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TONIGHT: Siva Vaidhyanathan Speaks on "Antisocial Media": BMC 2.106, 7 PM by American Studies

Dr. Siva Vaidhyanathan will deliver a talk this evening at the Belo Center for New Media entitled "Antisocial Media: How Facebook Disconnects People and Undermines Democracy." A full description of the event, including a longer biography of Dr. Vaidhyanathan, can be found here (<https://calendar.utexas.edu/event/siva-vaidhyanathan-talks-on-antisocial-media-how-facebook-disconnects-people-and-undermines-democracy#.WpzV3Og-fR0>).



Dr. Vaidhyanathan is the Robertson Professor of Media Studies and director of the Center for Media and Citizenship at the University of Virginia. He is an acclaimed journalist, scholar, and speaker, and a graduate of the UT-Austin American Studies doctoral program. His research and writing has focused on the relationship between legal notions of intellectual property and the development of the digital sphere, and his books include *Intellectual Property: A Very Short Introduction* (2017 OUP) and *The Googlization of Everything—and Why We Should Worry about It* (2011 UCP), among others. Dr. Vaidhyanathan has written for journalistic publications such as *The New York Times*, *Dissent*, and *The Nation*, and has appeared as an analyst on BBC, CNN, and ABC, among other networks.

Below is the abstract for Dr. Vaidhyanathan's talk; please stop by if you can!

"If you wanted to build a machine that would distribute propaganda to millions of people, distract them from important issues, energize hatred and bigotry, erode social trust, undermine respectable journalism, foster doubts about science, and engage in massive surveillance all at once, you would make something a lot like Facebook. Facebook grew out of an ideological commitment to data-driven decision making and logical thinking. Its culture is explicitly cosmopolitan and tolerant of difference and dissent. Both its market orientation and its labor force are global. Facebook also indulges a strong missionary bent, one that preaches the power of connectivity and the spread of knowledge to empower people to change their lives for the better. No company better represents the dream of a fully connected planet "sharing" words, ideas, images, and plans. No company has better leveraged those ideas into wealth and influence. No company has contributed more to the global collapse of basic tenets of deliberation and democracy. How did the mission go so wrong? Facebook's leaders believed that good intentions were enough, and that blind faith in technology could generate a better world."

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