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How Tech Populism is Undermining Tech Policy Development

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■ About ITIF

Public policy think tank committed to pro-productivity, pro-innovation, and pro-technology policy agenda internationally, in Washington, and in U.S. states

Focusing on:

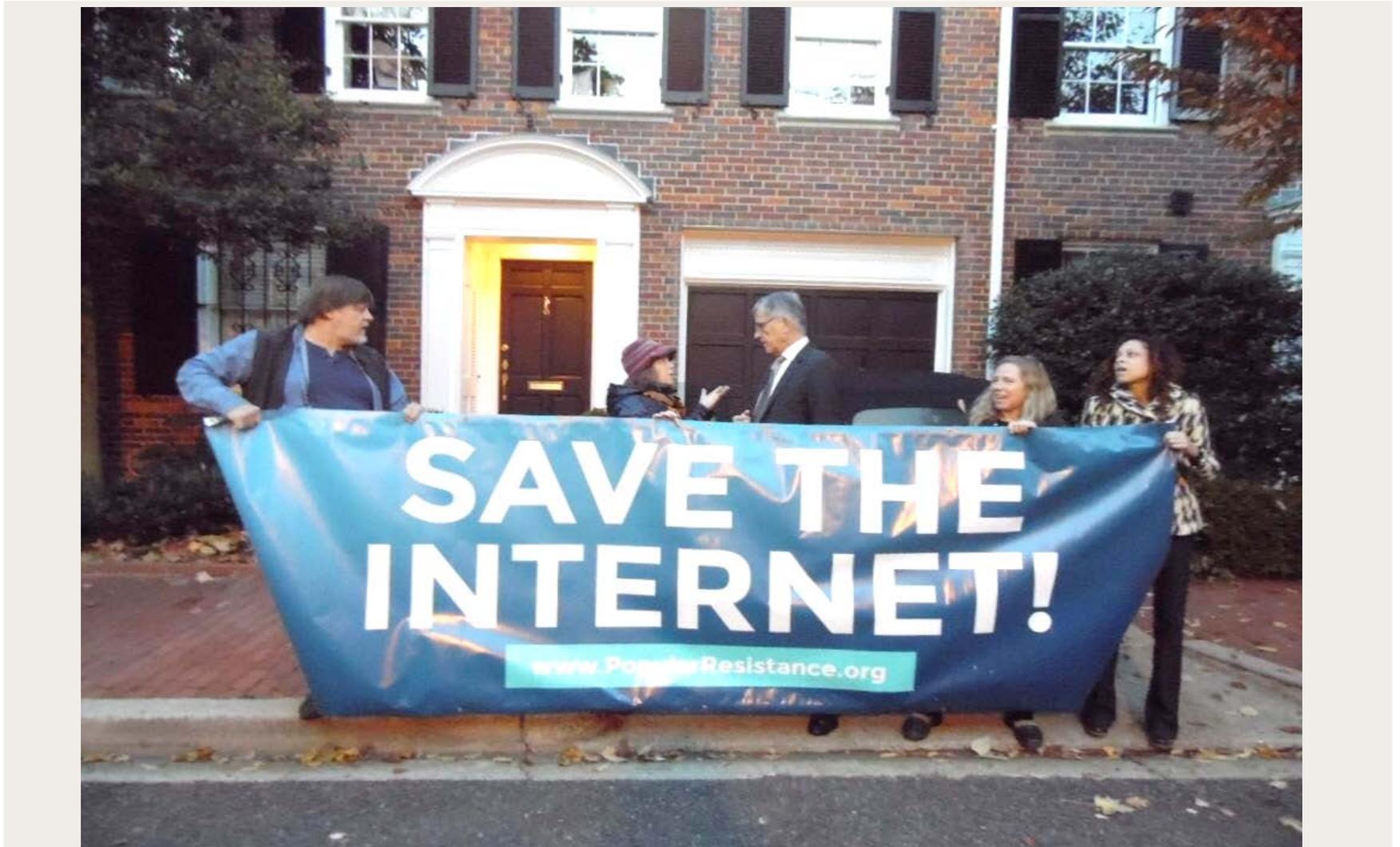
- Innovation processes, policy, and metrics
- Science policy related to economic growth
- IT and economic productivity
- Innovation and trade policy
- Clean energy and life sciences innovation



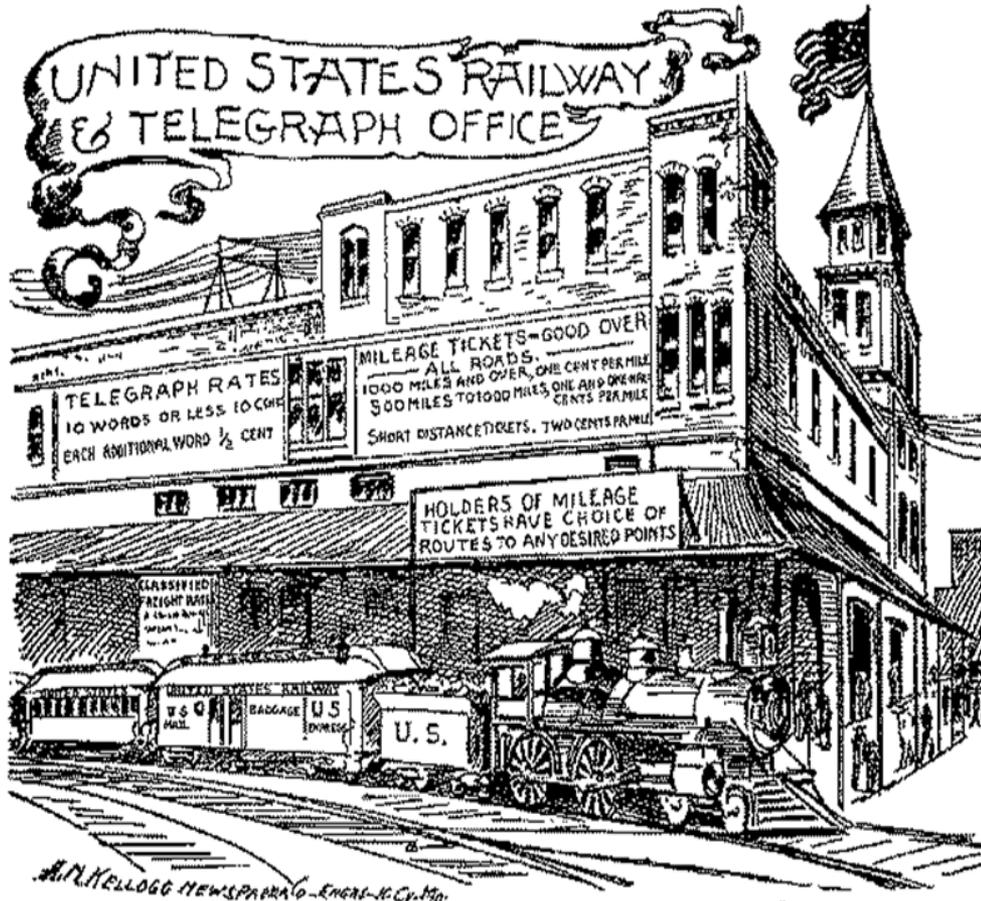
- Tech Policy Used To Look Like This



- Now It Looks Like This



■ Tech Populism Is Not New...

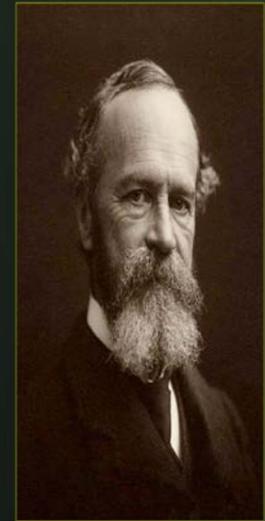


ANOTHER FEATURE OF OUR PLATFORM.

Third—Transportation being a means of exchange and a public necessity, the government should own and operate the railroads in the interest of the people.

The telegraph and telephone, like the post office system, being a necessity for the transmission of news, should be owned and operated by the government in the interest of the people.

There is nothing so absurd that it cannot be believed as truth if repeated often enough.

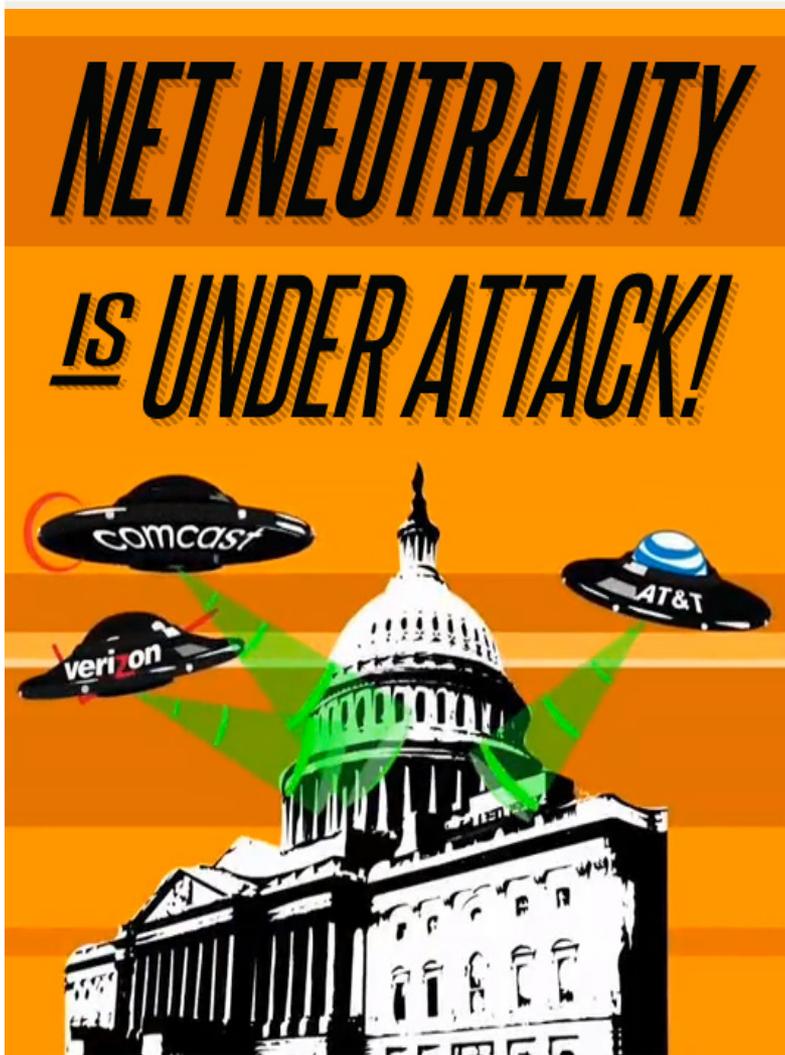


William James
1842-1910

■ But Today It's On Steroids

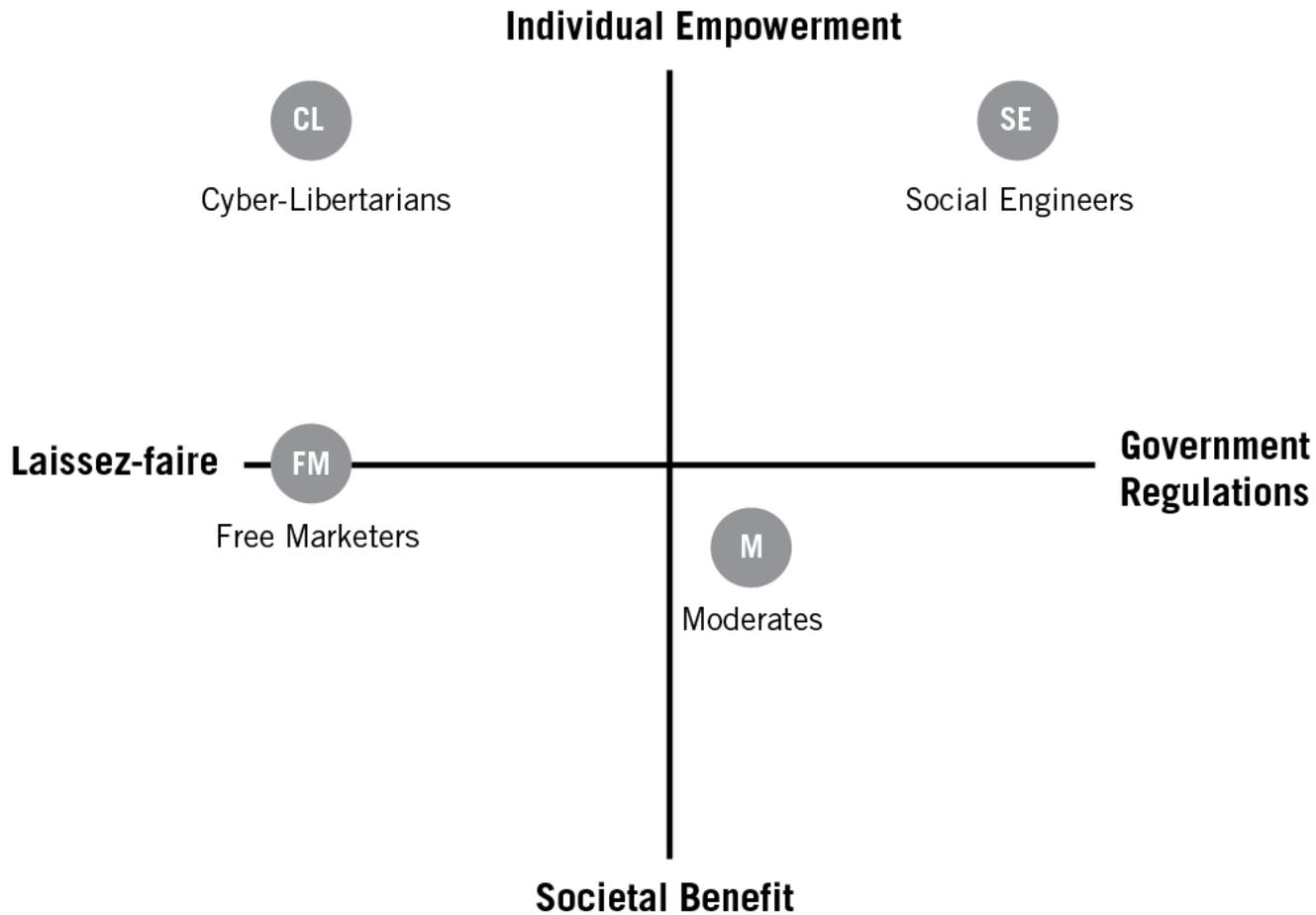


■ What Is Tech Populism?



- Marked by fear, misunderstanding, distrust
- Emotional, hyperbolic
- Self-interested
- Demonizing big business, big government elites

Internet Politics Typology



TECH POPULISTS

TECH PROGRESSIVES

Are you motivated by...

Self-interest

Societal benefits

Do you see problems as...

Us versus them

Opportunities to work together

Do you believe government and businesses are...

Something to fear

Legitimate partners

Do you prefer arguments that appeal to...

Emotion

Reason

Are you focused on technological...

Downsides

Benefits

Is the legal system something you...

Distrust

Trust

■ Tech Populism Is Grounded In Self-Interest

- Not wanting to pay traffic tickets for running red light
- Getting cheaper phone without a contract & “breaking” my phone.
- Downloading content without paying
- Using web applications that hurt other broadband users
- Using free Internet resources sites without sharing my information



- Tech Populism Demonizes the “We”



- Tech Populism Relies on Spin



■ Issue: Net Neutrality

- Populist solution:
Impose utility-style regulations to treat all bits equally

- Progressive solution:
Allow network innovation while protecting consumers

The image displays 15 service bundles from Telco ADSL, arranged in a 5x3 grid. Each bundle includes a price, a list of services, and a brief description.

Bundle Name	Price	Services
TELCO ADSL	\$29.95	Includes 100 MB of free transfer to non-peering websites at full speed. Limited to 128 kbps thereafter.
YouTube + Hulu + tv.com	\$10	Includes free Hulu subscription. Enjoy exclusive content from your favourite networks.
Google, Blogger, Ask, Yahoo! Search, Bing, WordPress.com, Flickr, YouTube	\$5	Includes a massive extra 1000 MB a month to non-peering, at non-selected websites. Limited to 200 kbps thereafter.
Twitter, Facebook, AOL, Bebo, MSN, Myspace.com, Yahoo!, Friendster	\$0	All social networks. All your friends. Includes all your dating sites. Just \$1 after three months.
Baidu, Яндекс, Web.DE, BBC, Indiatimes, News.com.au	\$5	Includes the top 200 services from over 30 countries.
Lost.fm, Spotify, iTunes, Pandora, Napster, Rhapsody	\$10	Listen to your favourite music. Includes three months of emusic.
Digg, The New York Times, MSNBC, The Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Fox News, The Huffington Post	\$5	News Freak? Get your fix. Includes free online access to your local news site.
Amazon.com, News.com, PayPal, Overstock.com, Skype, eBay	\$5	Save money. Shop online. All your favourite things, secure and fast. Includes Internet Banking from over 20 financial institutions.
Steam, EA Electronic Arts, World of Warcraft, RealArcade, Full Tilt, Gametap	\$5	Games? We hear you. Unwind, relax and play hard.
Recharge	\$5	Your full-speed quota wasn't enough? A massive 2000 MB for access to your company's VPN at full speed. For accessing your friends' non-peering websites at full speed. For getting your emails faster and the included limit didn't cut it. Or if you're a web designer and need some extra buffer. Whether it be the world wide web, VPN or email, we have you covered.

■ Issue: Online Advertising



- **Populist solution:** Prevent companies from using customer information to target Internet ads
- **Progressive solution:** Allow use of customer information in well-functioning, self-regulatory environments

■ Issue: Digital Copyright



- **Populist solution:**
Weaken protections for copyrighted material so content is free
- **Progressive solution:**
Balance between Internet platform innovation and free speech with rights of copyright holders

■ Issue: Cell Phone Unlocking



- Populist Solution: Ban device locking
- Progressive Solution: Allow carriers to choose whether to lock; but require transparency

■ Issue: Educational Data

- Populist solution: Ban collection of data on individual students (“cognitive colonization)

- Progressive solution: Allow use of student data for analytics as long as it is de-identified.

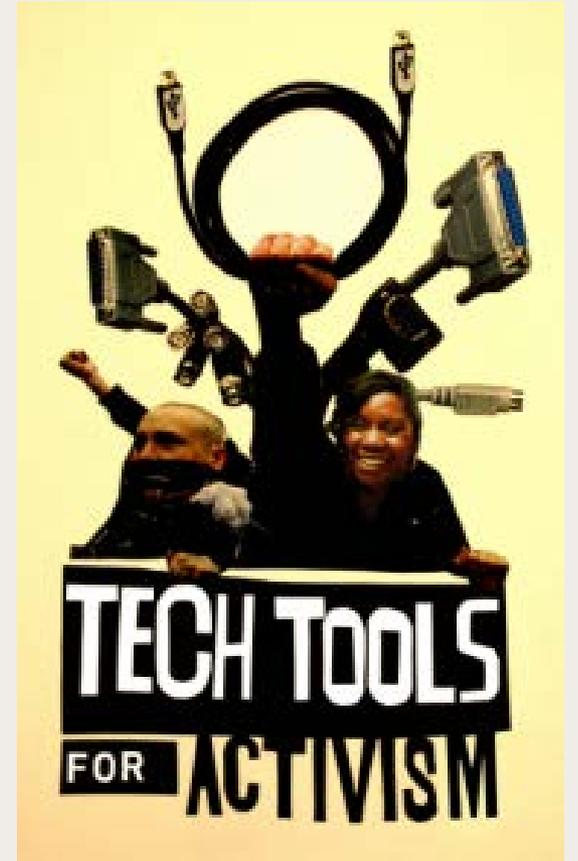


■ Why the Rise of Tech Populism?

- Rise of overall populism



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 - Rise of overall populism
 - Web 2.0 enables campaigns



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- **Activist Foundations**



■ Why the Rise of Tech Populism?

- Rise of overall populism
- Web 2.0 enables campaigns
- Activist Foundations
- A media with fewer resources and more desire for “eyeballs”

■ Where Are We Headed?



- Frenzied protests are the new norm
- Tech populism expands to more issues
- A general dumbing down of tech policy

■ How to Get Back On Track

- Expose tech populist demagoguery
- Don't overestimate tech populist political power.
- Embrace a progressive approach that expanding societal benefits and mitigates specific harms

Thank You

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