

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN THE DIGITAL AGE: WHERE SHOULD WE DRAW THE LINE?

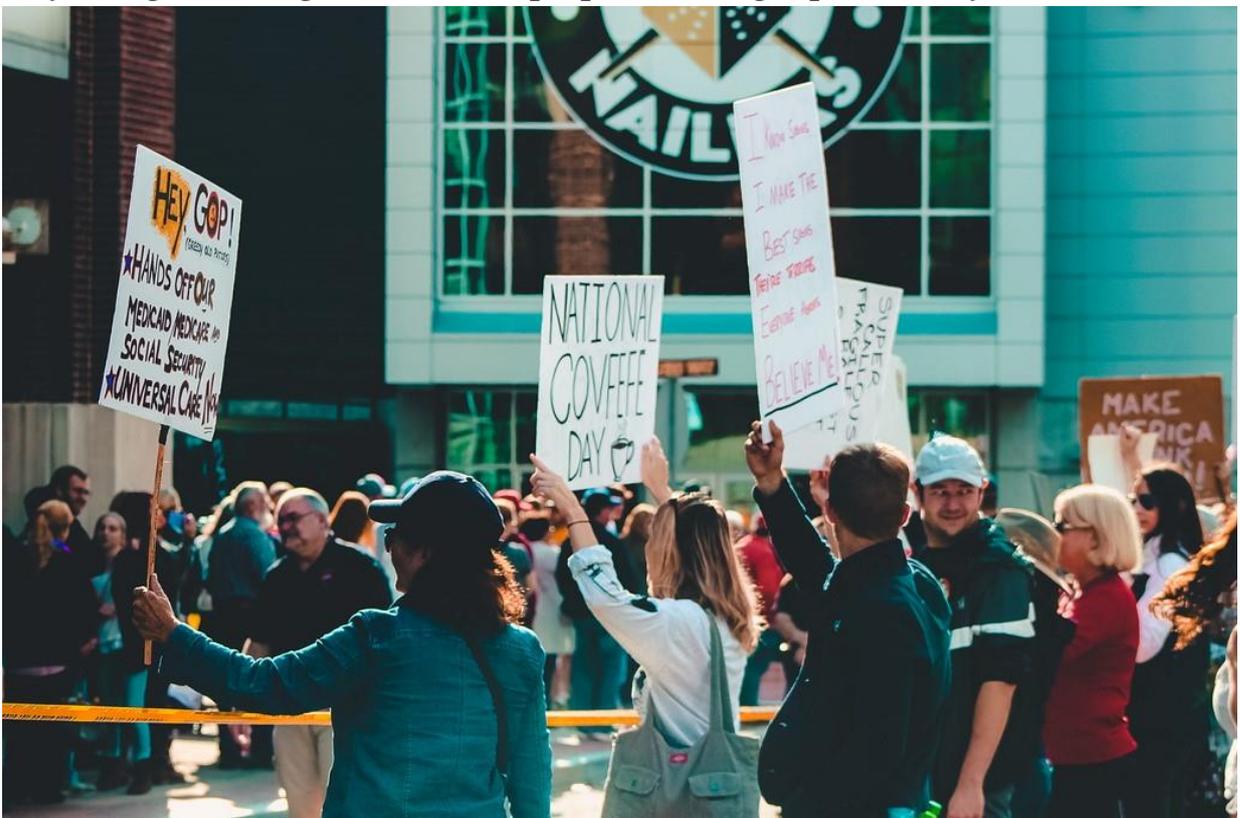
Ibodullayeva Sarvinoz Xurshid qizi

Student of Namangan State University

**Annotation:** This paper studies freedom of speech in the digital era. The internet gives people more chances to share ideas. However, it also spreads hate speech, fake news, and online bullying. Too much control may cause censorship, while no control may harm society. International law says limits must be legal and necessary. The paper shows the need for balance between rights and safety.

**Keywords:** Freedom of speech, Digital age, Social media, Hate speech, Fake news, Human rights, Cyberbullying.

In an increasingly globalized world, this topic becoming more common issue over the years. Freedom of speech has always been considered one of the most important human rights. In the past, this right was mostly connected with newspapers, books, or public speeches. Today, however, most discussions happen online, especially on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram and TikTok. This change has created new opportunities, but also new challenges. These kind of platforms makes our life more easy but against it, a great number of people becoming dependence by it.



On one hand, the internet allows people to express themselves freely. Anyone can share opinions, ideas, or even criticize governments and powerful institutions. This helps democracy grow because voices that were once ignored can now be heard. For example,

many social movements, such as campaigns for gender equality and climate action, became stronger thanks to social media.

Although, complete freedom online can also be dangerous. Hate speech, fake news, and cyberbullying are spreading quickly and harming individuals and societies. For instance, online misinformation about elections or health issues, like during the COVID-19 pandemic, showed how serious this problem can be. Governments and social media companies are now trying to control harmful content, but this raises another important question: Where is the line between protecting people and limiting their freedom?

The debate continues because there is no easy answer. Too much control may lead to censorship, which limits people's rights. Too little control, however, can create chaos and even violence. Therefore, finding a balance between freedom of expression and protection against harm is one of the biggest legal challenges of our time.



Speech that would be deemed a “true threat”: Speech that a person reasonably would perceive as an immediate threat to their physical safety is not protected by the First

Amendment. For example, if a demonstrator yelled at an individual student and threatened a physical assault to the speech, then such speech would not be protected.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, everyone has the right to freedom of thought, speech and beliefs. The consolidation of this right in the Constitution of the country is one of the main guarantees of freedom of speech, since it obliges the State to ensure it. To assess the level of ensuring freedom of speech, we must first determine its content. In Uzbekistan, freedom of speech is ensured by the laws "On Mass Media", "On the principles and guarantees of freedom of information", "On the openness of the activities of State authorities and management" and other regulatory legal acts. The study of legislation shows that Uzbekistan has a legal framework and institutions to ensure freedom of speech.

In Conclusion, freedom of speech is one of the most vital human rights, but in the digital age it faces more new challenges. Social media makes it easy for people to share their views, yet it also allows hate speech and false information to spread quickly. Complete freedom without control may be dangerous, while too many restrictions can turn into censorship. That is why a fair balance is needed between protecting people's rights and keeping society safe. International laws already give guidance, but clear and practical rules



are necessary for today's online world. Finally, human rights, law all the time on the first stage in whole world.

#### REFERENCES:

1. United Nations. (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
2. United Nations. (1966). International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/internationalcovenant-civil-and-political-rights>
3. UN Human Rights Office. (n.d.). Freedom of Expression and Opinion. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/topic/freedom-expression-and-opinion>
4. Freedom House. (2024). Freedom on the Net 2024: The Struggle for Trust Online. Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2024/struggle-trust-online>
5. Amnesty International. (n.d.). Freedom of Expression. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/freedom-of-expression>