**Social media legislation**

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Imagine if the Associated Press’ (AP)—an American non-profit news agency—Twitter account has been hacked and releases a ‘tweet’ falsely stating that there had been two explosions at the White House and the President of the United States had been injured. What will happen afterwards?

Apparently, it is easy to say that the tweet must be taken down at the earliest hour and rectification may be issued. But the damage was done. Nevertheless, this had already happened with Associated Press (AP) and within 2 minutes, the tweet had reached US stock traders and Dow Jones dropped over 143 points (an estimated $136.5 billion loss).

Although all have their pros and cons, however, it is alarming how fast information can spread via social media and how great the impact of believing false information can be.

While challenges to the definition of social media exist, the same is consolidated as a set of internet technologies that allow for interpersonal communication and collaboration, made up of applications that interactively connect people and information. “Information and Trust” are two main factors that are at the same are advantageous and disadvantageous on this forum thereto.

[Watchdogs shouldn’t be used as pressure tools: PM Khan](https://nation.com.pk/27-Feb-2021/watchdogs-shouldn-t-be-used-as-pressure-tools-pm-khan)

Researchers indicate that interpersonal trust is the appropriate category to discuss digital trust. Interpersonal trust may be defined as “expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon”.

Moreover, information quality is a cognitive-based trust factor “associated with observations and perceptions”.

Thus, based on these definitions, ‘credibility’, ‘reputation’, and ‘content’ are considered the three sub-factors for information and trust factors. Credibility concerns the source of information, the reputation of who posted it and the content that has been posted.

Since social media, by definition, uses user-generated content, many applications depend on recommendations to spread information.

[US raise threat level for troops stationed in Iraq after recent Syria strikes](https://nation.com.pk/27-Feb-2021/us-raise-threat-level-for-troops-stationed-in-iraq-after-recent-syria-strikes)

Social media users questioned false rumours far more frequently than confirmed truths, posting refuting false rumours and thus adding validity to confirmed truths, thus users of social media must analyse credibility, reputation and content before sharing or posting any information.

Furthermore, it is time for us as a nation of Pakistan to chalk out proper legislation on social media and to establish a department to cope with the social media sensitive issues that have to do with “terrorism, extremism, hate speech, fake news, posts against esteemed national institutions and national security” by monitoring and mitigating online content.

Social media companies will also be required to set up a physical presence in the country for correspondence and redressal of grievances thereof. Likewise, China has hundreds of thousands of cyber-police, who monitor social media platforms and screen messages that are deemed to be politically sensitive.

[Missile attacks by 'terrorists,’ not fighters: Iraq](https://nation.com.pk/27-Feb-2021/missile-attacks-by-terrorists-not-fighters-iraq)

Words that seem to be sensitive are added to a long list of censored words and are either temporarily banned, or are filtered out from social platforms.

As far as freedom of speech is concerned it is the fundamental right of every citizen of this nation. However, content considered blasphemous to Islam, harming national security, and defaming esteemed institutions of Pakistan must be curbed for a peaceful and affluent Pakistan for our next generations.