Killing the comments – Supplementary Material

Table S1. Codebook utilized to code comment removal statements and policies relying upon a modified grounded theory approach allowing for a focus on language used as well as emergent themes.

Code	Definition	Example (when necessary)
Alternative Efforts to Connect with Audiences	Use when orgs describe alternatives to own site-hosted platform comments	i.e. continue the conversation
How to Contact	Use when specific communication alternatives are discussed	i.e. write a letter to the editor
Bad Commenting Practices	Most frequent words, phrases, language used to describe unacceptable commenting; Code any variant of each word to appropriate subnode; Code to both sub nodes and parent node	
Abuse		
Commercial Promotion		
Direct or Indirect Attacks		
Hate		
In Relation to Article Subjects		
In Relation to Journalists		
Insults		
Intention to Derail, Hijack, or Bait Others		
Negativity		
Obscenity		
Off Topic Discussion		
Offensive		
Prejudice		
Anti-Jewish		
Homophobia		
Misogyny		
Racism		
Rudeness		

Shouting		
Spam	Including bots	
Vulgarity		
Comment Moderation Decisions	Use when orgs describe how and/or why they moderate comments; code to subnode when relevant	i.e. we have a team of moderators working around the clock; OR there are more commenters than moderators .. etc. etc.
Automation	Use when orgs describe an automatic process by which comments are moderated	
Case-by-Case Comment Allowance	Use when orgs describe some comments as permissible	
Human moderation and or moderation teams	Use when human moderation is described in any way (cross coding ok)	
Outsourcing of Comment Moderation	Use when outsourcing is described	i.e. social media
Selective Comment Activation	Use when orgs describe how/why they choose which articles on which to allow commenting	
Connection or Community Building	Use when orgs reference the idea that commenting or interaction with readers builds community	
Effects or Expected Outcome of Comment Removal	When orgs describe the expected outcome of their decisions regarding commenting; Parent node; code to sub nodes when applicable	
Comments or Discussions Hosted Elsewhere		i.e. social media
Effects of Incivility in Comments	When orgs describe consequences of bad commenting	i.e. journalists' mental health, misinformation, community discord, etc.
Importance and or Primacy of Conversation	The desire to continue commenting in a civil way	
Possibility of Temporary Removal	When orgs describe leaving the door open to hosting comments in the future or reversing their current decision	
Scaling Back Comment Section(s)		
Good Commenting Practices	Most frequent words, phrases, language used to describe acceptable commenting; Code any variant of each word to appropriate subnode; Code to both sub nodes and parent node	
Active Engagement		

Articulate		
Considered		
Constructive		
Critical and or Criticism		
Enjoyable		
Informed		
Insight, opinion, or idea		
Intellectual		
Intelligent		
Lively Discussion		
Maintains Civil Atmosphere		
Polite		
Respectful		
Smart		
Thoughtful		
Vibrant		
Lack of Anonymity		
Language Describing Removals	Most frequent words, phrases, language used to describe comment removal; Code any variant of each word to appropriate subnode; Code to both sub nodes and parent node	0
Close and or Closure		
Ending		
Killing		
Removed		
Shut Off		
Loss of Commenting Privilege	When orgs describe users banned from commenting	
Reader Reaction	When orgs reference their understanding that readers will react to their decision in a particular way	
Criticism of Decision	Assumptions of negative reader/public reaction	

Support for Decision	Assumptions of positive reader/public reaction
Reasons for Removing Comment Functions	Most frequent words, phrases, language used to describe reasoning for comment removal; Code any variant of each word to appropriate subnode; Code to both sub nodes and parent node
Accessibility	
Lack of Civility	
No Longer Useful	
Sensitive Stories and or Content	
Skewing Public Perception or Opinion	
Social Media Discussion	
Social Media	Use whenever each SM platform is referenced in any context
Facebook	
Instagram	
Journalist Accounts	
Reddit	
Tumblr	
Twitter	