



WHY NEPC PULLED ITS PODCAST FROM SPOTIFY



Joe Rogan is not the worst purveyor of misinformation. Spotify is not the worst publisher or platform for misinformation.

They are both, however, part of the problem of misinformation and of profiting from the failure to take responsibility for editorial content. The high-profile pushback directed at Rogan and Spotify can send a powerful message that misinformation and irresponsibility are harmful and not acceptable.

This is why NEPC decided last week to pull its podcast from Spotify. This movement, started by Neil Young, has brought attention to the role of private companies in spreading untrue and dangerous deceptions. Spotify's [response](#) explains that the company declines to play the role of a "content censor," instead choosing to support the expression of content creators on all sides of issues. Spotify does, however, want to "help creators understand their accountability for the content" (emphasis added).

As author [Roxane Gay](#) recently explained, the choice by a private publishing platform to include or refuse content is "curation," not "censorship." The choice of Spotify to pay Mr. Rogan \$100 million dollars is also curation—an active choice to tie its corporate wagon to specific content.

The misinformation at issue concerns COVID-19 and vaccines. Given Mr. Rogan's extensive listenership (purportedly 11 million strong), this misinformation has almost surely cost lives. This sort of misinformation prolongs the pandemic. It keeps people, including educators, from work, and harms everyone in school communities.

We are a Spotify small fry. Our exit won't amount to even a blip on the company's radar. However, as a university-based education policy center, NEPC must take positions against active disinformation, whether it concerns COVID-19, Critical Race Theory, the 2020 election, or any other vital issue impacting our country and its children. This is one reason (along with privacy issues) that NEPC [unplugged from Facebook](#) four years ago. It's why we're unplugging Spotify now and why we encourage others to join us.

We hope that Spotify changes its position and accepts its editorial responsibility to reject misinformation. We hope to rejoin Spotify if and when that happens. Until then, *NEPC Talks Education*, hosted by Christopher Saldaña, will continue to be available through other streaming services, including [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Stitcher](#), as well as [directly through the NEPC website](#).

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