

● Inside 'Facebook Jail': The Secret Rules That Put Users in the Doghouse

https://www.wsj.com/articles/inside-facebook-jail-trump-the-secret-rules-that-put-users-in-the-doghouse-11620138445?mod=Searchresults_pos12&page=1

May 4, 2021 at 10:28 am ET

- Jail, many users are serving time for infractions they don't understand.
- The plight of baffled users caught in Facebook's impenetrable system for adjudicating content has reinforced the company's reputation for heavy-handed and inept policing of its online platforms.
- company's newly formed Oversight Board—a group of 20 lawyers, professors and other independent experts who consider appeals to decisions made by Facebook —has been charged with interpreting Facebook's numerous detailed rules governing everything from the depiction of graffiti to swearing at newsworthy figures.
- The board's most closely watched decision is expected Wednesday—whether Facebook appropriately applied its rules when it booted former President Donald Trump from the platform.
- John Taylor, the board's spokesman, says the intention was never "to offer the hot takes on any particular issue of the day.
- The point of the board is to render a decision on the most difficult content decisions facing the company."
- Facebook in recent years has introduced many new rules, often in response to specific complaints from lawmakers and various interest groups, designed to protect users and guide an army of outside contractors who work on content moderation.
- The internal guidelines are in addition to the company's Community Standards listed on its website, and not made public.
- Some of the guidelines include detailed examples to illustrate fine distinctions.
- The spokeswoman says Facebook reviews two million pieces of content a day.
- Separately from the Oversight Board's decisions, Facebook restores thousands of pieces of previously removed content each quarter after user appeals.
- Facebook recently has turned more toward automation to help guide its decisions, relying on artificial intelligence and algorithms to take down content and also decide on user appeals, according to people familiar with the company and more than two dozen users interviewed by the Journal.
- The result is more frustration, with some users wondering how Facebook could have made a decision on their content in only a matter of seconds.
- A research paper from New York University last summer called the company's approach to content moderation "grossly inadequate" and implored Facebook to stop outsourcing most of the work and to double the overall number of moderators. "
- The Facebook spokeswoman says the company mistakenly removed Mr. Barksdale's comment.
- Facebook's Community Standards, the public rules, have expanded in recent years to include six major categories and 27 subcategories ranging from "violent and graphic content" to "false news."
- Facebook's policy on hate speech forbids direct attacks on people, based on race, religion and other demographics.
- In contrast, Alphabet Inc.'s Google search engine publishes the full set of 175 pages of rules that its 10,000 "search quality raters" use to evaluate search results.
- "We want people to understand where we draw the line on different kinds of speech, and we want to invite discussion of our policies, but we don't want to muddy the waters by inundating people with too much information,"
- In several rulings this year, the Oversight Board has urged Facebook to be more clear in its Community Standards akin to the specificity found in its internal documents.
- Facebook is assessing the feasibility of making the list public, the company said in its February post.
- When artist Sunny Chapman saw a photo in a Facebook group of a selfie of a Muslim woman in front of an anti-Muslim protest last month, a well-known photo that was circulating, Ms. Chapman of Hancock, N.Y., wanted to join the conversation.

- Facebook took down her comment, and informed her she had been restricted from posting or commenting for 30 days because the post violated the Community Standards on hate speech.
- Ms. Chapman had earlier received a 30-day ban for calling two other users who were degrading Vice President Kamala Harris racist.
- What I'm learning about Facebook is not to talk on Facebook," Ms. Chapman says.
- Facebook expanded the Oversight Board's scope to include decisions on user requests to remove content.
- In recent years, Facebook has been relying more heavily on its artificial intelligence to flag problem content, according to people familiar with the company.
- Facebook took down 6.3 million pieces of content under the "bullying and harassment" category during the fourth quarter of 2020, up from 3.5 million in the third quarter, in part because of "increasing our automation abilities," the company said in its quarterly Community Standards Enforcement report.
- The use of automation for moderation at scale is "too blunt and insufficiently particularized," says Mr. Sylvain of Fordham. "
- Users say they have had content taken down from months or years earlier with no explanation, in what one user called "Facebook's robot gone wrong."
- The Oversight Board has advised Facebook to let users know when automated enforcement is being used to moderate content, and let them appeal those decisions to a human being, in certain cases.
- Facebook says that is because it has lacked the human moderators to review cases.
- Tanya Buxton, a tattoo artist in Cheltenham, England, has tried to appeal multiple restrictions on her Facebook accounts showcasing areola tattoos—tattoos that are made to look like nipples for women who have had mastectomies.
- Facebook users should be allowed to show breastfeeding photos, the company wrote in a document to moderators, but warned: "Mistakes in this area are sensitive.
- Ms. Buxton, who says she isn't aware of the internal guidelines, has appealed each time she has been banned.

★🟢 As Decision on Trump Looms, Facebook Preps Its Advertisers

https://www.wsj.com/articles/as-decision-on-trump-looms-facebook-preps-its-advertisers-11620151529?st=tn4siu9lwpl9o5&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

May 4, 2021 2:05 pm ET | WSJ Pro

- Facebook Inc. has been quietly working to prepare Madison Avenue for the long-anticipated ruling by its oversight board on whether the company should reinstate former President Donald Trump's Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- Over the past few weeks, Facebook has reached out to advertising agencies in calls and emails to describe the board's process and emphasize that its management team has no sway over the board's decision, which is expected Wednesday, ad executives said.
- Facebook suspended Mr. Trump early this year, saying his posts violated the company's rules against praise and support for the Jan. 6 Capitol Hill riot.
- Ad revenue, which accounts for the lion's share of Facebook's total revenue, rose 46% in the first quarter compared with a year earlier to \$25.44 billion. "
- Last July, the Anti-Defamation League and the NAACP called for brands to boycott Facebook, arguing that the social media giant hadn't made enough progress in enforcing its policies on hate speech and misinformation.
- Last year, Facebook said it had more than 10 million active advertisers in the third quarter, up from 8 million in January.
- If Mr. Trump is reinstated on Facebook, advertisers are likely to step up their push to get more control over where their ads appear on the platform, agency executives said.
- Facebook promised advertisers more tools and transparency after last year's boycott.

Who Decides if Trump Is Banned From Facebook?

https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-decides-if-trump-is-banned-from-facebook-11620216804?mod=Searchresults_pos6&page=1

Updated May 5, 2021 at 1:21 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. established an oversight board in 2019 to review content-moderation decisions and recommend policies.
- The board operates like a Supreme Court for content.
- The social-media company can refer cases, or individual users can submit petitions for the board to consider.
- The board considers whether Facebook erred in removing content or accounts from its platforms or left intact content that should have been taken down under company rules.
- The social-media giant referred its decision about suspending former President Donald Trump's accounts to the board in January, and on Wednesday the board upheld the ban.
- The oversight board made its first rulings earlier this year and showed a willingness to overturn the company's past content-moderation decisions.
- Source: Oversight Board found that two posts by the then-president violated the company's rules against praise and support for the riot at the Capitol.
- April 29 Overturned U.S. Banned then-President Donald Trump from posting after accusing him of inciting violence during the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Is Donald Trump Still Suspended From Facebook? Here Is What the Oversight Board Decision Means

https://www.wsj.com/articles/donald-trump-facebook-ban-decision-11620056600?st=48ws4mm1rs8j8ry&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated May 5, 2021 at 7:22 pm ET

- Facebook Inc.'s independent oversight board ruled Wednesday that the company was justified in suspending then-President Donald Trump but added that it must decide in the coming months whether he is permanently locked out of Facebook and Instagram.
- The board determined that two posts from Mr. Trump on Jan. 6 following the attack on the U.S. Capitol "severely violated" the platforms' community standards, but that it wasn't appropriate for the company to assess an indefinite suspension with no criteria for when the account will be restored.
- It called for Facebook to review the decision and make a new determination about the status of Mr. Trump's accounts within the next six months.
- Facebook said it found that two posts by the former president violated the company's rules against praise and support for the riot at the Capitol.
- Facebook has pledged to abide by the panel's decisions.
- The oversight board made its first rulings earlier this year and showed a willingness to overturn the company's past content-moderation decisions.
- Facebook previously said it would abide by the board's content decisions.
- The company reached out to advertising agencies in calls and emails to describe the board's process and emphasized that its management team had no sway over the board's decision, ad executives said.
- Social-media platforms including Alphabet Inc.'s YouTube, Twitter Inc. and Facebook suspended Mr. Trump's accounts in the wake of the riot.
- By Mr. Trump's standards, he has been quiet.

★● Trump's Ban From Facebook Is Upheld, but Panel Orders Review

https://www.wsj.com/articles/donald-trumps-facebook-ban-is-upheld-by-oversight-board-11620220252?st=ri2zm7krlwsd4z9&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated May 5, 2021 at 7:35 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. was justified in suspending then-President Donald Trump early this year, the company's independent oversight board ruled Wednesday, but it must better explain its reasoning if it decides to permanently lock him out of its social-media platforms.
- The Oversight Board gave Facebook six months to determine whether Mr. Trump should be permanently banned, and it put the company on the line to more clearly articulate its rules for prominent individuals and develop penalties for violators.
- But Wednesday's decision essentially punted the ball back to the company, stating that it wasn't the board's role to set policy for the social-media platform.
- Alphabet Inc.'s YouTube, Twitter Inc. and other social-media platforms also removed the then-president after accusing him of inciting the deadly Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol.
- an undefined period, with no criteria for when or whether the account will be restored," the board said in its decision. "
- In a statement on Wednesday, Mr. Trump criticized the decision as a "total disgrace" and said social-media companies must pay a political price for their actions against him.
- Facebook's Oversight Board The board sidestepped taking a position on whether political leanings played a role in Facebook's decision on how to handle Mr. Trump.
- The Facebook decision was made by five members of the current 20- person Oversight Board, a Facebook-endowed body created in 2019 to adjudicate the company's handling of contentious content and advise on its moderation practices.
- Facebook was among social-media platforms that banned Mr. Trump following the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol by a pro-Trump mob.
- The board members split on standards for Mr. Trump's possible return.

Facebook's Book-Banning Blueprint

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-book-banning-blueprint-11620426021?st=xvuuch3muwumb75&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

May 7, 2021 at 6:20 pm ET

- Amazon this year started its foray into politicized book-banning, pulling a three-year-old book on transgender policy by a conservative think-tanker from its web store.
- Facebook doesn't sell books, but it can suppress their distribution when they conflict with a political agenda.
- The social-media giant now appears to be throttling a Wall Street Journal review of a book on climate science by physicist Steven Koonin, the former top scientist at the Obama Energy Department and provost of the California Institute of Technology.
- Facebook uses so-called fact-checkers to tell it which news articles to suppress.
- The fact-check on the statement that "global crop yields are rising, not falling" retorts that "while global crop yields are rising, this does not constitute evidence that climate change is not adversely affecting agriculture."
- Maybe it doesn't make sense for Facebook to restrict the reach of legitimate scientific argument and competing interpretations of data.
- Democrats such as Sen. Elizabeth Warren and left-wing interests have been pressing Facebook to implement more censorship of climate-related discussion, which can help soften opposition to the Democratic majority's Green New Deal priorities.
- Facebook is demonstrating a new blueprint to force inconvenient books out of the marketplace.

★● **States Urge Facebook to Abandon Plan for Children's Instagram**

https://www.wsj.com/articles/state-prosecutors-add-to-warnings-about-instagrams-child-safety-plans-11620662601?st=138aqio17lupg44&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated May 10, 2021 at 2:44 pm ET

- Attorneys general from 44 states and territories urged Facebook Inc. to abandon plans to launch a version of Instagram for children, citing behavioral and privacy concerns about social media's effects on young people.
- In a letter to Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg on Monday, the officials said that research has painted a grim picture of children's social-media use, referencing links to mental-health problems and bullying.
- Facebook now prohibits children under the age of 13 from joining its apps and websites, but Mr. Zuckerberg has acknowledged that many children join by lying about their age.
- Mr. Zuckerberg said in March that, used with supervision, social media can help young people maintain connections with friends.
- In their letter, the attorneys general rejected that argument, writing, "There are myriad other—and safer—ways for young children to connect with family and friends."

★● Facebook Loses Bid to Block Ruling on EU-U.S. Data Flows

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-faces-irish-ruling-on-suspension-of-eu-u-s-data-flows-11620983614?st=xznxcyu26fajfqg&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated May 14, 2021 at 11:57 am ET

- Facebook Inc. lost a bid to block a European Union privacy decision that could suspend its ability to send information about European users to U.S. computer servers, opening a pathway toward a precedent-setting interruption of its data flows.
- Ireland's High Court dismissed Friday all of Facebook's procedural complaints about a preliminary decision on data flows that it received in August from the country's Data Protection Commission.
- The preliminary decision, which the court stayed in September pending its decision, could, if finalized, force the social-media company to suspend sending personal information about EU users to Facebook's servers in the U.S. While Friday's court decision is a procedural one, the underlying questions are central to trans-Atlantic trade and the digital economy.
- Legal experts say the logic in Ireland's provisional order could apply to other large tech companies that are subject to U.S. surveillance laws, such as cloud services and email providers—potentially leading to widespread disruption of trans-Atlantic data flows.
- That ruling restricted how companies like Facebook could send personal information about Europeans to the U.S., because it found that Europeans had no effective way to challenge American government surveillance.
- How Ireland's DPC enforces the ruling is being closely watched, because it leads EU privacy enforcement for several other big tech companies, including Alphabet Inc.'s Google, Apple Inc. and Twitter Inc., which have their European headquarters in the country.
- Friday's decision comes as countries world-wide increase measures to take control of where data flows.
- Orders, even if only preliminary ones, to stop sending data to the U.S. are a major shift in more than two decades of wrangling over how to balance privacy and commerce when it comes to trans-Atlantic data flows.
- In 2015, the EU's top court invalidated a major legal mechanism for transferring such information to the U.S. But the threat ended up being mostly theoretical: No company faced a specific order to stop sending personal information, and the data flows never stopped.
- Now, some lawyers say resolving the issue could require changes to U.S. surveillance laws to give more legal rights to Europeans.

★● Facebook, Instagram to Allow Users to Hide 'Likes'

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-instagram-to-allow-users-to-hide-likes-11622034000?st=fk81xju3rlmv0vc&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

May 26, 2021 at 9:00 am ET

- Facebook and Instagram will begin allowing users to hide "like" counts on their posts, even after pilot tests of the feature didn't show meaningful impact on how people use the platforms or feel about themselves.
- The "like" button, which first appeared on Facebook in 2009 in the form of a thumbs-up symbol, has for years been the primary measure of social-media success.
- Facebook Inc., which owns Instagram, two years ago began experimenting with hiding likes in the hope that it might be good for users' mental health and reduce anxiety about the popularity of their posts, Instagram head Adam Mosseri said.
- Mr. Mosseri said that Instagram chose to go forward with giving users the ability to hide likes as a matter of personal choice. "
- The company's formal introduction of the option to hide likes comes as it and rival social-media platforms face scrutiny over their products' effects on mental health and in particular their impact on children.
- Users will be able to hide both likes on their own posts and on those of the people they follow, he said.
- Mr. Mosseri said Instagram expects a double-digit percentage of users to end up hiding likes.
- Instagram users in some countries will start being shown the option to hide likes starting on Wednesday, Mr. Mosseri said, with the feature being rolled out across the world within a few days.

★ EU Eyes Formal Antitrust Investigation Into Facebook

https://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-eyes-formal-antitrust-investigation-into-facebook-11622040255?st=obknnwifai9af31&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

May 26, 2021 at 10:44 am ET

- The EU's top competition watchdog, the European Commission, is likely in coming weeks to open formal antitrust proceedings against Facebook, a key procedural step in one of its long-running investigations into the company, the person said, adding that the timing could still change.
- The probe, which stems from complaints from competitors, looks at least in part at how Facebook allegedly favors Marketplace—its own flea market service where users can hawk their wares, from used clothes to used cars—at the expense of other companies that sell products through Facebook.
- The EU fined the company €110 million in 2017 for providing misleading information during the review of its WhatsApp acquisition.
- The Commission's Facebook inquiry is part of a new wave of antitrust enforcement for the bloc.
- The EU is also pursuing informal antitrust investigations into Alphabet Inc.'s Google related to both advertising and its use of data, according to people familiar with the matter.

★ Facebook Ends Ban on Posts Asserting Covid-19 Was Man-Made

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-ends-ban-on-posts-asserting-covid-19-was-man-made-11622094890?st=fkaejuko7cifu9t&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated May 27, 2021 at 12:56 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. has ended its ban on posts asserting Covid-19 was man-made or manufactured, a policy shift that reflects a deepening debate over the origins of the pandemic that was first identified in Wuhan, China, almost 18 months ago.
- President Biden on Wednesday ordered a U.S. intelligence inquiry into the origins of the virus.
- Facebook in February began the ban on claims the virus was man-made or manufactured as part of a list of misleading health claims that aren't allowed.
- Facebook has struggled with regulating user content, resulting in complaints from lawmakers, advocacy groups and users who said that its decisions are opaque, inconsistent and unfair.
- Facebook's independent oversight board has been critical of the company's enforcement effort.

Facebook's Lab-Leak About-Face

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-lab-leak-about-face-11622154198?st=nb8lkk1ep1rkb5f&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

May 27, 2021 at 6:23 pm ET

- Witness Facebook's decision to stop censoring some claims about the origin of Covid-19 the same day President Biden said his Administration will investigate whether a Chinese lab may have been involved.
- Yet Facebook announced in February that it would expand its content moderation on Covid-19 to include "false" and "debunked" claims such as that "COVID-19 is man-made or manufactured."
- YouTube's Covid-19 policy similarly forbids contradicting "health authorities."
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is run by a political appointee and its evolving guidance is clearly influenced by political considerations.
- In 2019 a wiser Mark Zuckerberg, the Facebook CEO, said "I don't think it's right for a private company to censor politicians or the news in a democracy."

★ Facebook's Marketplace Faces Antitrust Probes in EU, U.K.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-and-u-k-open-antitrust-probes-into-facebook-11622800304?st=rmon5yd2debhv43&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated June 4, 2021 at 7:01 am ET

- The European Union and the U.K. opened formal antitrust investigations into Facebook Inc.'s classified-ads service Marketplace, ramping up regulatory scrutiny for the company in Europe.
- Both the European Commission—the EU's top antitrust enforcer—and the U.K.'s Competition and Markets Authority said Friday they are investigating whether Facebook repurposes data it gathers from advertisers who buy ads in order to give illegal advantages to its own services, including its Marketplace online flea market.
- The U.K. added that it is also investigating whether Facebook uses advertiser data to give similar advantages to its online-dating service.
- Separately on Friday, Germany's competition regulator announced that it is opening an investigation into Google's News Showcase, in which the tech company pays to license certain content from news publishers.
- objective and non-discriminatory criteria, and partner content is not given preference in the ranking of our results," and that Google will cooperate with the investigation.
- The three newly opened cases are part of a new wave of antitrust enforcement in Europe.
- The European Commission filed formal charges last month against Apple Inc. for allegedly abusing its control over the distribution of music-streaming apps, including Spotify Technology SA.

Facebook Suspends Donald Trump for at Least Two Years

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-suspends-donald-trump-for-two-years-11622825480?st=iamvgshfxzndexo&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated June 4, 2021 at 7:33 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. said it is suspending Donald Trump's accounts for two years, formalizing a long-term penalty for the former U.S. president after its independent Oversight Board said the company was wrong to keep the ban open-ended.
- In responding to the board's criticism, Facebook also opens the door for more, as the company will now be required to make more subjective decisions on whether posts from political figures violate its rules surrounding misinformation, hate speech and other issues that are hotly debated.

- White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters on Friday that decisions about whether to ban users should be left to the companies that run the platforms. "
- On Friday, Facebook said it would no longer consider posts from politicians newsworthy by default but would make its own judgments about those that qualify, and then label those that merit the exemption.
- Facebook's move Friday came a month after the Oversight Board ruled that the social-media giant was justified in suspending Mr. Trump over posts in which he urged his followers to go to the Capitol as lawmakers were certifying President Biden's win.
- In the ruling, the board gave Facebook six months to determine whether Mr. Trump should be permanently banned. "
- YouTube, a unit of Alphabet Inc., has said it doesn't grant politicians exemptions from its rules for newsworthiness.
- The company also suspended Mr. Trump's account in January and has said it would reinstate him when it concludes the risk of further violence has abated, though it has offered no explanation of how it will make that determination.

Facebook Advertising Boss Carolyn Everson Leaving the Social-Media Company

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-advertising-boss-carolyn-everson-leaving-the-social-media-company-11623262708?st=zzy1kby15ja3fg8&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated June 9, 2021 at 4:03 pm ET

- Carolyn Everson, Facebook Inc.'s head of global advertising sales and one of the ad industry's most powerful executives, said she is leaving the company.
- Ms. Everson spent more than a decade at Facebook, helping the social-media company build relationships on and off New York's Madison Avenue and grow into a global ad behemoth.
- Ad revenue accounted for \$84.2 billion of Facebook's nearly \$86 billion of revenue last year. "
- Some ad executives saw Ms. Everson as a possible successor to Facebook's revenue chief, David Fischer, who announced plans to leave the company later this year.
- Last summer, Ms. Everson played a critical role in persuading top advertisers not to pause or limit spending on Facebook when civil-rights groups called for a boycott of the social network for failing to control the spread of hate speech and misinformation.
- Facebook recovered quickly from the boycott and posted record revenue in last year's third quarter despite the imbroglio.
- Early in her tenure, Ms. Everson helped form Facebook's client council, an invitation-only group made up of top marketers and top ad agency executives.
- Some executives said Ms. Everson's departure could have financial repercussions for Facebook. "

★ Facebook and Its Advertisers Feel Pinch of Apple's Privacy Drive

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-and-its-advertisers-feel-pinch-of-apples-privacy-drive-11623502980?st=v89sbmygkb0t31n&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

June 12, 2021 at 9:03 am ET

- On Wednesday, Facebook's head of global advertising sales Carolyn Everson said she was leaving the company after more than a decade.
- These exits have led some to worry about the impact on Facebook's advertiser relationships.
- Facebook has been outspoken about its concern that tracking changes will disproportionately affect small businesses.
- Recent iOS changes could threaten some of Facebook's loyalty among small businesses.
- some of its marketing budget to focus on brand partnerships and other strategic marketing areas outside Facebook after hearing that the iOS update had been negatively affecting its peers.

- In some cases, she said fellow direct-to-consumer brands have seen their return on investment on Facebook cut in half.
- Ultimately, brands that have historically allocated large, set portions of their budgets to Facebook are becoming more nimble in terms of advertising channels, he said.
- Facebook has said it expects iOS changes to begin to have an impact on its business in the current quarter.
- Despite some advertisers reporting lower returns on their investments, pricing on Facebook's ads has been rising.
- It expects ad revenue growth to be primarily driven by price for the remainder of the year.

★● After Trump Ban, Facebook Oversight Panel Pushes for More Say

https://www.wsj.com/articles/after-trump-ban-facebook-oversight-panel-pushes-for-more-say-11623844800?st=tmo9n0aetpfq6dd&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

June 16, 2021 at 8:00 am ET

- Facebook Inc.'s oversight panel has won credibility for independence after ruling repeatedly against the social-media giant—most recently objecting to its decision to ban indefinitely former President Donald Trump.
- But board officials and outsiders say the panel's longer-term impact will hinge more on how Facebook follows up on all the detailed recommendations and guidance the board has issued as part of its decisions.
- Since it started making rulings on Facebook's determinations about what content to allow and what to take down, the panel—a 20-member group called the Oversight Board—has decided eight times against Facebook.
- But the board also issues copious guidance with each ruling, and those recommendations aren't.
- A Facebook spokesman said the board was "already having a demonstrable and significant impact on Facebook" and that it had implemented nearly all of the board's recommendations, including adopting a new protocol for public figures like Mr. Trump.
- Following the two-year suspension of Mr. Trump earlier this month, Facebook posted a 20-page response to the board's recommendations about how it should handle content from politicians.
- In that response, the company said it was "fully committed" to implementing 15 of the board's 19 recommendations.
- Earlier this month, Facebook said it would suspend Mr. Trump from its platform for two years, responding to a deadline set by the Oversight Board to clear up its guidance on how it treats politicians on the site.
- In May, the board had ruled Facebook was right to ban Mr. Trump from the site but criticized its lack of clarity about its indefinite ban.
- In an earlier case, the board overturned Facebook's decision to remove a post from a user in Myanmar about Muslims.
- In another, the board upheld Facebook's decision to remove a Dutch video of people in blackface, saying it was a harmful racial stereotype.
- Established as a limited liability company in Delaware, the board has a six-year budget of \$130 million, provided by Facebook to help pay its 50-member staff and 20 board members.
- While skeptics say Facebook's funding keeps the panel from being truly independent, and that its mandate is too narrow, it has received praise from lawyers and academics for its members' robust criticisms of Facebook in their rulings for each case.

★● Facebook Critics Regroup in Bid to Reshape the Digital Behemoth

https://www.wsj.com/articles/big-tech-critics-regroup-in-push-to-reshape-facebook-11625052684?st=7b1mqplpfglt2z33&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated June 30, 2021 at 11:55 am ET

- U.S. District Judge James Boasberg ruled Monday that a Federal Trade Commission lawsuit was "legally insufficient," saying the regulator didn't show enough proof that Facebook was a monopoly and that its practices harmed competition.
- In another setback, the judge dismissed the case brought against Facebook by 46 states on grounds that, among other things, the attorneys general waited too long to bring their claims.
- Lawmakers in Washington, meanwhile, are considering the path forward after a bruising battle last week to advance bills aimed at strengthening tech antitrust enforcement.
- Facebook has disputed claims from the FTC and lawmakers, saying that it competes fairly "to earn people's time and attention."
- Bernstein analyst Mark Shmulik said the recent ruling shows the FTC's case against Facebook was "weak to begin with" and the dismissal doesn't change his investment thesis on the company, which recently crossed the \$1 trillion market-cap threshold and whose stock he says is undervalued. "
- Even some advocates of change say the path ahead for the antitrust overhaul is rocky. "
- For their part, the big tech companies also are lobbying hard to win over more allies in the House, ahead of new efforts to pass the bills, which lawmakers and lobbyists say could potentially happen in September.
- One measure targeted for erasure by lobbyists is the bill that could potentially break up companies.
- It passed out of the committee on a 21-20 vote, a signal of its vulnerability. "
- Some lawmakers representing districts in California, where companies such as Facebook and Alphabet Inc.'s Google are based, are wary of the impact the proposed legislation could have.

Trump Sues Facebook, Twitter, Google to Restore Social-Media Accounts

https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-sues-facebook-twitter-google-to-restore-social-media-accounts-11625674561?st=w7zszd3ha59i1y0&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated July 7, 2021 at 4:33 pm ET

- Former President Donald Trump has sued Facebook, Twitter and Google, seeking to restore his online profile after he was suspended from most social-media platforms following the Jan. 6 riots in the U.S. Capitol.
- Mr. Trump was the most prominent plaintiff seeking class-action status against the tech companies, claiming he has been wrongly censored by them in violation of his First Amendment rights.
- The lawsuits named as defendants the chief executives of the three companies: Jack Dorsey of Twitter, Alphabet Inc.'s Sundar Pichai and Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg.
- Facebook on Jan. 7 imposed a ban lasting at least two weeks on Mr. Trump's accounts on its flagship Facebook platform and Instagram in response to posts he made during the attack on the U.S. Capitol by a mob of his supporters the day before.
- Twitter and YouTube also quickly removed Mr. Trump from their platforms in response to posts he made around the time of the attack at the Capitol.
- First Amendment attorney Floyd Abrams called Mr. Trump's suits against the three platforms "irredeemably frivolous" and said that Section 230 of the Communications Act provides social-media outlets with more protection than the First Amendment requires.

★ Facebook Seeks FTC Chair Lina Khan's Recusal in Antitrust Case

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-seeks-recusal-of-ftc-chairwoman-in-antitrust-case-11626267605?st=0m2g63nrrtzowjc&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated July 14, 2021 at 1:20 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. sought the recusal of Federal Trade Commission Chair Lina Khan from the agency's deliberations on whether to file a new antitrust case against the company, arguing she couldn't be impartial because of her long history of criticizing it and other big-tech firms. "
- For the entirety of her professional career, Chair Khan has consistently and very publicly concluded that Facebook is guilty of violating the antitrust laws," the company said Wednesday in a formal recusal petition filed with the FTC. "
- Facebook's request comes two weeks after a similar recusal petition was filed by Amazon.com Inc., which is facing multiple investigations at the FTC.
- The FTC soon must decide whether to file a new antitrust lawsuit against Facebook after a judge threw out the FTC's previous complaint as legally insufficient.
- Ms. Khan has been a prolific writer about antitrust issues, especially as they related to big tech companies.
- The FTC, along with 46 states, had alleged Facebook was engaged in illegal monopolization, including by buying up other companies such as WhatsApp and Instagram to prevent them from challenging Facebook's market position.
- The company denied the allegations, saying it competed fairly and achieved success because its services are popular with consumers.
- In last month's ruling, U.S. District Judge James Boasberg in Washington dismissed the FTC's case at the outset of pretrial proceedings, saying the FTC didn't plead enough allegations to support monopolization claims against Facebook.
- The judge gave the commission 30 days to file a new lawsuit that attempts to make more detailed allegations.
- Disqualification requests haven't seen much success in modern times, but there are older court rulings that vacated FTC enforcement actions on the grounds that a commissioner should have been disqualified.

★● Facebook to Pay Content Creators More Than \$1 Billion Through 2022

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-to-pay-content-creators-more-than-1-billion-through-2022-11626292301?st=6cixzs4z6ova9p6&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated July 14, 2021 at 5:22 pm ET

- Facebook said it would pay more than \$1 billion to content creators on its social networks through 2022, a move that reflects the increasing value the company and its competitors see in the recorded videos, live-streams and other kinds of posts their users make.
- The billion-dollar total also reflects the bar set by pledges previously announced by Snap Inc.'s Snapchat, Google's YouTube and Bytedance Ltd.'s TikTok.
- The company also plans to provide seed funding to help creators cover content-production costs for its platforms.
- Savvy content creators have become a crucial part of the global social-networking landscape in recent years, helping platforms like TikTok and Amazon.com Inc.'s Twitch grow in popularity.
- Facebook has a massive global reach: It reported 2.72 billion people a day on average used one of its platforms including Instagram in March.
- It is betting that monetary rewards will serve as a sweetener for those deciding which platforms to focus their energy on.
- Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg has said he wants the company's platforms to be the best place for millions of creators to make a living. "
- Other companies have made similar bets.
- TikTok said last year that its Creator Fund would invest more \$2 billion in content creators world-wide over the next three years.
- The moves could help Facebook and other tech giants tone down government scrutiny over the outside impact they make on consumers' lives, said Tom Forte, a consumer-tech analyst at D.A. Davidson.

Biden Blasts Covid-19 Vaccine Misinformation on Social Media

https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-blasts-covid-19-vaccine-misinformation-on-social-media-11626464163?st=jkithe4qrcfhyk5&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated July 16, 2021 at 5:23 pm ET

- President Biden blasted Facebook and other social-media companies over the spread of misinformation around Covid-19 vaccines on their platforms. "
- The only pandemic we have is among the unvaccinated.
- Experts say the vaccines are highly effective against Covid-19.
- U.S. health regulators have warned that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is linked to a very small incidence of cases of a rare neurological disorder associated with other shots.
- Misinformation being circulated on Facebook Inc. makes various claims, including that the vaccine can lead to infertility, according to the White House.
- Facebook spokesman Kevin McAlister said that Mr. Biden's claim wasn't supported by facts and that more than 3.3 million Americans have used a Facebook tool to find out where to get a vaccine. "
- The Biden administration has said social-media companies aren't doing enough.
- have asked Facebook to remove posts more quickly. "
- We're dealing with a life or death issue here," Ms. Psaki said Friday. "
- Some Republicans have criticized the White House's handling of the issue.

● Biden's Facebook Attack Followed Months of Frustration Inside White House

https://www.wsj.com/articles/bidens-facebook-slam-followed-months-of-frustration-inside-white-house-11626632335?st=5n2s2mk20tt6qit&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

July 18, 2021 at 2:18 pm ET

- President Biden's attack on Facebook Inc. on Friday followed months of mounting private frustration inside his administration over the social-media giant's handling of vaccine misinformation, according to U.S. officials, bringing into public view tensions that could complicate efforts to stop the spread of Covid-19.
- The tough words between the White House and Silicon Valley escalated over the weekend, as Facebook issued a blunt statement accusing the Biden administration of distorting the facts.
- U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, who made the rounds on the Sunday talk shows in Washington, countered that social-media companies weren't doing enough to clamp down on false statements about Covid-19 vaccines. "
- The reality is that misinformation is still spreading like wildfire in our country, aided and abetted by technology platforms," Dr. Murthy said on Fox News Sunday.
- Facebook has rejected the Biden administration's criticisms.
- Still, the conflict has further complicated Facebook's profile in Washington—with both the left and right—over everything from misinformation to its economic and political clout.
- While the company is under attack from the White House for failing to do more to monitor posts, some Republicans accused it of stifling free speech.
- On Friday, Mr. Biden accused social-media companies such as Facebook of killing people by not doing more to remove false statements about the vaccine. "
- The only pandemic we have is among the unvaccinated.
- The facts show that Facebook is helping save lives.
- The false narratives that Covid-19 vaccines result in widespread death and that the U.S. government is mandating vaccines more than doubled across the major social-media platforms within the past three months, according to Signal Labs Inc. Others include false claims that vaccines are really microchips and that vaccines change people's DNA, the media-analytics firm said.

- Mr. Biden and Facebook have long had frosty relations, although the current situation appears to have elevated tensions as the president looks to control the spread of the coronavirus.
- Facebook's swift rebuttal and suggestion that the administration is "finger pointing" show the company's plans to defend itself publicly. "
- During meetings with Facebook, Biden administration officials pressed the company to explain how it was measuring success in responding to misinformation, where misinformation was coming from and what impact misinformation was having on users, a senior administration official said.
- Some in the administration came to believe the company's approach had fundamental flaws and that its standards weren't rigorous enough, the official said.
- The official said the administration is less concerned about individual false or misleading posts than it is about the amplification and funneling of users to those posts.
- One example cited by an administration official: Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has questioned the efficacy and safety of vaccines, has been banned from Instagram, but not Facebook.

Biden Retracts Facebook Mass-Homicide Claim

https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-retracts-facebook-mass-homicide-claim-11626716930?st=45ln3iza2w4wp82&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

July 19, 2021 at 1:48 pm ET

- **Now safely ensconced in the White House, Mr. Biden accused the company of mass homicide on Friday—and didn't retract his statement until Monday.**
- The Journal's Andrew Restuccia reports today from Washington: President Biden on Monday sought to clarify his criticism of Facebook Inc., asserting that the company itself wasn't killing people by not doing enough to clamp down on vaccine misinformation.
- Pointing to research indicating a significant amount of false information comes from 12 social-media users, Mr. Biden told reporters at the White House, "Facebook isn't killing people.
- The only pandemic we have is among the unvaccinated.
- We employed similar tactics in the UK and Canada, which have similar rates of Facebook usage to the US, and those countries have achieved more than 70% vaccination of eligible populations.
- Sydney Ember reported: With deaths from the coronavirus nearing 200,000 in the United States, Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Wednesday assailed President Trump for playing politics with a potential coronavirus vaccine, saying he did not trust Mr. Trump to determine when a vaccine was ready for Americans. "
- Let me be clear: I trust vaccines," Mr. Biden said. "
- I trust scientists.
- But I don't trust Donald Trump, and at this moment, the American people can't either." ...
- In his speech, Mr. Biden thrust the issue of a coronavirus vaccine to center stage in the presidential race, expressing grave concern over the political pressure he said Mr. Trump was exerting over the government's approval process and accusing him of trying to rush out a vaccine for electoral gain. "
- He was talking Silicon Valley tech moguls, most specifically people like Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg, the top two leaders of Facebook, and their platform's role in allowing dangerous misinformation about the Covid- 19 vaccines to spread far and wide.
- Some readers may decide that Facebook, the president and the Times deserve whatever harsh treatment they can inflict upon each other.
- But these unhealthy relationships among big media outfits and the White House are bound to do more harm to the average citizen—and especially the average patient—than to the powerful players in this Washington drama.
- **Whatever one thinks of Facebook, it is highly destructive to have the federal government trying to dictate the flow of information among individuals and across private networks.**
- Former Rep. Justin Amash notes on Twitter that it's not just a threat to liberty but to the medical innovation we rely on to protect human health: The First Amendment protects the spreading of misinformation in almost every context.

Biden Seeks to Clarify Comments on Facebook, Vaccine Misinformation

https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-seeks-to-clarify-comments-on-facebook-vaccine-misinformation-11626713309?st=ivuavkelwjamd5&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated July 19, 2021 at 2:57 pm ET

- President Biden on Monday sought to clarify his criticism of Facebook Inc., asserting that the company itself wasn't killing people by not doing enough to clamp down on misinformation about Covid-19 vaccines.
- Pointing to research indicating a significant amount of false information comes from 12 social-media users, Mr. Biden told reporters at the White House: "Facebook isn't killing people."
- Mr. Biden said he hoped his public remarks would prod Facebook to do more.
- The president said he hadn't seen any indication that Facebook is doing enough to satisfy his concerns.
- "We're in a battle with the virus," she told reporters on Monday.
- Facebook has pushed back aggressively on criticism by Mr. Biden and his senior advisers in recent days, prompting a new level of tension between the social-media company and the U.S. government.
- The only pandemic we have is among the unvaccinated.
- The facts show that Facebook is helping save lives.
- On Saturday, the company posted an item on its blog saying it wasn't responsible for Mr. Biden's failure to achieve his publicly stated goal of 70% of American adults receiving at least one dose of the vaccine by July 4 and that 85% of its users in the U.S. have been or want to be vaccinated against Covid-19.
- Mr. Biden's decision last week to publicly call out Facebook followed months of mounting private frustration inside his administration over the social-media company's handling of vaccine misinformation.

WPP Pulls Out of Facebook's Media Agency Review

https://www.wsj.com/articles/wpp-pulls-out-of-facebooks-media-agency-review-11626986747?st=dtpfj73tp5hal0i&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

July 22, 2021 4:45 pm ET

- Facebook Inc.'s incumbent ad-buying shop GroupM has pulled out of the social-media giant's agency review, the companies said.
- Rival advertising firms Dentsu Inc., Havas Group and Publicis Groupe SA are still competing for the highly sought after account, which includes ad spending that could amount to more than \$1 billion, according to people familiar with the matter.
- Pulling out of the review will likely bring an end to GroupM's work handling the bulk of the Facebook global media planning and buying business, although the agency group will continue to work with Facebook throughout the review process.
- Dentsu also works on Facebook's ad-buying account.
- One reason for withdrawing from the review is a Facebook request for strict contractual terms, according to people familiar with the matter.
- GroupM is involved in a number of large pitches, including for Coca-Cola Co., Unilever PLC, Bayer AG and Chanel, according to people close to the company.

★ Judge Extends Deadline for FTC to Refile Facebook Antitrust Suit

https://www.wsj.com/articles/judge-extends-deadline-for-ftc-to-refile-facebook-antitrust-suit-11627320720?st=pe39tjt02ags90z&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

July 26, 2021 at 1:32 pm ET

- The Federal Trade Commission has until Aug. 19 to file an amended version of its antitrust lawsuit against Facebook Inc. after a judge granted the agency an extension.
- Facebook has sought the recusal of FTC Chairwoman Lina Khan from the agency's deliberations on whether to file a new antitrust case, arguing she couldn't be impartial because of her long history of criticizing it and other big-tech firms.

★● Time to Roll the Dice on Facebook

https://www.wsj.com/articles/time-to-roll-the-dice-on-facebook-11627514233?st=u4reawsin5skwry&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

July 28, 2021 at 7:17 pm ET

- Since reaching a two-year high last August, the stock's multiple of prospective price to sales contracted significantly throughout the winter and spring amid regulatory threats, lower social-media usage as consumers stepped back out and anticipation of the negative effects of Apple's recent privacy changes.
- After impressive results from fellow social-media companies Twitter and Snap last week, Facebook reported strong second-quarter numbers on Wednesday, growing advertising revenue 56%—edging Wall Street's expectations moderately.
- Facebook's stock fell 4% in after hours trading immediately following its report.
- Investors fear the unknown, but at this point they mostly know the bad news: As more people adopt Apple's new iOS privacy changes, it is clear that deceleration in ad revenue growth will likely come.
- Analysts expect Facebook to grow ad revenue an average of just 25% year on year over the next two quarters—less than half the growth rate it posted in the second quarter and a slight deceleration from the average growth it showed over the same period last year.
- Coming into its earnings report, Facebook was trading at just 8 times forward sales—the cheapest of the major social-media stocks.
- It is working to make both virtual reality via "the metaverse" and e-commerce key to its evolution.
- Because Facebook's ad business is so big, management has been clear that it will take a while for secondary businesses to become meaningful.

Facebook's Ad Business Posts Another Strong Quarter

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-fb-2q-earnings-report-2021-11627435564?st=igow45img4bmtxm&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated July 28, 2021 at 8:08 pm ET

- Facebook's profit doubled from a year earlier to \$10.39 billion, or \$3.61 a share, soundly beating analysts' expectations.
- Revenue rose 56% to \$29.08 billion.
- However, shares fell more than 3% in after-hours trading as Facebook said it expects revenue growth to slow in the second half of this year.
- Facebook's financial results come as Google parent Alphabet Inc. on Tuesday reported its best quarter ever for sales and profit, bolstered by a strong digital advertising market.
- The company's business practices and its platforms continue to face a drumbeat of scrutiny from the White House, nonprofit groups and other parties.
- The Real Facebook Oversight Board, part of a U.K. nonprofit called the Citizens, chided the company Wednesday over disinformation about Covid-19 vaccines, the 2020 U.S. presidential election and other subjects on Facebook's main platform.
- On Wednesday, Facebook said as its offices reopen, it will require employees at its U.S. campuses to be vaccinated.
- Former President Donald Trump, too, has taken a swing at Facebook, suing the company as well as Google Inc.'s YouTube and Twitter earlier this month for removing him from their platforms in response to posts he made around the time of the Jan. 6 riots at the U.S. Capitol.
- Mr. Trump has claimed he has been wrongly censored by them in violation of his First Amendment rights.

- Separately, Facebook remains in legal battles with U.S. regulators over its size.