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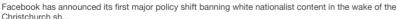
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Drugs, sex, and death at work: Facebook posts leaving moderators traumatised

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







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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.

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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.

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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.

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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 exemployees, 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

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National \mid World \mid Lifestyle \mid Travel \mid Entertainment \mid Technology \mid Finance \mid 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.

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



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