Keynote: Mobocratic Algorithms – Could Social Media be a Threat to Democracy?

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Abstract

From the Arab Spring to the 2016 US Elections, politicians, activists, and authoritarian regimes have used social media to influence politics. How much of these global world events were impacted by social media? This talk aims at providing "alternative" perspectives (not facts!) about social media from a witness to how such a powerful tool was used to unite people, and also to tear them apart.

Biography

Wael Ghonim is a computer engineer, an Internet activist, and a social entrepreneur. He is best known for his role in sparking the Egyptian revolution back in 2011. In 2015, Wael co-founded Parlio, a social media platform for public conversations that rewards civility, acquired by Quora. Wael is a senior fellow at The Ash Center for Democratic Governance at Harvard University.

In 2011, Wael was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, was named one of Time 100's most influential and received the JFK Profile in Courage Award. Coined the "keyboard freedom fighter," he used the power of the Internet and social media to fight for social justice, democracy and human rights in Egypt. He is the founder of "Tahrir Academy", a nonprofit online knowledge-sharing platform for Arab youth.