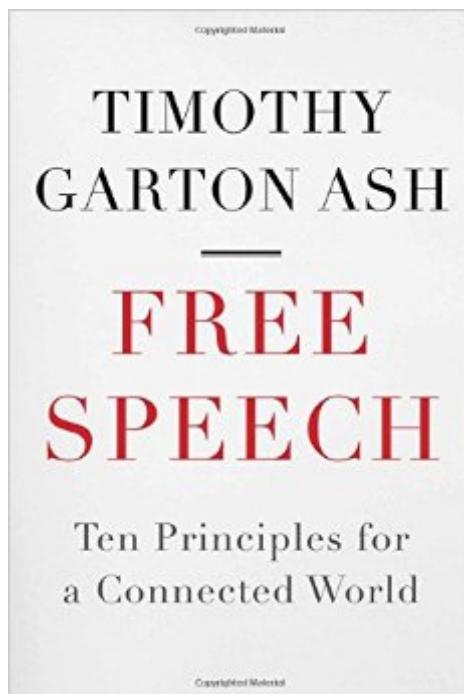


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Free Speech: Ten Principles For A Connected World



Synopsis

One of the great political writers of our time offers a manifesto for global free speech in the digital age. Never in human history was there such a chance for freedom of expression. If we have Internet access, any one of us can publish almost anything we like and potentially reach an audience of millions. Never was there a time when the evils of unlimited speech flowed so easily across frontiers: violent intimidation, gross violations of privacy, tidal waves of abuse. A pastor burns a Koran in Florida and UN officials die in Afghanistan. Drawing on a lifetime of writing about dictatorships and dissidents, Timothy Garton Ash argues that in this connected world that he calls cosmopolis, the way to combine freedom and diversity is to have more but also better free speech. Across all cultural divides we must strive to agree on how we disagree. He draws on a thirteen-language global online project "freespeechdebate.com" conducted out of Oxford University and devoted to doing just that. With vivid examples, from his personal experience of China's Orwellian censorship apparatus to the controversy around Charlie Hebdo to a very English court case involving food writer Nigella Lawson, he proposes a framework for civilized conflict in a world where we are all becoming neighbors.

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Customer Reviews

I am a retired lawyer. I went to a good law school and I studied First Amendment law more thoroughly than most law students do. As a result, I thought I had a pretty good handle on free speech issues. But the landscape has changed considerably since the 1970s and I have come to

realize that I am now poorly equipped to navigate it. If any single book could bring me up to speed, not just as to contemporary free speech issues here in the United States but also around the world, it is FREE SPEECH by Timothy Garton Ash. It is a superb book on free speech in the second decade of the 21st century, and I recommend it highly. The biggest changes affecting free speech since I was in law school have been brought about by the internet and, more broadly, the digital revolution. They "have given unprecedented opportunities for billions of people to publish their views" -- instantaneously. It is impossible for a sovereign nation to control completely the exchange of information (whether viewed as good or bad) across its borders. By virtue of its speed, its global reach, and the longevity of posted content, the internet renders obsolete some traditional principles of American First Amendment law -- such as "the clear and present danger test". Moreover, the internet, together with other quantum-leap developments in communications and data-processing technology, have given rise to wholly new threats to individual privacy, which in turn is a necessary condition for true freedom of expression. I cannot begin to list, much less summarize, all the issues that the book addresses. Indeed, more than a dozen of them would each warrant separate books (as indeed many of them have).

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