A core team of dedicated product, engineering, and design Facebookers are tackling the most glaring problems with what happened: increasing verification procedures for US political advertisers, exposing the funding source of political ads, making active ads available regardless of targeting, and publicly archiving political ads as they run. We are taking initial steps to prioritize civility above other objectives in this space, but we can go even further— use the existing framework for how our ads system works to empower people with information:

# 1) Allow political education and campaign funders to more clearly self-declare their financial support for specific messages.

Version 1 of our political ad rendering has advertisers enter a "paid for by" on individual ads run by individual ad accounts. From our research thus far, most of the advertisers in this space are worried less about being identified with their strongly-held views and more about unintentionally running afoul of the law. How do we let organizations more visibly and consistently self-identify as campaign or independent expenditure organizations across entire campaigns or elections, and do so at the ad set, ad campaign or business level?

# 2) Provide delivery advantages f

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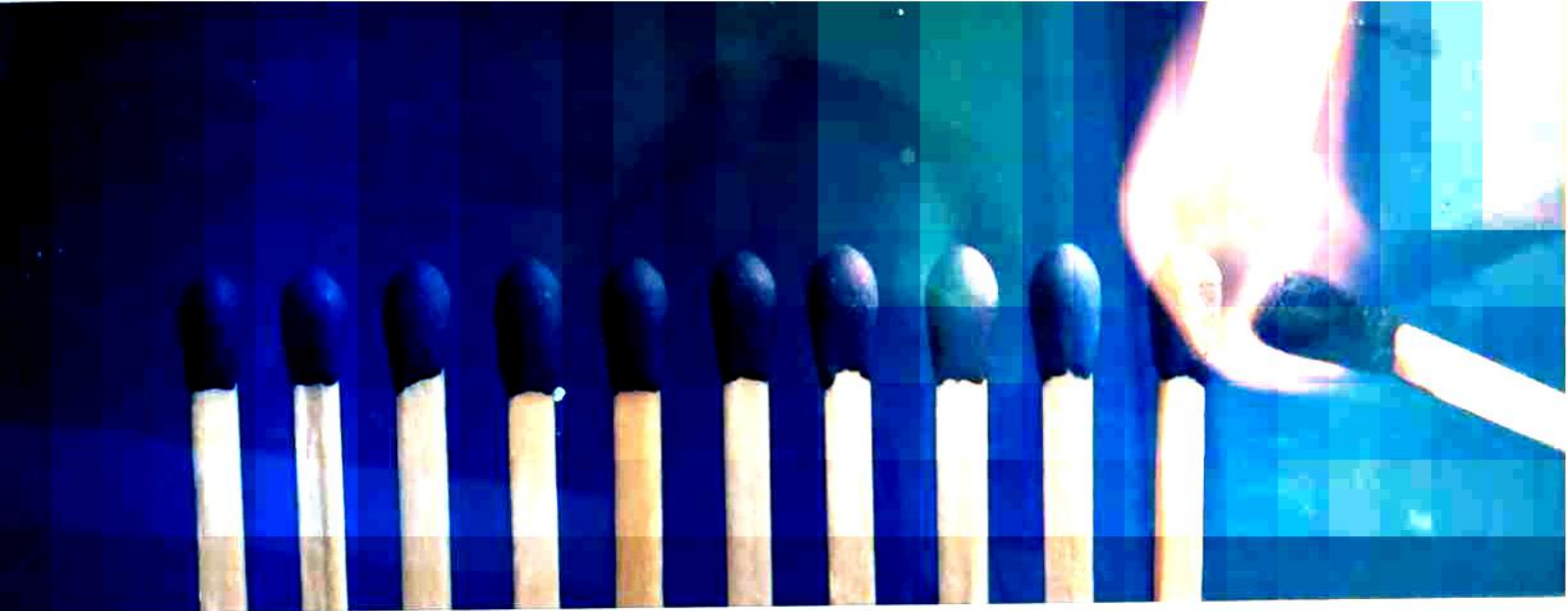
# Social Engineering and Political Ads

█████████ · THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2018 · READING TIME: 4 MINUTES 💼

*How to use the influential power of ads to empower people to make better-informed decisions about political ads, have well thought-out views and be more aware of dubious or unreliable sources.*

In the Facebook Ads world, we seek to make meaningful connections between people and businesses. And more specifically, █████████ publicly declared our advertising principles last November. One of those principles reads:

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# *Advertising should be safe and civil; it should not divide or discriminate.*

At the same time, polarization is an important marketing strategy made manifest in the creative, messaging, and targeting of ads. We don't want to discourage segmentation strategies on the part of our advertisers as a whole, which for many small and medium-sized businesses starting with a particular niche is a prerequisite for entering growth mode.

We have to countenance these two realities in Business Integrity. We enforce ad policies for the sake of Facebook and it's users, while doing our best to at least provide and at best enhance advertiser value. However, we've recently come into an intense amount of scrutiny for the lack of specific policies about political ads from both regulators and Facebook users.

Many articles have discussed how was how Russian online influence in US elections worked at least back in 2016 if not earlier: the use of "influence operations." At its core, this was an abuse of the openness our our platform, on both the organic and Ads side, in order to divide and undermine confidence in the election process and American civil society more broadly.

## 2) Provide delivery advantages for informative political ads over divisive and hateful ones.

The challenge here is a technical and design challenge, but not an insurmountable one. How can we use aggregate feedback and/or modeling to give ads that *inform* users about a particular side of a political question an advantage in delivery? We stand to benefit on user sentiment about ads and to promote quality revenue. This effort would also give upstart political advertisers with high-quality content access to ad inventory and address valid criticisms that divisive ad messages are cheap and easily spread.

## 3) Start a recurring political ads transparency report to hold ourselves accountable to the public, including product launches and global performance.

The largest part of Facebook's optics problem with political ads is the lack of public and regulatory awareness of proactive and reactive efforts taking place at the company. We can and should highlight major victories in political ad enforcement, good actors making our platform better and ongoing efforts we're committed to bringing on  Chats

## 3) Start a recurring political ads transparency report to hold ourselves accountable to the public, including product launches and global performance.

The largest part of Facebook's optics problem with political ads is the lack of public and regulatory awareness of proactive and reactive efforts taking place at the company. We can and should highlight major victories in political ad enforcement, good actors making our platform better and ongoing efforts we're committed to bringing online. We have a transparency report— https://transparency.facebook.com/government/ —for exposing the number of takedown requests we get from governments around the world, why not begin offering a public-facing, clear and sincere update on where we've succeeded and where we have to grow with political ads transparency?

One step at a time

We have started on the long journey to rebuild trust and have both users and governments regain confidence in the integrity of ads served on our platform. This is an opportunity to manifest our stated priorities, be transparent without penalizing good actors and help external observers properly scrutinize if we live up to our commitments or not.

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