

# ENSH\*TTIFICATION & PLATFORM DECAY

Who broke the internet? Why does it feel so bad to be online these days?

## WHAT IS ENSH\*TTIFICATION?

Ensh\*ttification happens when Big Tech companies prioritize **profits over usefulness** in their apps and websites.

Tools and services are offered at no-cost to **lure in users, gather data, harness attention, and encouraging users to create content.**

As people become more reliant on the product, it becomes *less useful* because it is solely being optimized for profit.

*The ensh\*ttified experience includes not owning your content or products, feeling like you can never leave the platform, and having few alternatives.*

## WHAT IS A PLATFORM?

When we say “platform,” we mean digital infrastructure that helps us organize and locate information. Social media, websites, and search engines are all platforms.

Here is **how platforms die**: First, they are **good to their users**; then they **abuse their users to make things better for their business customers**; finally, they **abuse those business customers to claw back all the value for themselves**. Then, they die.

—Cory Doctorow, author of *Ensh\*ttification: Why Everything Suddenly Got Worse and What to Do About It*

## EXAMPLES OF ENSH\*TTIFIED INTERNET EXPERIENCES

Facebook and Instagram have become **ad-machines** and **AI slop dumping grounds**. Endless irrelevant ads, grotesque body horror, and constant interruptions—the bad old days of TV have made their way into YouTube! What began as a free service for instructional or entertainment short videos is now a cesspool of bots, ads, and AI-generated nonsense. People are giving up making well-researched video essays because they can’t beat the algorithm’s favorite machine-generated, click-baity extended video ads. At the same time, dark patterns and social engineering purposefully make it very hard to turn away, log off, or opt out.

## WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

First, know that *we still have choices*! Opting out might seem difficult at first, but it feels more possible when you consider alternate approaches and take small steps:

- Do your current apps and platforms actually meet your needs?
- Look for **open source** and **indie-developed tools**, as well as tech worker-owned or tech cooperative tools. This might take some research, but it’s worth it!
- Prioritize **privacy-forward platforms**. Try a few out and see what’s best for you.

