

your listening to TechTank a bi weekly podcast from the Brookings Institution exploring the most consequential technology issues of our time from racial bias in algorithms to the future work tech take takes big ideas and makes them accessible thanks for joining our Brookings TechTank Podcast on Darrell west senior fellow in the Center for Technology Innovation at the Brookings Institution it was a big night for Republicans with the results of the twenty twenty four elections now in Donald Trump has regained the presidency and Republicans have made big gains in the house and Senate given the new political landscape what is the outlook for technology policy and what will happen in terms of A. I. anti trust enforcement the digital divide relations with China crypto currency and disinformation to discuss these issues I am pleased to be joined by my Brookings colleague Nicol Turner Lee she is the director of the Brookings Center for Technology Innovation and the author of the Brookings book entitled digitally invisible I highly recommend that book we'll be discussing what to expect in the coming years and what people should watch from Capitol Hill in the administration Nicole welcome to our Brookings tech tent podcast hi Daryl so good to always be with you and have these types of conversations so let's have at it right it was a huge day for Republicans on election day you're right and Trump is our new president and it looks like Republicans already have majority control of the Senate and the house is not completely decided but it seems to be edging in the direction of Republicans so they may end up having unified control of both the presidency and Congress so Nicole let's talk first about a I there's been a lot of action in regard to Biden's A. I. executive order an A. I. regulation in general what do you expect in regard to the Trump administration on the issue of A. I. policy so this is going to be an interesting one right because obviously it's an executive order off the latest legislative action that came out of the White House from president Biden and vice president Harris who you know the the art trustworthy AI executive order that came at the end of October fact see TI I just wrote a series of responses as it celebrated its one year anniversary so if you think about what that order has been able to do it's given in the United States some type of global presence when it comes to artificial intelligence governance degree when we think about our relationship with China and Russia so you know the president elect has suggested months ago that were he to become president he was going to immediately repeal the EO which I think some people who are unfamiliar with the legislative process do not know how easy it is for new leadership to do so you know part of his concerned about you know biting Harris activity obviously you know it it should be I know you know there should be no drama about that we know why right but what's more interesting is that the president looks at the executive order sort of as another appendage of left wing politics and I think in his quest to get more deregulation he may also see it as a barrier that Alaska would you say about the high policy which I think is going to be interesting as well is that much of the A. I. policy is rooted in national security as well as intelligence and there's been some

suggestion that a president like Trump will sort of got that effort as well which would be interesting given that the national security memorandum just came out couple weeks ago but more important much of the activity of the A. I. has been embedded in federal agencies you know different agencies have already appointed a chief AI officer they have also worked hard to come up with types of guidance that aligns with their statutory requirements as federal agencies they have a bed among career professionals some activities that will help them to exercise equitable A. I. that steers clear of any type of diversity violation so I'm curious right given this new administrations presumption that federal workers are easy to get rid- I'm curious how that will also stand because I think much of that work you know over the last two years at least has been embedded within those agencies you know because that they ordered down if you remember it was a lead up from a variety of things right the adverse management framework they came out of next that is now widely used by industry the blue print that came out of the white house's office of society technology policy so I'm just curious like how do you end the chapters in a book even though you may want to get rid of the copper if that makes sense.

I know that makes complete sense and I agree that binds A. I. executive order will be reversed if not on day one shortly thereafter I do think there will be greater agency adoption of any I have heard Republicans already talking about the need to quote unleash a I and really see what I can do so I think there will be a much greater use of that throughout a federal agencies it's already being pretty substantial used in defense and for intelligence gathering we may see some of the domestic agencies a move in that direction that could be used to improve administrative functioning a twin hands productivity within individual agencies so I think there'll be a lot of action on that front I think what could be missing is Biden worked hard to try and start to put human guardrails in place for the use of AI I think Trump will be less concerned about that he will employ a lighter touch in terms of A. I. regulation in general if you go back to his first term they actually did quite a bit on A. I. but they work closely with industry they often I talk about voluntary compliance on the part of tech companies as opposed to government mandates requiring companies to do various things Chuck Schumer of course had wanted to push A. I. legislation and have there been a harassed administration and a democratic Congress there likely would have been a major efforts to pass a I. legislation that would put some guardrails in place that is not likely to happen with a Republican Congress and in the absence of federal action I do think a lot of A. I. regulations going to move to the state level we already are seeing a number of states a move in this direction and I think just given some of the public concerns about A. I. in terms of privacy bias transparency and so on if Washington does not act there will be state capitals around the country that will act now the other issue that I think it is noteworthy in terms of the Trump administration is just the whole topic of competition policy and anti trust enforcement we know that

those were a major areas for the Biden administration Biden actually appointed several well rather tough minded individuals to the Federal Trade Commission and the department of justice there were a number of enforcement actions are already under way against some of the large tech firms in terms of what we should expect in terms of the way Trump will handle anti trust enforcement I guess my view is we will still have anti trust enforcement because on the campaign trail both that Trump and his new vice president elect JD Vance actually talked tough on several of the large tech platforms Vance in particular I talked a lot about the tech platforms having a too much of power he had worries about that so he actually was more populous in regard to technology as opposed to Trump but in terms of anti trust enforcement we may end up in the situation of selective enforcement of competition policy because we know Trump is a very transactional guy he likes to negotiate with leaders their CEO's in companies he likes in one city doesn't like Elon musk obviously is on the like a issue so some of the regulatory problems that SpaceX and his other companies were facing will probably start to go away or there will be a reduced a will to enforce those types of actions but there may be other companies well where there will be continuing action against them there may be a continuing a lawsuits are there some companies that don't seem to be on the favored a list so I I think a Trump will have a multi faceted approach to anti trust which may depend in part on companies he likes versus companies he does not like that Nicole I'm curious your view on how Trump will handle anti trust enforcement you know I I think this is going to be a very interesting time at tech policy particulars of anti trust you know after a divided Harrison distribution and department of justice have laid out some clear cut cases of foreign for Smit and there is this sort of excessive enforcement is happening on the geopolitical level that I think will also factor into this conversation so I mean clearly you on that showed up on the campaign trail and he's been a vocal critic of companies like open a I'm cool so I'm very curious given you Baskin JD Vance's a range of allies in the tech industry you know will it fall along their preferences and will Trump essentially sort of listen to them as I visors one what companies you should go after what's also interesting about your question right in this conversation you and I talked about this a lot you know they have a scant campaign was not too different the Trump campaign when it came to noodling down on big tech companies employ wince and what their monopolies look like and areas in which both parties felt that there was just too much control whether it came with regards to the over exertion of social media for young people or take top right and Chinese own ability or other issues I'm curious as we go forward given she spoke about as well whether you know the Trump administration will sort of stay hands off and allow Congress in many respects a sort of come in and do the things that they've been wanting to do for a long time which is to repeal section two thirty which provides indemnification of social media companies from liability whether they will push children's privacy legislation vertically with the control of the Senate now you know

being able to make sure that you know this very ideological split when it comes to how much screen time is too much for young people in very conservative states will sort of be on the side of of you know movement which you know quietly kept may also be of interest to some certain Democrats but then I also think they'll be in the Trump administration when it comes to anti trust then remove the the god you know she's gonna probably one of the first people gone there's been talk that JD Vance has praised or the path for the type of great that she brings to the Federal Trade Commission but I would suggest to you you know I believe that there are certain people that are sitting waiting for her to leave so that they can go into a less of a hands on approach when it comes to enforcement and the types of trials but I generally think he's going to say but he did four years ago which is to permit mergers and acquisitions you know where he may or may not know the implications of it but he's going to think that it's good for business for me that's gonna be interesting because as you and I know since his last time in office B. A. I. space has expanded right Navidea is now dominating this market place the chip that has created new players we're starting to see you know for example a lot of more geopolitical concerns the work that we do a Brookings in particular when it comes to other countries and whose ally ship that we're gaining.

I had the opportunity to be in Spain I had during the election period there and it's very interesting a person and I'll keep her name was but she represented a small country that is engaging it that made this comment do you think a lot of votes will become the new advice from this because we might be able to move in a vacation in Europe because he gets it so I'm here it's kind of interesting the conversations that are happening but I do think that people should expect you know that conversation to be shaped a little differently if we rely upon B. intelligence and credibility of bus to sort of drive that agenda because I think you know is that what you want he's going to bring in a much more innovative look on many of these technologies that may be very interesting based on where we have been looking at them today primarily around like generative AI you know these there are much more complex hi compute high bandwidth technology that out there and I would be surprised if this administration tried to take those on I mean mass definitely is going to be a big player in the new administration but it'll be interesting because there are some issues where Trump and musk actually have differing views on the issues tariffs actually is one of those so it'll be interesting to see how they work out that some of those differences there Nicole you know that there been major efforts to close the digital divide you were actually the expert on that topic with your new book so Biden has been spending billions at in that area in an effort to really close that divide what do we think Trump will do to make progress on closing that digital divide this is gonna be interesting I mean you know I write about in my book Trump had something to do with the expansion of digital connectivity when he was in office in particular he was very

instrumental in promoting five G. technology in many respects are his administration particularly under an FCC controlled a Republican regime was able to move out of the way some permitting barriers as well as help us think through ways in which that we can just do better infrastructure build and development when the by industry she came in clearly their issue was getting to folks that were less connected that is like the the digital divide both which which I care deeply about what that look like Trump administration you know I don't know we're in the middle of probably the third or fourth year of the distribution of the broadband equity dollars that came out of the department of commerce that what the rise under the infrastructure act by by Dan Harris we are seeing states relying upon those funds to build out both infrastructure as well as advanced digital equity programs it's going to be one of those things that majority Republican Congress is going to continue to look at over reaching over spending which I think may have an impact on whether or not we fill the true promises of getting people connected now one thing that is interesting that people should actually pay attention to JD Vance actually supported the affordable connectivity program so I think that's something to be said that there may be some wiggle room for the affordability concerns critically those who voted for Trump who made under a hundred thousand had Tennessee to have less than a high school degree there might be an opportunity to help them as we recover from an economic standpoint but it's gonna be interesting there are paying attention to that I don't think it's going to fully go away I just think that it may be looked at differently that's interesting that you mention the role of JD Vance and I do think he is going to be very key very smart guy he has close ties to Silicon Valley Peter Theo was one of his mentors and supporters early in his political career so he will certainly have that Trump you're on a lot of these issues we also know that Trump has devoted a lot of attention to China it was a big issue during the campaign when he was president he impose major tariffs on Chinese imports Biden actually maintain those terrorists Trump has talked about getting even tougher with China raising the tariffs and also possibly placing tariffs on imports from other countries as well so I think that will certainly be a something to watch in terms of how that issue plays out and as I mentioned before terrorist acts sure one of the issues that divide Trump from Moscow so they will certainly have interesting conversations with that China is another issue where there could be differences between a truck and musk to Tesla obviously has this major a manufacturing facility in Shanghai and it's had a close relations with the Chinese government in so how Trump navigates that relationship of being tough on China about one of his best buddies you on us probably not wanting to be quite as a tough on China that will be interesting to watch there's this whole issue of export controls a Biden has imposed major export controls on the sale of various products to China I would expect that Trump to maintain that and possibly even be tougher in that area you know he talks a lot about the big trade imbalance with China and ways to navigate that I in his first term they actually negotiated

this agreement where China agreed to buy a bunch of new products agricultural products and other things from the United States in order to reduce the trade imbalance although there wasn't a lot of evidence of much follow through on that agreement but I suspect that there will be these types of discussions on tariffs export controls and just the whole trade imbalance with China well I mean this is going to be a big issue I mean it is very clear that there were some fine details his policies are pretty big the ones that have come out for agenda forty seven tariffs being a huge part of this in fact there I don't know if you read this recently you know the terrorists that will be imposed on the chip sack will also be significant suggesting that he may also abandoned that effort given the fact that he wants everything to be made in America not recognizing the potential blowback from Chinese companies if we would have to pay import taxes yeah now it's one of those things right that be I don't know how this is going to work out and I'm the kind of this I'm not going to actually speculate but I do agree with you and the tech ecosystem where supply chain matters and we know that yes we did have concerns which is why you know many Republicans many conservatives many folks who were not necessarily in alignment with the with inflation reduction act this is gonna come up and this is I think driving this conversation around terrorists be the answer to help us to maintain a vibrant economy here in the United States but you know as as many folks have already suggested in speculated the terrorists have to come from somebody and that means that it will come from the consumer somewhere along the line and so I am concerned about that I think you know there is some value in trying to make more of these goods in the United States I just read something recently about Arizona and the ice part of the chip sector the the manufacture facility that they just opened has begun to show some returns but still you know we're not quite there yet.

So I'm just curious how the market will react to that in health industry will react to that at some point and the extent to which is going to affect the supply chain going forward to your point you know it doesn't necessarily make us competitive in again I've heard when I was global people also suggests that these terrorists hi res the most concerned for that and the thing that I will be watching on that front is just how terrorists as well as that tax cuts contribute to inflation in the states because we know the people who end up paying the terrorists are not the companies but the consumer so there's likely to be an inflationary effect there if Trump does impose a terrorist out not just on China but on other countries around the world and then the twenty seventeen Trump tax cuts expire next year Democrats were hoping to use that as leverage to kind of re balance the tax code more in favor of middle class interest Trump has already indicated he plans to extend of the current tax cuts which would cost about five trillion dollars there are others who have other tax cuts so they wanna add there's likely to be A. for the reduction of the corporate tax rate but all these things could end up being

inflationary so one of the ironies of this new Trump administration is after all the criticisms of inflation under Biden which now is down almost two percent of their actually could be a renewal of inflation during the next Trump Trump yeah that's what I was if I can jump in here as I was trying to mention too and I want to correct myself it was the defense production act right I was referencing that raise a lot of alarm but it goes back to what you're talking about I think this administration tried to do things where it prevented additional inflationary measures right and I think again to your point by driving the market place around the tariffs what we're essentially going to see its potential consequential impact the weather not gonna see the economic growth that he's seeking you know now there's been a huge amount of crypto money that flowed into the twenty twenty four elections especially on the side of Republicans now with the G. O. P. a seemingly regaining control of the house and Senate it looks like increased regulation of cryptocurrency is not likely to happen so I'm just curious what you see as the future of crypto currency well you know I can say this I mean first and foremost let's acknowledge the crypto advocates have been wanting to have some type of symbolism right in the American economy and so this is their moment so I would suggest to you that Harris Biden administration and then the Harris campaign was always unclear as to where crypto stood when it came to economic outputs and perhaps Paris was even too late to come in it's about like a strategy for this I do think you know Trump has always been very open and amenable to the crypto community as a source of currency for the United States in many respects there are opportunities that exist there I can tell you from my research on in these communities of color our highly active in the cryptocurrency market place in see that as a way to create wealth or to build assets to digital currencies that they're not able to actually gave the traditional markets and banking I just sat on the commodities futures trading commission technology buys we counsel they did a really interesting paper on D. five which are you know these digital decentralized markets and the impact the consequences now with that being said all that was done technocratic administration I do think under a Republican administration you know with a very willing Republican Congress to be able to pass certain legislation to your point we're gonna see a lot of deregulation we're gonna see a lot of experimentation we'll see a lot of use of it now the challenge there are in this kind of goes back down so we'll be talking about for the episode all of these things I hope our listeners understand are interconnected so what the pioneers mystery she did do quite well is to at least tell the story of tech that we sit together it's a quilt don't you think like I think a past years things have been very silos but this particular administration I have seen the thing sort of relate to one another and what what I mean by that is crypto currency by itself yes is one area of the crypto currency coupled with you know a I technologies advance capable defense other types of highly sophisticated tackler logical systems becomes a little bit more dangerous right and I think that's something that we are going to have

to see if this administration cares about any of the consequential outcomes of technology for that matter going forward and I don't think they might you know I think I think that's not gonna be on the radar I think that there will be a big focus on advancing crypto advancing a high advancing space but I don't think that they'll be as much attention as we've seen in the last couple years one balancing of mitigating the rest yeah I agree space policy will definitely be a top priority for Musk and since he has the your Trump I'm sure he will push for some changes in that area and on the crypto area it's actually interesting how Trump's views have changed over time and it was that long ago he was actually a major critic of crypto currency but then as crypto money flowed into his campaign coffers as well as Republican congressional coffers he shifted to becoming much more favorable and sympathetic to a crypto there's actually been talked about shifting the locus of federal regulatory authority right now the securities and exchange commission has been the primary federal agency that oversees the cryptocurrency industry proponents would prefer to shift that to the commodity futures trading commission in hopes that it would be more sympathetic because the SEC actually took a brother tough a stance on the crypto currency and then there's also the possibility Congress has been mauling crypto legislation for several years and if there is unified Republican control of the house and Senate and a Republican president they may actually pass a crypto legislation that is pretty friendly to the industry that's right that's right and I think that's going to you know I think people didn't realize you know the down part of the ballots were equally important to the presidential election and so as research as you and I will continue see look at what are these impacts like a domino effect and I'm just curious given the greater concentration of control that we've seen in his prior administration you know how that's going to affect one the function of Congress in terms of being able to move legislation Gerry Connolly couple years but last year I was on a congressional hearing made a comment that this last Congress just was not able to pass anything you know I think that's going to be different to your point in this new Congress so I do think under tech policy we'll see more things and move without a house majority it will be easier for the things that have been sort of sitting in the balance to actually move forward crypto being one of them children's privacy being another one so I'm it's it's gonna be an interesting and interesting you know for years Darryl actually could be an interesting first one Hundred Days because he wants to come out of the gate fast so I expect a lot of action on tax cuts on A. I. and other things now the the last topic that we're gonna cover is disinformation and you know along Kim Mark and I have a new Brookings press book entitled lies they kill a citizen's guide to disinformation and in this election we actually solve lots of examples of disinformation and I actually have a new blog post on the Brookings fix gov a site about how disinformation help shape voter perceptions of various issues in this campaign we saw lots of lies about immigration crime and the economy there were fake Russian videos about immigrants voting

illegally which didn't actually take place there were examples of misinformation that was spread in terms of the hurricane disaster relief that money was going to undocumented immigrants as opposed to the people who actually were harmed by the flooding that came out of that.

So I think in a lot of respects there were ways in which disinformation affected the way voters saw all different types of issues I mean one of the things Trump talked about was this a huge crime wave coming from undocumented immigrants but the interesting thing is the National Institute of justice had a study in which they found that native born Americans actually had triple the crime rate of undocumented immigrants and so the facts are completely at odds with the Trump narrative but yet the Trump narrative one on immigration so I think there are as we move forward in terms of not only future election campaigns but future public policy discussions we need to get a handle on disinformation otherwise it's just going to continue to create a situation where there's a huge gap between a fact and what people actually think you know I'm glad you wrote that piece too because I do think the level of disinformation was discounted in this current campaign you know there were many folks that suggested that we weren't seeing disinformation or misinformation the same way we saw it in the twenty sixteen election where you know people were being told not to vote or their polling location at change I think the challenge was that this level of disinformation as I've heard it referred to by many scholars with much bigger into your point you know one of the areas which I found to be interesting you know on the democratic side their information was that the economy was great right because of the numbers of and those employed on the Republican side it was worse than ever and B. disinformation that also came out on that side we see basically suggesting to people that we were in doomsday now with that being the case I love how you reference in your piece all of these other videos and many of those are being done by Russian operatives right and the Chinese were hacking it acting into systems and cell phones and sort of re directing that data to use to amplify the other crises I think what happened in this campaign which I hope will be able to talk about you know there's been a lot this up work right now and what happened what happened to the Democratic Party why didn't people come out and vote but I think we really have to go to this conversation I think I was telling you the other day that disinformation misinformation are so ingrained in our society it has become people's truth and people vote their truth whether it's real or it's false and I love the way you've sort of frame did people were speaking to whatever truth that they had in this web in this ecosystem of information which they believed to be there their own right whether it was about I Tina's and immigration and the fact that you know the disinformation I I was I was I talked about this because I was actually in a conversation with free press would written a really great report about Spanish misinformation disinformation suggesting that they were vulnerable targets about three four months before the

actual election itself because they receive most of their news on social media and they tended to share that with other family members and friends and so you can only imagine right the web of disinformation that actually flooded that community and time will only tell the impact of what they saw and how that actually helps improve the way they voted my point is a sociologist this all appears to be just very much ingrained in our information ecosystem that we take it for granted that it's not our grandmothers misinformation disinformation this is the new web of disinformation and in many respects the other thing I think that was discounted in this prior election which sort of lead to where we are today in terms of being baffled in many respects on you know voter turnout numbers and why certain people stay home every week we have been able to unpack this clearly you know for the good of for the bad I think we do need to do some more research in places like Brookings need to be that place that actually generates that but you have to ask yourself you know where are people getting their news and what people consider to be their troops I dare I was founded like a Baptist preacher I had to stop because of my soapbox can't really wrap that podcast but I do think that I to your point in your book is wonderfully explains this you know the law it's a life that we tell ourselves right about our society which we live for the good over the bad right we all have something that we tell ourselves that we think is true the challenge is how that played out this campaign was also quite interesting because it also influence how people voted not to see where the boat it does that make sense that makes complete sense and Nicole it was great to be on the same podcast with you enjoyed our conversation and look forward to an exciting year on tech policy coming up and for our listeners we hope that you enjoyed this conversation and many others that we've had as part of this series we appreciate your listening don't forget to follow the tech talk blog for more details on many of the technology policy issues that we have discussed on this podcast you can find us at Brookings dot EDU thank you very much for tuning in thank you so much it's always so great to be on this podcast if you and for our listeners who come to us where we take very big bets in tech policy conversations and make them into very palatable bites and I hope everybody enjoyed this conversation I'm looking forward to the next tech tank podcast because we're gonna be doing some amazing conversations as the year Percy thank you for listening to tech take a series a round table discussions and interviews with technology experts and policy makers for more conversations like this subscribe to the podcast and sign up to receive the tech take newsletter for more research and analysis from the Center for Technology Innovation.