

# Investigating Facebook’s actions against accounts that repeatedly share misinformation

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## Abstract

### SHORTEN AND ADD NEW CONDOR RESULTS

Like many web platforms, Facebook is under pressure to regulate misinformation. According to the company, users that repeatedly share misinformation (‘repeat offenders’) will have their distribution reduced, but little is known about the implementation or the efficiency of this measure. First, combining data from a fact-checking organization and CrowdTangle, we identified a set of public accounts (groups and pages) that have shared misinformation repeatedly. While we observe a decrease in engagement for pages (median of  $-43\%$ ) after they shared two or more ‘false news’, such a reduction is not observed for groups. However, we discover that groups have been affected in a different way with a sudden drop in their average engagement per post that occurred around June 9, 2020. No public information was given by Facebook about this sudden decrease. This drop has cut the groups’ engagement per post in half, but it was compensated by the fact that the overall activity of ‘repeat offenders’ has doubled between 2019 and 2020. Second, we identified pages that have been warned by Facebook and have shared a screenshot of the ‘reduced distribution’ notification they have received. We found that their engagement per post following the notification decreased by a modest amount (median of  $-24\%$ ), with some popular pages actually gaining more engagement. Our results highlight

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easy steps Facebook could take to reduce misinformation, such as to enforce their ‘repeat offenders’ policy more forcefully on pages, and to start applying it to groups.

*Keywords:* Misinformation, Content moderation, Algorithmic transparency, Facebook, Fact-checking, Social media analysis

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