

DECLARATION OF DIGITAL RIGHTS



**DESIGN
IT FOR
US**

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PREAMBLE

We the young people who have been addicted, manipulated, and taken advantage of by Big Tech, produce this Declaration of Digital Rights. We are a generation that has grown up almost entirely online. In middle school, many of us received our first smartphones and got on social media. Snapchat and Instagram were the apps of choice that allowed us to communicate outside of school, form community, and connect with people we might not otherwise have ever met. Yet despite the benefits, the darker sides of social media and Big Tech's addictive features hooked us from a young age and kept us scrolling. Ask most young people and it's likely we'll have something to say about our negative experiences with social media. The prevalence of addiction, scams, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, sextortion, and suicide heightened and maintained by Big Tech's addictive algorithms is a major threat to our futures. Big Tech has made it impossible for us to thrive on and offline. Enough is enough.

Now, there's a rapidly growing movement to hold Big Tech accountable, but the movement for responsible tech doesn't always consider the voices and perspectives of young people. As a result, our movement lacks a unified narrative. You hear from parents, innovators, and executives who will tell you what they think is best for young people. But we deserve to shape our digital future. Social media, digital tools, and AI — they are all part of our daily lives. Yet those who aim to shape these tools and products in the name of our safety and privacy have consistently neglected to meaningfully incorporate our voices. Young people's mental health is at an all time low, social media usage is at all time highs, and platforms are publicly doubling down on making decisions they know will harm users.

So what can we do?

We launched our first-of-its-kind coalition in March 2023. Since then, we've fought to successfully advance policies at the local, state, and federal levels. We released a policy platform for social media in 2023, and again in 2024 to meet the expansive growth of AI. We're here to chart a path for what many young people want and deserve as we navigate the bright benefits and dark corners of our ever-evolving digital ecosystem. We're taking on Big Tech.

A mission to define the narrative of a generation.

In the fall of 2024, our coalition embarked upon a tour of college campuses from coast to coast. We made it our goal to meet young people where we are and speak with as many of our peers as we could about an issue that we are all navigating in real-time. We hosted interactive panel events with impactful speakers like Nobel Laureate Maria Ressa, Meta whistleblowers Frances Haugen and Arturo Bejar, FTC Director, Bureau of Consumer Protection Sam Levine, and Digital Culture Analyst Jules Terpak. We were joined by digital creators and activists, members of the press, and youth technologists who all led our attendees in exploring what we deserve out of the tools we use every day.

At each of our events, we used unique polling to define in detail what our generation believes we need and deserve. We asked our peers what they valued, what isn't working, and challenged them to consider what a better online world can look and feel like. Based on hundreds of individual responses, we represent a view of our generation's outlook, and we hope that this will serve as a roadmap for the generation of youth-facing policy led by young people and adults alike.



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THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES REPRESENT THE IDEALS OF OUR GENERATION. OUR DEVELOPMENT AS CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS, TEENS, AND YOUNG ADULTS IS FUNDAMENTALLY INTERTWINED WITH TECHNOLOGY. AS A RESULT, WE KNOW INTIMATELY THE BENEFITS AND DOWNFALLS OF SUCH TOOLS WE USE DAILY. OUR EXPERIENCE IS EXPERTISE, AND WE BELIEVE IT CAN HELP US CAPTURE A BETTER FUTURE ON AND OFFLINE.

1. Right to privacy

Social media platforms collect endless amounts of data on us. Young people have the right to scroll without Big Tech listening to them on every corner of the internet and selling off that data to the highest bidder. Companies should be responsible for designing social media and AI products that consistently protect and preserve our personal data. Privacy must come before profit.

2. Right to safety

There are so many features that social media uses to keep us hooked. Some of those features have proven to be detrimental to young people's mental health or put our safety at risk. Like seatbelts in cars, it is our right as consumers that companies build their products with us in mind. We demand they proactively keep us safe from their harmful products and business practices.

3. Right to not be experimented on

Social media and technology companies are constantly rolling out new features on their platforms and products. They use young people as test subjects. Young people are no longer the guinea pigs to be experimented on. Young people have a right to not be tested on by Big Tech without allowing us to provide informed consent.

4. Right to agency

Social media can be a beautiful place. It links us to people all over the world, brings us closer to community, and shapes our understanding of the world. But with power comes responsibility. Young people have the right to options provided by platforms that allow us to take back control over our digital lives so we can minimize the bad and maximize the good.

5. Right to user controls

Suggested posts in feed, new shop features, algorithms, endless scrolling, and never-ending push notifications. Whether you like them or hate them, young people have the right to switch the most harmful features on or off, whenever we choose.



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6. Right to delete

As consumers of digital products, young people have a right to permanently delete our own content and leave social media platforms that are not working for us. Social media platforms should uphold that right, delete our information, and leave us alone. The right to our personal information is solely ours, not social media companies'.

7. Right to choice

One or more social media platforms may not be working for young people. Young people have the right to choose from an array of products, apps, or sites we want to use as alternatives, not just whatever the biggest Big Tech players choose for us.

8. Right to a seat at the table

Increasingly, it seems like decisions about young people's digital lives are being made by stakeholders, lawmakers, and communities that don't represent them. Young people have a right to a seat at the decision-maker's table.

9. Right to connect

One of the most valuable parts of social media is the ability to connect with our friends and family, and build community. When Big Tech clogs up our feeds with targeted ads and body-comparison content, it's antithetical to everything we want out of social media. We have a right to build vital relationships online that are not mutually exclusive with a forced acceptance that our identities are Big Tech's revenue stream.

10. Right to transparency

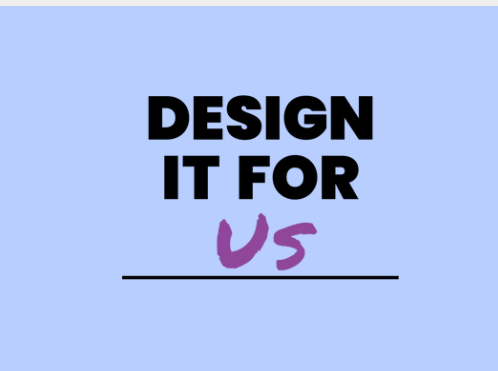
Big Tech has thrived off of the presumption that they are above the law. They leverage their power as private companies to profit from our pain, by design, while shielding themselves in opacity. Like any other public goods, we as consumers have a right to fair and transparent products that are responsible to the user and the law, not the shareholders nor the CEOs.

11. Right to accountability

Young people are stepping up to establish innovative legislative solutions that address our needs. Yet, at every turn, Big Tech blocks meaningful legislation to protect their own monetary interests. We demand that our government be accountable to their constituents, not the companies that pay to manipulate legislation.

12. Right to be protected from manipulation

Like never before, Big Tech has relentlessly leveraged innovation against the best interests of users, manipulating our data and weaponizing our well being against us. Instead of crafting design features meant to support healthy engagement, Big Tech companies have wielded their unchecked power to addict us and harm us while publicly saying otherwise. We have a right to be shielded from these insidious patterns of abuse.



ABOUT

We're Design It For Us - a youth-led coalition fighting for key policy reforms to protect kids, teens, and young adults online through the mobilization of youth activists, leaders, and voices. We're led by two Co-Chairs, a Core Team of young people between the ages of 18 and 26, and a membership of 200 young people ages 14-26 representing more than 30 US states and more than 13 countries, and counting!