



Official Epik Statement on Parler

Epik Addresses Calls to Deplatform Dozens of Online Communities

January 11th, 2021

On behalf of the domain registrar Epik, this is an official statement that we have had no contact or discussions with Parler in any form regarding our organization becoming their registrar or hosting provider. From our understanding, Parler was working on satisfying the requested terms placed upon them by various elements of their supply chain, and to date, no communication has been received by them for discussion of future service provision. We have received a number of media requests for comment and story inclusion. Many seem intent to rehash prior falsehoods, and grossly inaccurate distortions regarding content that we declined to support.

At this decisive moment in history, it is worth noting the growing transparency of media owners utilizing the most extreme examples possible to characterize events for the purposes of shaping narratives and public perception. They rarely reflect truth anymore, but rather serve as propaganda for strategic purposes whereby managed bias is employed with the intent of controlling others. Often these stories align directly with objectives and goals held by executives and non-declared direct political interests. Seldom do they match the best interests of the citizens they have professed to serve, and more often than not they are being used to divide us. At no other point in recent history has the abuse of this tremendous responsibility been so measurable, at a time when few seem willing to share responsibility for the violent and repeated structural breakdowns in civil society that we are witnessing.

While we could easily expound on the tremendous responsibilities of major media owners, and the impact their editorial malfeasance creates, when it comes to Parler, it is clear that there is an artificial standard that many now want to apply. The staggering size of Twitter and Facebook alone, have made real change or accountability almost impossible, as the political interests and objectives of their own executives end up creating an undeniable double standard for both policing and enforcement. Over the last year, the effects of this were felt by millions of people, already kept in fear, as our nation was met by unprecedented waves of violence on life and property.

In an apparent attempt to preserve voter continuity and confidence by their respective constituencies, thousands of leaders, executives, and elected officials refused to condemn it. Now suddenly our nation has the audacity to believe the actions of January 6th are any different from those that we have all witnessed over the past seven months. Though the media may persist to indicate otherwise, the lives of our public servants are no more precious than those who elected them into office.



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As a provider of critical infrastructure for an increasingly digital world, Epik has closely observed the battle between oversized monopolies and smaller platforms. The notion that Big Tech has pushed for centralized control over all future narratives is very real. The danger to humanity is the looming prospect of an unthinkable abuse of both power and financial privilege that places control into the hands of a small number of individuals that routinely demonstrate they are unworthy. The old adage is that absolute power corrupts absolutely. The same group that is deplatforming an open social network like Parler as but one example, earned record levels during a global pandemic while reducing affiliate payouts by as much as 80%. Surely they are not unaware of the correlation of how economic challenges help feed the anger and intolerance that is infecting our country.

In terms of the eagerness by some to call for mass deplatforming and universal cancellations, it is becoming increasingly easy to demonize anyone who has different beliefs with no recognition of the actual effects and impact this can have on society. Vicious attack campaigns can be readily manufactured, online or offline, to promote a false public consensus. Without smarter discernment outside of a mob-based judgement of instant convenience, the decisions we make now may ultimately be utilized to reduce liberties that many take for granted. Until these freedoms and voices have been taken away, most will not realize the extent of what could be lost.

With respects to the responsibilities of domain registrars and hosting companies, some believe that they carry the obligation to be better stewards of our world, and to promote unity and positive living however possible. Many may not know that Epik has helped to identify and remove literally millions of threads of harmful content online, often extending even beyond our own direct responsibility, mandate, or direct authority. The positive influence we play online is seldom reported, as it is outside of the narrative others use to contain growth and weaken competition. We take our role in preventing violence and malicious targeting of others very seriously, believing that true digital empowerment improves lives through expanding the connections and dependencies that we have with one another.

There are some who repeatedly embrace a kneejerk reaction of simply deplatforming and terminating any relationship that on the surface looks problematic or controversial. In most cases, they know clearly that a removal simply shifts the burden and responsibility of management to other companies who may be less equipped to act as a positive influence. In some instances, the inheriting host or registrar will hold zero interest in holding themselves or the content they support to higher standards. In our experience though, the capacity for oversight and direct interaction provides a tremendous opportunity to move lines and change hearts every day. The ability to positively influence site owners and content publishers is seen as an incredible privilege and responsibility in itself, especially when serving large open communities. The positive impact it makes over time is very measurable and real, particularly when dealing with those who feel like society has forgotten about them.



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Epik would reiterate that we are not quick to abandon our administrative positions, as our response team and abuse department has the view that no one is beyond redemption. The best way we can help make our world a better place is by actually participating in it. Positive transformation is not achieved by marginalizing or ostracizing any individual or group that may be on a pathway to forming new opinions. Simply stated, countering extremism and isolation with love works! However, make no mistake, the process takes time and personal investment, along with the willingness to see beyond one's self long enough to recognize that all of us are in this journey together.

For more information on Epik's work in identifying and formulating the line for responsible free speech, please see www.epik.com/blog/fightinghate for examples of our efforts in combatting both violence and the targeting of others based on skin color, ethnicity, religion, or belief system.

Respectfully yours,

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