

# The Twenty-Six Words That Created the Internet

JEFF KOSSEFF

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**Free speech, trolling, and the law that changed our lives**

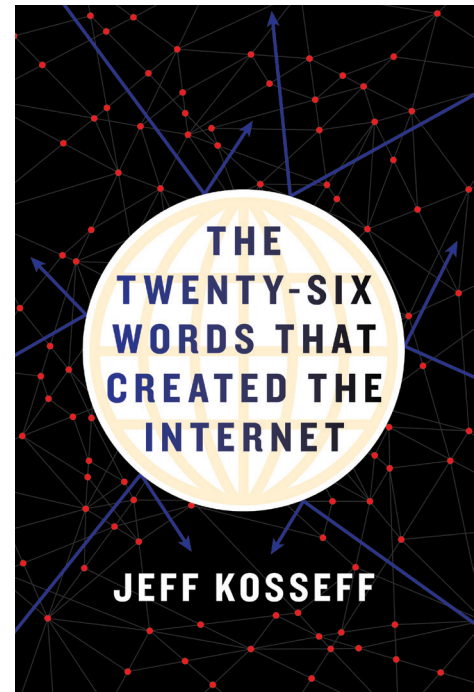
“No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider.”

Did you know that these twenty-six words are responsible for much of America’s multibillion-dollar online industry? What we can and cannot write, say, and do online is based on just one law—a law that protects online services from lawsuits based on user content. Jeff Kosseff exposes the workings of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which has lived mostly in the shadows since its enshrinement in 1996. Because many segments of American society now exist largely online, Kosseff argues that we need to understand and pay attention to what Section 230 really means and how it affects what we like, share, and comment upon every day.

The *Twenty-Six Words That Created the Internet* tells the story of the institutions that flourished as a result of this powerful statute. It introduces us to those who created the law, those who advocated for it, and those involved in some of the most prominent cases decided under the law. Kosseff assesses the law that has facilitated freedom of online speech, trolling, and much more. His keen eye for the law, combined with his background as an award-winning journalist, demystifies a statute that affects all our lives—for good and for ill. While Section 230 may be imperfect and in need of refinement, Kosseff maintains that it is necessary to foster free speech and innovation.

For filings from many of the cases discussed in the book and updates about Section 230, visit [jeffkosseff.com](http://jeffkosseff.com)

**JEFF KOSSEFF** Jeff Kosseff is Assistant Professor in the United States Naval Academy’s Cyber Science department, where he teaches cybersecurity law. He was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting and the recipient of the George Polk Award in National Reporting.



“Most people benefit from Section 230 every hour, but are unaware it even exists. Jeff Kosseff’s new book provides the first-ever comprehensive history of this monumentally important law. The book’s lucid and reader-friendly style will fully engage Section 230 newcomers; while the book’s many never-before-publicized details will enlighten Section 230 enthusiasts.”

—Eric Goldman, *Santa Clara University*

“So much of our life today—our reputation, networks, and livelihood—is mediated by our online presence. Kosseff’s excellent and well-researched book should thus be read by anyone interested in online regulation. It is a joy to read.”

—Orly Lobel, *author of You Don’t Own Me*