



Google's pro-Muslim algorithms

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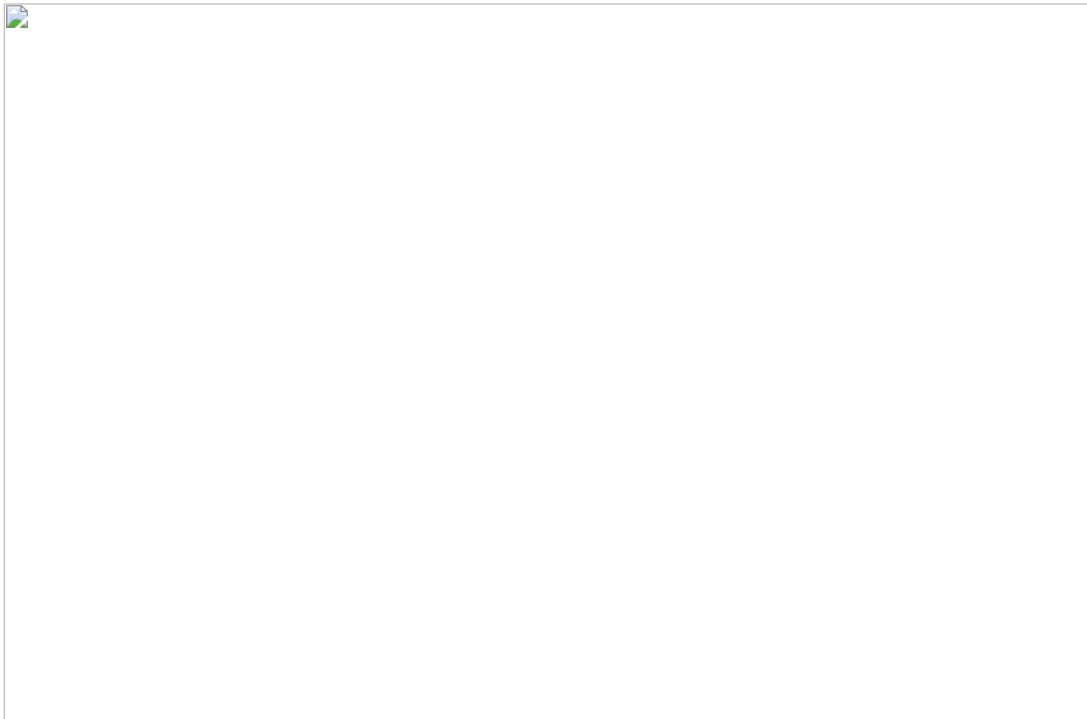
Back in 2007, the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) lobbied the United Nations to impose worldwide blasphemy laws. Even though the resolution enjoyed the support of many non-OIC members and even though it appealed to Western liberal thinking by arguing that “unrestricted and disrespectful freedom of opinion creates hatred and is contrary to the spirit of peaceful dialogue and promotion of multiculturalism,” the OIC’s resolution ultimately was a failure.

By – Anne-Christine Hoff

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Today, such a far-reaching bid has been attempted again – this time with better results for the Islamists. After many years, Texas imam Omar Suleiman has successfully lobbied Google into changing the algorithm used to find results on Muslim-related issues. According to the state-run Turkish news Anadolu Agency, Google’s results about queries related to Islam or Muslims in the past produced “what many criticized as propaganda from hate groups” and “alleged disinformation.” In contrast, now “Google’s first page results for searches of terms such as ‘jihad,’ ‘sharia’ and ‘taqiyya’ return mostly reputable explanations of Islamic concepts.”

According to Suleiman himself, in an article titled “Google Is Doing Irreparable Harm to Muslims,” for the last few years, the Dallas imam and his team have been publishing reports on controversial topics in Islam in order to influence the outcome of the search engine. In July of 2018, after Google agreed to change its search engine results, the world’s most popular search engine issued a statement to the Anadolu Agency that “it does not seek to remove content from its platform simply because it is unsavory or unpopular, but [that it] does its best to prevent hate speech from appearing.”

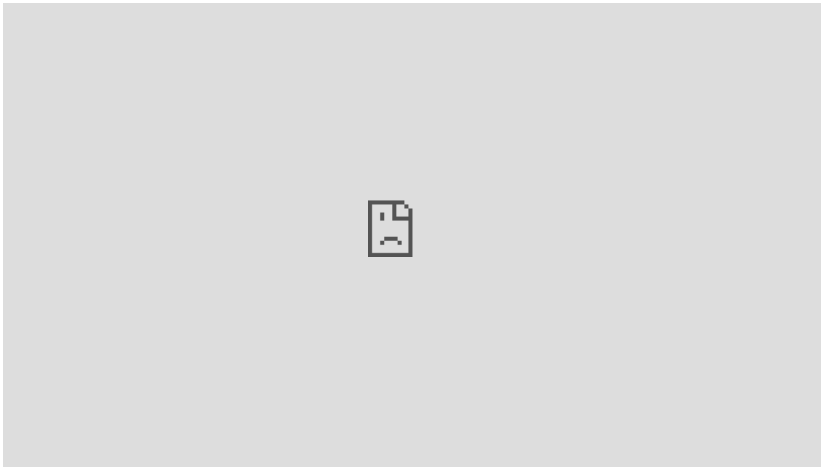


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In theory, such a bid to contain hate speech is all to the good. However, in practice, often such manipulation of Google’s search results amounts to Google-led control of the narrative that is

permissible to have on Islam and Muslim-related issues. We have seen these tactics used before. For example, the search results related to Tommy Robinson's imprisonment over the summer: Despite Robinson's supporters collecting over 600,000 signatures from around the world petitioning for his release, Google's search results on Robinson's case were heavily slanted toward the sharia-compliant British media. Even today, a quick search on Tommy Robinson turns up links to websites that call Robinson "a phony martyr," "a hateful hero," and someone who "sows divisions" despite the many conservative voices such as Raheem Kassam and YouTubers Red Pill Phil and Sargon of Akkad who argue otherwise.

According to the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, every human has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. In contrast, in many streams of Islamic thought, any form of cursing, questioning, or annoying God, Muhammad, or anything sacred in Islam constitutes blasphemy. According to sharia, leaving Islam and expressing contempt for Islam and the religious conversion of Muslims from Islam are prohibited. According to a 2011 Pew Report, 20 Muslim-majority nations have laws declaring apostasy from Islam as illegal and a criminal offense. In a 2013 Pew Survey Report, based on international surveys of religious attitudes, more than 50% of the Muslim population in six out of 49 Muslim-majority countries supported the death penalty for any Muslim who leaves Islam.



The globalization of Western society has created a distinct clash of cultures. Even though Google claims that it will not silence views that are unpopular or unsavory, its tampering with the algorithm at all is proof enough that the platform itself is not free, nor is our speech on it. My fear is that the suppression of free speech will create a world like that described in Milton's *Areopagitica*: "We boast our light; but if we look not wisely on the run itself, it smites us into darkness."

For the last fifty or so years, the civil rights movement has made headway on race-related civil rights issues. To my mind, the next frontier of civil rights should be the right to diversity of thought. Such a right should trump all other concerns, including Google's and YouTube's concerns with being sharia-compliant.

Source: americanthinker.com

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