Unblock the internet

At the time of writing, we are in another period of remote learning. While this comes with a lot of downsides, being the positive, optimistic people we are, we will focus on one aspect that we find beneficial: freedom on the internet.

When students are learning on campus, and a website is used frequently, the school then can decide to block it. There certainly is a need for blocked websites, so that students will pay attention to teachers or, at the very least, do something moderately productive, but the scope of this blocking at Jackson Prep is far too great.

Teachers, faculty, and administrators are fooling themselves if they think that students are always trying to be productive. Study halls are often used to rest, and activity periods are not always used for finishing homework. Students need breaks throughout the day, and there is no reason why some of those breaks can be spent on harmless websites, shopping or watching movies, activities which are currently blocked.

Shopping websites are only the beginning. Many sites that are often used for educational purposes have also been banned. One prominent example of this is Twitter. You might be thinking, "Twitter is a time-wasting site and has no business being on any student's computer."

However, Twitter is different from other social media platforms, such as Instagram or Facebook. Twitter is primarily used to spread information, not just post about the latest party or meme. In fact, Twitter is oftentimes where news not only is reported, but where it happens. Yes, Twitter can be a time-waster, but so can Google or Youtube. Not all of Twitter's articles are educational, but the overall platform is, just like Google.

The censors have also blocked websites that pose no threat to education, like Spotify, Soundcloud, and Bandcamp. Many students like to listen to music while working on homework or studying. In fact, for a lot of students, listening to music increases productivity. There is no good reason that these websites should be banned.

There are rarely times when students can get on their computers and go to distracting websites during class. If they are going to a website used for entertainment, it is probably during a break. Excessive website banning incentivizes students to download a VPN to get around site blockers. This leaves rule-followers facing the punishment instead of those who now have access to every website.

We recommend that websites, such as Twitter, shopping websites, Soundcloud, Spotify, and Bandcamp be unblocked, and in the future, websites are not blocked as often or without taking into consideration how and when they can be used for good. The internet is a tool; let's use it properly.

Student are not allowed to go to many websites, including Netfilx and Twitter. Illustration by Kayln Giesecke