

Center for Humane Technology | Your Undivided Attention Podcast

Bonus — A Whirlwind Week of Whistleblowing

- Tristan Harris: Wow. For the last seven years working on social media and the problems of runaway technology, I do not think I've experienced a week like this.
- Aza Raskin: No, this has been one of those, "I am experiencing history hour by hour." But for those of you who are new, or if you've been here for years, we're going to recap this week and announce a very exciting next episode.
- Tristan Harris: This is Your Undivided Attention, a podcast from the Center for Humane Technology. And many of you may know us from the film, the Social Dilemma on Netflix, which was released about a year ago. But we have both, I think, not seen as much change and turning upside down the world of the possibility of regulating social media companies and specifically Facebook as we have in the last three days.
- Aza Raskin: Let's talk about the whirlwind of the last few days. So, Sunday. 60 Minutes. All attention's on Facebook as Frances Haugen names herself as the Facebook whistleblower. She's from the Civic Integrity Team. It's a bombshell interview. And we're all wondering what's going to happen next. When, on Monday, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp go down. We don't know what's happening. It appears from tweets that Facebook employees are locked out of their own building. Their badges don't work. And then, on Tuesday, we woke up and Frances testified in front of the Senate for three hours, incredibly clear, incredibly poised. And a really incredible moment for me was when Senator Markey said, "Frances, you are a 21st century American hero." And in that moment, my eyes got really wet.
- Tristan Harris: Yeah. I was in New York City, and woke up in the morning to watch Frances' testimony. And I watched Frances for three hours testify before the Senate, and just blew them away with clear incontrovertible evidence of many of the things that we had been talking about on this podcast with Facebook's own research and evidence, proving the things that so many people have known and felt that, that it makes political parties more divisive, that it fundamentally has changed the life outcomes of teenage girls. The stuff that everybody has heard, but made personal.
- Tristan Harris: I didn't hear a single Senator move into a partisan accusation of the platforms. I saw Senators come together for the first time, literally cheering each other on saying, "You know, we need to talk afterwards about how we're actually going to get this done." I've never, in the years that I've testified for the Senate and for Congress, heard them talk that way. And so, I was just so blown away. I'm so... I honestly think people are going to look back at this moment and say that Frances Haugen helped change the world.
- Frances Haugen: During my time at Facebook, I came to realize the devastating truth. Almost no one outside of Facebook knows what happens inside of Facebook. The company intentionally hides vital information from the public, from the US government and from governments around the world. The documents I have provided to Congress prove that Facebook has repeatedly misled the public about what its own research reveals about the safety of children, the efficacy of its artificial intelligence systems, and its role in spreading divisive and extreme messages. I came forward because I believe that every human being deserves the dignity of the truth.

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- Tristan Harris: And I'm excited to announce that our plan is to have Frances, the whistleblower herself, on this podcast, coming next. In fact, Frances, myself, and Meetali Jain from Reset Tech, are going to be on a Yale Social Media Reform panel, this Thursday at 6:00 PM Eastern time. We're going to be followed by a panel of academics, including Jack Balkin, Nathaniel Persily, and Zephyr Teachout and to Shoshana Zuboff, the author of *Surveillance Capitalism*. I really recommend everyone sign up for the event. Go to [humanetech.com/get involved](https://humanetech.com/get-involved).
- Aza Raskin: There is so much that has to change for Facebook to become a benign force in our world, from the governance level to internal policies, to regulation, to the cultural zeitgeist that gives it form. But there is one specific change that we are really excited to launch a campaign around, to pressure Facebook to make. And we'll be talking about that, then, too.
- Tristan Harris: So, thank you for being on this wild ride with us. Stay tuned as history continues,
- Tristan Harris: Your Undivided Attention is produced by the Center for Humane Technology. Our executive producer is Stephanie Lepp and our Associate Producer is Noor Al-Samarrai. Dan Kedmey is our editor at large. Original music and sound design by Ryan and Hays Holladay. And a special thanks to the whole Center for Humane Technology team for making this podcast possible.