What just happened this week?



Ah, what a year this week has been! Our entire perception of time has already been skewed by the pandemic, but even by *that* standard the last few days have felt like a bizarre time warp, starting with a Slack outage on Monday that seemed like it would be the story of the week. Oh how naive we were. Of course, Wednesday's attack on the Capitol as Congress was certifying the Electoral College results dominated the rest of the news cycle, and social media and other online platforms decided that by inciting the rioters, the president had finally crossed a line.

Here's a review of the tumultuous first week of 2021.

Wednesday, January 6th

After he spoke to a rally near the White House, a mob of Trump supporters marched on, and broke into the US Capitol building. Five people were killed, and scores have been arrested with more to come. YouTube scrambled to moderate livestreams and surface authoritative sources as rioters livestreamed their activities. President Trump posted a video repeating that the election had been stolen and praising the protesters, which

Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook all promptly removed from their platforms. Twitter issued a 12 hour ban on the president, requiring him to delete several tweets that appeared to glorify the violence at the Capitol. Facebook and Instagram banned Trump for 24 hours.

Thursday, January 7th

At about 3:30 a.m., Vice President Mike Pence affirmed the results of the presidential election, cementing President-elect Joe Biden's victory. The largely ceremonial action came after Congress returned to the Capitol following the expulsion of throngs of rioters. But the consequences of Wednesday's violence for President Trump started to become clear. Facebook banned the president "indefinitely", ensuring he won't be able to post there for the remainder of his term. Shopify took down Trump's campaign store, where his followers purchased Make America Great Again hats and other merch. YouTube announced it would punish Trump and other channels for spreading election lies, and Twitch said it was disabling Trump's account. TikTok, the video platform that had been in the president's crosshairs for months, removed a video of Trump inciting supporters to storm the Capitol.

Friday, January 8th

As the House considered impeaching Trump a second time, more platforms made their restrictions on the president and his followers permanent. The Alphabet Workers Union called on YouTube to ban Trump, and Reddit banned the r/donaldtrump forum for inciting violence. Apple and Google faced pressure to deplatform social site Parler over calls to violence, and later in the day, Google pulled Parler from its Play Store, with Apple threatening to do the same. Gaming chat platform Discord banned pro-Trump server 'The Donald' and Twitter banned QAnon supporters, including former national security adviser Michael Flynn.

And after hundreds of Twitter employees called for Trump to be banned, at long last, the president’s favorite social media platform pulled the plug: Twitter permanently suspended his realDonald Trump account, after he resumed tweeting and said he would not be attending President-elect Joe Biden’s inauguration. Trump tried to tweet from the @POTUS account, but those tweets were removed almost immediately.

Saturday, January 9th

By Saturday afternoon, several Trump administration officials had resigned, and Sen. Richard Warner called on telco and social platforms to preserve content about the attack on the Capitol that could be digital evidence. The United States Capitol, Warner wrote, “is now a crime scene.”

Late Saturday, Apple announced it would ban Parler from its App Store, saying the app “has not upheld its commitment to moderate and remove harmful or dangerous content encouraging violence and illegal activity.”

Biden’s inauguration is 11 days away.

***Update January 9th, 9:05PM ET**: Added Apple’s ban on Parler*

https://www.theverge.com/2021/1/9/22221669/what-just-happened-this-week-trump-social-media-capitol-twitter-facebook-parler