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**Social Regulation of Digital Technology:
Facilitating Technological Moderation Through
"Community Unplug Together" (CUT) Laws**

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During the Jewish tradition of Shabbat, adherents observe a day of rest from work to devote time to spiritual activity, contemplation, and family. As part of this tradition, followers abstain from using technology for the duration of the Sabbath, which occurs from sunset on Friday to sundown on Saturday. This practice is simultaneously radical and reconciliatory in its approach to the Janus-faced pleasures of modern technology. Instead of all-out rejection of modern life, the practice asks adherents "to set apart one day a week for freedom" as "the solution of mankind's most vexing problem will not be found in renouncing technical civilization, but in attaining some degree of independence of it."[1] For technologists, civic leaders, and policymakers, the practice of Shabbat provides a valuable model of a human group successfully moderating their relationship with technology. For the narrow analytical purposes of this paper, Shabbat is a notable example of the exercise of socially coordinated and communal sovereignty. Simply put, moderation and regulation are more manageable through the united action of a group. The costs of technological disengagement, particularly from technology that facilitates social interaction, are lower when standards of behavior are coordinated. Conversely, defecting from group commitments carries little reward: communication technology (in particular) loses its value when there are no users to communicate with. Social solidarity binds group members to a common end, and the shared nature of the group's commitment facilitates coordination around activities compliant with the group's intentions. Americans today are spending an ever-increasing amount of their waking lives staring at screens (upwards of ten hours a day pre-Covid).[2] At the same time, Americans are expressing discontent with this

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[1] ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL, THE SABBATH (FSG Classics ed. 2005).
[2] The Total Audience Report: Q1 2016, NIELSEN, https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/report/2016/the-total-audience-report-q1-2016/#

phenomenon and are suffering from measurable declines in their well-being.[3] It is incumbent upon policymakers to consider the regulatory tools that social groups and institutions require to regain agency and control over digital technology. This article proposes several possible policies, stylized as "Community Unplug Together" (CUT) laws.

An elegant and deceivingly simple problem sits at the core of our contemporary policy discussions about the appropriate relationship between humans and digital technology: humans claim to want to reduce or better manage their relationship with technology, yet—year after year—the amount of time humans spend engaging with digital technology only seems to increase. This problem, in which consenting and willful decisions to engage with technology simultaneously engender a feeling of powerlessness and submission, is neither structurally novel nor politically intractable. Many dominant policy discussions have conceived of this problem as a crisis of addiction and have constructed policy solutions drawn from fields of study like behavioral economics. This article argues that to effect a meaningful change in our troubled status quo, a different approach that focuses more directly on social coordination and social institutions is necessary. When individual users are forced to make isolated decisions about the terms of their engagement with digital technology, the aggregated effect of these decisions forms a social structure in which defection is prohibitively costly. This social structure explains how users can individually claim they want to reduce their usage of digital technology while collectively acting in a way contrary to this wish. Identifying promising regulatory approaches to facilitate social agency over technology in afflicted communities and institutions is the core project of this paper.

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[3] Hunt Allcott et al., *The Welfare Effects of Social Media*, 110 AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW 629–676 (2020), https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/10.1257/aer.20190658; K.C. Madhav, Shardulendra Prasad Sherchand & Samendra Sherchan, *Association between screen time and depression among US adults*, 8 PREVENTIVE MEDICINE REPORTS 67–71 (2017).

I.   Assessing the Harms of Digital Technology and Social Media

The study of the effects of digital technology—particularly social media—on the well-being of users is a growing field. While social media offers several clear and intuitive benefits to users which require no explanation, scholars and citizens alike have become increasingly aware of its downsides. For example, in a randomized study from 2018, Facebook users were assigned to deactivate their Facebook accounts four weeks before that year's midterms elections. Researchers found that the randomly selected group increased their subjective well-being, increased offline activity, increased socializing with family and friends, reduced factual news knowledge *and* polarization, and reduced their Facebook use persistently post-experiment.[4] Social media usage, particularly among youth, has been tied to fatigue, anxiety, and depression.[5] Screen time more generally has been associated with depression.[6]

These findings do not negate other studies that present a rosier view of social media. Studies have found positive effects on user well-being through increased social capital and bonding.[7] However, it is important to note that upsides and downsides may concentrate and manifest themselves differently across varying social institutions, ages, sexes, and economic

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[4] Hunt Allcott et al., *The Welfare Effects of Social Media*, 110 AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW 629–676 (2020), https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/10.1257/aer.20190658; Brooke Auxier, 64% OF AMERICANS SAY SOCIAL MEDIA HAVE A MOSTLY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING IN THE U.S. TODAY PEW RESEARCH CENTER (2020), https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/15/64-of-americans-say-social-media-have-a-mostly-negative-effect-on-the-way-things-are-going-in-the-u-s-today/
[5] Amandeep Dhir et al., *Online social media fatigue and psychological wellbeing—A study of compulsive use, fear of missing out, fatigue, anxiety and depression*, 40 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT 141–152 (2018).
[6] K.C. Madhav, Shardulendra Prasad Sherchand & Samendra Sherchan, *Association between screen time and depression among US adults*, 8 PREVENTIVE MEDICINE REPORTS 67–71 (2017).
[7] Dragana Ostic et al., *Effects of Social Media Use on Psychological Well-Being: A Mediated Model*, 12 FRONT. PSYCHOL. 678766 (2021).

classes. For example, baby boomers who have established offline habits, friends, and social communities may have healthier relationships with social media than teenage girls, a demographic which seems to experience substantial harm. Nevertheless, without advocating for Luddism, there is sufficient evidence that the serious costs of digital technology have not been appropriately cognized, moderated, or regulated by society.

Large numbers of Americans report having a fraught relationship with social media. While 67% of Americans believe that social media has been overall good for them personally, 58% of users suggest social media has been bad for society.[8] In an NBC poll, 82% of social media users claimed that social media wastes time instead of using our time well. 48% of users have attempted to limit the amount of time they spend on their smartphones, and 42% have tried to limit or quit social media usage in the last year or two.[9] Yet, the amount of screen-time users of digital technology partake in has continued to increase, with the Covid pandemic proving to be an additional catalyst of this trend.[10] A pre-pandemic Nielsen report stated that Americans spend an average of 10 hours and 31 minutes a day staring at a screen. In a survey conducted in February of 2021, half of the respondents stated they spend between five and six hours a day on their smartphones alone.[11]

While broad assessments of individual well-being and harm are helpful, it is imperative to assess the effects of digital technology within the context of varying social and economic

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[8] Brooke Auxier, 64% OF AMERICANS SAY SOCIAL MEDIA HAVE A MOSTLY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING IN THE U.S. TODAY PEW RESEARCH CENTER (2020), https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/15/64-of-americans-say-social-media-have-a-mostly-negative-effect-on-the-way-things-are-going-in-the-u-s-today/

[9] https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/5794861-19093-NBCWSJ-March-Poll-4-5-19-Release.html

[10] K.C. Madhav, Shardulendra Prasad Sherchand & Samendra Sherchan, *Association between screen time and depression among US adults*, 8 PREVENTIVE MEDICINE REPORTS 67–71 (2017); Daria J Kuss & Olatz Lopez-Fernandez, *Internet addiction and problematic Internet use: A systematic review of clinical research*, 6 WJP 143 (2016)

[11] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1224510/time-spent-per-day-on-smartphone-us/

institutions. Schools are frequently cited as an institution of concern. Adolescents—particularly young girls—are experiencing increasing rates of depression and anxiety, both of which have been linked to social media usage.[12] Within schools themselves, social media can be a source of distraction, conflict, and an accelerant of the standard trials and tribulations of adolescence.[13] More broadly, screen-time among children has been linked to obesity, irregular speech, behavioral problems, impaired academic performance, violence, and a deficit of time for play.[14]

Outside of the classroom, scholars have linked social media use to growing political conflict and polarization.[15] These phenomena most obviously affect the well-being of political institutions, but hyperpolarization also seeps into other social institutions: families, neighborhoods, and workplaces.

Another obvious site of concern is the workplace. For information workers especially, interaction with digital technology not only consumes vast swaths of the workday but also allows the duties of the workday to seep into hours of the day traditionally reserved for rest and leisure.[16] The experience of the modern information worker is well captured by a Pew interview with economics professor Carolyn Heinrich. She writes, "If someone would have told me I was going to spend 10-12 hours in front of a computer most days to do my job, I would never have chosen my current occupation, but it seems like most jobs these days require constant computer

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[12] Jean M Twenge, *Why increases in adolescent depression may be linked to the technological environment*, 32 CURRENT OPINION IN PSYCHOLOGY 89–94 (2020).

[13] Teun Siebers et al., *Social Media and Distraction: An Experience Sampling Study among Adolescents*, 25 MEDIA PSYCHOLOGY 343–366 (2022).

[14] C.N.P. Jill Christensen, CHILDREN AND TOO MUCH SCREEN TIME MAYO CLINIC HEALTH SYSTEM (2021), https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/children-and-screen-time (last visited May 22, 2022).

[15] Hunt Allcott et al., *The Welfare Effects of Social Media*, 110 AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW 629–676 (2020), https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/10.1257/aer.20190658;

[16] Tammy Katsabian, IT'S THE END OF WORKING TIME AS WE KNOW IT: NEW CHALLENGES TO THE CONCEPT OF WORKING TIME IN THE DIGITAL REALITY, 65 McGill L.J. 379 (2020)

use."[17] As one might expect, Americans with higher education, higher income, and those who live in urban places report higher rates of "being online constantly."[18] While it might be easy to dismiss the plight of the often well-paid information worker in a time of radical inequality, the combined effect of this class's overwork and retreat from the physical world may have troubling effects on society at large. First, scholars like Professor Daniel Markovits argue that the rising incomes of elite labor help drive the alarming rates of inequality we experience today. This class of highly skilled information workers exploits their own human capital for tremendous financial reward.[19] Technology facilitates brutal self-exploitation and inequality. Second, one might be concerned about the effects of a class of information workers who lead lives increasingly detached from physical place and common culture. Scholar Christopher Lasch argues that this rising class of citizens who specialize in "the interpretation and deployment of symbolic information" present a threat to democracy as they "live in a world of abstract concepts and symbols, ranging from stock market quotations to the visual images produced by Hollywood and Madison Avenue."[20] These "symbolic analysts" may lack the physically-grounded social commitments to their fellow citizens necessary to maintain democracy.

II.   The Addiction Model, Behavioral Economic Solutions, and Their Drawbacks

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[17] Janna Anderson & Lee Rainie, 2. THE NEGATIVES OF DIGITAL LIFE PEW RESEARCH CENTER: INTERNET, SCIENCE & TECH (2020), https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/07/03/the-negatives-of-digital-life/ (last visited May 22, 2022).

[18] Andrew Perrin & Sara Atske, ABOUT THREE-IN-TEN U.S. ADULTS SAY THEY ARE 'ALMOST CONSTANTLY' ONLINE PEW RESEARCH CENTER (2021), https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/03/26/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-say-they-are-almost-constantly-online

[19] DANIEL MARKOVITS, THE MERITOCRACY TRAP HOW AMERICA'S FOUNDATIONAL MYTH FEEDS INEQUALITY, DISMANTLES THE MIDDLE CLASS, AND DEVOURS THE ELITE (2020).

[20] CHRISTOPHER LASCH, THE REVOLT OF THE ELITES: AND THE BETRAYAL OF DEMOCRACY (1996).

One common way to make sense of the asymmetry between the rising use of digital technology and the preferences and well-being of users is that digital technology companies, particularly social media companies, have "addicted" users to their products. This conceptual framework has been popularized --most notably-- in the Netflix documentary "The Social Dilemma." In the film, director Jeff Orlowski describes how tech companies have crafted sophisticated psychological exploits to increase user engagement with their products. The conceptual framework implies a legible difference between non-addiction and addiction: an *individual* in a state of freedom with agency and *an individual* acting compulsively without agency. The addiction model creates helpful analogies between quintessentially addicting products like cigarettes and digital technology. In groups of both cigarette smokers and digital technology users, one sees an asymmetry between individuals' professed intentions and their actual behavior. The addiction model naturally leads critics to closely scrutinize the engagement mechanisms created by companies and their effects on the psychology of individual users. Moreover, a regulatory agenda naturally follows: boundaries and rules might be set on exploitive product features, and individuals can be provided "nudges," which might lead them to make decisions more in line with their more reflective preferences. Consumers can help themselves when the sources of their behavioral biases are addressed. New legislation like the SMART (Social Media Addiction Reduction Technology) Act—introduced to the United States Senate in 2019—best embodies the types of policy which naturally follow from an addiction model of digital technology use.[21] The SMART Act calls for bans on certain exploitive features created by tech companies including infinite scroll and autoplay. Additionally, the act calls for several

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[21] Social Media Addiction Reduction Technology Act or the SMART Act, S. 2314, 116th Congress. (2019).

"nudge" style behavioral economics interventions: rules about how consent terms are designed and a mandate that users personally set time limits each month on social media applications.

The addiction model is most useful for the regulation of digital technology in which the most relevant relationship is between an individual user and the technology company. For example, smartphone games are a quintessential example of a product overflowing with exploitive mechanics designed by companies to take advantage of individual users. However, for digital technology, in which the utility of the technology is mainly dependent on social interaction and network effects, the addiction model might be less helpful. While cigarettes would largely retain their addicting qualities on a desert island, certain digital technologies with social features— work communication software, social media, multiplayer videogames—would be of little use without network effects. The cybernetic pleasures of social technology (likes, retweets, favorites) definitionally require integration into a system of other users. Even with exploitative UI, a social media product has little value without other users. It may be that for certain digital technologies, the core social function of the product is inseparable from the reasons for its overuse.[22] It is clear, then, how policies like those found in the SMART Act are insufficient. Bans on particular features can be innovated around as the discovery of new psychological exploits can always outrun a regulatory regime. But more importantly, attempts to police features and increase individual agency fail to address why digital technologies with social features are so attractive to begin with: they connect users to coordinate, interact, and socialize. Individual users disengage at their own peril. Further, the widespread use of digital technology may preclude or limit the number of alternative activities and institutions in the physical world.

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[22] James A. Roberts & Meredith E. David, *The Social Media Party: Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), Social Media Intensity, Connection, and Well-Being*, 36 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN–COMPUTER INTERACTION 386–392 (2020).

III.   <u>The Power of Sociability and Sovereignty</u>

How else could policymakers make sense of the asymmetry between the preferences and behavior of digital technology users? How do we understand freely made individual decisions which also feel coercive? A compelling place to start is by answering this question in a broader context than the addiction model affords. In David Grewal's *Network Power*, Grewal attempts to explain freely made yet coercive decisions within the context of globalization.[23] He defines broadly two sorts of power: the power of sociability and the power of sovereignty. According to Grewal, "relations of sociability consist in the accumulation of individual contracts which, taken together, generate a broader social setting or structure."[24] This social structure exerts power onto free individuals in ways that aren't immediately obvious. For example, millions of humans learn English every year. Often, this decision is made freely. But the plausible alternatives of languages an individual may select from to learn are limited by the broader structure of social relations. English is the dominant standard of business and media. While it is possible to learn medieval Latin instead, significant opportunity costs are imposed upon those who make that decision.[25] This is an example of the power of sociability.

In contrast, the power of sovereignty is defined as when individuals, through an initial social contract, "fashion themselves into a unity that then provides for collective, rather than merely aggregated decisions."[26] As a result, "constructive projects can be undertaken by the decisions of

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[23] DAVID SINGH GREWAL, NETWORK POWER: THE SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF GLOBALIZATION (2008).
[24] Id. at 9
[25] Id. at 11
[26] Id. at 47

the single, corporate body." Each individual is conceived of as represented in the body.[27] Collectively coordinated decisions have the unique potential to reshape the social context in which decisions are made. However, the allocation of liberal democratic "rights" may prove insufficient to respond to the power of sociability. Negative rights cannot conceive of new alternatives" but instead just guarantee the right "to walk away without interference."[28] Positive rights protect forms of behavior but fail to provide "straightforward access to a good when the good in question is social relations."[29] In order to respond to problems of sociability then, Grewal argues that groups of citizens must exercise the power of sovereignty to control the "the anarchy of pure sociability which is neither desirable nor sustainable." Freedom and human agency often require collective, socially coordinated decisions to reshape the structure of social relations.[30] It goes without saying that sovereign power is not inherently good, and the power of sociability is not inherently bad. Sovereign power can be exercised by authoritarian forces or democratically through various social and political groups.

It is possible to see how this model can help explain the simultaneously free and coercive experience of digital technology usage with social features. In order to be privy to the benefits of social contact and coordination, users "freely" elect to use social media platforms. The choice of whether to engage with social media and the choice of which social media platform to engage with are both shaped by the power of sociability. Staying engaged with social media platforms is necessary to harness social benefits, fulfill obligations, and respond to requests. The technological form of social media (ever-present connection) makes expectations of user engagement high and makes the costs of disengagement even higher. Moderating or abstaining

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[27] Id. at 47
[28] Id. at 169
[29] Id. at 170
[30] Id. at 294

from social media means giving up the benefits of social coordination for a period of time, while others do not. Depending on the duration of this absence, real costs can be felt or merely the anxiety of these costs. The choice of an adolescent student to abstain or moderate Instagram usage and the choice of a professional information worker to abstain or moderate the use of workplace connectivity tools (outside of what is mandated) are both subject to the coercive power of sociability. Even when digital technology usage exceeds what is rationally useful, ever-present doubts set in. What am I missing? Am I left out of social opportunities and information that might just now have become accessible to me? Further, alternative uses of time rooted in the physical world are more difficult to construct without coordinated defection from the status quo.

IV.   Exercising Power Over Technology in Liberal Democracies: "Community Unplug Together" (CUT) Laws

In a pluralistic liberal democracy, regulators should not, and do not, have the ability to issue universal edicts or commands that dictate the boundaries of digital technology usage. Instead, policymakers must enact regulations that *facilitate* social and economic groups to make decisions that respect their unique goals, needs, and deliberative processes. Certain institutions, like workplaces and school districts, lend themselves to more robust regulation. In contrast, regulation of the social sphere may require a lighter touch to allow exclusively social institutions to coordinate their members without incurring on the individual agency of members or granting too much power to the state.

A. "CUT Laws" in the Workplace

In Europe, several countries have enacted laws that aim to give employees agency over the time they are obligated to respond to and engage with their employers and co-workers online through digital technology. These laws have been popularized as "right to disconnect" laws. However, this title may be a misnomer that elides essential variations in the laws enacted and fails to emphasize the critical role social coordination plays in their more successful variations.

In September 2015, France amended its labor code to support a "right to disconnection."[31] Interestingly, the law does not merely give individual employees protection from retaliation for disconnecting from the workplace, nor does it set boundaries on digital technology usage through a centralized edict. Instead, Article L2242-17 of the labor code requires that annual negotiations take place between employers and employees to determine enforceable limits on the time employees are expected to be online.[32] If representatives of employees and employers fail to enter into an agreement, the law stipulates that "the employer shall draw up a charter, after consultation with the works council or, failing that, with the staff delegates. This charter defines these procedures for exercising the right to disconnect and provides for the implementation, for employees and management and management personnel, of training and awareness-raising activities on the reasonable use of digital tools."[33] France's highest court (French Court of Cassation) has enforced these rules in several decisions since the enactment of the regulation. These include a 2018 ruling which ordered compensation to an employee whose employer failed to respect the agreed-upon ability to disconnect.[34] The key

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[31] Droit à la déconnexion Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de l'Insertion (2018), https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/archives/archives-courantes/loi-travail-2016/les-principales-mesures-de-la-loi-travail/article/droit-a-la-deconnexion (last visited May 22, 2022).
[32] Tammy Katsabian, It's the End of Working Time As We Know It: New Challenges to the Concept of Working Time in the Digital Reality, 65 McGill L.J. 379 (2020)
[33] L2242-17 Code du travail
[34] Katsabian (2020)

elements of France's policy that make it a helpful model are its deference to the unique deliberative processes of various workplaces, its tolerance of a pluralism of technology policies across industries, and –most importantly-- its focus on social coordination.

Italy has also passed a "right to disconnect" law, although according to Tammy Katsabian, there are essential differences between this law and its French counterpart. While the Italian law lacks important enforcement mechanisms and is more limited in the types of employees it protects, it has a core conceptual difference from the French law. According to Katsabian, "unlike the French law, which is based on collective negotiation, the Italian law is implemented on an individual basis through a specific agreement between an individual employee and employer." Whereas the French law mandates collective deliberation and coordination, the Italian law provides protections more akin to a traditional liberal right. Individual action and deliberation will fail to create new social contexts altogether and instead give employees a set of protections within the bounds of the status quo.

In Germany, voluntary agreements exist between several large corporations and their employees, which dictate the boundaries of online obligations. While Germany does not have a law mandating these agreements to be negotiated, the agreements between German companies and their employees still offer American policymakers insight. According to Katsabian, companies like Volkswagen and Daimler have enforced their agreements through technological features of their work communication software. Volkswagen prevents emails from being able to be sent after formal working hours, and Daimler created a "holiday mode" setting for the company's email system, which automatically deletes emails received between certain hours.[35]

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[35] Id.

These technological features can help enforce the agreements between employers and employees.

Following France's lead, policymakers in the United States should pass labor laws that require that employers and employees (over a certain size) must negotiate clear written policies dictating the obligations of employees to be online. It is also vital that individual employees are prevented from defecting and working beyond their legally required hours (under social pressure or to 'get ahead'). To maintain consistent enforcement of these limits, Congress should pass a law mandating that workplace communication software include standardized usage restriction settings across products, which employers may use to set limitations on product usage within the times or hours agreed upon with employees.

By combining the best of French law and German private sector practices --while avoiding the pitfalls of the Italian individual rights framework- policymakers can reign in digital technology usage while still deferring to the needs of companies and their employees.

B. "CUT Laws" in Education

Education is another domain in which policymakers, parents, and educators have more leeway to set limits and boundaries on technology usage. Most school districts have policies and rules around technology usage at school. However, what may be lacking are technological features in the products students are using, which might be necessary for schools and parents to enforce these policies collectively. For example, many technology products have sophisticated parental control systems. These give parents the ability to set the boundaries of their children's

technology usage. However, the diversity of parental controls on most dominant products and services makes it difficult to coordinate limits and restrictions across a group or community.

Congress should pass a law requiring technology products and online platforms to standardize screen-time or product usage restrictions across devices and platforms. Given statutory authority, the FTC could promulgate the rules necessary to create a standardized menu of usage restrictions that parents and school districts could coordinate around. Of course, restrictions could be narrowly tailored to the needs of students. For example, exceptions for communication between parents and students or students and emergency services likely make sense. School districts could require that technology products brought to campus be restricted according to a common, cross-platform standard that complies with district policy. Enforcement of restrictions would be easier for parents when all students are subject to a common standard. While students will always attempt to creatively circumvent rules placed on them, the allure of technology products would be less when classmates are under similar schooltime restrictions. The ability to coordinate common screen-time standards across products and platforms might also allow for opt-in parental coordination outside of the classroom. A voluntary association of parents could use their coordinating power to set common and collective restrictions during out-of-school hours.

C. CUT Laws for Social Communities

While children are a common and convenient object of concern by policymakers and scholars concerned by rising technology usage, the technology usage of adults is more challenging to control in a way that respects individual agency. Policy solutions grounded in

behavioral economics are often seen as a way to change behavior while avoiding government paternalism. While it's doubtful whether psychological "nudges" really respect individual agency and autonomy, it is important to be wary of granting any decision-making body (public or private) control of technology usage. The early internet-age dream of a decentralized internet may be over. Digital technology facilitates surveillance and censorship.[36] It can make legible individual actions to sources of power and authority on a scale never seen in human history.[37] In so far as adults can coordinate restrictions on technology within social institutions, reasonable and thoughtful limits should be set on tehcnlogical interventions to protect a social group from violating the privacy and agency of individual group members.

At the same time, policymakers should reject the idea that the social regulation of technology is inherently paternalistic. The "CUT" policies advocated for in this paper do not grant any government agency power over technology usage. Instead, social groups are given tools to deliberate and make decisions about their relationship with technology. In many small-scale communities and institutions, the act of deliberative rulemaking may be a generative exercise that expresses individual agency instead of denying it.

A law that mandates that technology products and online platforms standardize screen-time or product usage restriction tools across devices and platforms could be a powerful aide to social communities. Social communites may coordinate and set collective limits on their usage of digital technology. The FTC could be given statutory authority to promulgate the rules necessary to create a standardized menu of usage restrictions that users could coordinate around. If social groups can coordinate common and interoperable usage standards across different devices and

[36] Samo Burja, THE CENTRALIZED INTERNET IS INEVITABLE PALLADIUM (2020), https://palladiummag.com/2020/10/19/the-centralized-internet-is-inevitable/ (last visited May 22, 2022).
[37] Id.

products, these social communities could set boundaries on technology usage together. By adopting common standards, users could also communicate their offline/online commitments to users outside of their immediate social community.

For too long, Americans have failed to define for themselves what a coherent and sustainable relationship with technology looks like, opting instead to be buffeted around by the technology companies and the natural logic of their products. To regain agency over a future in which nearly all moments of an average day are spent staring at a screen, Americans must meet with their fellow citizens and deliberate the terms, rules, and relationships they wish to have with technology. In the workplace, in public education, and across a diverse range of social institutions, policymakers have a role to play in facilitating community deliberation and making sure that community members have the technological tools necessary to coordinate their behavior.