


[National](#) | [World](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [Travel](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Technology](#) | [Finance](#) | [Sport](#)

 technology  [online](#) > [social](#)

Drugs, sex, and death at work: Facebook posts leaving moderators traumatised

Extreme content on Facebook is being blamed for a rise in radicalisation, but the posts we don't see are taking a huge toll on the moderators.

Sean Keach

🕒 SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 6:39AM

[Video](#) [Image](#)


Facebook has announced its first major policy shift banning white nationalist content in the wake of the Christchurch sh...



advertisement

Facebook moderators have revealed how they're becoming "addicted" to extremist content, according to a new report.

Some workers even say they have hoarded troves of dodgy content for their own personal collections.

Facebook uses teams of third-party moderators to scour the app for banned or illegal photos, videos or posts.

And workers at one office in Berlin told [The Guardian](#) that they had developed addictions to extreme content.

Even their political and social views were influenced after being forced to view fake news and hate speech constantly.

Employees also scoured through texts sent through Facebook Messenger, to uncover sexual abuse against children.

Algorithms flag up these rogue messages, which are then reviewed by moderators.

"You understand something more about this sort of dystopic society we are building every day," said one worker.

"We have rich white men, from the US, writing to children from the Philippines.

[National](#) | [World](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [Travel](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Technology](#) | [Finance](#) | [Sport](#)



shift.

That's roughly one issue every 30 seconds.

According to recent reports, this number has now been reduced to between 400 and 500 items per day.

RELATED: [Facebook ploy to tackle extremists](#)

RELATED: [Facebook slammed over privacy rejection](#)

In a statement given to *The Sun*, Facebook said: "Content moderators do vital work to keep our community safe, and we take our responsibility to ensure their wellbeing incredibly seriously.

"We work closely with our partners to ensure they provide the support people need, including training, psychological support and technology to limit their exposure to graphic content.

"Content moderation is a new and challenging industry, so we are always learning and looking to improve how it is managed.

"We take any reports that our high standards are not being met seriously and are working with our partner to look into these concerns."



Facebook launched a campaign in Britain to counter the spread of online extremism following warnings from former PM Theresa May after four terror attacks in three months. Picture: Leon Neal/AFP Source:AFP

Back in February, a report revealed how Facebook moderators were using drugs and having sex at work to cope with their PTSD symptoms.

One moderator even reportedly found himself believing in the warped conspiracy theories he had to monitor continually.

Based in a facility in Arizona, operated by third-party contractor Cognizant, employees are constantly bombarded with sexual, violent, and bloody content — for \$A20 an hour.

advertisement

[National](#) | [World](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [Travel](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Technology](#) | [Finance](#) | [Sport](#)



minute breaks, a 30-minute lunch break, and nine minutes of “wellness time”.

To add to the hell employees endure, they reportedly find themselves spending their breaks — the only peace they have at work — queuing for the toilets.

For a facility that houses hundreds of workers, there are apparently three bathroom stalls, which are reportedly often occupied by people having sex.

As a means of coping and escape, employees also snuck into the facility’s nursing rooms.

It reportedly got so bad, the locks had to be removed from nursing room doors.

The Verge reported the psychological stress had turned many to drugs and alcohol, with many smoking marijuana while working.

Cognizant employees were apparently even contending with threats from ex-employees, who send threats after being sacked.



Facebook’s moderators are suffering mental health problems due to the images and videos they are forced to watch.

Picture: iStock Source: iStock

Then in June, a Facebook moderator died from a heart attack while sifting through gruesome videos on the social media platform.

In an investigation by [The Verge](#), Keith Utley was just 42-years-old when he died at his desk.

He had spoken out about how the grotesque videos were affecting his mental health, but he was also desperate to keep his job to support his family.

A former lieutenant commander of the Coast Guard he was one of the 800 workers employed by Cognizant — a Facebook content moderation site in Tampa, Florida.

The stress of the job was crippling Keith, who openly expressed that he was struggling with the content he was seeing.

According to The Verge, regular exposure to such distressing scenes resulted in

[National](#) | [World](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [Travel](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Technology](#) | [Finance](#) | [Sport](#)



Night worker Keith was found slumped over his desk in March last year. His colleagues raised the alarm when they noticed he was in distress and started sliding out of his chair.

According to The Verge, two began to perform CPR but no defibrillator was available in the building.

By the time paramedics arrived, one worker said that Keith had already begun to turn blue.

Allegedly, some staff members didn't even look up from their screens and continued to moderate.

Keith was pronounced dead in hospital, further information about his health history or exact circumstances of death were not released.

He left behind his wife Joni and two young daughters.

According to insiders, workers on the day shift were informed that there had been an incident but were not told that Keith had died.

After the Christchurch massacre, [Facebook promised instant bans for rogue live-streamers](#) under a new "one-strike policy".

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg also admitted that [the social network should be regulated after the attack](#).

This article originally appeared on [The Sun](#) and was reproduced with permission

Do you think Facebook does enough to protect users and moderators? Comment below



Comments

Show comments ▾

How one perfect taste launched a brand

Three decades ago Jo and Craig started a chocolate company with two aims: to make the world's finest flavours, and to source ingredients ethically.

We Recommend

Never Overpay Again - This Tool Finds Every Promo Code on the Internet

Promoted | Honey

Flinders Dining Bench - Online Only

Promoted | Now \$649 - mattblatt.com.au

Trade Gold With A Trusted Partner, Start Today!

Promoted | IC Markets

Mr Lee's Noodles - Now Available at Woolworths!

[National](#) | [World](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [Travel](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Technology](#) | [Finance](#) | [Sport](#)



This Pocket Device Allows You To Speak 43 Languages Instantly

Promoted | Muama Enence

Best home loan awards announced for 2019

Promoted | Mozo

Adina Apartment Hotel Auckland Britomart

Promoted | Adina Auckland Britomart

Go-To is jammed with stuff your skin ACTUALLY needs. (Hydration! Anti-oxidants! Diamonds!)

Promoted | Go-To skin care

Real story behind Margot's hit movie

Promoted | Foxtel

Vibe Hotel Rushcutters Bay Sydney

Promoted | Vibe Hotel Rushcutters

New South Wales: People With 5-49 Vehicles Have Discovered This Tracker

Promoted | Expert Market Vehicle Tracker

5 Custom, Tailored Shirts For 4* | Use code '5FOR4'

Promoted | InStitchu

You can make a difference...

Promoted | Arnhem

[Jump back to top](#) ^

[Follow us](#)

[Advertise](#)

[About us](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Connect](#)

Be rewarded
for your opinions

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Relevant Ad Opt-Out](#) | [Cookie Policy](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#)

A NOTE ABOUT RELEVANT ADVERTISING: We collect information about the content (including ads) you use across this site and use it to make both advertising and content more relevant to you on our network and other sites. [Find out more about our policy and your choices, including how to opt-out.](#)

News Pty Limited Copyright © 2019. All times AEST (GMT +10).

Powered by [WordPress.com](#) VIP