Content Moderators Rip Facebook’s Decision Not to Act on Trump’s Post

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8 mins ago
A group of current and former content moderators became the latest to lash out at Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and the rest of the company’s top leaders over their inaction on a post by President Donald Trump.

The open letter expresses solidarity with the Black community following the death of George Floyd, along with dismay at Facebook’s failure to act on a post from Trump that was interpreted by many as threatening violence against demonstrators for its use of the phrase, “When the looting starts, the shooting starts.”

The signees pointed out their familiarity with how Facebook handles questionable content, writing, “We know how important Facebook’s policies are because it’s our job to enforce them. Our everyday reality as moderators is to serve as the public square’s first responders. We oversee all kinds of content, even the most hateful or gruesome, stay proactive and react when necessary to keep all communities safe—while also making sure we enable freedom of expression and information.”

While many Facebook employees protested Zuckerberg’s decision not to act on Trump’s post by virtually walking out on their jobs last week, the content moderators noted that this was not an option for them, due to both nondisclosure agreements with the companies that they work for, as well as financial concerns.

They wrote, “We would walk out with you—if we could afford it. At the moment, content moderators have no possibility, no network or platform or financial security—especially when we are atomized in pandemic and remotely micromanaged—to stage an effective walkout without risking fines, our income and even our right to stay in the countries where we live and work.”

The signees said Zuckerberg expressing his personal dismay with Trump’s rhetoric wasn’t enough, urging the social network’s top management to change course, as well as urging their colleagues: “Let’s mourn. Let’s organize. Let’s unionize.”

They wrote, “Current events prove that we cannot passively accept our role of silent algorithm facilitators—not when our screens are being flooded with hate speech. Not when we are forced to witness the impact of the dogwhistles and countless hours of livestreamed police brutality, of pain inflicted on Black bodies.”

The open letter was signed by four active content moderators who remained anonymous for obvious reasons, as well as former content moderators Reine Laferrere, Anita Pohl, Ibrahim Waziri and Valera Zaicev.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/content-moderators-rip-facebooks-decision-not-to-act-on-trumps-post/

Twitter Begins Adding Fact-Check Labels to Tweets

Claiming That 5G Causes Covid-19

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2 hours ago
Twitter said last month that it would begin adding labels and warning messages to tweets containing disputed or misleading information related to the coronavirus pandemic, and that initiative has been extended to tweets claiming that 5G causes Covid-19.

The social network is adding a label below those tweets, reading, “Get the facts on Covid-19,” and directing users to a Twitter event debunking the theory.

The event contains information and context from news articles, tweets and official sources.

A Twitter spokesperson said, “We’re prioritizing the removal of Covid-19 content when it has a call to action that could potentially cause harm. As we’ve said previously, we will not take enforcement action on every tweet that contains incomplete or disputed information about Covid-19.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/twitter-begins-adding-fact-check-labels-to-tweets-claiming-that-5g-causes-covid-19/

Facebook Files Lawsuit Over 12 Deceptive Domain Names

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3 hours ago
Facebook filed a lawsuit in Virginia Monday against 12 domain names that were registered by Compsys Domain Solutions, a proxy service based in India.

Director and associate general counsel for intellectual property litigation Christen Dubois said in a Newsroom post that Facebook reached out to Compsys about domain names including facebook-verify-inc.com, instagramhjack.com and videocall-whatsapp.com, and it did not receive a response.

Dubois wrote, “We regularly scan the internet for domain names and applications that infringe on our trademarks, and today’s lawsuit is part of this ongoing effort to protect people from phishing, credential theft and other methods of online fraud.”

The company filed a similar lawsuit in Arizona in March against domain name registrar Namecheap and its Whoisguard proxy service for registering 45 deceptive domain names including instagrambusinesshelp.com, faceboo0k-login.com and whatsappdownload.site.

And last October, Facebook filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of California against OnlineNIC and ID Shield, accusing them of trademark infringement and cybersquatting via domain names including buyinstagramfans.com, facebook-fans-buy.com, facebook-mails.com, facebook-pass.com, facebook-pw.com, facebookphysician.com, facebookvideodownload.net, findfacebookid.com, hackingfacebook.net,

hacksomeonesfacebook.com, iiinstagram.com, instaface.org, instagram01.com, lamsocialfacebook.net, login-instagram.com, m-facebook-login.com, singin-lnstargram.com, trollfacebook.com, www-facebook-login.com and www-facebook-pages.com.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/facebook-files-lawsuit-over-12-deceptive-domain-names/

Mark Zuckerberg Promises Reviews of Several Facebook Policies

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17 hours ago
Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg waited until late Friday to address a week of criticism, both internal and external, over his refusal to act on posts from President Donald Trump, and that response was mostly, “We’re going to review.”

To recap, Trump posted on Facebook and Twitter last Tuesday, claiming that mail-in ballots will not be “anything less than substantially fraudulent.

Twitter posted a fact-check label on two of his tweets, directing users to credible sources and drawing the ire of the president, who issued an executive order last Thursday with the aim of rolling back Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which provides protection to social networks by removing liability for content generated by their users.

Facebook took no action.

In the wee hours of last Friday morning, in response to protests over the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police, a post from Trump on both social networks contained the phrase, “When the looting starts, the shooting starts.”

Twitter placed a label over the tweet for violating its rules on glorifying violence, while Facebook again took no action.

Zuckerberg said in a Facebook post late last Friday, “Personally, I have a visceral negative reaction to this kind of divisive and inflammatory rhetoric,” but the post would not be taken down because references to the National Guard implied state action, which he felt people needed to know about.

That explanation did little to pacify critics, including Facebook employees, some of whom left the company this week due to their strong feelings about how this issue was handled.

Again waiting until the bitter end of the work week, Zuckerberg posted Friday evening, “As we continue to process this difficult moment, I want to acknowledge the real pain expressed by members of our community. I also want to acknowledge that the decision I made last week has left many of you angry, disappointed and hurt. So, I am especially grateful that, despite your heartfelt disagreement, you remain focused on taking positive steps to move forward. That can’t be easy, so I just want to say I hear you and I’m grateful.”

He addressed seven areas to be examined after gathering feedback from employees, civil rights experts and internal subject matter experts, often leading with the phrase, “We’re going to review,” and warning that changes may not be made in all of these areas.

1. Zuckerberg pledged to review policies regarding discussion and threats of state use of force, saying the

two specific situations the social network will focus on are excessive use of police or state force, and ongoing civil unrest or violent conflicts.

2. Voter suppression policies will be reviewed, taking into account the reality of voting during a pandemic. He wrote, “There’s a good chance that there will be unprecedented fear and confusion around going to the polls in November, and some will likely try to capitalize on that confusion.”
3. Facebook will review options for content that violates or partially violates its rules besides simply allowing it to remain on the platform or taking it down, including potentially adding labels, a la Twitter. Zuckerberg cautioned, “I worry that this approach has a risk of leading us to editorialize on content we don’t like even if it doesn’t violate our policies, so I think we need to proceed very carefully.”
4. Zuckerberg said Facebook will work on establishing a clearer and more transparent decision-making process, saying that since he accepts the recommendations of the team led by vice president of content policy Monika Bickert, the process should begin there. He added, “For the most sensitive escalations, where I discuss with the team further rather than just accepting their recommendation over email, we can try to outline how we incorporate all perspectives into those follow-up discussions, as well, even though that tends to vary depending on the equities at stake in each decision.”
5. He also promised to review whether the right people are at the table when decisions are made, with an eye toward “elevating the representation of diversity, inclusion and human rights in our processes and management team discussions.”
6. Zuckerberg said Facebook “started a workstream” for building products to advance racial justice, adding that it will be led by Facebook application head Fidji Simo and include people who are currently on the company’s

Facebook NPE Team.

7. Finally, Facebook will build a voter hub to “double down” on previous get-out-the-vote efforts. Zuckerberg wrote, “We’ll focus on making sure everyone has access to accurate and authoritative information about voting, as well as building tools to encourage people to register to vote and help them encourage their friends and communities to vote, as well.”

He concluded, “We have so far to go to overcome racial injustice in America and around the world, and we all have a responsibility and opportunity to change that. I believe our platforms will play a positive role in this, but we have work to do to make sure our role is as positive as possible. These ideas are a starting point, and I’m sure we’ll find more to do as we continue on this journey.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/mark-zuckerberg-promises-reviews-of-several-facebook-policies/

Pinterest Adds Features to Support Black Lives Matter

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19 hours ago

Pinterest added some new features this week aimed at connecting its users to resources related to Black Lives Matter.

The Today tab will feature daily inspiration curated by the Pinterest team, including resources on how to be an ally, how to speak with your kids about racism and a celebration of art.

When Pinners search for Black Lives Matter, they will see recommended trending topics like Black Lives Matter protest, along with quotes and art, over a black background. Pinterest said this debuted on the web Friday and will be extended to its mobile applications next week.

Pinterest created a Black Lives Matter board containing topics such as organizations to donate to and how to support Black-owned businesses.

Searches for protests on Pinterest were up 25 times during the week of May 25 compared with the previous week, and top searches over the past week included Black Lives Matter protest signs, protest art and peaceful protest quotes.

Searches for justice also reached their highest level ever on the platform, up four times during the week of May 25 versus the prior week, with trending searches including justice for George Floyd, justice quotes and no justice no peace.

Finally, Pinterest noted a spike in searches for racism is taught.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/pinterest-adds-features-to-support-black-lives-matter/

Facebook: No Foreign Interference Related to Nationwide Protests

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21 hours ago

Content from one of the pages removed in Iraq
Facebook head of cybersecurity policy Nathaniel Gleicher said Friday that the social network has not discovered foreign interference on its platform related to the demonstrations that have been occurring across the country in reaction to the death of George Floyd.

U.S. Attorney General William Barr said Thursday that foreign

groups were using misinformation campaigns to widen divisions in the country's society, mirroring efforts by Russian entities that influenced the 2016 presidential election, Elizabeth Culliford of Reuters reported.

Gleicher said during a press call Friday, "We have been actively looking, and we haven't yet seen foreign interference or domestic coordinated inauthentic behavior targeting these protests. We want to caution people against jumping to conclusions without clear evidence of foreign interference."

Facebook also released its Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report for May 2020 Friday, providing details on two networks that were removed from its platform.

One network originated in Tunisia and focused on Francophone countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, using fake accounts to impersonate locals, post and like their own content, drive people to off-Facebook sites and manage groups and pages posting as independent news entities.

Some pages in the group engaged in deceptive audience-building tactics such as changing their focus to political themes and changing their names and administrators several times.

Facebook said it removed 446 pages, 182 accounts, 96 groups, 60 events and 209 Instagram accounts.

The social network also removed 324 pages, 71 accounts, five groups and 31 Instagram accounts that originated in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and focused on domestic audiences.

Facebook said fake accounts were used to post in groups, impersonate local politicians and political parties and manage pages purporting to be news entities, adding that some of those fake accounts had already been detected and disabled by its automated systems.

The social network said this activity was tied to individuals

associated with Zanyari Agency, part of the intelligence services of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraqi Kurdistan.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/facebook-no-foreign-interference-related-to-nationwide-protests/

Facebook’s Photo Transfer Tool Goes Global

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17 hours ago
Facebook’s photo transfer tool is now available globally, meaning that users anywhere in the world can transfer their photos and videos from the social network to Google Photos.

Testing of the tool began in Ireland last December, before being expanded to countries in Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region in February.

More European Union countries (including the U.K.) got the photo transfer tool in March, as did markets in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia.

And the tool was released in the U.S. and Canada at the end of April.

Director of privacy and public policy Steve Satterfield wrote in a Newsroom post when testing began last December, “At Facebook, we believe that if you share data with one service, you should be able to move it to another. That’s the principle of data portability, which gives people control and choice while also encouraging innovation. Today, we’re releasing a tool that will enable Facebook users to transfer their

Facebook photos and videos directly to other services, starting with Google Photos.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/facebooks-photo-transfer-tool-goes-global/

Facebook Confirms Test of Email Marketing Tools for Small Business Pages

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14 hours ago
Facebook confirmed that it is testing new email marketing tools for pages with a small number of small and midsized businesses.

The social network said the new tools, should they be released, will enable SMBs to create email contact lists individually or by uploading contact lists from spreadsheets, after which they can compose emails via easy-to-use tools and send those emails directly via the Facebook platform, with the ability to track their performance.

Businesses that are part of the test group can access the new email marketing tools through a Marketing Emails tab in their pages’ inbox.

Meg Coffey/Facebook

Meg Coffey/Facebook

Meg Coffey/Facebook
Coffey & Tea managing director Meg Coffey tipped off Adweek about the test and shared the screenshots in this post.

A spokesperson for Facebook said in an email, “We’re testing new email marketing tools with a small number of businesses to help them more efficiently notify their customers of changes to their services and operations. We’re evaluating whether these tools are beneficial for people and businesses before deciding whether to expand it further.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/facebook-confirms-test-of-email-marketing-tools-for-small-business-pages/

Snapchat Dynamic Product Ads Are Now Available Worldwide

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15 hours ago
Snapchat’s dynamic product ads are now available worldwide, after previously being offered only in the U.S.

The messaging application began testing dynamic product ads last October as a way to enable brands to automatically create

ads in real-time based on their own product catalogs, which can potentially contain hundreds of thousands of items.

The worldwide expansion of the ad unit kicked off in the U.K. Wednesday, and advertisers there can automatically create ads in real-time, based on their product catalogs, which can be served in multiple markets globally.

Brands that have been testing dynamic product ads include Adidas, Farfetch and Topshop.

Snap Inc. said dynamic product ads enable brands of all sizes to easily showcase their products in a professional layout through easily customizable ad formats.

The company also cited data from the Interactive Media in Retail Group that online sales reached a 10-year high in

April, marking a year-over-year spike of 23.8%.

Snap Inc. is working with partners including 4C, Brainlabs and Smartly.io on dynamic product ads.

Snapchat U.K. general manager Ed Couchman said in a statement, “The coronavirus has accelerated the need for businesses to look at their digital sales channels and encouraged them to be more innovative in how they do that. Since we opened up beta-testing, I was impressed at the number of businesses that wanted to get involved—far above what we expected—which really shows the appetite for brands to get on board with ecommerce. Dynamic product ads is the latest in a series of innovative ad solutions that Snap has rolled out to advertisers, focused on efficiency and return on investment, and we are seeing strong results from advertisers in multiple sectors, from high street clothing stores to food delivery, that have been testing the product.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/snapchat-dynamic-products-ads-are-now-available-worldwide/

Former Reddit CEO Ellen Pao Rips Current Reddit CEO Steve Huffman

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12 hours ago
A letter to Reddit employees from current CEO Steve Huffman drew the ire of former CEO Ellen Pao.

Huffman shared his letter to all Reddit employees in response to the nationwide racial unrest and demonstrations spurred by the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis May 25 following the use of excessive force by the police during an arrest.

He wrote, in part, “We work for this platform because we care deeply about community and belonging. But community and belonging are not possible without safety from violence, and now is the time to stand in solidarity with the Black members of our communities (locally, at Reddit, on Reddit and beyond). As Snoos, we do not tolerate hate, racism and violence, and while we have work to do to fight these on our platform, our values are clear.”

The Snoo is the Reddit mascot.

Pao, who resigned as Reddit’s CEO in July 2015 following controversy over the removal of five subreddits for harassment, blasted Huffman’s letter in a tweet.

She wrote, “I am obligated to call you out: You should have shut down the_donald instead of amplifying it and its hate, racism and violence. So much of what is happening now lies at your feet. You don’t get to say BLM (#BlackLivesMatter) when Reddit nurtures and monetizes white supremacy and hate all day long.”

> *I am obligated to call you out: You should have shut down the_donald instead of amplifying it and its hate, racism, and violence. So much of what is happening now lies at your feet. You don’t get to say BLM when reddit nurtures and monetizes white supremacy and hate all day long* ***https://t.co/VN5XCiYp5g***
>
> *— Ellen K. Pao (@ekp)* ***June 2, 2020***

Pao was referring to subreddit the_donald, which was placed behind a quarantine screen last July for “significant issues with reporting and addressing violations of Reddit’s rules

against violence and other aspects of the content policy.”

In addition to the quarantine screen, further measures were put in place to keep posts from the_donald from interfering with other areas on the site.

Reddit declined to comment.

Reddit was one of the first social platforms to take action against the alt-right movement in February 2017 and against QAnon in September 2018.

Its policies were overhauled in 2018 to further ban several potential hate-oriented subreddits.

Huffman went on to say that in the short term, Reddit is exploring options including on-site activations, shifting marketing resources and hosting Ask Me Anything sessions to help guide conversations on its platform.

Longer-term, he stressed support of voting reform and said there was more that Reddit can do on this topic in the context of Covid-19 and potential threats to the integrity of the upcoming presidential election in the U.S.

Huffman concluded, “I am heartened to see so many of our Snoos looking for ways to stand up, both outside of work and with your fellow Snoos (whether making donations to national and local orgs fighting racism and police violence or asking how to be better allies to coworkers of color and more). The people and culture team and I spoke earlier with people leaders to start what will be ongoing conversations at Reddit around allyship and how we as a company show up, speak out and take action. We will share more at this Thursday’s all-hands (if not before) on how we are going to do so.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/former-reddit-ceo-ellen-pao-rips-current-reddit-ceo-steve-huffman/