
Think *Your* Privacy is Threatened?

Segment Length: 4:40 minutes

Lesson Description:

The ongoing debate about internet privacy in the United States seems like a minor concern compared with internet privacy in China. But is the United States destined to become like China?

Concepts & Key Terms:

Mao Zedong (also written as Mao Tse-tung) – leader of the Chinese communist revolution, Mao established the People’s Republic of China, which he ruled from 1949 until his death in 1976.

Repression – act of controlling, repressing, subduing, or limiting someone or something by force or exercise of authority.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- list the components of China’s social credit score.
- discuss China’s social credit score.
- explain the reasons China’s government monitors internet use.
- assess the impact of the Chinese government monitoring its citizens’ internet use.
- hypothesize the future of United States citizens’ internet freedom.

Preview Activity and Questions:

Use Think, Pair, Share to have students answer A, B, or C below:

- A. Should our government be able to track what websites we look at? Should the government monitor our social media posts? Explain your answers.
- B. Should your parents monitor your internet use and see what you read and write on social media? Should the government?
- C. What are some similarities and differences between government in the United States and government in China?

Viewing Guide:

We recommend that teachers show the video segment twice: once to allow students to view the video and focus on the issues presented, and once to allow them time to complete the viewing guide. After they complete the viewing guide, allow students a few minutes to work in pairs sharing and verifying answers.

Answers to Viewing Guide

1. trust score
2. Cultural Revolution
3. repression
4. banning
5. predictive

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Viewing Guide

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____

Teacher _____

Directions: As you watch the video, fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. Purchase history, political leanings, and social interactions would be used to calculate a person's _____.
2. She survived the Great Leap Forward, the Great Famine, the _____.
3. The _____ is not over. The control of people's mind, people's mouth, people's pen, never stopped.
4. And now, another step, more subtle than just _____ things. The state will monitor what you say in social media and assign you a social credit score that will tell them how trustworthy you are.
5. Los Angeles Police now practice _____ policing. They pay a company called Palentir to analyze social media, trace people's ties to gang members, and predict the likelihood that someone may commit a crime.

Now, take a few moments to reflect on the video and answer the questions below:

The Chinese government says that monitoring what people look at on the internet and post in social media and assigning them a social credit score will allow the “trustworthy to roam everywhere under heaven while making it hard for the discredited to take a single step.”

1. Would you support or oppose a policy like that? _____ Explain _____

2. John Stossel said: “In America every week on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, I challenge people in power. I say these things and no one punishes me. So far.” Why did he say “So far”?

Discussion and Analysis:

1. When you are on the internet, how much privacy do you think you have? How much should you have?
2. Shouldn't the government monitor internet use for people doing bad things? Isn't that in our best interests? Explain.
3. If you have nothing to hide, why would you mind the government tracking what you do on the internet? Isn't government just trying to make us safe? Many places have red light cameras, speed cameras, bus lane cameras. Don't they help? Shouldn't the government do everything it can to improve our safety?
4. John Stossel tells Li Schoolland, "the repression in China is over." When you see businesses developing in China and many Chinese people being lifted out of poverty, don't you think that, too? Do you think that is a common perception? Explain.
5. What is a social credit score in China? What is the Chinese government trying to encourage people to do?
6. If the LAPD can predict the likelihood that someone will commit a crime, what, if anything, could it do with that information?
7. If our government engages in predictive policing, does that mean we will eventually have something like China's social credit score in our country? Why or why not?
8. What are some similarities between predictive policing and the social credit score? What are some differences?
9. Why has the phrase "Long Live the Emperor" been censored in China? How might people use this phrase in a subversive way? Why does China's government want to stamp out this talk?
10. How do people gain good or bad reputations in a free country such as the United States? What happens if a person or company cheats or deceives others, or sells poor quality products? How can information about trustworthiness spread without the government or anyone else organizing it?
11. Li Schoolland said, "After I came to the United States, I thought 'oh, no more politics. I'm in the land of the free.'" Why might politics be more important in China than in a freer country such as the U.S.? Why does Li see politics as mostly a bad thing?
12. What message does Li have for the American people? Should we be concerned?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. The government says this will allow the "trustworthy to roam everywhere under heaven while making it hard for the discredited to take a single step."
2. The repression is not over. The control of people's minds, people's mouth, people's pen, never stopped.

3. Los Angeles police pay a company called Palentir...to predict the likelihood that someone may commit a crime.
4. Yes, we do want to know who we can trust when we do business. But those are market behaviors. We don't want the government to get involved.
5. I think they are giving government too much power.
6. In America, on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, I criticize my government all the time. No one punishes me. So far.

Quotes for Discussion:

Social media is changing the way we communicate and the way we are perceived, both positively and negatively. Every time you post a photo, or update your status, you are contributing to your own digital footprint and personal brand. – Amy Jo Martin

I can't in good conscience allow the U.S. government to destroy privacy, internet freedom and basic liberties for people around the world with this massive surveillance machine they're secretly building. – Edward Snowden

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment. – Ralph Waldo Emerson

I believe there are more instances of the abridgement of the freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations. – James Madison

The user in China wants the same thing that any internet user wants—privacy in conversations, maximum access to information, and the ability to speak their minds online. – Rebecca MacKinnon

It is very necessary for the educated youth to go to the countryside and undergo reeducation by the poor peasants. – Mao Zedong

To read too many books is harmful. – Mao Zedong

Not to have a correct political point of view is like having no soul. – Mao Zedong

Activities:

1. Have students complete the Exit Ticket (included at the end of this guide).
2. Research the Great Leap Forward and the Great Famine. What were they? When and why did they happen? How were the two related? What were the consequences of the famine?
3. Research Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution. Who was Mao? What was the Cultural Revolution? Why and how did Mao launch it? What were the consequences?

4. Write an essay or journal entry from the perspective of a Chinese person who has to decide how to behave in a country that tracks what you read, who you spend time with, and other information. How, if at all, is the social credit score system affecting your life? (Don't worry; this writing assignment is safe from the censors!)
5. Find a news article or TV news clip about what the LAPD or another police department does with the data it accumulates through predictive policing. Choose from the following activities:
 - A. Summarize the article or news clip.
 - B. Write a persuasive essay arguing for or against predictive policing.
6. List some ways the government gathers and uses our data for crime-fighting or other purposes. Research and list some legal restrictions on the gathering of this information. Is our privacy adequately protected? Explain.
7. Write a persuasive essay in which you explain the arguments for and against the government monitoring citizens' internet and social media activity and take a position on such monitoring.
8. Consider the ways you modify your behavior to maintain a good reputation. Compare and contrast these with the ways a Chinese citizen might change his or her actions to maintain a good social credit score.
9. Hold a classroom debate about government monitoring of the internet or social media, social credit scores, or predictive policing.
10. Read and write a book report on *Animal Farm*, *Brave New World*, or *1984*.

Name

Admit One

Why do some people support government monitoring of the internet and social media?

What I think:

Admit One

EXIT TICKET

Name

Admit One

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What I think:

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