What Is Your Social Credit Ranking?
The Coming Social Credit System
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Lacie is a young woman who lives in a world where your social media ranking determines where you live, how you travel, what you eat, and much more. Lacie's social score is 4.2, but she needs a 4.5 ranking to afford the apartment of her dreams.

Lacie goes to great lengths to improve her rating, including being excessively nice to total strangers and offering up high ratings to almost everyone she meets. In this phony society, an eye-embedded app lets people rate their interactions with one another and share status updates similar to Facebook, Instagram, and Yelp combined—but with serious stakes.

Characters who act nice and don't appear groveling can get five stars. But if they act negatively, they'll face one-star reviews. If someone drops too low, they become a kind of second-class citizen—they are socially shunned, shuttered out of workplaces, forced to pay a premium on leases, and penalized in myriad other ways. But all of Lacie's efforts to rise in a superficial world come to naught.

This is the scenario of creepy Episode One—called "Nosedive"—of the third season of the Netflix British TV series "Black Mirror." I don't recommend this disturbing episode or the series; I have only seen this first episode, and that was enough to tell me not to watch the rest of the series. It was so eye-opening to me that I had to look further into this subject.

The truly disturbing question is: Is it only fiction or is it taken from real life? How long before it comes to your town? Well, it's already happening.

The Nosedive episode takes a present tech-related paranoia to its extreme. But in the United States, this trend has already begun to be implemented corporately in a limited way. In China, a similar system is becoming a reality.

The marketing team for a top-secret super-car from Ford is promoting it as an insane offer. The street version of the car costs $500,000, but even if you have the money, Ford will not sell it to you unless you have at least 25,000 followers on Twitter or Facebook.

There are very few copies of the car available and Ford wants to make sure they go to

"influencers" on social media. Your social score must be high enough to prove your social status is of the highest caste—otherwise you cannot buy this car.

What is social scoring? Social Scoring is also known as your social media influence. Initially it began as the act of rating a person's level of influence based on evaluating one's followers, friends, and postings on social networks such as Twitter and Facebook.

Companies now have the capability to score millions, eventually billions, of people on their level of influence. But they are not simply looking at the number of followers or friends you've amassed; they also measure influence in more nuanced ways, and post their judgments—in the form of a score—online.

Putting in historical perspective: By 2013, the adoption of social scoring in mainstream culture helped build personal brands that could generate millions of dollars in sponsored-post revenue for the influencer, usually a celebrity. The thinking became that your rating could help determine how well you are treated by everyone with whom you interact.

Critics are increasingly concerned that we are moving closer to creating social media caste systems, where people with high scores get preferential treatment by retailers, prospective employers, even prospective dates.

It's important to note that social scoring is subjective and imperfect. Most analytic companies rely heavily on a user's Twitter and Facebook profiles, leaving out other online activities like blogging or posting YouTube videos.

As for influence in the offline world, it used to not matter, but now China has a social scoring system. President Xi has proposed a new law that bans Chinese citizens from airplanes and trains if they have a bad "social credit" rating. Citizens accused of "misdeeds" are banned from public transportation for a year. The penalties apply to those who have failed to pay fines or are guilty of spreading "false information." Of course, it's a short leap from spreading false information to merely having the wrong political views.

It will not be long before this system of social credit is more widespread in the United States and penalties are imposed for expressing politically incorrect views in public. Penalties might include loss of access to bank accounts and ATMs. This is what the critics are concerned about.

The danger of a social credit system hinges largely on its impenetrability. It's not clear

what factors affect someone's score, and so those with a low score may face exclusion without knowing why. Access to the benefits of the social credit system require a high score, but those who need these benefits the most may be structurally denied the opportunity to raise their score due to low education, an isolated social network, or untrustworthiness from having a low score to begin with. Additionally, contesting one's score can be characterized as disloyalty, lowering one's score further.

A combination of big data, statistics and behavioral analytics sets the basis of China's Social Credit System (SCS). Automated algorithms are used to structure the collected data, based on government rules that define good and bad. The government rules are what define the good and the bad. What remains unclear is whether data is also structured according to *its* trustworthiness, to eliminate errors through fake news or unreliable sources. The purpose of a universal ratings system is ostensibly to incentivize untrustworthy individuals in a society to shape up to what other members consider good.

The social media rating system will very likely end up creating a culture of disingenuity—a "numbers game" where people kiss up to popular folks to raise their social standing, rather than simply striving to be a better person. The outcome of such a system will not end happily for those who step out of line with popular opinion. We are already seeing that in this nation depending on whether you are on the Left or the Right. The media demonizes those on the Right and give credibility to the lies of the Left.

In March 2018, Reuters reported that restrictions on Chinese citizens and businesses with low trustworthiness Social Credit ratings would go into effect on May 1st, 2018.

The Chinese Social Credit System is scheduled to be fully implemented starting in 2020 and will be made mandatory for every citizen. Once implemented, every citizen will be rewarded or punished on the basis of their government-approved behavior.

The U.S. credit rating system right now is called your FICO score and is a precursor to the coming social credit system. They are already combing the scores of the different ones—Transunion, Experian, and Equifax. We already cannot buy or sell anything on credit without a good FICO score.

When you try to buy a house or vehicle on credit, your score is checked. What's yours? The base range is 300-850. With a score of 300 you can by nothing, not even a candy bar, on credit. A score of 850 means you can buy anything on credit up to your credit limit—anything at all.

It doesn't end there! If you are using Twitter or Facebook, you are already being programmed to accept this social credit system. It's not a number system; however, you give a like, love, laugh, surprise, sad, or anger rating. You have contributed to the scoring of others. Isn't it interesting how we get stuck in the system and cannot get out.

Do you "love" or "dislike" the articles others have posted on your phone? If so, welcome to the world of the social scoring system.

Do you go to websites that are politically incorrect? Do you know someone who does? If so, that will eventually be taken into consideration when you receive your Social Credit Rating, just like the people in China

What kind of influencer are you? Are you trustworthy? If so, we must ask, "To what?" To the standards of a corrupt government? Or, to God's standards? They are at opposite ends of the evil-to-good spectrum.

> **Proverbs 29:2** When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan.

As this social scoring system spreads around the world as a control mechanism over the social status of everyone, freedom of speech and religious liberty will be forcefully controlled. In some areas of the world the groaning has already begun.

The world will judge and score us harshly! How harshly do you score others?