Opening Statement of
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Manipulation and Deception in the Digital Age"
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As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Chair Schakowsky and welcome to our witnesses.

I appreciate your work to highlight online deception.

Last Congress, Chairman Walden led several hearings on platform responsibility, before it became the popular cause it is today.

Disinformation is not a new problem.

It was also an issue 130 years ago when Joseph Pulitzer and the *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst and the *New York Journal* led the age of quote "yellow journalism."

Just like "clickbait" on online platforms today fake and sensational headlines sold newspapers and boosted advertising revenue.

With far more limited sources of information available in the 1890s, the American public lost trust in the media.

To rebuild trust, newspapers had to clean up their act.

Now the name Pulitzer is associated with something very different.

I believe we are at a similar inflection point today.

We are losing faith in sources we can trust online.

To rebuild it…this subcommittee, our witness panel, and members of the media are putting the spotlight on abuses and deception.

Our Committee's past leadership and constructive debates have already led to efforts by platforms to take action.

Just this week Facebook announced a new policy to combat deep fakes, in part by utilizing Artificial Intelligence.

I appreciate Ms. Bickert for coming here to discuss this in greater detail.

"Deep fakes" and disinformation can be handled with innovation and empowering people with MORE information.

On the platforms they choose and trust, it's a far more productive outcome when people can make the best decisions for themselves rather than relying on the government to make decisions for them.

That's why we should be focusing on innovation for major breakthroughs… Not more regulations or government mandates.

As we discuss ways to combat manipulation online, we must ensure America will remain the global leader in AI development.

There's no better place in the world to raise people's standard of living and make sure this technology is used responsibly.

Software is already available to face swap, lip sync, and create facial reenactment to fabricate content.

As frightening as this is, we can also be using AI to go after bad actors and fight fire with fire.

We cannot afford to shy away from it because who would you rather lead the world in machine learning technology?

America or China?

China is sharing its AI-surveillance technology with other authoritarian governments like in Venezuela

It's also using this technology to **control and suppress** ethnic minorities, including the Uighurs in Chinese concentration camps.

The New York Times reported just last month that China is collecting DNA samples of Uighurs and could be using this data to create images of their faces.

Could China be building a tool to further track and crack down on minorities and political dissidents?

Imagine the propaganda and lies they could develop with this technology behind the Great Chinese Firewall where there's no free speech or an independent press to hold the Communist Party accountable.

This is why America must lead the world in AI development.

By upholding our American values, we can use this as a force for good and save people's lives.

For example, AI technology and deep-learning algorithms can help us detect cancers earlier and more quickly.

Clinical trials are already making major breakthroughs to diagnosis cancers.

The continued leadership of our innovators is crucial to make sure we have tools to combat online deception too.

I applaud the Trump Administration for their forward thinking leadership in setting a light-touch framework for encouraging continued, responsible American innovation in AI.

To win the future in a global economy, America should be writing the rules for this technology so real people—**not** an authoritarian state like China—are empowered.

I'm also glad we're putting a spotlight on "dark patterns."

Deceptive ads, fake reviews, and bots are the latest version of robocall scams.

I'm pleased that the FTC has used its Section 5 authority to target this fraud and protect people.

We should get their input as we discuss how to handle dark patterns.

We must be careful where we legislate so we don't harm practices that people enjoy.

A heavy-handed regulation will make it impossible for online retailers to provide discounts.

This would especially hurt lower and middle-income families.

In the digital marketplace services people enjoy should not get swallowed up by a strict definition of a "dark pattern".

How we make these distinctions is important.

I'm looking forward to today's discussion. Thank you again to our panel. Thank you, and I yield back.