

★ Facebook to Counter Apple Privacy Update With Its Own Prompt

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-to-counter-apple-privacy-update-with-its-own-prompt-11612191604?st=0ztoet2efko5gkz&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Feb. 1, 2021 at 11:17 am ET

- Facebook Inc. plans to roll out an in-app prompt aimed at educating users about the handling of their data as it battles Apple Inc. over the iPhone maker's new privacy changes that would require users' consent to track their behavior and make targeted ads more difficult.
- The screen will ask users for permission to use data collected from third-party websites and apps while also describing how certain data is being used, for example, to personalize their experience.
- The screen will be paired with an Apple prompt related to its new privacy policy, which is expected to be released in the next several months.
- earnings call a day earlier and singled the company out as one of its largest competitors, saying Apple has made misleading claims about user privacy.
- Facebook, which expects Apple to roll out its new privacy policy during the current quarter, said it expected the changes to weigh on its advertisement performance.
- The company has long targeted large advertisers to its platform and has been pushing to court small businesses to its growing Marketplace segment, which it has been integrating with its Instagram and WhatsApp apps.
- In December, the Federal Trade Commission and a group of 46 states each filed antitrust lawsuits against Facebook accusing the company of buying and freezing out small startups in order to squeeze competition.
- The company posted revenue of \$28.07 billion and profit of \$11.22 billion in the fourth quarter, both record levels.

Myanmar Blocks Facebook Access After Online Protests of Military Coup

https://www.wsj.com/articles/myanmar-blocks-facebook-access-after-coup-11612436184?st=dns5y46jexf1u8l&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Feb. 4, 2021 at 7:20 am ET

- People in the country had been posting to Facebook images of people banging pots and pans in a show of opposition to the coup.
- Some people were also shown making a three-fingered salute that was a symbol of resistance in "The Hunger Games" books and movies, and adopted by protesters after a 2014 military coup in neighboring Thailand.
- United Nations investigators in a 2018 report called for Gen. Min Aung Hlaing to be prosecuted for genocide over his role in a military campaign the previous year that killed thousands of members of the Rohingya minority and sent some 740,000 fleeing across the border to Bangladesh.
- Facebook acknowledged its slow response to a torrent of anti-Rohingya hate speech and misinformation on the platform in Myanmar.
- The company in 2018 removed hundreds of pages, groups and accounts, some tied to Myanmar's military, that it said had abused its services.

★ Facebook Moves to Muffle Politics on Its Platform

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-moves-to-muffle-politics-on-its-platform-11612962001?st=owcekytyinh3mkg&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Feb. 10, 2021 at 11:28 am ET

- The announcement, made in a Wednesday blog post, follows Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg's declaration on the company's earnings call last month that most users wanted to see less political content.
- Facebook says that political content currently constitutes only 6% of what people see on the platform.
- The Wall Street Journal previously reported that internal Facebook research concluded ahead of the election that the most active political Facebook Groups were incubating a toxic brew of hate speech, conspiracy theories and calls to violence.
- Depending on how far Facebook's overhaul goes, the reduction in the visibility of political content could jumble the ecosystem of online activism, publishing and advertising that has grown up around the social network and its reported 2.8 billion monthly users.
- It also could reanimate complaints, largely from conservatives, that the company is stifling political speech.
- The ultimate prominence of political content will depend on testing and user feedback, the company says. "
- The move isn't the first time that Facebook has tinkered with the prominence of particular categories of content on its platforms.
- The Journal reported last year that internal research indicated Facebook's algorithms were rewarding the purveyors of polarizing content that struck an emotional response with users.
- Facebook is facing other hot-button political issues in the near term.
- Its new independent content-oversight board is set to determine later this year whether Facebook erred in suspending former President Donald Trump from its platform.

● Facebook Meets Apple in Clash of the Tech Titans—‘We Need to Inflict Pain’

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-meets-apple-in-clash-of-the-tech-titanswe-need-to-inflict-pain-11613192406?mod=Searchresults_pos7&page=2

Feb. 13, 2021 at 12:00 am ET

- Facebook Inc. Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg has groused for years that Apple Inc. AAPL 1.33% increase; green up pointing triangle and its leader, Tim Cook, have too much sway over the social-media giant's business.
- Facebook was embroiled in controversy over its data-collection practices. Mr. Cook piled on in a national television interview, saying his own company would never have found itself in such a jam. Mr. Zuckerberg shot back that Mr. Cook's comments were "extremely glib" and "not at all aligned with the truth."
- The escalation of grievances erupted late last month in a rare public tit-for-tat between the two tech giants that laid bare the simmering animosity between their leaders, who exchanged jabs about privacy, app-tracking tools and, ultimately, their dueling visions about the future of the internet.
- Apple has positioned itself as the protector of digital privacy, upholding a greater good, while often leveling criticisms at Facebook's business model—without naming the company. All of that grates on Facebook, which sees Apple as overreaching in a way that threatens Facebook's existence, and hypocritical, including by doing extensive business in China where privacy is scarce. A 2017 attempt to address tensions through a face-to-face meeting between the two CEOs resulted in a tense standoff.
- Mr. Zuckerberg accused Apple on an earnings call of using its platform to interfere with how Facebook apps work. Mr. Cook, without naming Facebook, delivered an online speech condemning "conspiracy theories juiced by algorithms"—a jab that came just days after the Capitol riot.
- At stake is how the internet will evolve and which companies will dominate it. Facebook and Apple's visions are diverging and increasingly incompatible. Facebook wants to capture and monetize eyeballs on every possible device and platform. Apple wants to draw users to its own hardware-centric universe, partly by marketing itself as a privacy-focused company. The outcome of the battle could affect what kinds of information users see when they browse the internet.
- "Apple claims this is about privacy, but it's about profit, and we're joining others to point out their self-preferencing, anticompetitive behavior."

- In personality terms, the two men differ greatly. Mr. Zuckerberg, 36 years old, is a hacker-turned-Harvard-dropout who once touted the end of privacy as a social norm. Mr. Cook, 60, who hails from Alabama, has been a deeply private man who rose through the company as a specialist in supply-chain logistics.
- Mr. Zuckerberg built Facebook on the concept of radical openness, and he is determined to keep the company at the heart of global connectivity, with free services supported by targeted advertising. Some people familiar with Mr. Zuckerberg's thinking said he has taken Apple's broadsides personally, running the risk of distracting him at a time when Facebook is fighting many other battles in the U.S. and abroad over antitrust and content moderation.
- Mr. Cook, former deputy to Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, plans to carve out an experience for users free of what he portrays as invasive tracking. His position on privacy, which harks back to the days of the late Mr. Jobs, is made somewhat easier by the fact that much of Apple's business comes from the sale of iPhones, iPads and computers, not ads.
- As Apple and Facebook have evolved, they increasingly compete head-to-head in some areas. With iPhone sales possibly peaking, Mr. Cook has pushed Apple to bolster and develop digital services. Its iMessage chat system competes for user attention with Facebook offerings such as WhatsApp. Facebook is developing more hardware devices. Both companies are investing in payments systems.
- Apple also receives billions of dollars a year from Alphabet Inc.'s Google, for making the search giant the default search engine on Apple's Safari browser. Google's profits are largely derived from the kind of data-gathering on users that Mr. Cook and other Apple leaders have sharply criticized Facebook for doing.
- Publicly, Mr. Zuckerberg has identified Apple as one of Facebook's most formidable competitors. Privately, he and other Facebook employees have been waging a campaign against Apple, asserting in meetings and communications with government officials, antitrust regulators and advertisers that the company is abusing its power and deserves more regulatory scrutiny, according to people familiar with the matter.
- Before his death in 2011, Mr. Jobs had spoken publicly about the matter at an event held by The Wall Street Journal. "I believe people are smart, and some people want to share more data than other people do," he said. "Ask them. Ask them every time. Make them tell you to stop asking them if they get tired of asking them. Let them know precisely what you're going to do with their data."
- In public, Mr. Cook emphasized that Apple's business wasn't based on collecting user information, urging users to "follow the money" to see whether companies are profiting from gathering personal data.
- Such comments rankled Mr. Zuckerberg and other Facebook executives, who bristled at the notion that advertising was out of step with customers and publicly questioned what they deemed the high prices of Apple's products, people who worked with them said.
- As Facebook stewed, Apple introduced during its 2018 software conference new features for iMessage that resembled social-media tools, such as group video chat, while also introducing a privacy tool for its web browser that aimed to limit personal data that apps like Facebook could collect. During the presentation, Apple featured Facebook in its examples of how it worked.
- The change means that Facebook or other companies would no longer be able to collect a person's advertising identifier without permission. The ad identifier, a string of numbers, is widely used by digital ad and data brokers to track where users go online.
- Late last year, Facebook executives, including Mr. Zuckerberg, deliberated joining the high-profile legal battle against Apple by Epic Games Inc., the company behind the popular videogame "Fortnite," which accused Apple of exerting too much control over pricing, a person familiar with the matter said. Apple has said its commission is in line with other app marketplaces.
- Faced with litigation from the Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general over allegedly anticompetitive practices, Facebook has argued that competition from Apple and other tech companies show Facebook isn't a monopoly.

★● Facebook Surprises Australians With News Blackout

https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-day-facebook-went-dark-on-news-11613652431?st=wenyu956q17mbvg&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Feb. 18, 2021 at 5:40 pm ET

- Australians were caught off guard by Facebook Inc.'s decision to remove news from its platform in a deepening spat with the government over payment for content.
- Facebook overnight had followed through on a threat to bar users in Australia from posting news.
- The move also cut off access to information such as the national weather service and some local health sites, though Facebook said that had been done inadvertently.
- The U.S. company opposes legislation by the Australian government that would effectively require big tech companies to pay the country's media outlets for content.
- This week, News Corp said it has agreed to a multiyear partnership with Google to provide journalism from its news sites around the world in return for significant payments from the search giant.
- Google had previously joined Facebook in saying the Australian proposal set an unmanageable precedent, and had said it would possibly shut down its search engine in Australia as a result.
- The tech giants are facing new rules in Europe and both Google and Facebook have been hit with antitrust lawsuits in the U.S., raising the possibility that each country or region could have its own rules.
- But she said people's use of Facebook could decrease over time, noting Facebook's appeal has been that users could do multiple things on the platform, such as reading news, selling furniture or catching up with friends. "
- Facebook user Max Loomes, a 25-year-old research assistant in Sydney, said he'll revert to an old strategy to stay informed and set the home page on his web browser to a newspaper's website. "
- In Mount Gambier, a town in South Australia state, Josh Lynagh said he was surprised that his Facebook page, called Limestone Coast Community News, wasn't affected by the ban.

Facebook Blocks Collection of Sensitive Data Through Apps Following New York Probe

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-blocks-collection-of-sensitive-data-through-apps-following-new-york-probe-11613691592?st=irv20z24c2n1i2y&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Feb. 18, 2021 at 6:39 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. has taken steps to prevent it from collecting unauthorized data about people's medical conditions but should do more to limit the sharing of such sensitive information, the New York Department of Financial Services said Thursday in an investigative report that criticized the social-media giant.
- The regulator concluded that Facebook has failed to appropriately investigate its past collection of sensitive data and called for further federal action.
- But the company told the New York regulator that it had "routinely obtained" such data from developers, contrary to its own policies.
- While Facebook cooperated with the agency's requests to explain how the lapses had occurred, the DFS said, the company balked at undertaking a review of which developers had provided such data and how it was used within Facebook's targeting systems. "
- The FTC in December ordered nine social-media and video-streaming companies to provide the agency with data on how they collect and use personal consumer information.
- The New York regulator called for the agency to follow up on its report with more action.

★● Lawmakers in U.K., Canada Slam Facebook After Australia News Blackout

https://www.wsj.com/articles/lawmakers-in-u-k-canada-slam-facebook-after-australia-news-blackout-11613735931?st=42vd4jwnfq52ngw&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Feb. 19, 2021 at 9:50 am ET

- Lawmakers from the U.K. and Canada criticized Facebook Inc.'s ban on Australian users sharing news articles, and they said the tech giant could attract more scrutiny around the world as authorities grow increasingly concerned about its market power.
- Facebook removed news from its platform in Australia in response to legislation that would effectively compel it to pay traditional media companies for content.
- Users in Australia woke up Thursday morning to find that the Facebook pages of Australian and international publishers appeared blank.
- Facebook says the proposed law misunderstands the relationship between publishers and tech companies, and that it had little choice but to restrict news sharing rather than accept a law that ignores reality.
- Rep. David Cicilline, the chairman of the antitrust subcommittee in the House, also criticized the news ban in Australia.
- Facebook has said it recognizes news plays an important role in a democracy, and it has been willing to pay for news in other contexts.
- The proposed law in Australia would essentially require publishers and tech companies such as Facebook and Google to negotiate, and submit to binding arbitration if they can't reach a deal.
- Google has also opposed the law and at one point threatened to shut down its search engine in Australia.
- Others have raised concerns about the law.
- Australia's Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said Friday that negotiations with Facebook were continuing.
- He said he talked to Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg and that the two discussed their remaining issues and agreed to try to work through them.
- Mr. Frydenberg said the proposed law is already leveling the playing field between tech giants and the news companies.
- He argued that Google's recent deals wouldn't have happened without the possibility of the law being enacted.

★ Facebook Reaches Deal With Australia to Restore News

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-says-agreement-reached-with-australian-government-to-restore-news-11614055767?st=c6lk6i6tuoe6wsy&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Feb. 23, 2021 at 4:32 am ET

- Facebook Inc. reached a deal with the Australian government to restore news pages to the social media company's platform, following a five-day suspension because of a disagreement over payment for content.
- Facebook removed news from its platform in Australia last week, as legislation that would effectively require Facebook and Alphabet Inc.'s Google to pay traditional media companies for content worked its way through the country's parliament.
- The legislation is being widely watched globally and could offer a model for other countries to compel tech giants to pay for content.
- Facebook got some changes to the legislation as part of the deal.
- In return, Facebook planned to restore news pages to its platform in Australia in the coming days, the statement said.
- "I don't see them as huge concessions," said Ms. Hanson-Young, whose party supports the new regulations in principle.
- Both Google and Facebook have in the past been willing to pay for news in certain contexts.
- Google, which initially opposed the legislation and had threatened to shut down its search engine in Australia, also recently agreed to new deals to pay some publishers for content, including News Corp, owner of The Wall Street Journal publisher Dow Jones & Co. Facebook said it is satisfied that the changes to the legislation address its main concerns.
- Facebook's removal of news from its platform caused an uproar in Australia, including from consumers.
- Lawmakers in the U.S. and U.K. criticized the news ban.
- In Canada, one minister said his government would move forward on similar legislation.

- In Europe on Monday, news publishers and Microsoft Corp., which had previously said it supported the Australian legislation, called for a mechanism similar to the Australian legislation to be enacted there.
- In Australia, the legislation would require tech companies and news publishers to submit to binding arbitration if a deal can't be reached on payment for content.
- Facebook previously said that the proposed law misunderstands the relationship between publishers and tech companies, and that it had little choice but to restrict news sharing rather than accept a law that ignores reality.

★ Google and Facebook on the Barbie

https://www.wsj.com/articles/google-and-facebook-on-the-barbie-11614122987?st=p5vg5un9dv8hz8m&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Feb. 23, 2021 at 6:29 pm ET

- Hey Australia, the 1830s called and they want their media business model back.
- They see the same opening to suborn—er, support—a free press made vulnerable by the digital collapse in ad revenues.
- Australia's rationale is disingenuous even by political standards, exploiting the unpopularity of Google and Facebook as a foil.
- This isn't Google's and Facebook's fault but Australia's Parliament nevertheless would put the onus on them to compensate publishers for the fact that their news products, while still valued by readers, no longer are valued quite so highly by advertisers.
- Australia is right to be concerned about the travails of the press.
- subsidizing media owners, and doing so behind an anti-transparency fig leaf provided unhappily by Google and Facebook.
- Our world is already awash in proposals, including from Sen. Sanders, to undermine a free press by addicting its owners to tax dollars.
- Let U.S. media outlets join forces to control the terms under which their content is searchable and linkable.
- If they so choose, let them create their own ad platform to compete with Google and Facebook.
- The truth is, media companies have always been free to block the internet ad giants from linking to their stories, but it would be suicide to do so.
- They also want leverage to extract more revenue to sustain news gathering.
- But at least news outlets would continue to be rewarded for quality reporting rather than for their coziness with officials.
- The alternative is one I've pointed to for 20 years: Newspapers might live on as charity instruments of the superwealthy whose main goal is political and public patronage.

Bill to Make Facebook, Google Pay for News Clears Last Major Hurdle in Australia

https://www.wsj.com/articles/bill-to-make-facebook-google-pay-for-news-clears-last-major-hurdle-in-australia-11614163071?st=8tulglbcazec7dq&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Feb. 24, 2021 at 5:37 am ET

- Australian legislation effectively requiring Facebook Inc. and Google to pay news outlets for content cleared its last major parliamentary hurdle, capping a multiyear effort that could set a global precedent for regulating the tech giants' relations with publishers.
- As its spat with the Australian government over the proposed media code deepened, Facebook last week followed through on a threat to remove news from its platform in the country.
- After the government agreed to small changes to the legislation, Facebook said Tuesday that the news would be restored.
- Alphabet Inc.'s Google also initially opposed the legislation, at one time threatening to shut down its search engine in Australia.
- Prime Minister Scott Morrison's center-right government effectively controls the lower chamber.

- The code will become law when it is signed by Australia's governor-general, the representative of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, Australia's head of state.
- Australia's effort to compel the tech companies to pay for news has been watched globally, and there are signs of momentum for similar legislation in other countries.
- Both Google and Facebook have previously paid for news in some cases.

★ Facebook to Spend \$1 Billion on News Content Over Three Years

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-to-spend-1-billion-on-news-content-over-three-years-11614187391?st=vvjfqvz3ej2cat6&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Feb. 24, 2021 at 12:23 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. said it would spend at least \$1 billion to license material from news publishers over the next three years, a pledge that comes as tech giants face scrutiny from governments around the world over paying for news content that appears on their platforms.
- Facebook removed news from its platform in Australia last week as the country's legislature debated a proposal that would have required Facebook and Google to pay traditional media companies for their content.
- Other governments, including Canada, have pledged to consider measures similar to what Australia has planned.
- In his blog post, Mr. Clegg said that the proposed Australian law would have required the company "to pay potential unlimited amounts of money" to global media companies under the arbitration system. "

★ Facebook, Google and Publishers Are Fighting Over News. What You Need to Know.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/google-facebook-and-the-contest-over-paying-for-news-11614107023?st=r1xrx61t0h0lbas&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Feb. 24, 2021 at 2:23 pm ET

- Australian legislation that would effectively require Facebook Inc. and Alphabet Inc.'s Google to pay news outlets for content cleared its last major hurdle Wednesday, potentially setting a global precedent for regulating the tech giants' relations with publishers.
- The Australian government's proposal prompted a showdown with both companies, with Facebook removing news from its platform in the country for five days and Google briefly threatening to shut down its services there.
- Both tech giants later shifted course toward striking deals with media companies, in Facebook's case after winning some concessions from Australian policy makers on the legislation.
- Google and Facebook say they help publishers by delivering traffic.
- Whether Google's and Facebook's current use of news content is fair use hasn't been tested in court.
- In a blog post Wednesday, Facebook's vice president of global affairs, Nick Clegg, argued that the Australian dispute represents a misunderstanding of the relationship between Facebook and news publishers. "
- It's the publishers themselves who choose to share their stories on social media, or make them available to be shared by others, because they get value from doing so," he wrote, adding, "We neither take nor ask for the content for which we are being asked to pay a potentially exorbitant price."
- Why do publishers think Google and Facebook should pay for news?
- Publishers argue that Google's business has changed massively since the Perfect 10 ruling in 2007.
- In contrast, the news-publishing industry's ad revenue has steadily declined.
- In 2019, the European Union changed its copyright laws to allow publishers to ask tech platforms to pay for using snippets of their content.

- Australia is expected to pass a tougher version of such regulation, which would require tech platforms over a certain size—meaning Google and Facebook—to engage in "baseball" arbitration with news publishers to come to an agreement on payment for news.
- The approach is designed to level the playing field between tech giants and publishers during negotiations.
- Both Google and Facebook initially approached the proposed Australian law the same way—by threatening to shut down their services in the country if it passed.

★● Facebook, Google Face 'Strong Pipeline' of Privacy Rulings in Europe

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-google-face-strong-pipeline-of-privacy-rulings-in-europe-11614211200?st=gpb758jbpoe6rm&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Feb. 24, 2021 at 7:00 pm ET

- The privacy regulator overseeing Facebook Inc., Alphabet Inc.'s Google and Apple Inc. in the European Union expects to boost its tally of big tech decisions this year—and rejects complaints that its enforcement has been too slow.
- Helen Dixon, who leads Ireland's Data Protection Commission, said her office is on track to make draft decisions in roughly half a dozen privacy cases involving big technology companies this year, compared with just two last year. "
- Two cases, involving Facebook, are already on Ms. Dixon's desk for draft decisions, she said.
- Instead, the largest European privacy fines against big tech companies in recent years were issued last fall by France's privacy regulator, CNIL, which used a separate law, called the ePrivacy directive, to fine Google and Amazon.com Inc. a combined \$163 million.
- She said Wednesday that Ireland's cases take a long time because they have so far involved novel, complex law, and companies must be given their due-process rights to respond substantively to all allegations during an investigation. "
- In addition, Ireland's draft decisions in cross-border cases like those involving tech giants must be reviewed and finalized along with the EU's other privacy regulators as part of the GDPR's power-sharing rules.
- Bigger fines may be coming from Ireland's data commission.
- WhatsApp's Irish unit in November reported in corporate filings that it had set aside €77.5 million for potential fines from the commission.
- Some of the cases also drive toward the core of some tech companies' business model.
- Also on Ms. Dixon's plate: a separate battle with Facebook over whether the social network will have to suspend at least some transfers of data about its EU users to servers in the U.S. The commission told Facebook in August that it believed a ruling from the EU's top court last summer required Facebook to suspend some such transfers, because of concerns about U.S. surveillance authorities' access to the data.

★● Facebook Ad Campaign Promotes Personalized Advertising

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-ad-campaign-promotes-personalized-advertising-11614261617?st=tobnx2ych9fj59s&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Feb. 25, 2021 9:00 am ET

- Facebook Inc. will promote the value of targeted ads to businesses and consumers in a new ad campaign in digital media, radio and TV programming including National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball games and Sunday's Golden Globe Awards. "

- The effort comes as Apple Inc. nears implementation of a policy requiring many apps to ask users whether they want their behavior on the web to be tracked for the purposes of personalized ads.
- A Facebook spokeswoman said the campaign wasn't spurred by Apple's planned moves, calling it the latest stage in a long push to inform businesses about Facebook's tools.
- The ads don't mention Apple. "
- But Apple's changes will make it harder for small businesses to reach their customers with personalized ads, the spokeswoman said. "
- Apple has defended its new policy as giving priority to users' privacy.

★● Facebook Fight Over Media Payments Shifts Focus to Europe

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-fight-over-media-payments-shifts-focus-to-europe-11614264170?st=1u6djkg30ssgi5&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Feb. 25, 2021 at 9:42 am ET

- Australia's fight with Facebook Inc. over media content is focusing attention on European efforts to force tech giants to pay more for news, as European politicians urge national governments to quickly enact new legislation that would strengthen the hand of news organizations in their battle with internet behemoths.
- European Union countries face a June deadline to adopt national versions of a bloc-wide law, dubbed the Copyright Directive, that aims to improve media producers' bargaining position against tech powerhouses including Facebook and Alphabet Inc.'s Google.
- Under the law, passed in 2019, news publishers can demand payment for reuse of their content.
- Publishers argue that news is a significant attraction for services like Google, and that they should receive a share of the companies' revenue.
- Senior EU officials have said Facebook's move in Australia shows that tech platforms wield too much power against the press and other media.
- EU Industry Commissioner Thierry Breton on Monday urged member countries to quickly pass national GOOG 0.71% versions of the copyright law to strengthen their news publishers' right to compensation from tech platforms. "
- Nick Clegg, Facebook's vice president of global affairs, said in a blog post Wednesday that the Australian law stems from a misunderstanding of its relationship with media companies, which choose to post their content on social media.
- Mr. Clegg acknowledged that the internet has disrupted the news business, and said the company plans to spend \$1 billion in the next three years to support it. "
- But a new settlement needs to be based on the facts of how value is derived from news online, not an upside-down portrayal of how news and information flows on the internet," he wrote.
- Google has signed paid licensing deals with more than 500 publishers in over a dozen countries, including Germany, the U.K. and Australia, for a product called News Showcase.
- The battle in Australia over payments to news media outlets is the latest example of a topic that has arisen globally for more than a decade.
- News Corp has supported the Australian and EU laws.
- Some European officials expressed solidarity with Australia.
- Some politicians and analysts say Facebook's hardball tactics could show Europe must get even tougher. "
- Some legal analysts say Australia's new legislation, based on competition law, has sharper teeth than Europe's copyright law.
- Martin Kretschmer, a professor of intellectual property law at the University of Glasgow, said copyright law is the wrong tool to protect publishers because it shouldn't prevent news content from being linked to or quoted. "
- The Copyright Directive is already yesterday's law.

★ What Happens When Facebook Slows the News Flow

https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-happens-when-facebook-slows-the-news-flow-11614355223?st=3ek2epp6ignyq6r&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Feb. 26, 2021 at 11:00 am ET

- The residents of Thursday Island, a speck on the archipelago Torres Strait Islands, have relied for years on Facebook Inc. to learn of everything from cyclone warnings to crayfish prices to a recent parvovirus outbreak among the neighborhood pets.
- The platform doesn't eat up data the way other websites do, a priority for the remote communities, where people often use prepaid phones.
- Newspapers and radio stations with staffs made up of indigenous reporters publish Facebook updates in local dialects—a critical feature for those for whom English is a third or fourth language.
- By the time papers from mainland Australia arrive, the news is about a week old.
- Websites are our second stop," said Kantesha Takai, a 29-year-old small-business owner on the island. "
- We are very much reliant on giants like Facebook.
- Mark Zuckerberg cut off a critical piece in the chain of communication from such regions when Facebook blocked news from the social-media platform across the country, a drastic counterpunch to the Australian government's plan to force the company to pay news services for the content shared on the site.
- The effect of Facebook's sudden absence was particularly felt among Australia's indigenous people, those often remote communities that use the social-media platform as more of a utility, especially in a time of climate-change induced weather patterns and a pandemic.
- After Facebook spent years defending the platform from accusations of trafficking in conspiracy and misinformation, it ripped away legitimate news sources from the continent's most vulnerable populations days before a coronavirus vaccine was to be distributed.
- Facebook on Tuesday announced a deal with lawmakers that will allow it to return news to the site.
- It agreed to pay some news outlets through deals it strikes on its own, though details have not been revealed.
- Alphabet Inc.'s Google, the other company covered by the Australian law, at first threatened to leave the country before agreeing to new deals earlier this month to pay some publishers for content.
- In a company blog post on the Australia events published Wednesday, spokesman Nick Clegg wrote: "The events in Australia show the danger of camouflaging a bid for cash subsidies behind distortions about how the internet works. "
- Nearly half of Australia's 25 million residents have a Facebook account, but the platform has particular reach within its First Nation communities.

★ Facebook's Hardball Move in Australia Comes With Risks

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebooks-hardball-move-in-australia-comes-with-risks-11614681007?st=hvjaa6zv0hu4jzg&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

March 2, 2021 at 5:30 am ET

- Facebook's hard-edged move to block news on its platform in Australia extracted concessions from the government, which agreed to ease a new law that effectively requires payment in exchange for the social-media company restoring the content to its platform.
- Yet the dramatic action drew rebukes from users, lawmakers and others around the world who were troubled by Facebook's willingness to abruptly remove vast amounts of information.
- That action could deepen Facebook's challenges over time and inspire other countries to pass tough rules, say some people who follow internet regulation.
- In the U.S. and the U.K., lawmakers criticized the news ban.
- In the European Union, one official urged member countries to pass copyright laws that would strengthen news publishers' right to compensation.

- Facebook later said blocking that content was inadvertent, but that it targeted an array of material because the law's definition of news was vague. "
- Australian officials said they got what they wanted out of the compromise, since the law could still require Facebook to submit to binding arbitration if it can't reach deals with publishers. "
- Facebook had argued the Australian law was unfair because news makes up only 4% of the content people see in their feeds, and that the platform sends significant traffic to news websites.
- Facebook decided to remove news once the law passed the lower chamber of Australia's parliament. "
- Some business groups and computer scientists also raised concerns that the law could impinge the free sharing of links online.
- Mr. Geist, the law professor, said Facebook shouldn't have to pay to display links to news stories.
- Alphabet Inc.'s Google, also subject to the Australian law, at one point threatened to shut down its search engine there.
- The search giant later decided to license content from publishers, including News Corp, which agreed to a three-year deal worth tens of millions of dollars.
- Just hours earlier, Mr. Frydenberg, the treasurer, told reporters: "Facebook has re-friended Australia.

★ Facebook Drops Plan to Run Fiber Cable to Hong Kong Amid U.S. Pressure

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-drops-plan-to-run-fiber-cable-to-hong-kong-amid-u-s-pressure-11615400710?st=ue1mx35g58cy73i&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

March 10, 2021 at 1:25 pm ET

- A Facebook Inc. consortium withdrew its bid to build a new internet conduit between California and Hong Kong after months of pressure from U.S. national-security officials, the latest sign of a deepening rift between the two governments.
- Facebook and several telecommunications-industry partners first filed for permission to build the fiber-optic cable in 2018.
- It would have connected two sites in California with branches to Hong Kong and Taiwan. "
- It is the latest cross-Pacific fiber project to stall due to U.S. resistance.
- People in Hong Kong long used social-media platforms to express political opinions and show support for protests against China's growing influence in the city, and the services operated freely without restrictions from China's firewall, which applies to mainland users.
- U.S. tech companies operating in the city now face a delicate balancing act, according to analysts.
- If authorities ask them to remove user accounts or their content, the companies could alienate their user bases in Hong Kong and abroad.
- U.S. companies' submarine cable proposals have also faced scrutiny for including Chinese partners.

★ Facebook Seeks to Dismiss Antitrust Suits, Saying It Hasn't Harmed Consumers

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-seeks-to-dismiss-antitrust-suits-saying-it-hasnt-harmed-consumers-11615400041?st=4d08thucvy1k0v8&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated March 10, 2021 at 3:45 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. on Wednesday asked a federal judge to dismiss antitrust lawsuits by the Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general, arguing that government enforcers have no valid basis for alleging the social media giant is suppressing competition.
- The company's filings in U.S. District Court in Washington mark its first legal salvo since the FTC and 46 states sued Facebook in December on allegations the company has unlawfully preserved monopoly status by freezing out and buying up potential competitors.
- Facebook will have to meet a high legal standard to convince a federal judge to throw out the cases before trial.

- Facebook also argued the FTC hasn't plausibly alleged the company has monopoly power, because the government can't show that the company has raised prices or restricted output, given that "Facebook's products are offered for free and in unlimited quantities."
- The company repeatedly emphasized that the commission previously allowed it to acquire Instagram and WhatsApp in 2012 and 2014, respectively.
- The commission's case, if successful, could potentially lead to Facebook having to unwind those deals.
- Not all of the federal and state cases focused on Facebook's acquisitions.
- Antitrust enforcers also alleged Facebook engaged in other anticompetitive conduct, including by cutting off access to its platform for third-party developers.

★ Facebook to Offer Self-Publishing Tools for Content Creators

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-to-offer-self-publishing-tools-for-content-creators-11615922776?st=yx8env41xxrr24n&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

March 16, 2021 at 3:26 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. is rolling out new self-publishing tools it says will help writers and other cultural producers reach audiences and get paid for their work, the latest example of a social-media company pushing to keep creators in its fold.
- Facebook said Tuesday it plans to offer a free, customizable publishing tool that allows users to develop websites and email newsletters as well as charge for subscriptions.
- A Facebook spokeswoman said the company wasn't ready to discuss if it would take a cut of newsletter subscriptions that producers generate.
- In the company's blog post about its planned self-publishing tools, Ms. Brown and Ms. Strong said a large part of the effort is aimed at independent journalists in local communities. "
- Facebook has faced criticism from some news publishers over the company's role in distributing news and its powerful position in the digital-advertising market.

★ Facebook Unveils New Penalties on Its Groups in Wake of Capitol Riot

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-unveils-new-penalties-on-facebook-groups-in-wake-of-capitol-riot-11615993394?st=mszmo6ulnffqb0x&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated March 17, 2021 at 2:50 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. introduced new penalties for interest-based forums called Groups that are flagged for violating its community standards, as it aims to curb a product that played a high-profile role in the protests that led up to the Capitol riot.
- The changes to Groups come after Facebook's own researchers found that the company's oversight of the product was weak.
- The penalties formalize some of the restrictions placed on the product in the wake of the Jan. 6 attack.
- The company will also stop recommending political and health-related groups to countries outside of the U.S. It currently only restricts such recommendations to U.S. users. "
- The changes come after internal Facebook research found that Facebook Groups had been widely used to promote election-related conspiracy theories such as the "Stop the Steal" effort that preceded the Capitol riot.

Facebook Takes Down China-Linked Hacking Campaign Targeting Uyghurs

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-takes-down-china-linked-hacking-campaign-targeting-uyghurs-11616608878?st=aol5u8pjyrjyi9j&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated March 24, 2021 at 3:09 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. has taken down a network of China-based accounts being used to spread malware meant to spy on journalists and dissidents in the overseas Uyghur Muslim community, the company said on Wednesday.
- The sophisticated effort, which the company said was tied to a group of Chinese hackers, included setting up fake news sites and compromising real ones to infect the devices of a small number of people.
- The hackers also placed malware-laden apps—including Uyghur language keyboards and prayer apps—in third-party Android app stores.
- The Uyghurs have been targeted for mass detention by the Chinese government and some nations, including the U.S., have labeled the yearslong crackdown against them a genocide.
- He said the company identified "a fairly small number of targets"—less than 500—but those only represent those instances that touched Facebook in some way.
- Facebook said that it didn't expect that its actions would permanently halt the effort to target the Uyghur community, but that revealing the effort would at least disrupt it. "
- In recent years, alleged Chinese hackers have targeted both Android and Apple Inc.'s mobile phones by building digital attacks that leverage bugs in these devices and tricking their victims into visiting websites that contain the attack code, security experts say.
- Victims have included media organizations, Tibetan and Uyghur organizations and Hong Kong-based democracy activists, said John Hultquist, director of intelligence analysis with the U.S. cybersecurity firm FireEye Inc., which has investigated some aspects of the attacks. "

★ Facebook's Instagram for Kids Will Be Money

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-instagram-for-kids-will-be-money-11617102014?st=mrp9mn6qz6higl4&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

March 30, 2021 at 7:00 am ET

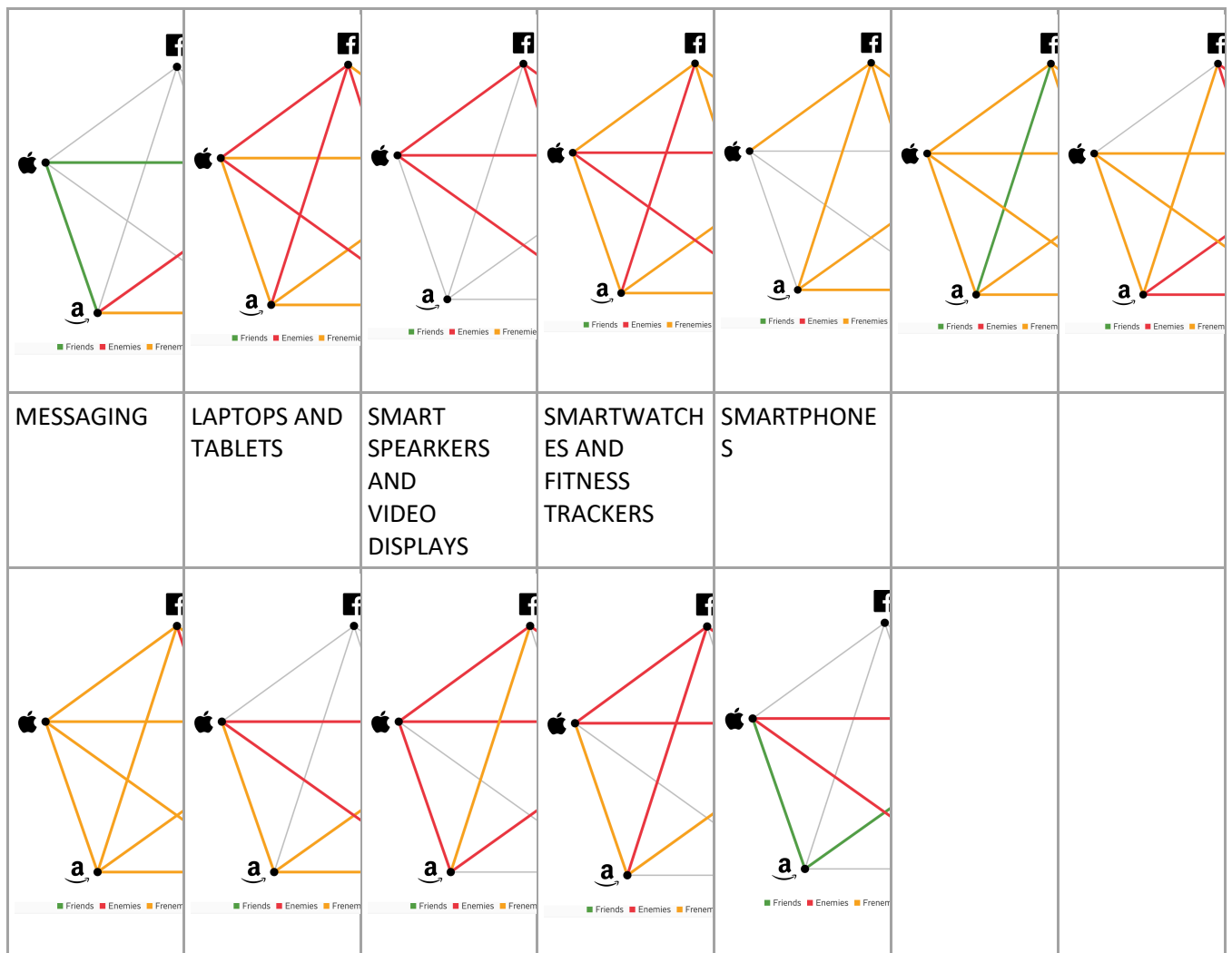
- Facebook has confirmed it is exploring the development of an Instagram-like app for children under 13 to enable them to keep up with family and friends in a safe and ad-free environment.
- The new app would likely be at least in part a policy-driven move to lure children under the age of 13 off their original Instagram platform where they technically aren't allowed.
- Facebook says the app wouldn't be about its bottom line.
- In reality, such an app could make its ad-targeting ability across its platforms even better.
- managed by parents, much as Facebook says a kid-focused App appeared in the March 31, 2021, print edition as 'Instagram for Kids Will Be Money'.
- Instagram app would be, it still collects useful information such as children's images, voices, time zones, birthdays and genders.
- Because access to a child's Messenger Kids app must be granted through an adult's Facebook account, it is possible that, while Facebook can't use children's information to serve them ads directly, it can serve their parents ads based on the information.
- In that sense, the more children it can get off its original apps and onto children's focused apps, the more accurately it can target credit-card-carrying elders.

Google, Facebook, Amazon, Apple and Microsoft. Call Them Tech Frenemies for Life.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/tech-giants-cooperate-while-competing-frenemies-for-life-11617293819?mod=Searchresults_pos11&page=2

Updated April 1, 2021 at 1:49 pm ET

CLOUD COMPUTING	DIGITAL ADVERTISING	NEWS AGGREGATIO N	VIDEO GAMING SERVICES	SOCIAL NETWORK AND LIVE- STREAMING	APPLICATION MARKETPLAC E	ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE SUITES
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- Once upon a time, Amazon AMZN 1.87% increase; green up pointing triangle. com Inc. only sold books, Apple Inc. AAPL 1.33% increase; green up pointing triangle sold computers, and Google GOOG 0.71% increase; green up pointing triangle was just a search engine. Those days are long gone, and each of those companies—as well as Microsoft Corp. MSFT 2.14% increase; green up pointing triangle and Facebook Inc.—has become a tech behemoth.
- The reality, as these charts show, is an interplay of collaboration and competition that helps to shape the extent and nature of Big Tech’s clout. And that interplay is evolving, as the companies increasingly encroach on one another’s turf to build and protect their dynasties.
- Tech giants have both protected themselves against competitive threats and opened new battlefronts by using their size and resources to acquire smaller companies and talent to expand their product lines and services.
- Although that growth has helped them become less reliant on partners, the shifting landscape has created some bitter rivalries. Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg and Apple CEO Tim Cook have slammed each other in statements over issues ranging from data privacy to app marketplace fees. Google and Microsoft executives have recently traded barbs over their practices around hosting news content and paying publishers.
- The bonds among the five companies aren’t completely frayed: They continue to work together on everything from software development to industry advocacy. Beyond marketing their apps and products on one another’s platforms, the companies, in some instances, have enmeshed their businesses in ways that have drawn regulatory scrutiny.
- Cloud Computing:

- While Amazon Web Services, or AWS, continues to be the biggest player in the cloud-computing space, Microsoft and Google are trying to eat into its market share. Facebook and Apple don't sell web-hosting services to other businesses, but Apple hosts some of the data from iCloud, its cloud-storage service, on both AWS and Google Cloud.
- Digital Advertising:
 - Google and Facebook play dominant roles in digital advertising, but that business is also growing for Amazon, Microsoft and Apple. Even with competing digital ad networks, Amazon buys ads on certain Google search keywords, and Google is a top web-traffic referrer for a significant portion of Amazon third-party sellers. Separate online-ad agreements between Facebook and Google as well as between Google and Apple are receiving scrutiny in lawsuits from a group of state attorneys general and the Justice Department.
- News Aggregation:
 - Internet platforms have long been interested in news as a way to engage users. That—in addition to regulatory pressure—has spurred companies to offer to pay news publishers to distribute their content. Microsoft and Google have engaged in a war of words over their postures toward news producers. Facebook and Google announced separate plans to spend \$1 billion on news content over three years. Apple, with its Apple News+ service, offers a paid subscription news product while Microsoft has its news product accessible through browsers and apps.
- Videogaming Services:
 - All five companies have collectively poured billions of dollars into the videogame industry, from publishing to the development of hardware and accessories. Today, each company operates either a subscription-based or free-to-play gaming service. Apple, which operates Apple Arcade, upset Facebook, Microsoft and Google with restrictions on cloud-gaming services within its App Store. Some services also use rivals' distribution channels to reach consumers: Google Stadia can be played on an Amazon Fire television and a digital controller for Amazon's Luna can be downloaded in Google Play.
- Social networks and live-streaming:
 - Facebook owns some of the world's largest social networks, but the layering of features like e-commerce and live-streaming has redefined the company's competitive relationships. Google's YouTube and Amazon's Twitch battle in live-streaming, but both companies benefit from their apps being distributed in each other's app marketplaces. Microsoft-owned LinkedIn competes with other platforms in social media but also battles Facebook and Google in generating revenue from job listings.
- Application marketplace:
 - App-hosting platforms—the critical gateways for how people access software over the internet—have increasingly served as flashpoints for disputes concerning the power of large tech companies. Apple and Google operate the largest mobile app marketplaces but also distribute their own apps through each other's platform. Facebook and Microsoft—which operates app stores for Windows devices and its Xbox videogame console—have sparred with Apple over its marketplace rules.
- Enterprise software suites
 - The market for providing software to businesses has exploded over the past two decades, and large tech companies—including the likes of Facebook—have jumped in to become vendors. Google and Microsoft battle in providing a range of products to businesses including email, calendars and text-document creation.
- Messaging:
 - The companies offer competing messaging products, for consumers and businesses though they rely on being distributed through rivals' platforms to reach customers. Facebook's Mr. Zuckerberg, whose company provides messaging services through WhatsApp and Messenger, has called Apple a competitor in messaging and a growing competitive threat on other fronts.
- Laptops and Tablets:

- Microsoft and Google are among companies that have begun to blur the product lines between tablets and laptops. Amazon doesn't produce laptops (despite selling them on its e-commerce platform), though its Fire tablet competes with products from Apple, Microsoft and Google while relying on a version of Google's Android operating system to power its device.
- Smart Speakers and Video Displays:
 - Smart speakers and video displays have helped bring digital-assistant technology into millions of devices world-wide. Apple, Amazon and Google are locked in a stiff competition in selling their voice-enabled speakers and displays. Facebook's Portal also competes with devices in this category, while having Amazon Alexa capabilities built-in. Amazon also sells Portal gear on its e-commerce platform.
- Smartwatches and fitness trackers:
 - Google's purchase of Fitbit brought it into selling smartwatches and fitness trackers, a category where Apple holds significant market share and Amazon is courting customers with its Halo product. The Fitbit purchase also includes elements of cooperation with Amazon: Fitbit's products are sold on Amazon's e-commerce platform, the product app is available in Amazon's Appstore and Alexa is integrated into some Fitbit devices. Facebook has said it is working to develop a wrist-worn device that could eventually sync with smart glasses under development.
- Smartphones:
 - While all five companies produce software for smartphones, only three produce the devices. Apple has the longest continuous tenure among the companies making handsets. Amazon isn't in the smartphone business after killing the Fire phone, but sells Google's Pixel and Apple's iPhone on its e-commerce platform. Microsoft also exited the business years ago before re-entering it of late with its combination phone-tablet Surface Duo.

Facebook Staff Fret Over China's Ads Portraying Happy Muslims in Xinjiang

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-staff-fret-over-chinas-ads-portraying-happy-muslims-in-xinjiang-11617366096?st=luvc1ieez551dvm&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

April 2, 2021 at 8:21 am ET

- Now, some Facebook staff are raising concerns on internal message boards and in other employee discussions that the company is being used as a conduit for state propaganda, highlighting sponsored posts from Chinese organizations that purport to show Muslim ethnic minority Uyghurs thriving in China's Xinjiang region, according to people familiar with the matter.
- The U.S. and some European governments say Beijing is committing genocide against the Uyghurs, citing a campaign that includes political indoctrination, mass internment and forced sterilizations.
- Facebook hasn't determined whether to act on the concerns, say people familiar with the matter.
- Beijing has denied any human-rights violations in Xinjiang and contends its actions are necessary to quell terrorist threats in a restive region.
- Beijing has previously denied all allegations of human-rights violations in Xinjiang, instead describing the vast network of camps as vocational training centers aimed at countering terrorism and religious extremism.
- Facebook staff have also internally discussed their unease with what they call Beijing's misinformation and the potential perception that Facebook is allowing a means for China to spread propaganda relating to humanitarian issues.
- Facebook typically removes Beijing's Xinjiang-related ads within a few days, if internal reviews show they are not properly labeled as pertaining to social and political issues.
- China's Xinjiang-related ads frequently don't follow Facebook's rules, but are often viewed tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of times, and sometimes more, before Facebook removes them.
- The ads may contain content that Facebook staff are uncomfortable with, but introducing policies to tackle them would amount to deciding what governments are allowed to broadcast on the platform.
- Government officials and bodies in countries such as Vietnam, Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia use Facebook to broadcast their views.

- China's state-controlled media outlets run three of the world's top 20 most-followed Facebook pages, according to online reference library DataReportal.
- That is the fourth-most in the world, surpassing the likes of Coca-Cola and pop star Rihanna.

★● Facebook's Algorithm Powers What You See. Here Are New Tools to Give You Some Control.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-is-giving-us-some-control-of-our-feedsbut-not-enough-11617372000?st=dsnhzytmlb46dd3&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

April 2, 2021 at 10:00 am ET

- This week the company announced a new bar that will appear at the top of our newsfeeds.
- It will allow you to toggle between the algorithmic, Facebook-curated feed and the full feed arranged in reverse chronological order.
- Facebook's new update makes it easier to get to its chronological feed.
- He also said Facebook is thinking about some deeper controls, specifically around customizing the topics you might see in your feed. "
- Nick Clegg says Facebook removes content that violates its rules and demotes content that is low quality.
- Nor is toxic content representative of what the majority of people see on Facebook, he added. "
- I think the most popular post on Facebook in the U.S. on Monday was that video of that mother bear trying to get her baby cubs to cross a road."
- Regardless, he says Facebook will take a number of steps to help us better understand the content we see over the next year, including providing more transparency about how the spread of problematic content is reduced,
- Facebook users should be encouraged by all of that, as well as the other new controls.
- What's emerging here and across the industry is a move to put the power over the content we see and the data we share back into our hands.
- That includes iOS 14.5, the impending latest update to Apple's mobile operating system, which will provide new controls in apps that track users for advertising—including Facebook.
- Facebook's not too happy about those controls.

★● Was My Facebook Data Leaked? What You Need to Know

https://www.wsj.com/articles/was-my-facebook-data-leaked-what-you-need-to-know-11617751579?st=obj1g6w8eyu9ov5&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

April 6, 2021 at 7:26 pm ET

- Data from a 2019 hack of Facebook Inc. was made public in recent days, revealing the phone numbers and personal information of more than a half-billion people.
- Regulators in Europe have asked Facebook for more details about the data leak.
- Facebook said Tuesday in a blog post that the data leak reflects the ongoing need to police actions of bad actors on its platform.
- Facebook hasn't commented on whether it will notify users to check if their information was swept up in the incident.
- The data were extracted from the platform before the changes made by Facebook and later sold by hackers.
- The hackers began selling the data online to bidders soon after it was accessed.
- The hacked data don't include more sensitive information like passwords, credit-card information or social-security numbers.
- could potentially try to take over some phone numbers using SIM swapping technique, where they use the personal information stolen in the hack to swap the phone number onto another device. "
- It's a fallacy to believe that old data is bad data," Mr. Allen said. "

- For example, the LinkedIn breach from the early 2010s was used by the Guild of the Grumpy Old Hackers to guess former President Donald Trump's Twitter username and password in 2016."
- Facebook has an enormous amount of information on its 2.8 billion users world-wide, and is a reminder that hackers will try to harvest that data for other purposes. "
- Facebook has faced controversy in the past from how its data is accessed and used, including when Cambridge Analytica, a data firm with ties to Mr. Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, improperly accessed data on tens of millions of Facebook users.

Facebook's Data Breaches Don't Matter, Until They Do

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-data-breaches-dont-matter-until-they-do-11617801941?st=pbwiwyt3mnp8ed5&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

April 7, 2021 at 9:25 am ET

- The 2018 Cambridge Analytica scandal, which included data from 89 million Facebook users, sent Facebook's shares down nearly 7% in its immediate wake, and ultimately erased nearly 29% of its share price over the next eight months.
- Facebook said the published data was leaked back in 2019, when it was publicly reported, in a vulnerability that has since been fixed.
- number, location and relationship status—was reportedly leaked over the weekend.
- Somewhat embarrassingly, that led to the discovery that he uses encrypted messaging service and WhatsApp competitor Signal.
- Recent attempts to increase transparency around what information is shared on Facebook has been eye-opening for everyone involved.
- In January, Facebook's messaging platform WhatsApp told users they would soon need to accept an updated privacy policy to continue using the service.

★ As Apple and Facebook Clash Over Ads, Mom-and-Pop Shops Fear They'll Be the Victims

https://www.wsj.com/articles/apple-facebook-clash-over-ads-small-businesses-fear-theyll-be-impacted-11618009627?st=17c1wmtj92xop7u&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated April 10, 2021 at 12:29 am ET

- What's at issue is a seemingly small change to the iPhone and iPad operating system that upends the past decade of the online ad industry, by prompting users to choose whether or not they'd like to be tracked by the apps they use.
- Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook says the iOS update, currently rolling out, is about respecting user privacy.
- Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has accused Apple and Mr. Cook of a power grab, an attempt to take control of data that has long been widely available to advertisers and data brokers.
- Facebook launched an ad campaign insisting that those who will be most hurt by Apple's changes are small and medium-size businesses, which represent the majority of the social network's more than 10 million advertisers.
- This system has also allowed Facebook to demonstrate how effective its ads are, yielding a record \$84 billion in advertising revenue for the company in 2020.
- With Apple's change in user tracking via apps, this flood of data about users could become a trickle.
- Changes Facebook has already made to its internal advertising systems, some in anticipation of Apple's new rules, have already led to a coarser picture of who responds to ads, says Gracie Foxwell, co-founder of Foxwell Digital, which advises businesses on their online advertising. "
- I'm not in the camp that privacy doesn't matter, but data has been used forever in order to personalize advertising," says John Merris, CEO of Solo Stove, a startup that sells backyard fire pits online. "
- Apple's influence on the U.S. digital advertising industry is a product of its dominance in mobile devices.
- Apple has 60% of the share of all mobile devices in use in the U.S., according to web analytics company Statcounter.

- Mr. Cook has expressed exasperation over the ad-tracking debate that arose with Apple's decision to prompt users.
- He says he's worried that after Apple updates its mobile operating system, the money he spends on advertising on Facebook won't lead to as many sales. '
- Users Should Have the Choice' Apple isn't entirely deaf to advertisers' concerns. "
- We firmly support advertising, we simply believe users should have the choice over the data that is being collected about them and how it's used," says an Apple spokesman. "
- Apple is also rolling out its own alternatives to the traditional ad-tracking identifier.

★ Facebook Expands Oversight Board's Scope to Hear Removal Requests

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebooks-oversight-board-expands-scope-to-hear-removal-requests-11618331183?st=w8jh4zi4neiha4l&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

April 13, 2021 at 12:26 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. is expanding the authority of its independent oversight board, saying the panel will hear users' appeals on the content they want removed from the company's platforms.
- The social-media giant said Tuesday that over the coming weeks, all users will have the ability to appeal content moderators' decisions to keep flagged content such as posts, comments, photos and videos on Facebook and Instagram.
- Board decisions are binding, the company has said.
- In a decision released Tuesday, the oversight board upheld Facebook's removal of a post made last year by a user in the Netherlands that content moderators determined broke one of its rules against hate speech.

★ Audio Could Perk Up Facebook's Eyes and Ears

https://www.wsj.com/articles/audio-could-perk-up-facebooks-eyes-and-ears-11619089200?st=zxojp107a9lzd kp&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

April 22, 2021 at 7:00 am ET

- Fringe social audio network Clubhouse has just 35 employees and, in the span of less than three months this year, has grown its valuation from \$1 billion to a whopping \$4 billion, according to PitchBook.
- So when it comes to audio, imagine what a company with more than 58,000 employees and nearly half the world's population already using its existing platforms can do.
- On Monday, the social-media giant said it would launch a series of new audio features, including a Clubhouse competitor in Live Audio Rooms that should be available to everyone on the Facebook app by the summer.
- Facebook says it will test its audio rooms in Groups, where the company hopes it will be able to do audibly what Groups did for its platform visually: Bring together a concentrated group of people with similar interests.
- Facebook says it has 1.8 billion people using Groups every month—64% of the total monthly users on its legacy Blue app.
- In theory, audio networks could be even more popular.
- But we appear to be coming full circle with the proliferation of audio apps as a potential next frontier of social media that can be consumed anywhere, anytime, from a street corner to your kitchen.
- Just considering Clubhouse's growth this year, the potential has promise.
- Launched last year, Clubhouse wasn't even available in the iOS app store until September.
- But in February alone, it saw 10.1 million downloads, according to Sensor Tower data.

★ Facebook's Ad Business Drives Surge in Revenue, Following Google's Act

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-fb-1q-earnings-report-2021-11619610405?st=tzsd78990wntxtm&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated April 28, 2021 at 7:00 pm ET

- Advertising revenue, which accounts for the lion's share of Facebook's total revenue, rose 46% from a year earlier to \$25.44 billion.
- Shares in Facebook rose more than 6% in after-hours trading, as both overall revenue and profit beat Wall Street forecasts.
- The strong results from Facebook came as Google parent Alphabet Inc. on Tuesday said it shattered sales records for the first quarter and that profit more than doubled.
- Also Tuesday image-sharing platform Pinterest Inc. said revenue jumped 78% and last week Snap Inc. said its quarterly revenue rose 66% as it gained more Snapchat users.
- Facebook said Wednesday it is seeing progress in consumers and businesses using its e-commerce tools and that it will continue such investments.
- Facebook Wednesday also pledged to accelerate spending on investments including technical and product talent and consumer hardware.
- Facebook last month said it is working on augmented-reality glasses in tandem with sensor-packed wristbands that can detect finger movements.
- Non-advertising revenue, which includes sales of virtual-reality headsets, more than doubled in the first quarter to \$732 million from \$297 million a year ago. "
- In addition, Facebook said it is working to make it easier for users to create and sell their own content across its apps, tapping into a trend of companies building platforms specializing in user-generated content such as the videogame hub Roblox and celebrity messaging service Cameo.
- The Federal Trade Commission and 46 states in December filed antitrust lawsuits against Facebook, accusing it of buying and freezing out small startups to stifle competition.

★ Facebook Needs Users to Shop, Not Drop

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-needs-users-to-shop-not-drop-11619652351?st=k8m5tn2vzdf5hux&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

April 28, 2021 at 7:25 pm ET

- On Wednesday, Facebook reported strong first-quarter revenue that handily beat Wall Street's estimates, up 48% year over year.
- Shares rose 6% in after-hours trading.
- It said it expects ad- revenue growth will be driven primarily by price for the remainder of the year.
- Last year Facebook said it lost roughly three million daily active users in the U.S. and Canada between the second and the fourth quarter.
- Average pages viewed per visit to the site were down 16% from a year earlier, while visit duration decreased 9%.
- Declining engagement is a particularly bad sign, coming just as Apple launched its iOS update, which essentially asks for users' approval to allow apps to track their online browsing habits.
- Online marketing and data analytics firm Tinuiti estimates that about 70% of iOS users currently share their personal identifier information with app publishers.
- But after Apple's change, that number is expected to drop to about 10% to 15%.
- Facebook's Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg recently said in a discussion on the social-audio app Clubhouse that Apple's new changes could actually put his company's business in a stronger position by encouraging its advertisers to conduct commerce directly on its platforms.
- Mr. Zuckerberg also said Facebook Shops, which launched last year, already has 250 million monthly visitors.