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Struggles of GETTR app illustrate dilemma facing Team Trump

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GETTR, the new social media platform launched by allies of former President Donald Trump, is facing problems with content moderation, illustrating the obstacles in front of conservatives eager for alternatives to Big Tech sites.

The platform is billed as promoting free speech but has faced data breaches and pornographic spam in its infancy, suggesting it could struggle without significant content moderation.

In the past year, Republicans, most prominently Trump, have alleged social media giants such as [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) engage in unfair bias and censorship. But conservatives say GETTR is an example of how challenging it is to create a platform that adheres to the First Amendment.

Thanks to its emphasis on anti-censorship, GETTR has been [flooded](#) with misinformation, pornographic images, and fake accounts of prominent users since its launch last week. On Sunday, the website was briefly hacked.

“If they try to stick to their guns and allow as much content as possible and not really moderate, it will be an unsuccessful platform,” said Patrick Hedger, vice president of policy at the Taxpayers Protection Alliance, a conservative advocacy group. “They will have to change course and follow similar content moderation standards as Facebook and Twitter, or else they won’t have enough users and advertisers to survive.”

Hedger said conservatives' demands for more free speech on social media platforms are difficult to fulfill because most users want a curated experience with unpleasant, grotesque, or false content removed from their feeds.

Nevertheless, GETTR is currently the No. 1 most downloaded app on the Android App Store and Google Play with more than 1 million users, according to its founder [Jason Miller](#), a senior adviser to Trump.

Some conservatives say the technical glitches on GETTR could have been anticipated, and it will be an uphill challenge to compete with social media giants such as Twitter and Facebook.

“I think anyone looking at GETTR will realize it won’t be a Twitter alternative anytime soon, even though that’s what they’re aiming to be,” said Matthew Feeney, director of emerging technologies research at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank.

Feeney said he is particularly curious how often GETTR will invoke Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996, the controversial law that gives online platforms legal immunity for third-party content.

“It’s funny how in GETTR’s terms of condition, they copy-pasted from Section 230 — their right to remove content that they think is obscene or otherwise objectionable — the same law conservatives and Trump spent the past year complaining about,” Feeney said.

Trump, who is banned from most major social media platforms, announced a class-action lawsuit Wednesday against tech giants Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, along with their respective CEOs Mark Zuckerberg, Jack Dorsey, and Sundar Pichai. Trump presented the suit as an effort to protect the First Amendment.

However, many conservatives say the First Amendment is an ideal for the government to uphold and for social media companies to strive for — but it's not necessarily their top priority.

“Free speech online sounds good in theory, but in reality, you realize that we already have a place on the internet where anything goes. It’s called 8chan. Most of us don’t want that,” said conservative Carl Szabo, vice president and general counsel at NetChoice, an advocacy group representing tech companies.

Conservatives are also worried GETTR might only attract Trump supporters and Republicans, which could doom the platform.

“You can’t create an echo chamber with everyone being conservatives. It’s no fun owning the libs if there are no libs to own on the website,” Hedger said.