



THANKS FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP

ADAMS CABLE SERVICE

Blue Ridge PenTeleData

Service Electric Service Electric
CABLE TV & COMMUNICATIONS

BCAP NewsClips

July 31, 2019

NBC Philadelphia
[Montgomery County Teen 'Bugha' Claims Fortnight World Cup, \\$3-Million Prize](#)

Nobody likes auto-playing video or sites that keep scrolling away infinitely when you're just trying to reach the bottom of the page. But you probably don't hate either "feature" as much as Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), who introduced a bill today to ban these and other "exploitative" practices.

Times Leader
[Our View: Luzerne County cyber attack a matter of national security](#)

While the ban on infinite scroll is the most amusing part, the proposed SMART Act (PDF), a backronym for the Social Media Addiction Reduction Technology Act, seeks to ban online companies from using a wide array of tactics that "exploit human psychology or brain physiology" to reduce user choice.

Forbes
[Protecting The Internet From Government Censorship Is Key To The Future Of Global Trade](#)

The SMART Act is really trying to target dark patterns: interfaces deliberately designed to trick, confuse, or pull a user deeper into something than they otherwise would be. Those designs, Hawley argues, fuel social media addiction. The business model for social media companies is to "capture as much of their users' attention as possible," the bill says, and the interfaces platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat use to exploit the human brain "interfere with the free choice of users."

GoErie
[Netflix's 2019 Originals: A Comprehensive Guide](#)

Infinite scroll and auto refill are on the no-no list because they eliminate "natural stopping points," defined as a process that loads and displays more content into a feed than the typical user scrolls through in three minutes. Same goes for autoplaying media files, which the bill would ban except in the case of pre-made playlists or audio-only streaming on services such as Pandora or Spotify.

Associated Press
[Pence is heading to Pennsylvania again to tout Trump's trade pact](#)

Hawley's bill also seeks to ban social media gamification, including "badges and other awards linked to engagement with the platform," such as the emoji rewards Snapchat users earn for Snapstreaks.

Harrisburg Patriot-News
[Kane, once attorney general, about to be released from jail](#)

The technique for compliance as outlined in the bill, however, seems to be to annoy consumers into abandoning their social accounts altogether.

NJ.com

Who won Tuesday's Democratic presidential debate? Experts grade the candidates

As described in the text, social media companies would have to limit users to 30 minutes of use per day by default. Users would be allowed to choose their own time limits for daily and weekly use, but companies would have to reset that time limit to half an hour every single month, as well as providing "conspicuous pop-up" displays at least once every 30 minutes showing how much time you have spent using a service in the past day, across all devices.

Hawley, whose website features an automatically playing video loop in the header image, said in a statement that the tech sector has "embraced a business model of addiction."

"Too much of the 'innovation' in this space is designed not to create better products, but to capture more attention by using psychological tricks that make it difficult to look away," he added.

This is not Hawley's first attempt to regulate potentially addictive mechanics employed in the digital sector. In May, he introduced a bill that would ban loot boxes in video games, saying such microtransactions exist to exploit children.— ***ArsTechnica***

