



# Section 230 Makes Content Moderation Possible

Section 230 is the law that empowers online services to keep bad content off their platforms. It means online services can write and enforce rules that allow them to ban accounts, remove content, and create safer, better experiences online for everyone.

## Section 230 Empowers Platforms To:

- **Set and enforce community guidelines** and codes of conduct
- **Ban bad actors and activity from their services**, including terrorism content, harassment, spam, or other harmful content
- **Proactively screen for illegal and illicit content** uploaded to their services and prevent it from being shared
- **Update their rules quickly and efficiently** to address new threats or challenges.



### What Is Section 230?

Section 230 was explicitly written to help platforms take down bad content. In part, it says:

*"No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be held liable on account of—(A) any action voluntarily taken in good faith to restrict access to or availability of material that the provider or user considers to be obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable, whether or not such material is constitutionally protected..."*

To understand why Section 230 empowers companies to moderate, just look at the world before the law existed. In the 1990s, courts ruled that:



- Platforms that wrote and enforced codes of conduct were considered the speakers of every post on their services (e.g. *Stratton Oakmont v. Prodigy*)
- Platforms that made no efforts to moderate faced no liability for user content (e.g. *Cubby v. Compuserve*)

A world without section 230 is one where platforms are incentivized to either do no moderation whatsoever or to dramatically limit the ability of users to post.

### About Internet Association

Internet Association represents over 40 of the world's leading internet companies. IA's mission is to foster innovation, promote economic growth, and empower people through the free and open internet. For more information, visit [www.internetassociation.org](http://www.internetassociation.org)