



# Alternative Social Networks Respond to Mark Zuckerberg Hearings



Alex Wong/Getty Images

by CHARLIE NASH **15**

The founders and CEOs of several popular alternative social networks, including Minds, Gab, and BitChute, have revealed to Breitbart Tech their thoughts on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's two congressional hearings this week.

## **Minds**

*Minds is an open source social network that is frequently used as an **alternative** to Facebook.*

“Privacy is a fallacy on Facebook,” declared Minds Founder Bill Ottman in a statement to Breitbart Tech. “Facebook’s testimony to Congress today spoke to their current scandals surrounding data privacy, surveillance, censorship, and transparency. As proactive and idealistic as he claims to be, Zuckerberg did not offer a single foundational change in operating procedure, only surface-level distraction. The true path to solving these issues would be to opt all users out of data collection by default, open-source all their software and implement the zero-knowledge principle with regards to their ability to access personal data.”

“The obvious reason they don’t do this is that their revenue is reliant upon the exploitation of user data, not any sort of a sustainable or ethical model. At the heart of Facebook is a complete and utter lack of transparency and commitment to put users first,” he continued. “There is no redemption at this point, and it’s time for people to vote with their energy online to empower new social networks that respect freedom from the ground up.”

Ottman continued to claim that “Users don’t own their content on Facebook.”

“As one Senator observed, if, as Facebook claims, users own their data, then why aren’t they compensated at all of the \$40 billion a year in ad revenue generated with that data? Clearly Facebook has a greater degree of ownership when, by default, your data is shared with a number of parties without consent immediately upon signing up,” he declared. “If people had any sort of real ownership of their data, then there would be a share of the billions that Facebook makes off users given back. Additionally, complete transparency is essential as to who is using your data, including corporations, individuals, and governments. Facebook does monetize user data. Regardless of what Zuckerberg says.”

“Facebook sells Targeted Ads — the only way to target an ad is by mining user data and knowing exactly their interests, demographics and comprehensive psychometric analysis. This third-degree of separation that Facebook claims is really just semantics. Facebook has built its empire by selling user data in the form of targeted advertising without consent,” Ottman explained. “They may not provide a data-dump for third-parties (still to be proven that this has not occurred), but they do monetize data to the tune of \$40 billion dollars last year alone. Does FB Sell User data? Yes.”

“A couple questions, especially from Senator Cruz, honed in on political bias in content policy enforcement and the blurry terms around what is and what is not acceptable speech. However, the general answer from Facebook seemed to communicate that more AI was going to be developed to combat these issues along with an army of content patrollers,” the Minds founder noted. “While it is true AI, if transparent, can help provide certain benefits to social technology, it is not a foundational solution in itself and also poses many dangers if let loose- as is the case now with unwarranted bans skyrocketing. Content patrollers can certainly be useful for policing illegal content, but beyond that they are only as beneficial as the terms of the site are. The emerging scientific consensus about censorship of law-abiding content is that it actually amplifies violence and extremism for a variety of different reasons.”

In conclusion, Ottman pointed out that “no one on the panel mentioned the catastrophic decline in organic reach on the platform where

publishers can now only reach 3-5% of their own followers due to the secretive newsfeed algorithm.”

“This is easily one of the greatest abuses to the community. Creators sign up and invest in building audiences under one impression, and suddenly the restrictions are implemented that limit the very ability to communicate with that audience,” he concluded. “That’s the opposite of social.”

## **BitChute**

*BitChute is a peer-to-peer video hosting website and network which is frequently used as an alternative to YouTube.*

“Zuckerberg is getting squeezed by the left for letting Trump win the election,” claimed BitChute Founder and CEO Ray Vahey to Breitbart Tech. “He had to censor conservatives, or face repercussions as an accomplice to ‘Russian hacking’. The right is falling for the trap of begging for more government regulation of Facebook which will only lead to more censorship.”

“What we need is more competition, more alternatives, more freedom,” he expressed. “Not more government control.”

## **Gab**

*Gab is a user-funded microblogging social network which is frequently used as a free speech [alternative](#) to Twitter.*

“Facebook plans to have 20,000 people reviewing content for ‘hate speech’ by year end, yet when pressured Zuckerberg could not define what they consider ‘hate speech’ to be,” noted Gab CEO Andrew Torba to Breitbart Tech. “He also claimed that the company hopes artificial intelligence will improve over the next five years to automatically remove ‘hate speech’ as soon as it is posted. It is clear that Facebook will continue down the path of censorship in the years to come.”

“The fragmentation of the social web is starting to accelerate and will continue to do so as people seek out alternative platforms that share their values and put people first,” he continued, adding, “Gab has always and will always support the core values of free expression, individual liberty, and the free flow of information online. On Facebook you are the product being sold. On Gab we sell a software product to our users and give them full control over their account data.”