Meta Ends Fact-Checking Program, Replaces It With New System: ‘We’ve Seen This Approach Work on X’

Meta is copying X’s Community Notes model, where users fact-check posts, in an effort to promote free expression.

Meta announced Tuesday that it is ending its eight-year independent fact-checking program for Facebook, Instagram, and Threads and moving instead to a Community Notes program written and rated by volunteers.

Community Notes asks users to flag posts that could be misleading or need to be removed, and then add an explanation citing their sources. The feature will roll out in the U.S. over the next few months.

Meta says it is making this shift because its previous third-party fact-checking program has been too biased and made “too many mistakes, frustrating our users.” Meta started the content moderation program in 2016, in the weeks after Donald Trump’s election, in response to outside political and social pressure urging it to curb misinformation. In response, Meta tasked outside organizations like The Associated Press and ABC News with looking over possibly false or misleading posts on its platforms to see if they needed to be deleted.

Now Meta states that third-party moderation has gone too far and is getting in the way of free expression. Plus, President-elect Donald Trump’s soon taking office indicates that the tide is turning towards free speech, according to Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

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“The recent elections also feel like a cultural tipping point towards once again prioritizing speech,” Zuckerberg said in a video posted to Facebook on Tuesday explaining the Community Notes change. “So we’re going to get back to our roots and focus on reducing mistakes, simplifying our policies, and restoring free expression on our platforms.”

Meta donated $1 million to Trump’s inaugural fund last month, with then-Meta president of global affairs, Nick Clegg, stating that Zuckerberg is eager to play a part in the Trump administration’s tech policies.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg. Photo Credit: David Paul Morris/Bloomberg via Getty Images

Meta is making other changes around allowed topics and automated systems. As of Tuesday, the tech giant will eliminate moderation rules on topics like immigration and gender identity.

In the past, Meta depended on automated systems to flag all policy violations, a system it says led to “too much content being censored that shouldn’t have been.” Now it will only rely on automated systems to flag illegal and high-severity violations and depend on users reporting issues for the rest.

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Meta follows the example of X in implementing Community Notes, a similarity Meta acknowledged.

“We’ve seen this approach work on X — where they empower their community to decide when posts are potentially misleading and need more context, and people across a diverse range of perspectives decide what sort of context is helpful for other users to see,” Meta wrote in a statement.

X began emphasizing Community Notes after Elon Musk bought the organization in the spring of 2022. An academic study released in April by researchers at the University of California, San Diego showed that X’s Community Notes were almost always accurate and referred back to high-quality sources.

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