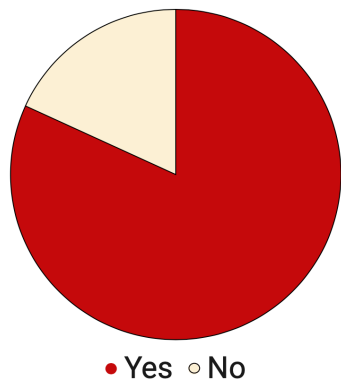


## What's Your Opinion?

Do you think The Herald's opinion page covers a wide range of topics?

Out of 33 responses:  
Yes -- 27  
No -- 6



## Next Poll:

### A-STATE SAFETY

Do you know where to go if there's a natural disaster on campus?

Students can answer the poll on The Herald's Instagram page, [@astateherald](https://www.instagram.com/astateherald). Instagram polls are posted on Mondays. Previous poll results can be found on [astatetheherald.com](https://www.astatetheherald.com). Have an idea for a poll? Send your ideas to [heraldopinion1921@gmail.com](mailto:heraldopinion1921@gmail.com).

These and future articles can be found on the Opinion section of The Herald's website.

# You do not own your digital library — Amazon does

LAILA CASIANO  
OPINION EDITOR



Laila Casiano is a senior multimedia journalism major from Paragould.

We gladly pay for digital content, but do we really own it? Not in the way we think — we are sleepwalking into a digitized ecosystem where ownership is disappearing. First our films and music, now our e-books.

In 2016, the World Economic Forum published a speculative fiction piece titled: "Welcome to 2030. I own nothing, have no privacy and life has never been better."

The article presented a futuristic world where personal ownership is obsolete and society functions as a shared service. The writer describes a world shaped by automation, artificial intelligence and sustainability —one where clean energy is free, transportation is efficient and major humanitarian concerns like environmental destruction

and economic instability have been eliminated.

At its core, the article is a looking glass into a possible future — one where unchecked capitalism and environmental neglect disillusion us about what it truly means to have personal ownership in the digital world, or more importantly, the lack thereof.

We are living in late-stage capitalism, where companies are decimating the meaning of ownership, turning everything from entertainment to necessities into subscription models. The oligarchy drains our wallets, and as music, television, video games and films become more digitized — the last relic of traditional ownership in the digital age — are now being targeted by corporate greed.

With the global e-book market projected to reach 1.1 billion users by 2027, Amazon dominated the industry, controlling 79% of all US e-book purchases and 67% of the market share.

So when Amazon announced a new policy change where users are no longer able to download books to personal storage outside of Amazon's ecosystem, people began to panic.

And although digital libraries remain intact, the change sparked uproar and concern not only over the inability to create physical backups of purchased books but also the permanence of digital

libraries and the extent to which readers actually control what they buy.

While many readers worry about Amazon deleting books outright, an even greater issue lurks beneath: digital rights management (DRM).

DRM means digital content such as e-books, music, movies and software can only be used in ways authorized by copyright holders. When e-books are DRM-protected on Amazon (or any other platform), Amazon remains the sole proprietor.

Readers risk having their books altered or censored without their knowledge or permission. A passage removed here, a paragraph edited there — silently stripping away content from books they rightfully purchased.

In 2009, Amazon deleted George Orwell's "1984" from its Kindle platform, removing the book from readers who purchased it from their own personal digital library. During this time, the topic of how easy it could be to censor in the digital age meant little as everything was still new, however as many southern states in the United States began to rack up numbers for which books should be banned or censored, this fear is justified now.

So, for those looking to push back, platforms like Kobo, Project Gutenberg and most independent booksellers offer DRM-free alternatives. But of course, the best option will always be to support your local library.

Read the rest at [astatetheherald.com](https://www.astatetheherald.com)

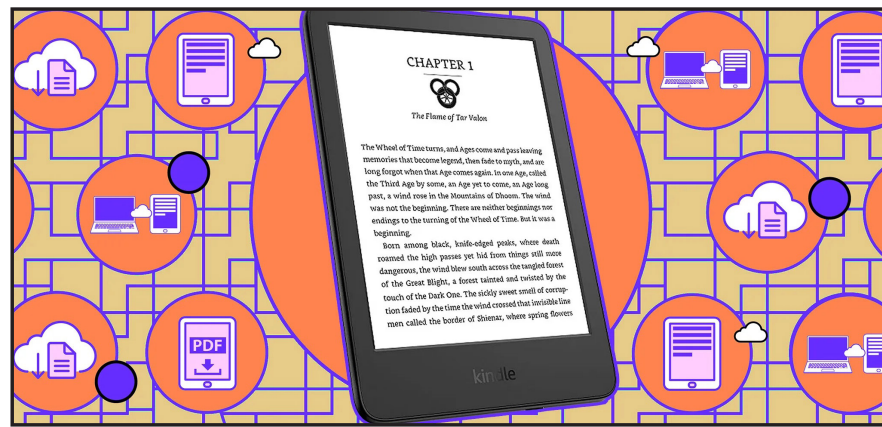


ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF THE VERGE

Illustration depicts an Amazon Kindle device with alternative backup methods.

# Bezos is latest pawn on Trump's chess board

ELIJAH TEMPLETON  
LIFE EDITOR



Elijah Templeton is a senior English major from Jonesboro.

A few weeks ago, Jeff Bezos, billionaire founder of Amazon, told the Washington Post staff that their opinion pages would now focus solely on "personal liberties and free markets." But this shift is not just about ideology or an editorial strategy, rather a calculated move to align with Donald Trump like his fellow billionaires who are attempting to consolidate power.

Bezo stated the assertion that free markets and personal liberties are core tenets of the American way of life and should be celebrated as such. On the surface this is seemingly not much of a story — after all, Bezos does own the Post and can realistically have the team cover whatever he wishes (a fair enough proposition for the \$250 million dollars

that Bezos paid for it).

Yet, the unofficial but far more likely reason for this sudden shift is that Bezos is attempting to cozy up to the Trump administration and stay off the hit-list that "big-tech" CEOs have so-often occupied since his first term in office.

Following in the footsteps of fellow titans in the tech industry like Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk, Bezos has rounded out the trio of the three wealthiest men alive who all aspire to stay in the good graces of the president.

In a nation that prides itself on "free markets" and "personal liberties" as Bezos declares, it should not be necessary to adjust company policy to ensure that your values more closely align with an incoming political administration.

Whether you believe it is fear of being in opposition to the most powerful man in the free world or simply dollars and cents that caused this move from Bezos, it is a troubling sign of an escalating problem.

When billionaires feel compelled to align themselves with a political leader for any reason, it should be cause for concern, especially when that political leader is as divisive and unpredictable as Donny boy.

Industry leaders in technology, commerce, social media and news publications are flocking to support

Trump's administration for one reason or another, effectively concentrating power in the hands of fewer and fewer people: the antithesis of the proclaimed "freedoms" that these individuals champion.

Business and politics have long been intertwined and acting like this is a new phenomenon would be naive but this public show of 'bending the knee' to Trump from the wealthiest and most powerful amongst us feels like the beginning stages of an American oligarchy.

While public sentiment has long been that the system works to keep the wealthy exactly where they are and vice versa for the poor, it has rarely been so

brazen as the first few months of this administration.

Trump has overhauled practically everything in Washington D.C. since his re-election and his billionaire cronies have followed suit, imposing his vision for America in their companies.

Perhaps this is just more of the same, with greedy people making decisions for greed's sake, but this time feels different.

The "market of ideas" that Bezos believes is underserved with talks of personal freedoms seems to be shrinking with every passing moment and, before we know it, could be closed to anyone who doesn't have the "right" ideas.

But of course, that's just one man's opinion.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF SKYNEWS.COM

Graphic depicts Bezos, Trump and the Washington Post.

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The March 12 Edition, the College of Veterinary Medicine story should have stated that the college will open Fall 2026.

In the March 12 edition, the chili cook-off story should have clarified Howl's Heroes as organizers of the event. Howl's Heroes is not directly affiliated with ROTC nor were funds raised for ROTC. The story should have identified John Volpe as the junior class representative of Howl's Heroes. Noah McAllister, Jillian Johnson and Kyle Johnson should have been identified as winners for the People's Choice Award for best chili.

### STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The Herald is printed every Wednesday during the semester, except during finals and holidays. Copies of The Herald are free.

### CORRECTIONS GUIDELINES

The Herald wants its news reports to be fair and accurate. We correct all errors of fact. If you know of an error, please contact us.

### EDITORIAL POLICY

Opinions expressed in personal columns are those of the writers and may not reflect the opinions of the staff as a whole.

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