

★ States Call on Facebook to Launch Hate-Speech Hotline

https://www.wsj.com/articles/states-call-on-facebook-to-launch-hate-speech-hotline-11596661898?st=lejggpswprh347&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Aug. 5, 2020 at 5:58 pm ET

- In a letter to Facebook executives, the attorneys general for California, New York, New Jersey, Illinois and other states called on the social-media platform to offer live, real-time assistance so users can report intimidation and harassment.
- They also asked Facebook to improve its filtering and blocking tools for hate speech and to be more cooperative with law-enforcement authorities investigating hate crimes.
- They are really the biggest vehicles out there for spreading hate and disinformation," New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, whose office helped organize the letter, said in an interview, referring to Facebook platforms.
- Facebook said it took action against 9.6 million pieces of content for violating policies against hate speech in the first quarter of this year, up from 5.7 million in the previous quarter.
- He said one of the most effective things Facebook could do is respond more quickly to users in distress.
- He cited one case where his office last year alerted the company to a Facebook group based around Lakewood, N.J. The group was organized around expelling Orthodox Jews from the area, and online comments included language inciting violence such as "We need to get rid of them like Hitler did," according to a letter Mr. Grewal's office sent to Facebook in April 2019.
- Facebook removed the group about 10 months later, Mr. Grewal said. "
- This is a platform where hate and disinformation spreads like wildfire in minutes," he said. "
- In his House testimony last week, Mr. Zuckerberg said Facebook has invested billions of dollars to police hate speech, involving both employee review and automated detection systems. "
- The letter to Facebook follows a separate initiative by attorneys general from most U.S. states examining the company for possible antitrust violations.

Facebook, Twitter Take Down Video of Trump Saying Children 'Almost Immune' From Covid-19

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-twitter-take-down-video-of-trump-saying-children-almost-immune-from-covid-19-11596674533?st=0oggggen8basit5a&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Aug. 5, 2020 at 8:56 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. and Twitter Inc. on Wednesday removed a video posted by President Trump in which he said children are "almost immune from this disease," a claim that the companies said ran afoul their rules against harmful misinformation about Covid-19.
- The video clip—a portion of an interview aired on Fox News—attracted roughly 450,000 views on Facebook before it was taken down, according to CrowdTangle, a Facebook-owned analytics company.
- While complications and deaths from Covid-19 are relatively rare among young people, children aren't immune from the virus.
- Older students, largely teens, are believed to be at greater risk than younger children.
- In June, Facebook removed posts and ads from the Trump campaign that showed an inverted red triangle once used by the Nazis to tag political rivals.

● Facebook's Hate-Speech Rules Collide With Indian Politics

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-hate-speech-india-politics-muslim-hindu-modi-zuckerberg-11597423346?mod=Searchresults_pos5&page=1

Aug. 14, 2020 at 12:47 pm ET

- By March of this year, they concluded Mr. Singh not only had violated the company's hate-speech rules but qualified as dangerous, a designation that takes into account a person's off-platform activities, according to current and former Facebook employees familiar with the matter.
- Given India's history of communal violence and recent religious tensions, they argued, his rhetoric could lead to real-world violence, and he should be permanently banned from the company's platforms worldwide, according to the current and former employees, a punishment that in the U.S. has been doled out to radio host Alex Jones, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan and numerous white supremacist organizations.
- Yet Mr. Singh, a member of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party, is still active on Facebook and Instagram, where he has hundreds of thousands of followers.
- The company's top public-policy executive in the country, Ankhi Das, opposed applying the hate-speech rules to Mr. Singh and at least three other Hindu nationalist individuals and groups flagged internally for promoting or participating in violence, said the current and former employees.
- Some high-profile advertisers recently boycotted the platform over its handling of hateful content.
- Facebook says it doesn't tolerate efforts to use its platforms to instigate violence anywhere in the world.
- The current and former Facebook employees said Ms. Das's intervention on behalf of Mr. Singh is part of a broader pattern of favoritism by Facebook toward Mr. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party and Hindu hard-liners.
- The spokesman said Facebook is still considering whether a ban is warranted.
- India is a vital market for Facebook, which isn't allowed to operate in China, the only other nation with more than one billion people.
- India has more Facebook and WhatsApp users than any other country, and Facebook has chosen it as the market in which to introduce payments, encryption and initiatives to tie its products together in new ways that Mr. Zuckerberg has said will occupy Facebook for the next decade.
- In April, Facebook said it would spend \$5.7 billion on a new partnership with an Indian telecom operator to expand operations in the country—its biggest foreign investment.
- Facebook, too, has encountered resistance from Indian regulators.
- Mr. Singh, a BJP state-level lawmaker, has drawn national attention for the stridency of his anti-Muslim rhetoric and his stated efforts to form a vigilante army to hunt down "traitors."
- He has used Facebook, where his own page and those dedicated to him have more than 400,000 followers, to say that Muslims who kill cows—animals revered by Hindus—should be slaughtered like them.
- Facebook Followings ...and his political party has nearly three times as many likes as its main rival in India.
- Within hours of the videotaped message, which Mr. Mishra uploaded to Facebook, rioting broke out that left dozens of people dead.
- Data from CrowdTangle, a Facebook-owned analytics tool, shows that within two months of the video of the speech being posted, the engagement for Mr. Mishra's Facebook page grew from a couple hundred thousand interactions a month to more than 2.5 million.

Facebook Faces Hate-Speech Questioning by Indian Lawmakers After Journal Article

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-faces-hate-speech-grilling-by-indian-lawmakers-after-journal-article-11597747734?st=n9qs12v117r1opr&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Aug. 18, 2020 at 7:49 am ET

- Indian lawmakers want to question Facebook Inc. about extremist posts on its platform.
- Opposition members of Parliament are acting following an article Friday in The Wall Street Journal that detailed what current and former Facebook employees said was a pattern of favoritism toward the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and Hindu hard-liners.
- It wants to ask the company about reports of favoritism and what it plans to do about hate speech, he wrote.

- The committee was established earlier this year following some of the worst communal violence in decades in India's capital city of Delhi. "
- The Internet Freedom Foundation, an Indian digital-rights advocate, said Monday that it had written to Parliament's information-technology committee asking it to take steps such as summoning Facebook's top global executives, holding hearings and ordering "an international human-rights audit leading to reparations for victims" of hate speech.
- The Wall Street Journal reported that Facebook staff charged with policing the platform for dangerous content concluded that BJP politician T. Raja Singh had violated the company's hate-speech rules and should be permanently banned from its platforms globally, according to current and former employees.
- But Facebook's top public-policy executive in India, Ankhi Das, opposed applying the rules to Mr. Singh and at least three other Hindu-nationalist individuals and groups flagged internally for promoting or participating in violence, the current and former employees said.
- The spokesman said Facebook is still considering whether a ban is warranted.

Facebook Removes QAnon Groups as It Expands Anti-Violence Policy

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-removes-qanon-groups-as-it-expands-anti-violence-policy-11597869178?st=jet3eoyrdgev8qw&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Aug. 19, 2020 at 8:28 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. said it is removing and will limit the spread of accounts that celebrate or suggest violence, including those associated with QAnon as part of a crackdown on the extremist conspiracy theory that has thrived on the company's platforms in recent years.
- The company said Wednesday it had removed more than 790 Facebook QAnon-related groups, 100 Facebook pages and 1,500 QAnon ads, and blocked more than 300 hashtags across Facebook and Instagram.
- The QAnon conspiracy centers on the idea that a powerful group of child traffickers control the world and is undermining President Trump with the help of other elites and mainstream news outlets.
- Facebook has been a powerful organizational tool for the QAnon movement, which got its start in late 2017 on the fringe site 4chan and later migrated to Facebook groups.
- Since March, when the first pandemic-related lockdowns took place in the U.S., QAnon's presence has exploded in popularity on Facebook and Instagram.
- Facebook has also removed more than 980 groups, 520 pages and 160 ads on Facebook from militia groups and organizations that encourage riots.
- Facebook said Facebook pages and groups as well as Instagram accounts associated with the militia, antifa and QAnon movements wouldn't "be eligible to be recommended" to other users who are looking for groups to follow.
- The company will also bar Facebook pages associated with these movements from running ads, selling products or fundraising using its products.

Facebook's Zuckerberg Questioned in FTC Antitrust Probe

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-zuckerberg-questioned-in-ftc-antitrust-probe-11597964759?st=163xiqrl39ibr1h&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Aug. 20, 2020 at 7:09 pm ET

- The Federal Trade Commission this week questioned Facebook Inc. founder Mark Zuckerberg in its probe into whether the social-media giant has violated U.S. antitrust laws, according to a person familiar with the matter.
- The Wall Street Journal reported in July that the FTC was considering deposing the Facebook chief executive.

- Mr. Zuckerberg wasn't deposed in the FTC's prior probe of Facebook for alleged consumer-privacy violations, a case that ended with a \$5 billion settlement last year.

Facebook CMO Antonio Lucio to Exit

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-cmo-antonio-lucio-to-exit-11598041084?st=zpud9xsh1hju6ru&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Aug. 21, 2020 at 4:18 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. Chief Marketing Officer Antonio Lucio is leaving the company, a Facebook spokesman said.
- His last day on the job will be Sept. 18.
- In a Facebook post cited by the spokesman, Mr. Lucio said it had been a reflective year for him. "I have decided to dedicate 100% of my time to diversity, inclusion and equity," he wrote.
- Mr. Lucio joined Facebook in 2018 from HP Inc., where he had been global chief marketing and communications officer.
- During his tenure at Facebook, the company increased its global advertising spending as it sought to rebuild trust amid criticism of its privacy practices and the way it handles misinformation and unwelcome content on its platforms. "
- Mr. Lucio was marketing chief at Facebook when the company decided to bring its family of apps, which include Instagram and WhatsApp, closer together.
- Facebook ran its first Super Bowl ad in February, a commercial featuring Chris Rock and Sylvester Stallone to promote its Groups feature.

★ Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg Stoked Washington's Fears About TikTok

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-ceo-mark-zuckerberg-stoked-washingtons-fears-about-tiktok-11598223133?st=fjv3kqj2v4bvzvt&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Aug. 23, 2020 at 8:33 pm ET

- When Facebook Inc. Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg delivered a speech about freedom of expression in Washington, D.C., last fall, there was also another agenda: to raise the alarm about the threat from Chinese tech companies and, more specifically, the popular video-sharing app TikTok.
- Tucked into the speech was a line pointing to Facebook's rising rival: Mr. Zuckerberg told Georgetown students that TikTok doesn't share Facebook's commitment to freedom of expression, and represents a risk to American values and technological supremacy.
- In a private dinner at the White House in late October, Mr. Zuckerberg made the case to President Trump that the rise of Chinese internet companies threatens American business, and should be a bigger concern than reining in Facebook, some of the people said.
- Mr. Zuckerberg discussed TikTok specifically in meetings with several senators, according to people familiar with the meetings.
- This month he signed an executive order demanding that TikTok's Chinese owner, ByteDance Ltd., divest itself of its U.S. operations.
- Few tech companies have as much to gain as Facebook from TikTok's travails, and the social-media giant has taken an active role in raising concerns about the popular app and its Chinese owners.
- Facebook spokesman Andy Stone said Mr. Zuckerberg has no recollection of discussing TikTok at the dinner.
- The CEO's comments in Washington about the Chinese app were tied into Facebook's campaign to blunt antitrust and regulatory threats by emphasizing Facebook's importance to U.S. tech pre-eminence, he said.
- Our view on China has been clear: we must compete," Mr. Stone said in a written statement. "
- In an employee meeting this month, Mr. Zuckerberg called the executive order against TikTok unwelcome, because the global harm of such a move could outweigh any short-term gain to Facebook.

- TikTok has gained more than 100 million U.S. users and become the biggest threat to Facebook's dominance of social media, as the app's blend of dance videos and goofs has made it a sensation among young people around the world.
- In the first quarter of 2020, TikTok became the most downloaded app in a single quarter, according to research firm Sensor Tower.
- It is possible that TikTok ends up with one of those companies, immediately making the buyer a formidable U.S. rival to Facebook.
- Facebook's advocacy has angered people inside TikTok, according to people familiar with the matter.
- Last month, CEO Kevin Mayer publicly accused Facebook of trying to unfairly quash competition. "
- Those moves made Mr. Zuckerberg popular among many in China, but public opinion there has turned against him because of his recent comments, including at a congressional hearing about competition in July in which he said it was "well documented that the Chinese government steals technology from U.S. companies."
- When its predecessor app in the U.S., Musical.ly, started to become popular among American teens in 2017, Facebook considered acquiring it, The Wall Street Journal has reported.

● Gun Sellers Use New Tactic to Deal on Facebook Marketplace

https://www.wsj.com/articles/gun-sellers-use-new-tactic-to-deal-on-facebook-marketplace-11598270872?st=k8wereetuah01fl&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Aug. 24, 2020 at 8:07 am ET

- Gun sellers have adopted a new tactic to attract buyers on Facebook Inc.'s Marketplace—a year after Democratic lawmakers called on Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg to more-effectively police the site's ban on firearm sales.
- Similar to Craigslist, Facebook's Marketplace allows the social media platform's more than 2.7 billion users to list goods they want to sell, alongside a price and a description.
- The company bars many items from Marketplace, including the private sale of guns or ammunition.
- Last year, The Wall Street Journal reported that dozens of would-be sellers across 10 U.S. cities were advertising rifles and handguns on the site, but disguising them in posts as gun cases or empty gun boxes, often accompanied by photos of the cases with gun- manufacturer logos.
- Now, a new tactic involves posts purporting to sell stickers, alongside images of gun makers' logos.
- Two other posters, contacted by the Journal, confirmed they were selling firearms, not stickers.
- Facebook said earlier this month, as part of a quarterly report on how it polices content across the site, that it had removed 1.3 million pieces of content related to firearms between April and June 2020, a number similar to the first three months of the year.
- The new tactic has emerged as Americans buy guns in record numbers.
- Like the rest of the site, Facebook's Marketplace platform uses a combination of artificial-intelligence algorithms and human moderators to weed out posts that violate its policies, such as ads for guns, drugs or animals, the company says.
- Last year, in response to the Journal's reporting on guns being marketed as boxes or cases, a group of 15 Democratic senators, including now-vice-presidential candidate Sen. Kamala Harris, wrote to Facebook demanding information on how it polices gun sales on Marketplace.
- Facebook responded to the senators' questions in a letter saying it was building new tools to better detect bad behavior, and increasing its team of people who reviewed listings on its Marketplace.
- Georgia-based Rob Disner, an audio engineer who tracks suspected gun sales on Facebook in his spare time and says he isn't affiliated with antigun groups, said he had flagged more than 100 postings of gun-manufacturer logos marked as stickers to Facebook's content moderators since January.

★● Facebook Says Apple's New iPhone Update Will Disrupt Online Advertising

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-says-apples-new-iphone-update-will-disrupt-online-advertising-11598458715?st=jhe0v5kyfwier2z&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Aug. 26, 2020 at 6:56 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. said privacy changes in Apple Inc.'s latest operating system would cripple its ability to place personalized ads and deal a financial blow to app-makers, highlighting a high-stakes clash between the tech titans over the rules of the road in the mobile-internet economy.
- Under Apple's changes, which will go into effect this fall in its iOS14 operating system, Facebook and other companies that facilitate online advertising will no longer be able to collect a person's advertising identifier without the user's permission.
- Many apps will begin asking users whether or not they want their behavior on the web to be tracked for the purposes of personalized ads.
- Apple's move also will hit Google's AdMob unit, which facilitates ad sales in apps, as well as several ad-technology companies that rely on tracking iPhone users.
- Apple, which produces devices sold worldwide, says it is standing up for user privacy, and has criticized the data-collection operation that underlies Facebook's advertising business.
- Google plans to block the use of "cookies"—snippets of code that help track users' web behavior—in its Chrome browser by 2022, following in the footsteps of Apple's Safari.
- Facebook doesn't disclose the size of the Audience Network business within its nearly \$70 billion digital-ad empire.
- The Apple change could also affect Facebook's sale of ads on its own properties, since apps that use Facebook code—from food-delivery apps to games—send data back to the company. "
- Facebook expects the impact from Apple's new consent requirements will be significant enough that the company acknowledged the changes on its July 30 earnings call.
- Facebook said Audience Network will continue to operate on Apple devices using previous operating systems and those made by other manufacturers.
- Facebook said the changes would likely result in reduced earnings for developers of apps "at an already difficult time for businesses."
- In a survey by Tap Research Inc. 85% of respondents said if given the choice they would ask apps not to track them.
- Apple isn't a big player in online advertising, but it does have its own small business that personalizes ads shown in the App Store and on Apple News based on where users go and what users do in Apple's apps.
- The company is applying separate rules for its own ad-personalization; to opt out, users must find an option in the iPhone's settings.
- Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook has made privacy one of the company's priorities in recent years, running advertisements based on its intent to protect user data and refusing to comply with some law-enforcement
- Apple critics have argued the company is limiting access to its platform to restrict competition.
- Facebook earlier this month joined those protesting Apple's 30% cut from transactions within apps, saying in a product release that it asked for an exemption but was refused.

Facebook Executive Supported India's Modi, Disparaged Opposition in Internal Messages

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-executive-supported-indias-modi-disparaged-opposition-in-internal-messages-11598809348?st=g5en39ptzd5gyhj&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Aug. 30, 2020 at 1:42 pm ET

- A Facebook Inc. executive at the center of a political storm in India made internal postings over several years detailing her support for the now ruling Hindu nationalist party and disparaging its main rival, behavior some staff saw as conflicting with the company's pledge to remain neutral in elections around the world.

- In one of the messages, Ankhi Das, head of public policy in the country, posted the day before Narendra Modi swept to victory in India's 2014 national elections: "We lit a fire to his social media campaign and the rest is of course history." "
- Some Facebook employees said the sentiments and actions described by Ms. Das conflicted with the company's longstanding neutrality pledge.
- Ms. Das is already at the center of a political outcry in India over Facebook's handling of hate speech on the platform, following a Journal article earlier this month.
- Facebook on Tuesday said the posts by Ms. Das don't show inappropriate bias. "
- These posts are taken out of context and don't represent the full scope of Facebook's efforts to support the use of our platform by parties across the Indian political spectrum," spokesman Andy Stone said.
- She has apologized to colleagues for sharing a post described in the previous Journal article, in which she approvingly reposted an essay from a former Indian police official who said the country's Muslims have historically been "a degenerate community."
- A nonpartisan group of 54 former civil servants in India on Monday circulated an open letter to Mr. Zuckerberg, asking him to audit the implementation of Facebook's hate-speech policy in the country.
- Her Facebook colleague, Ms. Harbath—a Republican—wrote that Ms. Das characterized Mr. Modi as "the George W. Bush of India," according to a 2013 internal post featuring a photo of the two women and the future prime minister.
- When a fellow staffer noted in response to one of her internal posts that the BJP's primary opponent, the Indian National Congress, had a larger following on Facebook than Mr. Modi's individual page, Ms. Das responded: "Don't diminish him by comparing him with INC."

★● Facebook Joins With Researchers to Study Its Influence on Elections

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-joins-with-researchers-to-study-its-influence-on-elections-11598909186?st=19wtiz0jly4iimf&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Aug. 31, 2020 at 5:26 pm ET

- On Monday, the company announced a partnership to give independent researchers new data to study the question.
- A group led by professors from New York University and the University of Texas at Austin will study how Facebook and Instagram users in the U.S. engage on the platforms in the run-up to elections in November.
- Facebook expects between 200,000 and 400,000 users to opt into participating in the research study.
- The company will log what volunteers do and see on Facebook and Instagram to provide researchers with aggregated behavioral data.
- The new partnership is an offshoot of Social Science One, Facebook's effort to build a privacy-safe data-sharing system with academics.
- A total of 17 university-affiliated researchers will be involved. "
- As with Social Science One, Facebook won't provide any funding to the academics and will have no say in what they eventually publish.
- The research will focus on political participation and polarization, knowledge and misperceptions as well as trust in U.S. democratic institutions, Prof. Stroud said.

★● Facebook Says It Will Bar News Sharing in Australia if Proposed Payment Rules Become Law

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-says-it-will-bar-news-sharing-in-australia-if-proposed-payment-rules-become-law-11598931060?st=ovw6nz24mgd3r70&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Sept. 1, 2020 at 1:04 am ET

- Facebook Inc. has threatened to stop allowing Australians to share news on its site and on Instagram if lawmakers allow media companies to demand payment from digital platforms.

- Australia in July unveiled a plan that would require Facebook and Alphabet Inc.'s Google to negotiate with media companies over payment.
- If the sides couldn't agree, an independent arbitrator would select one of their proposals.
- The sharing ban would apply to both local and international news stories, it said.
- It also warned that removing news sharing could hurt publishers.
- In the first five months of 2020, Facebook said, it sent 2.3 billion clicks to Australian news websites at no charge—traffic it valued at roughly \$148 million. "
- Although Google and Facebook have resisted paying publishers for content, they have softened their stance recently and struck deals with certain publishers.
- Facebook on Monday said news represents a fraction of what people see in their Facebook feeds and that news isn't a significant source of revenue for the company.
- The Australian government, led by conservative Prime Minister Scott Morrison, last year asked the competition regulator to develop a voluntary code that would govern the relationship between news businesses and digital platforms.
- A public-comment period on the proposed rules ended on Aug. 28, and final legislation could be introduced in Parliament soon.

Facebook Removes Accounts Tied to Russia's Internet Research Agency

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-removes-accounts-tied-to-russias-internet-research-agency-11599001139?st=duu0aobyd69hevz&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Sept. 1, 2020 at 10:35 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. took down recently created accounts and pages linked to a Russian group that U.S. authorities have accused of interfering in the 2016 presidential election, the social-media giant said Tuesday.
- The detection of the operation ahead of November elections show that the Internet Research Agency, a "troll farm" indicted by federal authorities in 2018, remains a thorn in Facebook's side.
- But the company said the recent effort's small reach—totaling 13 accounts and two pages—shows Facebook is getting better at detecting foreign political manipulation efforts before such content spreads widely.
- Russia has denied interfering in American elections.
- A spokesman from the Russian embassy in Washington, D.C., said Facebook's allegations are anti-Russia propaganda. "
- Facebook has acknowledged some shortcomings and pointed to new policies, additional spending and other efforts to address the groups' concerns.
- In the new report, Facebook said it removed three large networks of accounts, Pages and Groups for engaging in coordinated inauthentic behavior, bringing the total number of networks it has removed since 2017 to more than 100.
- Facebook said in its report that each takedown makes it more difficult for manipulators to thrive on its platforms.

Facebook, Under Pressure in India, Bans Politician for Hate Speech

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-under-pressure-in-india-bans-politician-for-hate-speech-11599105042?st=d43pqzq1mvhjeda&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Sept. 3, 2020 at 8:30 am ET

- The removal of the politician, T. Raja Singh, is an about-face for the company and one that will be politically tricky in India, its biggest market by number of users.
- In Facebook posts and public appearances, Mr. Singh, a member of Mr. Modi's BJP, has said Rohingya Muslim immigrants should be shot, called Muslims traitors and threatened to destroy mosques.

- One group, called "Friends who like Tiger Raja Singh Fan Club," has more than 23,000 members.
- In a tweet Thursday, Mr. Singh said Facebook's ban makes no sense.
- Opposition politicians—and some Facebook employees—have alleged the company has turned a blind eye to hate speech from the BJP, while Mr. Modi's party has accused Facebook of censoring conservatives.
- Highlighting the difficult politics Facebook faces, the company also has come under fire from the BJP.
- Ravi Shankar Prasad, India's communications, electronics and information technology minister and a party member, addressed a letter Tuesday to Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg raising concerns about what he said were instances of bias and inaction against people who support a "right of centre ideology."

Facebook Starts an Ad-Free Section for College Students

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-starts-an-ad-free-section-for-college-students-11599770307?st=vghicwzvcr9n18o&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Sept. 10, 2020 4:38 pm ET | WSJ Pro

- Called Facebook Campus, the new section will not have ads, said a spokeswoman. "
- We're focused on building a great product experience, and at this time have no plans to introduce advertising," she added.
- Campus joins Facebook Dating and Groups as another ad-free section of the platform.
- Facebook described Campus as a way for college students to meet each other and connect over shared interests, classes and campus life.
- But Facebook will track Campus users' activity to inform which ads and content it shows them elsewhere.

★● Facebook Appeals Move to Curb EU-U.S. Data Transfer

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-appeals-move-to-curb-eu-u-s-data-transfer-11599825025?st=kfwfyje3250lfw0&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Sept. 11, 2020 at 9:26 am ET

- Facebook Inc. is appealing a preliminary order by Ireland's privacy regulator to suspend its data transfers from Europe to the U.S., pushing its stance in a case with wide-ranging implications for global tech businesses.
- Facebook filed the case against Ireland's Data Protection Commission before Ireland's High Court on Thursday, according to the country's courts service.
- Though the order applies to Facebook, the same logic could apply to other large tech companies that are subject to U.S. surveillance laws, according to people familiar with the matter.
- Some lawyers say resolving the core issues from the EU court decision might require changes to U.S. surveillance laws to give more legal rights to Europeans.
- Ireland's data commission had given Facebook until roughly mid- September to file its responses to the preliminary order, according to people familiar with the matter.
- A Facebook spokeswoman on Friday said that the company still plans to submit its responses to Ireland's Data Protection Commission by the deadline set by the regulator.

★● FTC Preparing Possible Antitrust Suit Against Facebook

https://www.wsj.com/articles/ftc-preparing-possible-antitrust-suit-against-facebook-11600211840?st=bzrw61fiia0fl3&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Sept. 15, 2020 at 7:17 pm ET

- The Federal Trade Commission is gearing up to file a possible antitrust lawsuit against Facebook Inc. by year-end, according to people familiar with the matter, in a case that would challenge the company's dominant position in social media.
- The case preparations come after the FTC has spent more than a year investigating concerns that Facebook has been using its powerful market position to stifle competition, part of a broader effort by U.S. antitrust authorities to examine the conduct of a handful of dominant tech companies.
- No final decision has been made on whether to sue Facebook, people familiar with the matter said, and the commission doesn't always bring cases even when it is making preparations to do so, such as when it decided against filing an antitrust complaint against Google Inc. in 2013 after a lengthy investigation.
- A majority on the five-member FTC would need to vote in favor of any lawsuit.
- The company last year disclosed it was under investigation by the FTC, and The Wall Street Journal has previously reported that one focus of the agency's probe is the company's past acquisitions of potential competitors.
- We have the ability to look back at consummated mergers and to undo them," he said, adding that the agency has also asked major tech platform companies for information about past acquisitions that weren't required to be reported to antitrust authorities.
- A case against the social-media giant would open up a second big front in the government's pursuit of Big Tech.
- The Justice Department, which shares antitrust authority with the FTC, is planning to file an antitrust lawsuit soon against Alphabet Inc.'s Google, The Wall Street Journal has reported.
- The Nov. 3 election could impact the future of any case, though both Republicans and Democrats have been critical of tech-company practices, including at Facebook and Google.
- The FTC previously has blessed Facebook's expansion through acquisitions of companies including the photo-sharing app Instagram in 2012, though not without qualms.
- The FTC allowed Facebook's purchase of the messaging service WhatsApp in 2014.
- The company had acquired scores of firms over the past decade.
- expected to release a report in the coming weeks detailing its findings regarding potentially anticompetitive behavior in the tech sector and whether a legislative response is needed.
- Members of Congress and other Big Tech critics also have faulted the FTC for not doing more over the past decade to rein in tech platforms that have grown increasingly dominant, creating additional pressures on the agency as it plots a course on Facebook.
- The FTC has a pair of options if it sues Facebook: It could bring a case in federal court or it could file a complaint in its in-house legal system, where the case would first go before an administrative law judge.
- If the commission wants to seek an interim injunction blocking certain Facebook practices before the end of litigation, it would have to go to federal court.

★ Facebook to Curb Internal Debate Over Sensitive Issues Amid Staff Discord

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-to-curb-internal-debate-over-sensitive-issues-amid-employee-discord-11600368481?st=er0z9cufx2ujepk&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Sept. 17, 2020 at 5:54 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. is moving to curb internal debate around divisive political and social topics, Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg said Thursday, after a spate of disputes and criticism that has fueled discord among staffers.
- The steps will include delineating which parts of the company's internal messaging platform are acceptable for such discussions, and careful moderation of the discussions when they occur, Mr. Zuckerberg told employees at a company meeting, according to a spokesman.
- Employees shouldn't have to confront social issues in their day-to-day work unless they want to, the CEO said.
- Specific details of the new policy are still being decided, with more information to come next week, but Mr. Zuckerberg said Facebook plans to "explore ways to preserve our culture of openness and debate around" its work, according to a spokesman.

- The planned changes will arrive amid a contentious U.S. presidential election that Mr. Zuckerberg has said he fears could lead to civil unrest, as well as a series of other controversies that have intensified discussion inside and outside Facebook over how it handles controversial content.
- Several employees recently have posted memos internally that leaked outside the company criticizing its content policies.
- Other companies also have struggled to balance employee freedoms with a desire to limit internal discord
- Alphabet Inc.'s Google last year issued guidelines limiting employee discussion of politics and other topics, saying staffers should avoid spending time hotly debating matters unrelated to their jobs.
- Restrictions on internal discussion are likely to be especially sensitive at Facebook, which has billed itself as a platform for free expression—and where Mr. Zuckerberg's reluctance to put constraints on discussion of controversial topics by users has been a source of discontent among some staffers.
- And Mr. Zuckerberg said at the employee meeting that part of Facebook's intention with the new measures is to ensure that Black employees and other underrepresented communities don't face a hostile environment when they come to work.
- But Facebook has concluded that the regular discord that has erupted within the company over social-justice issues is untenable, according to current and former employees who spoke with the Journal. "

Facebook Links Instagram and Messenger

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-links-instagram-and-messenger-11601489689?st=9uews1nxwjch7m5&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Sept. 30, 2020 at 2:14 pm ET

- The main change, the company said, is that Messenger and Instagram users will be able to reach each other.
- Instagram users will still be able to interact with each other within the app, Facebook said.
- As the change is rolled out, Instagram users will be able to opt to update immediately to use the new functionality, Facebook said.
- The changes will make it easier for users to keep track of conversations across Facebook's platforms, the company said.

★ Facebook Says Government Breakup of Instagram, WhatsApp Would Be 'Complete Nonstarter'

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-says-government-breakup-of-instagram-whatsapp-would-be-complete-nonstarter-11601803800?st=da9z9cv8xyairky&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Oct. 4, 2020 at 2:04 pm ET

- A government effort to break up Facebook Inc. from Instagram and WhatsApp would defy established law, cost billions of dollars and harm consumers, according to a paper company lawyers have prepared in the wake of rising antitrust legal threats.
- The 14-page document, reviewed by The Wall Street Journal, offers a preview of the social-media giant's defense as federal antitrust enforcers and members of Congress continue to pursue investigations into Facebook's power and past competitive behavior.
- Probes of other technology companies such as Alphabet Inc.'s Google, Amazon.com Inc. and Apple Inc. are also ongoing.
- Facebook's acquisitions of Instagram in 2012 and WhatsApp in 2014 were examined by the Federal Trade Commission, which closed its reviews without issuing an objection.
- In the paper, Facebook says unwinding the deals would be nearly impossible to achieve, forcing the company to spend billions of dollars maintaining separate systems, weakening security and harming users' experience.
- A 'breakup' of Facebook is thus a complete nonstarter," the paper declares.

- The Journal reported last month that the FTC was preparing to file a potential complaint against Facebook before year's end, part of a broader wave of government probes targeting Facebook, Apple, Amazon and Google.
- Against a backdrop of concerns about Facebook's impact on politics, privacy and the regulation of speech, the company's critics have argued that key Facebook acquisitions—including Instagram and WhatsApp—illegally reduced competition in social media.
- The FTC didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.
- This summer, the antitrust subcommittee published 2012 emails in which Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg cited the difficulty of competing with Instagram as a rationale for buying the photo-based social media company, which at the time had 30 million users but only 13 employees. "
- The commission "voted 5-0 to let the companies close their deal."

Facebook Removes Trump's Post About Covid-19, Citing Misinformation Rules

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-removes-trumps-post-about-covid-19-citing-misinformation-rules-11602003910?st=ms2ea8u1ynhadsm&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Oct. 6, 2020 at 4:13 pm ET

- The social-media giant said its decision Tuesday was based on its policy against users spreading information deemed both wrong and harmful.
- Mr. Trump's statement Tuesday that the seasonal flu is more dangerous for most people than the coronavirus is widely considered false by medical professionals.
- The disease already has killed more than 210,000 Americans, and the death rate per person infected has been far higher than historical rates for the seasonal flu, according to infectious disease experts.
- With its decision, the social network has moved to censor the president just weeks before Election Day.
- Instead of removing the post, the company appended a notice that his tweet violated its rules on spreading harmful information related to the virus but that "it may be in the public's interest for the Tweet to remain accessible."
- Twitter said it also limited the distribution of Mr. Trump's tweet across its platform.
- The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the senior military advisers to the president, have gone into quarantine after a possible exposure earlier this week, defense officials said Tuesday.
- In an apparent response to the two social-media companies' treatment of his posts, Mr. Trump posted on both platforms "REPEAL SECTION 230!!!,"

★ Facebook's Status: The Easiest Target

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-status-the-easiest-target-11602008795?st=aqc8ymy5oqdqfg4&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Oct. 6, 2020 at 5:08 pm ET

- In preparation for an anticipated government crackdown, the social network's legal team has prepared an internal document outlining its defense strategy, according to The Wall Street Journal.
- The document came ahead of a report issued Tuesday by the House Antitrust Subcommittee detailing the findings of its investigation into Facebook and its big tech peers Amazon.com, Apple and Google-parent Alphabet.
- The report called on Congress to force tech giants to separate their online platforms from other business lines.
- For one, Facebook's role in the spread of misinformation and other harmful content has made it a target on both sides of the political aisle.
- Unsurprisingly, the documents describe a breakup scenario as "a complete nonstarter"—the surest sign yet the company would muster all of its legal resources to fight such a move.
- But to Facebook's user base, the apps provide very different experiences.
- And to the general public, the three are still distinct; a Pew Research survey late last year found that less than one-third of U.S. adults are even aware that Instagram and WhatsApp are owned by Facebook.

- Instagram growing to nearly one-third of Facebook's advertising business in the next two years.

★ Facebook Takes Down Network Tied to Conservative Group, Citing Fake Accounts

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-takes-down-network-tied-to-conservative-group-citing-fake-accounts-11602174088?st=7xm8zcp1w1uel3a&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Oct. 8, 2020 at 1:22 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. said it removed a network of accounts with links to a U.S. conservative political youth group for posing as fake users to praise President Trump and criticize his Democratic rival, Joe Biden.
- The company said Thursday it had removed 200 Facebook accounts, 55 Facebook pages and 76 Instagram accounts that were run by Rally Forge, a U.S. marketing firm, for violating rules against "coordinated inauthentic behavior."
- Rally Forge, which Facebook said is now banned permanently, was working on behalf of two clients, including Turning Point USA, a Phoenix-based conservative youth organization.
- About 373,000 accounts followed one or more of the Facebook pages and 22,000 followed one or more of the Instagram accounts, and Rally Forge spent \$973,000 on Facebook and Instagram ads connected to both authentic and inauthentic accounts that were removed, Facebook said.
- Facebook took action following a Washington Post article last month reporting that Turning Point Action was paying teenagers to post spam-like content on social media in a manner that some experts likened to a domestic troll farm. "
- The activity Facebook disclosed today was by Americans targeted at Americans," said Alex Stamos, director of Stanford University's Internet Observatory. "
- The company took down 46 accounts in August that were operated by a U.S. communications firm Facebook said was engaged in coordinated inauthentic activity targeting Venezuela, Mexico and Bolivia.
- This kind of tactic is becoming standard in such operations and was also used by a Russian-linked campaign that Facebook disrupted last month, he said. "
- While Rally Forge's work focused primarily on U.S. audiences, some content was aimed at Kenya and Botswana.
- Facebook banned Rally Forge because the tech giant found clear evidence that the group's behavior violated its platforms' terms of service, Nathaniel Gleicher, Facebook's head of cybersecurity policy, said on a press call Thursday.
- Though Turning Point USA held some on-platform links to the inauthentic campaign, Mr. Gleicher indicated Facebook didn't have sufficient evidence to penalize the conservative group as well, though he said the investigation was continuing. "

★ Facebook Bans Content Denying the Holocaust on Its Platforms

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-bans-posts-denying-the-holocaust-on-its-platforms-11602530357?st=5vn89hv1cbjavfx&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Oct. 12, 2020 at 4:10 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. said it would begin removing Holocaust denials or distortions from its social-media platforms, a move that follows years of complaints from civil-rights groups that the company tolerated hate speech and enabled the spread of misinformation.
- How Facebook deals with content disputing the Holocaust, the Nazi killing of six million Jews before and during World War II, has been a longstanding subject of controversy.
- The Facebook co-founder said the company has long removed posts praising hate crimes and mass murder.
- With the new rule, if people search for the Holocaust on Facebook, they will soon be directed to authoritative sources to get accurate information, Mr. Zuckerberg said.

- In a statement Monday morning, Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt praised the policy change but called it long overdue. "

How Mark Zuckerberg Learned Politics

https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-mark-zuckerberg-learned-politics-11602853200?st=hwk4q7nxzmdbhq3&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Oct. 16, 2020 at 9:00 am ET

- For more than a decade as he built Facebook Inc. into a global force, Mark Zuckerberg made it clear he didn't care for politics. Early advisers strained to hold his attention in briefings about D.C. lawmakers, people familiar with the matter say, and he frequently said he would gladly leave the politics to others.
- No longer. Mr. Zuckerberg is now an active political operator. He has dined with President Trump, talks regularly with White House senior adviser Jared Kushner, and has pressed lawmakers and officials to scrutinize rivals including TikTok and Apple Inc., people involved in the discussions say.
- Mr. Zuckerberg's new political moves are part of an effort to protect his company from pressures that range from antitrust scrutiny on both sides of the Atlantic to criticism of its privacy practices and of its role in disseminating misinformation and conspiracy theories.
- Facebook is also facing new competitive threats from the likes of ByteDance Ltd.'s TikTok. Forging relationships with political leaders, media personalities and activists is now critical to Facebook's continued primacy in social media.
- The political controversies haven't appeared to inhibit rapid revenue growth for the company, to more than \$70 billion last year, up from less than \$28 billion in 2016.
- Mr. Zuckerberg's evolution in many ways tracks Facebook's development from a college-based social network into a central element in the American political system—and a punching bag for both parties. The intense scrutiny of the social-media giant's influence from all sides during the past four years has made increased political acumen a necessity for its CEO. Facebook's massive reach and focus on free speech have at times made it a super-spreader of falsehoods, hate speech, terrorist propaganda and other posts it struggles to control.
- But he wasn't particularly political. A few years after Facebook was created, political advisers met with him to understand how his views might shape company policy, according to a person familiar with the matter. The advisers explained the differences among the American political groups, including Democrats and Republicans, and the meeting ended when Mr. Zuckerberg agreed that he was best described as a libertarian, rather than closely aligned with either major American party.
- The hands-off approach changed after Mr. Trump's 2016 election. Mr. Zuckerberg was jolted by criticism that Facebook had failed to stem misleading pseudo-news articles and other disinformation that many of its critics said sharpened divisions among Americans and made the race's rhetoric more toxic than in years past.
- Behind the scenes, Mr. Zuckerberg intensified his focus on making sure Facebook wouldn't be seen as partisan, in part by emphasizing Facebook's support for free speech.
- He started asking more policy-related questions and grew more involved in decisions about controversial content on the platform, including the 2018 decision to remove far-right talk show host Alex Jones's properties from the platform, people familiar with the company say. Mr. Zuckerberg tends to get involved in situations where Facebook's policies aren't clear, Mr. Clegg said, but leaves enforcement to his deputies.
- "Any insinuation that [Mr. Zuckerberg] encouraged the Administration to ban TikTok is false," a Facebook spokesman said.
- Mr. Zuckerberg has also told government officials Apple doesn't receive as much scrutiny as Facebook even though it owns an operating system used by a large percentage of Americans, people familiar with the discussions said.
- Mr. Zuckerberg also has forged ties with right-leaning publishers that drive engagement on the platform, including Ben Shapiro, co-founder of the Daily Wire and a Trump supporter, people familiar with the matter say. The conservative news site has been flagged repeatedly by Facebook's fact-checkers for

sharing falsehoods and distortions. But it is frequently among the most popular on the platform based on user interactions, according to CrowdTangle, a Facebook-owned analytics tool.

- In late 2017, when Facebook tweaked its newsfeed algorithm to minimize the presence of political news, policy executives were concerned about the outsize impact of the changes on the right, including the Daily Wire, people familiar with the matter said. Engineers redesigned their intended changes so that left-leaning sites like Mother Jones were affected more than previously planned, the people said. Mr. Zuckerberg approved the plans. “We did not make changes with the intent of impacting individual publishers,” a Facebook spokesman said.
- “I have not found any relationship at Facebook to be particularly beneficial to our business,” said Jeremy Boreing, co-founder and co-CEO at the Daily Wire. He also said Facebook’s fact-checking program, announced in December of 2016, has caused “serious losses” for the Daily Wire, which depends on Facebook for traffic, and thus ad revenue, adding that the fact checks are sometimes “wholly inaccurate.”
- Ms. Sandberg has told some colleagues and associates that she disagrees with certain Facebook decisions about political content, including the move last spring not to take down a video of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that had been manipulated in a way that made her appear to be drunk, according to people familiar with the matter.

★ WhatsApp Outlines Future Payday From Users Messaging With Businesses

https://www.wsj.com/articles/whatsapp-outlines-future-payday-from-users-messaging-with-businesses-11603371604?st=ja9wok7265pq7gn&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Oct. 22, 2020 at 12:32 pm ET

- After years of searching, Facebook Inc.'s encrypted messaging platform WhatsApp says it has a plan to make money from the services it provides at no cost to more than two billion users.
- On Thursday, the messaging service said it will soon give merchants the ability to store, analyze and manage their WhatsApp communications with customers Facebook's company servers.
- WhatsApp, which charges businesses for certain types of customer interactions, would profit from the embrace of those tools by merchants.
- WhatsApp users' communications with businesses will still be fully encrypted, but planned integrations with Facebook's other platforms mean some details of a WhatsApp user's shopping habits will likely be shared with Facebook's other platforms, feeding the parent company's overall behavioral data-collection operation.
- Storing any data about the substance of a user's activities would be new for WhatsApp.
- The company has long maintained that the best way to protect users' data from hacks, subpoenas and other snooping was to store as little of it as possible.
- The platform will notify users that such communications are being stored by businesses—possibly on Facebook-owned servers—Mr. Idema said.
- And the shopping-related features of the app will be visibly differentiated from user-to-user messaging.

Facebook Seeks Shutdown of NYU Research Project Into Political Ad Targeting

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-seeks-shutdown-of-nyu-research-project-into-political-ad-targeting-11603488533?st=7gmlcyqi2ymx0ws&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Oct. 23, 2020 at 8:59 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. is demanding that a New York University research project cease collecting data about its political- ad-targeting practices, setting up a fight with academics seeking to study the platform without the company's permission.

- The dispute involves the NYU Ad Observatory, a project launched last month by the university's engineering school that has recruited more than 6,500 volunteers to use a specially designed browser extension to collect data about the political ads Facebook shows them.
- In a letter sent Oct. 16 to the researchers behind the NYU Ad Observatory, Facebook said the project violates provisions in its terms of service that prohibit bulk data collection from its site. "
- Social media platforms have pledged to make online advertising more transparent, she said, but Facebook's threatened action against NYU "is further evidence that voluntary standards are insufficient."
- After a version of this article was published, Facebook said in a statement to the Journal that it wouldn't take any action on the NYU project's data collection until well after the election.
- Facebook earlier said that it already offers more transparency into political advertising than either traditional media or rival social platforms, and that the automated collection of data from users' on-platform activity— even with their permission—poses an unacceptable privacy threat. "
- Facebook imposed a series of restrictions on outsiders' ability to obtain, analyze and use data gathered from its platforms.
- The NYU project has already collected the targeting data behind more than 200,000 ads.
- Researchers say it has exposed areas where the publicly available archive of political ads Facebook created after the 2016 election is failing to log advertisements that should be in the system.
- Facebook said it has appreciated the NYU researchers' efforts to improve the ad library, but won't stand for violations of its rules.

Campaigns Rush to Submit Facebook Ads Ahead of Limits

https://www.wsj.com/articles/campaigns-rush-to-submit-facebook-ads-ahead-of-blackout-11603732212?st=a6v1gaxi1t4dcv5&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Oct. 26, 2020 at 1:10 pm ET

- Republican and Democratic political advertisers are scrambling to submit their ads to Facebook Inc. before the end of Monday after the social network decided not to allow new political ads in the week leading up to Election Day.
- Facebook's move, which it announced last month as part of an effort to limit misinformation that could lead to civil unrest, is prompting campaigns to submit new ads for approval as soon as possible.
- Some are also looking for other platforms or social-media influencers to carry their messages.
- While Facebook's political-ad limitation doesn't have the outsize impact it would likely have had during a typical election season—with many in the country now voting early, either in person or by mail, due to coronavirus concerns—it is still limiting, political operatives said.
- Republicans and Democrats say Facebook's move favors incumbents and others with large online audiences, as they can rely less on ads.
- A Facebook spokeswoman said the company thinks get-out-the-vote messaging is important—and it is still allowing ads so long as they are approved by the deadline.
- Facebook didn't disclose political ad spending specific to the weeks ahead of the 2018 election.
- But on Google platforms, 56% of such spending happened a month ahead of the 2018 election and 42% of advertisers started spending in the final four weeks, according to an analysis of Google ad archive data by Tech for Campaigns.
- Still, it is better than banning Facebook political ads altogether, said Andrew Bleeker, president of Bully Pulpit Interactive, which works with campaigns.

★● Facebook Prepares Measures for Possible Election Unrest

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-prepares-measures-for-possible-election-unrest-11603651659?st=y9yyvtshyz9eoh3&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Oct. 27, 2020 at 12:17 pm ET

- The emergency measures include slowing the spread of viral content and lowering the bar for suppressing potentially inflammatory posts, the people said.
- Previously used in countries including Sri Lanka and Myanmar, they are part of a larger tool kit developed by Facebook to prepare for the U.S. election.
- Facebook executives have said they would only deploy the tools in dire circumstances, such as election-related violence, but that the company needs to be prepared for all possibilities, said the people familiar with the planning.
- "We need to be doing everything that we can to reduce the chances of violence or civil unrest in the wake of this election," Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg told Axios last month.
- The company also developed levers it could use to better control content ahead of the 2018 midterm elections, including turning off recommendations for Facebook groups.
- At a companywide conference call last week, Mr. Zuckerberg said the coming election and the coronavirus pandemic have already led Facebook to limit speech more than it would like, according to a person who heard the remarks.
- The company shuttered or watered down a series of efforts meant to reduce polarization, The Wall Street Journal reported earlier this year, in part because of fear that such initiatives would be perceived as biased.
- Since 2018, the company has been taking more aggressive measures overseas, where Facebook has generally faced pressure to do more.
- The company formalized procedures for humanitarian interventions after the United Nations blamed the company's inaction on hate speech and incitements to violence for fueling the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.
- One such example was Sri Lanka, where a Facebook human-rights consultant concluded that the company's inaction on hate speech and false rumors set the stage for 2018 atrocities.

Facebook's Top Public Policy Executive in India Steps Down

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-s-top-public-policy-executive-in-india-steps-down-11603807845?st=t1ejyvysa4kmf9w&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Oct. 27, 2020 at 12:24 pm ET

- A Facebook Inc. executive in India who was at the center of a political storm over the company's policy on anti-Muslim hate speech on the platform is leaving her position Tuesday, the social-media giant said.
- Ankhi Das, Facebook's top public-policy executive in its biggest market by users, said in an internal post provided by the company that she had decided to step down to pursue her interest in public service.
- The Wall Street Journal reported in August that Ms. Das had opposed applying Facebook's hate-speech rules to a politician from the ruling Hindu nationalist party, along with at least three other Hindu nationalist individuals and groups flagged internally for promoting or participating in violence, according to current and former employees.
- Ms. Das said in her post that she had "decided to step down from Facebook after long service to its mission of connecting people and building communities." "
- India is a key market for Facebook, which isn't allowed to operate in China, the only other nation with more than one billion people.

★ Facebook Posts Record Revenue Despite Ad Boycott

https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-fb-3q-earnings-report-2020-11603992607?st=3k6hd303y0igh1o&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

Updated Oct. 29, 2020 at 7:48 pm ET

- Facebook Inc. posted record revenue in the third quarter as strong digital-ad spending outweighed a high-profile ad boycott, data-gathering restrictions and continued fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

- Revenue jumped 22% to \$21.47 billion in the three months through September, Facebook said Thursday.
- The company projects that revenue will grow even faster during the fourth quarter, as the holiday season bolsters ad spending.
- While the pandemic has accelerated the shift to online commerce in ways that will benefit Facebook longer-term, he said, the company faces substantial regulatory threats, as well as limitations on how it collects data from users of Apple Inc.'s products.
- Facebook also faces increased antitrust scrutiny, with staffers at the U.S. Federal Trade Commission recommending a lawsuit be filed against the company.
- jumped 29% to \$7.85 billion from \$6.09 billion, due in part to a \$913 million one-time tax deduction related to Facebook's R&D. The company's operating margin stood at 37%, compared with 41% a year earlier, as head count rose by 32% over the past year to nearly 57,000.
- The number of people using Facebook products each month—which include Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp—increased to 3.21 billion from 2.82 billion a year ago, up 14%.
- Following the third-quarter report, Facebook's stock initially climbed in after-hours trading.
- Facebook's total user numbers grew in every market except the U.S., where the number of daily active users dropped to 255 million from 256 million in the second quarter.
- The company's non-advertising revenue fell 7% from a year earlier to \$249 million.