practice. One can hope!

Solutions for Workers in the Industries of Surveillance Capitalism

Workers, like programmers, usually have to sign confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements⁴⁹ to work in major corporations like Google and Facebook. Those agreements make it unlikely that workers would

even consider speaking out in public against company policies. Nonetheless, some top engineers and computer scientists have begun to speak publicly against company policies they abhor.⁵⁰ Zuboff offers a long list of the “internet of things,” products that slyly monitor user behavior from people’s homes, as is the case of sensors placed in TV’s or music systems or as cameras on laptops and, of course, home security systems. All those product lines rely upon workers who might be organized to try to influence their employers, though they are often contract or gig employees who do not have secure positions from which to critique company policies when their jobs might be in jeopardy.

Since these companies have always fought unionization among their workforces, they seem immune to any worker-based movements to change the business plan of the entire corporation. It is important to consider the impacts of radical change in the entire industry that might result from changing the business plans of these huge corporations. Nonetheless, there is a nascent movement for change among Facebook employees.⁵¹ It provides an unexpected route to reducing the harm Facebook causes in its basic business model and daily activities that harm users.

Lanier reveals his empathy for those in the industry in ways that remind us that there is a human element among those in the internet industry that escapes Zuboff’s analysis and should be considered in any discussion about somehow doing away with it. Meaningful jobs, entire industries and the futures for generations to come must figure into the processes of changing those business plans. In short, those who would change surveillance capitalism and BUMMER companies need to prepare to offer new visions and practical, just transitions for workers to win their support.

Solutions for Governments: Regulation and Legislation

After several decades of development of surveillance capitalism, it seems clear that existing regulations of such government bureaucracies as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are woefully inadequate to protect users adequately. To be fair, no one could have anticipated the social media’s rapid growth in time to develop the perspective to foresee the impacts of a rising new sector, one that would challenge Big Oil for dominance in the global economy. The unforeseen terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, for instance, brought on a change in what had by then been the beginnings of FTC regulation of privacy rights on the World Wide Web, resulting in an emphasis on national security rather than user privacy. The political motives at the FTC shifted from that privacy to an approach to regulation that focused on the “...concrete ‘harms-based’ strategy, in which concrete physical harms or economic injuries could be defined, such as identity theft of database security.”⁵² Federal bureaucracies like the Central Intelligence Agency began to capture private information from internet users at a higher volume after 9/11, extending an emphasis that had been announced as early as 1997. Already, these surveillance values were a large part of federal security priorities, rather than the limiting of the surveillance of personal data that large corporations had begun by then. As Zuboff reports, “...the fledgling practices of surveillance capitalism were allowed to root and grow with little regulatory or legislative challenge, emboldening Google’s young leaders to insist on lawlessness as a right and, in ways that are even more opaque, emboldening the state to grant them that freedom.”⁵³

Since those times, Zuboff claims, four strategies have contributed to the protective shield Big Data has enjoyed. First, Google was able to demonstrate to politicians that their services could be a competitive advantage to candidates in elections. Second, a deliberate blurring of public and private interests was created through relationships with political entities and via lobbying activities. Third, a revolving door came about of personnel between Google and the Obama administration during the crucial development

years for Google, 2009 – 2016. Fourth, Google maintained a campaign of influence over academic studies and “the larger cultural conversation so vital to policy formation, public opinion and political perception.”⁵⁴ These four dynamics may not have been intended to shield corporations in their development of the internet, the historical consequences of those policy developments certainly aided them in their aims of escaping regulation and oversight.

In the crucial political policy-making arena, the 2012 FTC anti-trust investigation of Google’s strategy resulted in a significant move by the corporation to the Far Right, triggering grants from Google for activities of anti-regulatory groups such as Americans for Tax Reform, the Federalist Society and the Cato Institute. Google also acknowledged its membership in a corporate lobbying organization opposing gun control and emission standards and supporting voter-suppression activities “and other far-right causes.”⁵⁵ It remains clear that Google and the industry in Big Data will take practically any action to protect its right to personal data of internet users from meaningful regulation. Google’s demonstrated political clout protecting that right is wielded in what Zuboff calls “the dispossession cycle,” which she lists as “incursion, habituation, adaptation and redirection” strategies for resisting any new attempt to regulate its operations.⁵⁶ Incursion occurs when new unilateral initiatives of Google’s move into undefended space like a new application on a laptop or smart phone. If it is challenged in this move via lawsuits or attempts to regulate the incursion, Google moves into habituation mode, where it simply exhausts its adversaries, via delay, seductive offers or simply ignores complaints. After long delays, if adversaries are not exhausted, Google moves on the adaptations that satisfy the least possible objections that adversaries, already approaching the end of their resources, are likely to accept, leaving the larger part of the original incursion intact. Finally, Google can use redirection to satisfy any remaining objections by diverting supply chains just enough to appear to be complying with any remaining objections. The process can take years, usually wearing down opposition and transforming what looked like a clear violation of the rights of users into the “new normal” state of affairs.⁵⁷ It is a strategy for corporations with deep pockets and a cunning determination to maintain incredible profits. For Google and the super-wealthy corporate leaders and their boards of directors across the new industry, it is the public relations model for the future of Big Data.

Despite the incredible and abusive power of Big Data, Zuboff still encourages users not to believe that surveillance capitalisms abuses are inevitable. She uses the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which went into effect in May 2018 as an example of ways the power of giant corporations might be successfully countered. The list of some of its measures is instructive: It requires notification of users when personal data is taken, a high threshold of “consent” from users in that taking, a prohibition on making personal information public by default, a requirement to “use privacy by design” in building new systems,” a right for users to demand erasure of data, and expanded protections against decision-making within automated systems that cause “consequential” impacts on a user’s life.⁵⁸ After the immense struggle to get this system of regulation in place in Europe, many are hopeful that the power of Big Data has at last met its match. However, one cannot assume that this struggle is over, since Surveillance Capitalism’s markets are global, and the United States still has few of the protections of GDPR in place. The precedent is set, though. We shall see what strategies companies like Google will come up with in the years ahead.

Solutions for Sovereign Indigenous Nations in the United States

After this rather lengthy rendition of the options for challenging Big Data’s power at other levels, it is time to turn to how tribal individuals and nations might perceive and deal with surveillance capitalism.

First, though, it is important to understand the patterns of internet uses among the diverse Native American populations in the United States.

For most of the 574 federally-recognized tribal nations⁵⁹ in the U.S., internet usage mirrors that of the non-Native people in the surrounding communities, though they still face aspects of the “digital divide” to a much greater degree than even their rural non-indigenous neighbors. A U.S. Census report released in 2018 reveals that 53% of Native Americans with a computer had subscriptions to high-speed broadband internet on Indian reservations or other tribal lands.⁶⁰ Tribal libraries often lack broadband as well. A 2014 article reported that only 40% of tribal libraries have high-speed internet access. The article quoted President Susan Feller of the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums as she noted that, “As community anchor institutions, tribal libraries are often the only source of free access to the Internet and public computers, yet they are struggling to meet an ever-growing demand for more broadband capacity, better equipment and training programs vital to building digitally inclusive communities.”⁶¹ A number of U.S. House of Representatives members called for a federal study of tribal communications services to see whether federal, state and local governments could help to bridge the divide. They pointed out that more than 30% of tribal households still lack basic telephone service.⁶² Finally, a 2019 article in *Native News Online* reported that new legislation was introduced in Congress to deal with the problem, noting that a 2018 study by the Federal Communications Commission found that an estimated 35 percent of Native Americans living on tribal lands did not have broadband services, compared to eight percent of all Americans.⁶³ After years as a low economic priority, one can hope that meaningful internet connections can be established across “Indian country.”

Though it appears that many tribal nations and their members have major problems to solve to establish effective internet connections, a bad thing one might say, one might conclude that this is a good moment for tribes to build their capacity to provide both the hardware of the internet, and to establish their own policies for dealing with some of the problems of surveillance capitalism as it will come to affect them more and more in the coming years. As tribal nations continue their efforts to become economically self-sufficient, they have already experienced the colonial economics that has matured into neo-liberalism, so one can also hope that their development of new technologies like the internet will not be dominated by neo-liberal capitalism’s profit-at-all-costs thinking. Maybe our nations can help build a new version of social media, starting with applying tribal values to the problem. Already, many indigenous people have made creative use of internet services to create podcasts,⁶⁴ for instance, including some of my own very astute relatives. Probably a lot of people across Native America are well aware of that effective means for reinforcing kinship responsibilities and reaching across cultures to build mutual respect. A quick DuckDuckGo search reveals that many Native people are well on the way to claiming their own space on the ‘net, including in the field of journalism. As an older Native person, myself, I read from a pretty long list of Native newspapers and, of course, the internet reveals many more available for keeping the indigenous population informed so they can exercise their sovereignty knowledgeably. One can hope that the many Native people who are skilled in internet development can help counter the very powerful forces of surveillance capitalism, the BUMMER economics that has poisoned so much of social media.

Implications of Surveillance Capitalism Upon Democracy – Indigenous peoples

It is difficult to assess the full range of impacts of surveillance capitalism on indigenous people at this point, though corporations like Facebook are likely to gather and process information specifically about them in its rush to capitalize on personal information. Rural and indigenous people on tribal lands have been encouraged to overcome the “digital divide,” thereby bringing ever more effective corporate

penetration into their lives as it has to the American mass society. A major report on this divide shows that Native Americans often find it difficult or impossible to gain excellent home internet connections.⁶⁵ Projects to improve internet service in more isolated locations, though, are likely to improve that access in the near future. As tribal governments move to make their voices heard and to communicate effectively with their members and the overall public, they are subject to similar quantification, processing and manipulation of their behaviors as they make use of systems like those dominating the internet, like Google and Facebook. Their interests in tribal sovereignty in the political arena and de-colonization in social and cultural development seem likely targets for political analysis, possibly by antagonistic players. Though there is little evidence of such a threat now, sovereign indigenous peoples cannot simply dismiss what has become the one of the greatest threats to democracy and their own political survival in generations. We will have to find ways to first educate ourselves about the dangers of surveillance capitalism, and then to devise strategies to rescue not only the privacy rights, but to help reform and reimagine how digital electronics should serve our needs and the needs of future generations.

In the meantime, internet policies that tribal nations wish to explore are also easily found on the internet. Publications and actions of the National Congress of American Indians are available on its website including information on existing and proposed policies on internet development in Indian country.⁶⁶ There, one can find publications that show the many federal and other agencies that deal with internet concerns. Other major organizations with help provide advocacy and information on impacts of the internet on American's indigenous peoples include the American Indian Policy Institute at the University of Arizona.⁶⁷ Also, The Federal Communications Commission maintains an important task force to reach out to America's indigenous peoples on internet and other topics.⁶⁸ The Federal Trade Commission "...enforces federal consumer protection laws that prevent fraud, deception and unfair business practices. The Commission also enforces federal antitrust laws that prohibit anticompetitive mergers and other business practices that could lead to higher prices, fewer choices, or less innovation.

Whether combatting telemarketing fraud, Internet scams or price-fixing schemes, the FTC's mission is to protect consumers and promote competition."⁶⁹ It has enforcement jurisdiction over a number of internet laws that affect all users and should be considered when one has a complaint about scams online.

Options for Protecting Indigenous Communities from Surveillance Capitalism's Abuses

Beyond the ideas of deleting (or not) one's social media accounts and supporting regulations that counter the business model surveillance capitalism, individual people of local tribal communities and Native people in more urban settings can contribute to a better, less exploitive internet. A major suggestion is that family members, local leaders and even tribal governments and/or programs help educate members of the tribe in using internet services in safe ways. In some cases, perhaps tribal entrepreneurs can help individual households with the wide range of computer uses, especially in getting people online in safe ways in the first place as the internet becomes more available. Tribal computer services are probably well developed in many tribes and can make experienced employees available to members either as a part of their work duties or during off hours as part of tending kinship responsibilities. The kinship system of most tribes has been displaced for generations by the bureaucratic models of a mass society, so reviving kinship responsibilities in the provision of safe computer and internet usage might actually revitalize some of those relationships. Hands-on tutoring in computer usage as younger kinfolk help seniors could well be a powerful experience for both. It's worth a try. Given the poverty most tribal people experienced in the past, social well-being might be greatly improved by reinforcing communal values of "helping" tied to the many functions computers can serve.

For Native American individuals and their relatives on tribal lands, the most important suggestions for appropriate internet use are to protect households from Big Data collectors, programs that monitor their uses of social media and searches, especially. It is important to use caution in providing what should be confidential information while using social media and searching the world wide web. One must keep in mind that huge corporations like Google, with all its associated products and online services, is primarily in the business of gathering the data of individual users when they are not expecting it. The most basic security measures are probably to seek out knowledgeable tribal relatives who know how to deal with that from their own experiences. Not all supposedly knowledgeable computer users are really aware of the simple practices, the “computer and internet literacy” dos and don’ts that can help people avoid the negative outcomes that come from moments of carelessness. Treating computers as dangerous machinery is probably appropriate, given the abuses this paper has discussed. In case you do not have a younger relative or a tribal employee in the family who is aware of the dangers, there are some useful websites that help with basic safe usage of the internet,⁷⁰ good services one might select that emphasize user privacy,⁷¹ sites that help people understand internet policy-making⁷² and information on creating website privacy policies for organizations.⁷³

Conclusion – Popular Sovereignty in The Age of Surveillance Capitalism

The indigenous people of the United States will have to continue their efforts for self-determination and de-colonization in the confusing media environment created by surveillance capitalism for at least the immediate future. While this paper may help educate people about that crisis, it will take the best efforts of citizens, many organizations and levels of government to find appropriate solutions to the problem, since the internet is a global phenomenon that crosses the boundaries of politics, economics and culture. For Native nations in the U.S., surveillance capitalism may seem like another extension of colonialism, where the greed of the few makes victims of the many. Native people have experienced the crisis in internet surveillance from a somewhat isolated position, despite the daily personal use of the internet by so many tribal members. We seem to have little power that can be brought to bear against the looming forces of surveillance capitalism as individuals. It will take cooperative advocacy with other people to make the voices of the People heard in ridding the internet of its worst business practices.

The future of internet use remains uncertain, of course. Who in this author’s generation could have imagined our dependence upon it just thirty years ago? It has much to offer as a servant of The People and their sovereignty but instead, surveillance capitalism is re-making its dominant corporations into our masters. As younger Natives take on the challenges ahead, they can draw upon the experience of our ancestors in the struggle against colonial values. It will be their turn to find solutions that will assure that tribal nations continue in the new cyber society of the future. They must be the ones to develop their own perspectives on the need to have reliable, accurate information available on the internet so that the People can exercise their sovereignty knowledgeably. I would bet on our young people!

¹ “Indian Education and Self-Determination Act,” PL 93-638, 88 Stat. 2203 (1975), codified as amended at 25 U.S.C. Ch 46. <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title25/chapter46&edition=prelim>. Accessed 21 March 2021. The law and its many amendments remain one of the most important legal bases of federal recognition of tribal nations today. Reading it today can be an emotional experience for each generation of Native Americans, since it encapsulates the great struggle for self-determination and sovereignty for indigenous peoples. Of course, there are earlier instances of the exercise of sovereignty by Native people in U.S. legal documents, but this law remains the primer of the relationship between the sovereign peoples of tribal nations and the sovereign people of the United States, one in which Native people are “dual citizens.”

² Use of the metaphor “marketplace of ideas” carries its own baggage, since it connotes idea that some form of “market” is the idea to strive for. The idea that markets are the best way to serve the public good are increasingly suspect, since capitalist markets are now dominated by the neo-liberal reinterpretation of Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” that supposedly creates efficiencies that ultimately serve the public good. The “rising tide raises all boats” metaphor once attributed to John F. Kennedy is another expression of this questionable concept.

³ Conason, Joe, *Big Lies: The Right-Wing Propaganda Machine and How It Distorts the Truth*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin’s Press, 2003. This book is important, since it establishes important themes of the “post-truth” era’s emergence some 20 years ago.

⁴ Zuboff, Shoshana. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York: Hachette Book Group, 2019.

⁵ “12 Social Media Marketing Predictions for 2017,” *Rosy Strategies, Internet Marketing*. Most of us probably recall many predictions about the ways the internet would improve our lives. This citation shows some of the up-beat information designed for web developers. Interestingly, it does also include some critical information on ethics.

⁶ Other values of neo-liberalism, according to an *Investopedia* article, include “...fiscal austerity, deregulation, free trade, privatization and reduction in government spending.” One might include the reduction in the size and scope of government generally in this list. Criticisms of neoliberalism include “... its tendency to endanger democracy, worker’s rights, and sovereign nations’ right to self-determination.” Please see Kenton, Will, “Neoliberalism,” *Investopedia*. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/n/neoliberalism.asp>. Accessed 13 March, 2021.

⁷ Mander, Jerry. “Introduction: Globalization and the Assault on Indigenous Resources,” in *Paradigm Wars: Indigenous Peoples’ Resistance to Globalization*. Jerry Mander and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, eds. International Forum on Globalization. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2006, p. 7. See pages 54-55 for a chart of the impacts of this economic model entitled. “Box A: Eight Impacts of IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs.” These “adjustments” are the “liberalization” part of neo-liberalism.

⁸ McChesney, Robert W. and John Nichols, *The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution that Will Begin the World Again*. New York: Nation Books, 2010, preface, p. xxxiii.

⁹ McChesney, Robert W. *The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010, p. 167

¹⁰ In his section on “Limitations on Professional Journalism,” he clarifies current conditions that make ethical journalism difficult to sustain because of a number of other factors, though they are also related to commercial domination of media. See McChesney, p. 67-77.

¹¹ McChesney, p. 297.

¹² Zuboff, p. 281.

¹³ Even the terms of service agreement of *The Guardian*, the British-based newspaper that helped break the story of the Cambridge Analytical scandal, reveals a predatory relationship with user information as it makes users nearly powerless to control over any information the paper collects about them. See the agreement itself at “Privacy Policy,” *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/help/privacy-policy>. Accessed 15 March 2021.

¹⁴ Zuboff, p. 81. Zuboff provides a lengthy discussion of the ways that examples like Google and Facebook either ignore or evade normal privacy controls in gaining their users’ personal data.

¹⁵ Zuboff, paraphrasing McDonald, Aleecia M. and Lorrie Faith Cranor, “The Cost of Reading Privacy Policies,” *Journal of Policy for the Information Society*, 4, No. 3 (2008).

¹⁶ Zuboff, p. 339.

¹⁷ Lanier, Jaron. *Ten Arguments for Deleting your Social Media Accounts Right Now*. New York: Picador, 2019, p. 3.

¹⁸ Ma, Alexandra and Ben Gilbert, “Facebook understood how dangerous the Trump-linked data firm Cambridge Analytica could be much earlier than it previously said. Here’s Everything that’s happened up until now.” *Business Insider*. Aug. 23, 2019. <https://www.businessinsider.com/cambridge-analytica-a-guide-to-the-trump-linked-data-firm-that-harvested-50-million-facebook-profiles-2018-3?op=1>. Accessed 13 March 2021.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ “Cambridge Analytica Uncovered: Secret Filming Reveals Election Tricks.” Channel 4 British Public Broadcast Service. March 19, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpbeOCKZFfQ>. Accessed 15 March 2021.

²² QAnon. *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QAnon>, Accessed 13 March 2021.

²³ Fernando, Jason. “Business – Profiles - Cambridge Analytica” *Investopedia*. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/cambridge-analytica.asp>. Updated Jan. 24, 2021. Accessed 15 March 2021.

²⁴ Lanier, front inside jacket cover profile.

²⁵ Zuboff, p. 161.

²⁶ “Alphabet Inc. CI I” *MarketWatch*. <https://www.marketwatch.com/investing/stock/GOOG/financials>. Accessed 16 March 2021.

²⁷ Zuboff, p. 93.

²⁸ “Facebook Inc. CI A” *MarketWatch*. <https://www.marketwatch.com/investing/stock/FB/financials>. Accessed 16 March, 2021.

²⁹ Zuckerman, Ethan. “Technology- This is So Much Bigger Than Facebook: Data misuse is a feature, not a bug – it it’s plaguing our entire culture,” *The Atlantic*. March 23, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/03/data-misuse-bigger-than-facebook/556310/>. Accessed 16 March 2021.

³⁰ Zuboff, p. 47.

³¹ “The War of the Worlds (1938 radio drama),” *Wikipedia*. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_War_of_the_Worlds_\(1938_radio_drama\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_War_of_the_Worlds_(1938_radio_drama)). Accessed 21 March 2021.

³² Chinenye Nwabueze, Ebere Okonkwo, Rethinking the Bullet Theory in the Digital Age *International Journal of Media, Journalism and Mass Communications* 2018, 4(2): 1-10. <https://arcjournals.org/international-journal-of-media-journalism-and-mass-communications/volume-4-issue-2/1>. Accessed 12 March 2021.

³³ O’Brien, Chris. “How Social Media and Gamification Fueled QAnon’s ‘Crowdsourced Cult,’” Oct. 9, 2020. <https://venturebeat.com/2020/10/09/how-social-media-and-gamification-fueled-qanons-crowdsourced-cult/>. Accessed 21 March 2021.

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