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FACEBOOK’S EARLY DAYS

THEN – THEFACEBOOK.COM: A SMALL PROJECT WITH SMALL AMBITIONS

- ***Thefacebook.com was an offshoot of Mark Zuckerberg’s first website Facemash.*** In 2003, Zuckerberg set up Facemash.com, which gave users two student’s faces and asked them to choose who was more attractive. Students were reportedly outraged by Facemash, along with Harvard officials who put Zuckerberg on probation for creating it.
- ***Zuckerberg did not foresee the behemoth thefacebook.com would become.*** Zuckerberg bragged in 2004 that Facebook “literally took me a week to make.” The original plan with Facebook was to build an online version of the relationships people had in real life. At The time, Zuckerberg said Facebook “almost didn’t happen” and he was “just about to can it and go on to the next thing I was about to do.” Initially, Facebook users – then only college students – could only send messages and search for peers at their respective universities.
- ***In 2004, Zuckerberg had no grand vision for Facebook, saying it would be “cool” to be wildly successful, but that wasn’t “the goal.”*** In 2005, the New York Times wrote that Facebook was “a company built on substance rather than high expectations. Zuckerberg told the Harvard Crimson in 2004 that having Facebook “be wildly successful is cool, I guess, but I mean, I dunno, that’s not the goal.” After thefacebook.com’s initially success, Zuckerberg said he didn’t “really know what the next best thing [was],” because he didn’t spend his time “making big things.” Zuckerberg said “I spend time making small things and then when the time comes I put them together. Zuckerberg said his reason for building Facebook was “I’m just like a little kid. I get bored easily and computers excite me. Those are the two driving factors here.” In 2006, the New York Times wrote “by all accounts, Zuckerberg [was] motivated by his passion for his invention”

- **Facebook was initially a small project created with close friends.** In a 2004 Harvard Crimson article, Zuckerberg acknowledged that his Harvard roommate, Dustin Moskovitz, helped write the bulk of the programming needed to add new schools to thefacebook.com. Later in 2005, Zuckerberg said Facebook was just as much the project of his roommate, Moskovitz, as it was his. Chris Hughes, another early Facebook co-founder, was one of Zuckerberg's roommates as well. The friends moved to Silicon Valley together over the summer of 2004 and moved into a rental that they named "Casa Facebook." Zuckerberg & Co were kicked out of their first Silicon Valley rental after an incident involving a zip-line tied around a chimney, leading down to the pool. They called the rental they developed Facebook in, "Casa Facebook."
- **Zuckerberg said wasn't developing Facebook for the cash, but rather because it was a fun project that excited him.** In 2004, Zuckerberg said he did not create Facebook with the intention of generating revenue. He said he wasn't interested in Facebook because of the cash, but rather he just liked "making it and knowing that it works." In 2005, Zuckerberg said that they were not focused on "building something and how to make money out of it," but rather "always looking to maximize the long-term value." In 2007, Zuckerberg noted Facebook had "constrained growth" at first. In 2005, the Harvard Crimson wrote that Zuckerberg and his friends "did not guess" that in a little over a year, the company would serve 1.5 million users around the country. When Facebook first started, Zuckerberg paid himself a paltry \$65,000 annual salary, and paid for Facebook's server space out of his own pocket for \$85 a month. In 2004, Zuckerberg was quoted saying, "it might be nice in the future to get some ads going to offset the cost of the servers." When Zuckerberg needed to buy a suit to attend the Grammys, his checking account and credit cards were still linked to his parents. Zuckerberg's dad recounted that Mark called him and said, "don't be alarmed when you see the bills."

THEN – FACEBOOK: A PLACE FOR AUTHENTIC USERS TO CONNECT WITH REAL FRIENDS

- **When Facebook started, it rolled out to other college campuses slowly and methodically.** In March 2004, Facebook expanded beyond Harvard, adding schools like Columbia University, Yale and Stanford University, and expanded beyond to other colleges slowly to ensure the site could handle the increased use. In September 2005, Facebook finally expanded to allow high school students to sign up. In April 2006, Facebook allowed employees from companies to sign up for accounts, moving beyond students for the first time.
- **Facebook was supposed to act as a "social utility" for existing relationships, not for creating new ones.** In 2007, Zuckerberg told WIRED that he didn't care about using the internet to make new friends. Zuckerberg was quoted saying "People already have their friends, acquaintances, and business connections" explaining that Facebook was "just mapping" people's connections "rather than building new connections." In 2007, Zuckerberg called Facebook a "social utility" rather than a "social network." Zuckerberg said the goal of Facebook was "just to make it really efficient for people to communicate, get information, and share information. Zuckerberg said Facebook always tried to "emphasize the utility component" of the site.
- **Facebook took off in part because of the authenticity of its users.** In 2007, Zuckerberg said a "critical part" of Facebook was its focus on the authenticity of users. The Guardian wrote that Facebook took off "in part because it allowed people to communicate privately – or at least among a small group of friends. In 2010, Sheryl Sandberg said what most drove the effectiveness of social networks was its authenticity. Sandberg contended that many people joined Facebook because people used their real identities and entrusted the platform with their personal information/
- **Facebook was supposed to help people "share more efficiently" with close friends and family.** Zuckerberg said "sharing" was the only word on his mind when he dreamt up Facebook. In 2007, Zuckerberg said Facebook users saw the platform as "a more efficient way for them to communicate with their friends and get information about the people around them. In 2008, Zuckerberg said Facebook helped people "share more efficiently" with the people they talked to "all the time," like their "close friends and family." Zuckerberg said he and the Facebook founders believed "people being able to share the information they want and having access to the information they wanted [was] just a better world." Zuckerberg said Facebook was trying to position itself as a "social operating system" for the internet. In 2009, CNN reported that Zuckerberg hoped to turn Facebook into "the planet's standardized communication (and marketing) platform, as ubiquitous and intuitive as the telephone." Zuckerberg said at Facebook, they believed "we're adding a certain amount of value to people's lives if we build a very good product."

THEN – A BASIC WEBSITE VOID OF ADS, DISTRACTIONS AND STUFFED WITH STRONG PRIVACY PROTECTIONS

- **Fun fact: Facebook was blue because Zuckerberg was red-green colorblind.** Zuckerberg said Blue was “the richest color” for him, noting “I can see all of blue.”
- **Zuckerberg wanted Facebook to be clean and easy to navigate.** In 2007, Fortune wrote that Facebook had “a strong history” of “retaining an uncluttered, highly structured look and feel.” Zuckerberg said initially that when it came to ads on Facebook, he didn’t “want anything flashing or colorful that disrupt[ed] the flow” of Facebook. Zuckerberg: “If people want to see information about different products or events, that should be their prerogative.”
- **In the early days, Zuckerberg assured Facebook users their information wasn’t for sale and they enjoy strong privacy protections on the site.** In 2010, Zuckerberg promised that Facebook “never [sold] your information,” asserting “advertisers who [were] using the site never get access to your information.” In a 2004 interview with the Harvard Crimson, Zuckerberg promised “I’m not going to sell anybody’s email address.” In 2006, Zuckerberg said privacy was central to Facebook. In 2004, the Harvard Crimson wrote that Zuckerberg ensured Facebook’s extensive search capabilities were “restricted by a myriad of privacy options for members” that didn’t want “everyone to be able to look up their information.” Zuckerberg told the Harvard Crimson then that there were “pretty intensive privacy options” that limited “who [could] see your information.” Zuckerberg assured that people had “very good control over who [could] see their information.” In 2006, CBS News noted that Facebook had “long prided itself on privacy.”
- **Facebook’s emphasis on robust privacy controls was part of what helped catapult it.** In 2007, CBS ran an article headlined “Facebook promises more consumer privacy.” In 2007, Facebook’s Chief Privacy Officer, Chris Kelly, said Facebook had designed the site from the outset to protect users’ privacy and asserted Facebook had developed additional technologies to offer further protections. That same year, Zuckerberg said Facebook had succeeded “in part, because it [gave] people control over what and how they share[d] information.” Zuckerberg later noted that something “that initially got people comfortable” with sharing was that Facebook “offer[ed] extremely robust privacy controls.” Zuckerberg acknowledged “no one want[ed] to live in a surveillance society” and that with Facebook, “people choose to share” the information they do.
- **Facebook initially offered privacy controls that required users’ explicit permission to share their information.** Facebook promised in 2007 that users would have to give their explicit consent, or opt-in, before any information was passed along. Zuckerberg said “one of the most fundamental things on the internet” was “privacy” and “making sure that people ha[d] control over their information. Zuckerberg: “I mean, privacy and making sure that people have control over their information, is, I think, one of the most fundamental things on the internet.”
- **Facebook wanted to create “safe communities” free of “hate speech.”** Zuckerberg said part of the reason Facebook was being rolled out to new schools slowly was “because we wanted to create safe communities.” Facebook said it was able to “handle abuses with the accountability of having a real-name culture rather than a ‘screenname’ culture.” In 2008, Zuckerberg said Facebook wanted “to be very neutral” on what speech was allowed on the platform, but at the same time “really careful in not allowing hate speech.”

THEN – A SINGLE LAWSUIT FROM FELLOW HARVARD STUDENTS

- **In 2004, Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss sued Facebook and Zuckerberg, accusing him of stealing the original idea for Facebook from them.** The Winklevoss twins had asked Zuckerberg to help write the coding for a social network they were developing for Harvard and other campuses. Zuckerberg entered into an oral agreement with the Winklevoss Twins and was made partner.
- **Zuckerberg worked on coding for the Winklevoss twin’s website, but slow rolled them so he could launch thefacebook.com.** In November 2003, Zuckerberg told the Winklevoss twins that completing their website wouldn’t be difficult. Zuckerberg reportedly failed to show the Winklevoss twins any progress on the site, but assured them it would be operational shortly, explaining that he had been “completely swamped” with homework and finals. The Winklevoss twins said Zuckerberg slow rolled them and launched his own project instead.

- **While helping the Winklevoss twins, Zuckerberg launched thefacebook.com.** On January 8th, 2004, Zuckerberg wrote the Winklevoss twins saying the code seemed “to be working great” and promised he would discuss the site with them on January 13th. Zuckerberg failed to disclose to the Winklevoss twins that he was working on a similar site, instead merely mentioning that he was working on a “personal project.” The Winklevoss twins said Zuckerberg was helping them when he registered thefacebook.com on January 11th, 2004.

THEN – NEWSFEED INTRODUCED, STARTING FACEBOOK’S JOURNEY TOWARDS “OPENNESS” AND “SHARING”

- **After Facebook introduced News Feed, users began voicing concerns over the privacy intrusions it led to.** Facebook received backlash after introducing News Feed, with users saying “very few of us want everyone automatically knowing what we update,” and called news feed “too creepy, too stalker-esque.” WIRED wrote that when Facebook rolled out its newsfeed feature, users were “outraged that Facebook was broadcasting their updates, profiles changes and new friend connections.” Zuckerberg acknowledged users’ concerns over newsfeed and promised to ensure their privacy was protected. After news feed earned users’ ire, Zuckerberg affirmed that privacy was central to the site. Zuckerberg said Facebook was working on giving users additional privacy options.
- **News feed was a step towards Facebook’s “high level ideal” to create “openness and transparency.”** Zuckerberg said “the high level ideal” of Facebook was “this concept of openness and transparency.” Zuckerberg believed “over time thing trend[ed] towards becoming more open.” In 2010, Zuckerberg wrote on his Facebook page that his philosophy was “trying to make the world a more open place.” Zuckerberg said the thing he “really care[d]” about was “the mission” of Facebook, which was “making the world open.”
- **Zuckerberg believed an open web would lead to a “richer web.”** Zuckerberg said Facebook led way to a “richer web” that was “more democratically controlled by the people who [were] sharing stuff, as opposed to by some central entity that’s going out and indexing all this information.” Zuckerberg said “a lot of the founding principles of Facebook” were that “if people have access to more information” and were “more connected” it would “make the world better” and people would “have more understanding; more empathy.” Zuckerberg defined Facebook as a company that was “trying to bring innovative things to people that help[ed] them share more and make the world more open.”

THEN – AN ADVERTISING FEATURE, BEACON, RESULTED IN FACEBOOK’S FIRST MAJOR PRIVACY SCANDAL OVER SHARING USER DATA WITH THIRD PARTIES

- **In 2007, Facebook introduced Beacon, which tracked users activities elsewhere on the internet.** When Beacon was released, Facebook promised it was aligned with Facebook’s “philosophy of user control” and had “advanced privacy controls so Facebook users [could] decide” if they shared their activities. Beacon allowed Facebook to track users’ purchases and actions at dozens of sites and then broadcast that data on the pages of their listed friends. When users bought things on Beacon-affiliated sites, their friends were automatically notified of the purchase, before users had a chance to approve it.
- **Zuckerberg pitched Beacon as an innovative approach to advertising.** Zuckerberg believed Beacon would be seen as a friendly product endorsement that generated more sales than traditional advertising. More than 40 different websites had embedded beacon in their pages to track transactions made by Facebook users. When researchers and security experts dug deeper into beacon, they found that Facebook was tracking its user after they’d logged out of the site.
- **Beacon was Facebook’s first brush with user outrage over exploiting their data.** WIRED wrote Facebook’s Beacon – meant to revolutionize advertising - “turned out to be many users’ worst nightmare.” CBS News reported that thousands of Facebook users “lambasted” Beacon referrals “as a betrayal of trust,” saying Facebook users “attacked Beacon as a flagrant violation of privacy.” In response to Beacon, 69,000 people signed on online petition entitled, “Facebook, stop invading my privacy!.” Users accused Facebook of adopting Big Brother tactics to make money. Facebook’s Director of Policy Communication, Barry Schnitt, said the Beacon ordeal “underscored how critical is [was] to provide extensive user control over how their information was shared.”
- **Media outlets noted that the Beacon scandal was a new, unique challenge for Facebook at the time.** WIRED wrote that Beacon “immediately earned the ire of users.” CNET wrote that Zuckerberg was “plagued by

allegations of everything from deceptiveness to invasion of privacy” in the wake of the Beacon controversy. The Guardian wrote that the Beacon controversy was “one of the worst in the short life of Facebook.” CBS News wrote that critics had blasted Beacon as “an unwelcome nuisance with flimsy privacy protections that had already exasperated and embarrassed some users.”

- **Zuckerberg and Facebook swiftly apologized for Beacon and attempted to make changes to strengthen user privacy.** In 2007, Zuckerberg apologized, saying Facebook had “made a lot of mistakes building this feature.” Zuckerberg said he was “not proud of the way” Facebook had “handled” the Beacon controversy, saying “I know we can do better.” Zuckerberg on Beacon: “We’ve made a lot of mistakes building this feature, but we’ve made even more with how we’ve handled them, we simply did a bad job with this release, and I apologize for it.” Facebook reversed course soon after and announced it would limit the reach of the Beacon application. Zuckerberg recognized “the problem with our initial approach” to Beacon was “making it an opt-out system instead of opt-in.” Facebook tried to quell the rebellion from Beacon by revising it so that the information gathered was only shared when users specifically gave permission. In the wake of the backlash, companies like Overstock.com and Travelocity announced they had temporarily or permanently pulled out of the program. Beacon was shutdown in 2009 as the result of a lawsuit, at which time Facebook said it had “learned a great deal” from the experience.

THEN – A PLATFORM FOR ADVERTISERS, NOT A GATEKEEPER FOR ADVERTISERS

- **Zuckerberg recognized the importance of advertisements for Facebook but was cautious during the early years.** In 2006, the New York Times wrote that the “key question” for Facebook was “whether it [would] be able to find ways to weave advertising into its site in a way that audiences [would] accept.” Zuckerberg originally shunned venture capitalists when Facebook started, seeking advertisers to pay for the site. Until 2007, Facebook’s advertising was limited to banner ads that ran down the side of the pages and smaller ads that appeared in news feeds.
- **In late 2007, Microsoft invested \$240 million in Facebook, setting off a pivot towards making ads a central focus.** In October 2007, Microsoft invested \$240 million in Facebook. An October 2007 NBC News report said Facebook “hope[d] to become an advertising magnet.” In 2007, Fortune reported that Facebook’s announcement of Facebook ads “follow[ed] an October 24th announcement that Microsoft [would] take a \$240m equity stake in the site.” Facebook initially promised to let users select the advertising that would be displayed. Fortune wrote at the time that Facebook allowing users to control which ads they saw built on its “strong history of giving Facebook members control over their online profiles.” In 2007, Zuckerberg said as Facebook’s user base grew, it would give “more ways for advertisers to reach people and communicate in a very natural way.” In November 2007, Facebook unveiled Facebook Ads, a three-part strategy to help advertisers better connect with customers on the site.

THEN – MARK ZUCKERBERG HAD A HIGH SHARE OF FACEBOOK STOCK, BUT WAS STILL A SCRAPPY, SHY FOUNDER IN NEED OF GUIDANCE

- **In 2006, Zuckerberg had “an unusually high share” of Facebook stock.** The New York Times wrote that Zuckerberg’s high share of Facebook stock gave him “dominant say in its fate.” They further reported that Zuckerberg “arranged the ownership of Facebook so as to give himself extraordinary power to steer the company.”
- **Despite his controlling stake and grip on Facebook’s operations, Zuckerberg stayed connected to rank-and-file staff during Facebook’s early days.** In 2005, Zuckerberg told the Harvard Crimson if you’re gonna be a good businessman, really what it’s about, is finding situations where people win. It’s not about tricking people into doing stuff, it’s not about being a hard-ass. It’s about being comfortable and working in your pajamas, because that’s gonna end up being what’s best for everyone.” In 2008, Zuckerberg sat “at a desk like the other software engineers, writing code.” In 2010, Facebook employees described Zuckerberg as an “intense listener” and Zuckerberg was reported to be “involved in almost every new product and feature” according to the New Yorker.
- **Zuckerberg was initially a shy executive, preferring not to speak to the press or make public appearances.** In a 2008 article, CBS News wrote that they were “warned that [Zuckerberg] can be awkward and reluctant to talk about himself.” The outlet further reported that Zuckerberg was “learning fast” according to those around him, but “might still wear a hoodie and no socks.” In 2008, The Guardian wrote “despite his love of worldwide sharing, the founder of Facebook [was] less keen to share information on himself. In 2010, the

New Yorker reported that Zuckerberg did not enjoy speaking to the press or making public appearances, remarking “despite his goal of global openness, however, Zuckerberg remain[ed] a wary and private person.”

THEN – ZUCKERBERG HIRED A SEASONED EXECUTIVE, SHERYL SANDBERG, TO BRING STABILITY

- ***In 2008, Zuckerberg hired Sheryl Sandberg, who brought “stability” to Facebook.*** Facebook hired Sandberg in 2008 while she was the Vice President for Global Online Sales and Operations at Google. The New York Times wrote that Sandberg brought “stability to Facebook.” The Times also remarked that Sandberg was “known for her interpersonal skills as much as for her sharp intellect.” Sandberg was brought on to oversee Facebook’s marketing, human resources and privacy departments. When hiring Sandberg, Zuckerberg said “a big theme of this hire is that there are parts of our operations” that needed “to be taken to the next level.” The New York Times noted that Sandberg’s appointment came “as the competition between Google and Facebook intensif[ed].”

THEN – FACEBOOK LOST ALL OF ITS CO-FOUNDERS BESIDE ZUCKERBERG

- ***By 2010, all of Zuckerberg’s friends who worked on Facebook initially had left.*** In 2008, Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz announced he was leaving the company and asked for his bio and photograph be removed from the company’s PR site. In 2010, the New Yorker reported that most of Zuckerberg’s close friends, who worked at Facebook at the start, had left. The New Yorker wrote that the fact that all of Zuckerberg’s friends who worked on Facebook during its infancy had departed point to “the difficulty some people ha[d] working for Zuckerberg.”
- ***Zuckerberg became the Face of Facebook, and the press roasted him.*** Zuckerberg was described at the time as a “robot” who had been “overprogrammed.” In 2010, it was reported that during preparations for the Winklevoss trial, Facebook’s legal team searched Zuckerberg’s computer and found IMs portraying him as backstabbing, conniving and insensitive. In 2011, Esquire named Zuckerberg in their celebrity hall of shame and in 2011, GQ ranked Zuckerberg as the worst-dressed man of Silicon Valley.

FACEBOOK’S MID-LIFE OVERHAUL

LATER – FACEBOOK BECAME A MONOLITH THAT HARVESTED USER DATA ON A DAILY BASIS

- ***Facebook grew from 123 million users to a billion users in a mere four years – leading to a near record-breaking public valuation in 2012.*** In 2008, Facebook overtook Myspace in monthly unique visitors, getting 123.9 million users compared to Myspace’s 114.6 million. In August 2008, Facebook hit 100 million active users. In July 2010, Facebook reached 500 million uses – and Zuckerberg was named TIME person of the year. In October 2012, Facebook reached one billion users. In 2012, Facebook went public with an IPO of \$104 billion, the third largest public offering in U.S. history.
- ***After reaching a billion users, Zuckerberg asked “wow, so what do we do now?”*** TIME wrote “one answer was to put down bets on emerging platforms and distribution channels, in the form of some big-ticket acquisitions” like Instagram, Oculus and WhatsApp. Zuckerberg wasn’t content with having a billion users, saying “if your mission is to connect the world [...] that doesn’t mean you’re anywhere near fulfilling the actual mission.” By 2011, Facebook had “worked to spread its tentacles across the web” according to the New York Times.

LATER – ZUCKERBERG REVISED HIS VIEWS ON PRIVACY AND WANTED A WEB WHERE THE “DEFAULT” WAS SOCIAL

- ***In 2009, Zuckerberg began evolving his view on privacy, realizing user data was the modern-day version of oil and gold.*** When Facebook updated their terms of service in 2009, it deleted a provision that said users could remove their content at any time. Facebook added new language that said Facebook would retain users’ content and licenses after an account was terminated. That year, Zuckerberg said people needed to go through the “process of realizing that sharing information [was] good” and “slowly sharing more and more information over time.” Zuckerberg said Facebook was more focused on sharing on the platform, rather than

how much time they spent on it. When introduced news feed, Facebook's VP of Product Marketing, Chamath Palihapitiya, recognized there was "a tremendous amount of information being generated" on it.

- ***In 2009, Zuckerberg said Facebook was "building towards a web where the default [was] social," which really meant taking a sledgehammer to user privacy.*** Zuckerberg said with social networking, "the value people get [was] tied to how much information everyone [was] sharing." That year, Facebook made users' profiles public by default and complicated the process of opting out. The New Yorker wrote that when Facebook made the change, users again revolted, claiming Facebook had "violated the social compact upon which the company was based." The New Yorker wrote: "Unless you wrestled with a set of complicated settings, vastly more of your information – possibly including your name, your gender, your photograph, your list of friends – would be made public by default." In 2010, Facebook launched a "like" button plug-in on sites across the internet, which allowed it to gather data, using cookies, about users activity on the site, regardless of whether the user used the like button or even knew it was there. To alleviate privacy concerns, Facebook claimed at the time that it would not collect user-identifying cookies abouts their activity on partner websites while they were logged out of Facebook.

LATER – ZUCKERBERG SAID PRIVACY WAS NOT A "SOCIAL NORM" ANYMORE

- ***In 2010, Zuckerberg said privacy was not a "social norm" anymore.*** In 2010, the Guardian ran an article headlined "privacy no longer a social norm, says Facebook founder." In the article, the Guardian reported Zuckerberg believed that because people had "gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people,' the social norm of privacy had "evolved over time." Zuckerberg said it was important for companies like his to reflect changing social norms in order to remain relevant and competitive. Zuckerberg: "A lot of companies would be trapped by the conventions and their legacies of what they've built."
- ***In 2010, Facebook's business had to depend on "shifting notions of privacy, revelation, and sheer self-display."*** In 2010, the New Yorker noted that Facebook's business model depended on shifting notions of privacy and that Facebook could make more money from advertisers "the more tha people [were] willing to put online." A WIRED article from 2009 reported that Facebook was "pushing users to stop being so private with their information." Zuckerberg believed privacy was the "third-rail issue" online, and complained in 2010 that "a lot of people who are worried about privacy and those kinds of issues will take any minor misstep [...] and turn it into as big a deal as possible. WIRED Wrote that after he said the third-rail issue statement, "he then excused himself as he typed on his iPhone 4, answering a text from his mother." After returning to the conversation, Zuckerberg told WIRED, "we realize that people will probably criticize us this for a long time, but we just believe that this is the right thing to do." WIRED reported that Zuckerberg said Facebook was "trying to tell people to share information and be comfortable with that."

LATER – FACEBOOK BEGAN SEEING USER BACKLASH TO PRIVACY CHANGES AS JUST A PART OF DOING BUSINESS

- ***In 2010, Facebook announced it was sending user profile information in bulk to companies like Yelp, Pandora and Microsoft.*** A 2010 NBC News article was headlined "privacy is dead on Facebook. Get over it." The Guardian reported that "the rise of social networking [meant] that people no longer ha[d] an expectation of privacy." In a 2010 New Yorker Article, the magazine noted that Facebook's privacy policy changes were "almost always allowing more information to be exposed in more ways. The New Yorker remarked that Facebook's privacy policies were "confusing to many people, and the company ha[d] changed them frequently."
- ***Facebook stopped being concerned with public backlash to privacy policy changes and began only making minimal changes to features in response to it.*** In 2010, NPR reported that Facebook had been "plagued by periodic privacy concerns." That same year, Sandberg acknowledged to the New York Times that it was "completely fair to say we have had our challenges around privacy," but noted that "Mark took steps to apologize" about the privacy problems. She also said that Facebook had built powerful privacy controls, but they had become too complicated for the average user, and so in response, Facebook simplified those settings. The Washington Post wrote that whenever it released a new product, Facebook "would wait for the inevitable negative reaction on privacy, then announce[d] minimal changes without fundamentally altering the new feature." In December 2010, Facebook introduced facial recognition for photos to make the tagging process easier. Users had to opt-out of the program if they didn't want their name suggested in other people's photo albums. The facial recognition software combed through user's current photos to match people in new photos.

LATER – FACEBOOK SETTLED CHARGES WITH THE FTC AFTER IT WAS ACCUSED OF DECEIVING USERS BY SAYING THEY HAD CONTROL OF THEIR PRIVACY

- ***The FTC accused Facebook of promising users could keep their information private, then repeatedly making it public.*** In November 2011, the FTC announced the Commission and Facebook had agreed to settle charges that Facebook deceived customers over privacy problems. The FTC said Facebook had engaged in “unfair and deceptive practices” over privacy controls on the site. The FTC said Facebook had “deceived consumers by telling them they could keep their information on Facebook private, and then repeatedly allowing it to be shared and made public.” Under the settlement, the FTC required Facebook to obtain permission before sharing a user’s private information with a third party in a way that exceed the user’s existing privacy settings.
- ***The FTC said Facebook had allowed outside app developers to access user information – including personally identifiable information.*** The FTC said Facebook had allowed advertisers to glean personally identifiable information when a Facebook user clicked on an advertisement. The FTC said Facebook had shared user information with outside application developers – even after a user deleted an account – contrary to representations made to its users. The FTC required Facebook to obtain users’ “affirmative express consent” before it could override the user’s privacy settings. The FTC also required Facebook to undergo an independent privacy audit every two years for 20 years.

LATER – FACEBOOK SECRETLY EXPERIMENTED ON USERS TO HELP DETERMINE THE POWER OF THEIR PLATFORM

- ***In 2012, Facebook conducted a one week experiment to study how emotions could be spread on social media.*** For one week, Facebook studied the effects of manipulating News Feed based on emotions. Facebook manipulated the news feeds of over half a million users to study how emotions could be spread on social media. Facebook engineers running the experiment sought to manipulate the emotional valence of posts shown in users feed to be more positive or negative, and then observed whether their own posts changed to match those moves.
- ***Facebook chose not to obtain users permission before running the experiment that affected their well-being.*** Facebook did not ask explicit permission from those it selected to conduct the experiment on. Facebook found that “emotional states [could] be transferred to others via emotional cognition, leading people to experience the same emotions without their awareness. The study found that emotions were contagious: people who saw more positive posts in turn wrote more positive posts – users who saw negative posts prompted them to be more negative in their own posts. Facebook defended their lack of disclosure or consent, saying users consented to news feed manipulation when they agreed to the site’s terms of service.

LATER – FACEBOOK BEGAN ENGAGING POLITICAL LEADERS THROUGH LOBBYING AND CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

- ***Between 2011 – 2013, Facebook greatly ramped up spending on lobbying.*** In a 2011 Washington Post article, A Facebook spokesperson said it was “imperative” that they “scale[d]” their policy team so that they had “the resources in place to demonstrate to policymakers” that they were “industry leaders in privacy, data security and safety.” Between 2009 – 2012, Facebook grew their lobbying team from two lobbyists to 38 lobbyists in 2012. Between 2009 – 2010, the first years of recorded lobbying by Facebook, the platform spent \$559,268 on lobbying. Between 2011 – 2013, Facebook spent \$11,630,000 on lobbying.
- ***Between 2010 - 2014, Facebook increased their political spending immensely and worked to distribute their contributions more evenly between parties.*** In 2010, Facebook directed 71% (\$32,620) of their political contributions to Democrats and only 28% (\$12,900) to Republicans. In 2012, Facebook directed 64% (\$410,732) to Democrats and 35% (\$223,251) of their contributions to Republicans. In 2014, Facebook directed 52% (\$426,700) of their contributions to Democrats and 47% (\$391,800) to Republicans.

LATER – MARK ZUCKERBERG SOLIDIFIES HIS POWER BY CREATING A DUAL-CLASS STOCK STRUCTURE

- ***Zuckerberg had “little interest” in stepping aside and allow a more experienced leader to run Facebook.*** In 2008, the New York Times reported that Zuckerberg had “little interest in handing over the reins of his

company to more experienced leadership.” In 2009, Facebook created a dual-class stock structure, creating a public class A share and a class B share that had 10 votes each on matters of corporate governance. At the time, Facebook said it had “no plans to go public” when they created the dual class stock structure. Facebook’s spokesman, Larry Yu, said Facebook created the dual-class stock structure “because existing shareholders wanted to maintain greater control over voting to ensure the company [could] continue to focus on the long term to build a great business.

- **Zuckerberg believed Facebook’s success was a result of his control of it.** Zuckerberg had always kept a direct hand in controlling the way the Facebook site worked. When Microsoft originally invested in Facebook, it did little to dilute the power of Zuckerberg and Facebook “took very little skin out of the game,” according to Fast Company. Zuckerberg believed Facebook’s success was enabled by its unusual corporate structure, which gave him permanent and near-total control over it. Zuckerberg felt tech companies into the issue of having “define[d] themselves too narrowly as a company in a specific medium.”

LATER – ZUCKERBERG CONTINUES TO HOLD AN IRON GRIP ON FACEBOOK EVEN AFTER IT GOES PUBLIC

- **Zuckerberg’s outsized power wasn’t impacted by Facebook going public.** When Facebook went public, Zuckerberg managed to hold on to more than one-fourth of the share in the company. Zuckerberg had agreements with other investors that enhanced his voting power almost 60% of total shares. Zuckerberg’s 60% voting power was more control than Bill Gates had when Microsoft went public (49%) and far greater than the power the co-founders of Google had when it went public (16% each). The New York Times Wrote that Zuckerberg’s voting power left “little room for investors to have much input on the company’s direction.” In 2022, despite a majority of shareholders voting to terminate dual-class voting and strip Zuckerberg of his board chair, the efforts failed because of the dual class stocks.

CURRENT DAY: FACEBOOK BECOMES META PROBLEMATIC

NOW – FACEBOOK BOUGHT UP COMPETITORS IT VIEWED AS A THREAT TO ITS LONG-TERM GROWTH

- **Facebook maintained its monopoly by buying, copying or killing its competitors according to a U.S. House Antitrust Subcommittee report.** Between 2004 – 2020, Facebook acquired at least 63 companies. The U.S. House Antitrust Subcommittee wrote Facebook’s “serial acquisitions reflect[ed] the company’s interest in purchasing firms that had the potential to develop into rivals before they could fully mature.” Zuckerberg described buying companies as a “land grab” to “shore up our position.” Zuckerberg said he wasn’t concerned about competition, because Facebook could “likely always just buy any competitive startups.” Politico wrote that Facebook’s purchase of WhatsApp and Instagram exemplified its “buy or bury” strategy against competitors.
- **Zuckerberg saw Instagram as a major competitor to Facebook and pushed to acquire it – including issuing threats to Instagram’s founders warning of consequences if they didn’t sell.** In 2012, Facebook bought Instagram for \$1 billion. CNN wrote “as young social network users gravitated toward photo-sharing, Facebook wanted to scoop up what could have eventually become a big rival.” Zuckerberg said that Instagram and other social networks “could be very disruptive to us.” Zuckerberg identified that Instagram had a mobile advantage and could hurt Facebook. The U.S. Antitrust House Subcommittee reported Zuckerberg had issued veiled threats to Instagram’s Founder, with Zuckerberg telling him that “refusing to enter into a partnership with Facebook, including an acquisition, would have consequences for Instagram.” Instagram’s founder was reportedly concerned that his company would be targeted for retribution if he refused to sell to Facebook. Zuckerberg wrote the Instagram founder: “How we engage now will determine how much we’re partners vs. competitors down the line,” noting that Facebook was “developing our own photo strategy.” Facebook’s purchase of Instagram eventually gave it near total control of the social media space, with Facebook and its subsidiaries like Instagram accounting for 75% of all time spent on social media. When purchasing Instagram, Zuckerberg promised Facebook didn’t “plan on doing many more of these, if any at all.”
- **Zuckerberg bought WhatsApp in 2014 for \$19 billion.** The WhatsApp deal as the largest Facebook ever made. WhatsApp was the most popular messaging app for smartphones when Facebook bought it. Zuckerberg and Facebook executives considered WhatsApp a threat to Facebook Messenger and a threat to Facebook’s network. Facebook believed buying WhatsApp was an opportunity to further entrench its dominance.

- ***In 2014, Facebook bought Oculus VR, believing VR could be the next big thing.*** Zuckerberg said Facebook's purchase of Oculus reflected his belief that virtual reality could be the next big computing platform after mobile. The New York Times wrote that Facebook's purchase of Oculus was "one of several bets" Facebook was making "in its efforts to anticipate the future and secure its dominance of social communication."
- ***Facebook's acquisitions cemented its power over social networking.*** A Facebook presentation said the site controlled "95% of all social media" in the U.S. in terms of monthly minutes of use. Regulators in the UK, Germany, and Australia found Facebook dominated the social network market. A U.S. House Antitrust Subcommittee found Facebook to be a Monopoly and recommended it be broken up, saying Facebook's "monopoly power [was] firmly entrenched and unlikely to be eroded by competitive pressures from new entrants or existing firms, as it owned three of the seven most popular mobile apps in the U.S."

NOW – ZUCKERBERG SAT AS A DICTATOR OVER THE WORLD'S LARGEST SOCIAL NETWORK

- ***Zuckerberg consolidated power at Facebook, giving him a firm hand over all aspects of his company.*** A 2018 Vox article was headlined "Mark Zuckerberg is essentially untouchable at Facebook. A 2020 Wall Street Journal article was headlined "Mark Zuckerberg asserts control of Facebook, pushing aside dissenters." Zuckerberg called Facebook a "founder-led company." Zuckerberg and his allies controlled almost 70% of all voting shares in Facebook. Proving Zuckerberg's power at Facebook, The Board was notified about the Instagram acquisition only a few days before it was announced. The Wall Street Journal remarked "as both chairman and CEO and with a lock on the majority of Facebook's super voting shares, Mr. Zuckerberg ha[d] few checks on his power." Public Citizen said "with a mega-company such as Facebook, there [was] no justification or support for a dual-class stock system." Public Citizen said, "as a matter of public policy, it [was] dangerous to strip away one of the key tools of discipline for a mega-company."
- ***Zuckerberg acted as an authoritarian leader, forcing out those who disagreed with him and rewarding allies.*** In 2018, the Wall Street Journal reported that Zuckerberg had "took on the role of a wartime leader" at Facebook, "who needed to act quickly, and, sometimes, unilaterally." That year, Zuckerberg gave himself power over Instagram and WhatsApp, units he promised to leave independent. Zuckerberg was "not a man much given to quiet reflection," remarked a TIME reporter, who called described Zuckerberg as "supremely confident, almost to the point of being aggressive."
- ***Zuckerberg refused to take advice from his more seasoned, experienced and knowledge board members.*** After Erskine Bowles, a former investment banker and Clinton administration official, left the Facebook board, he criticized Facebook's leader for failing to take his advice on politics – his area of expertise. In 2020, the Wall Street Journal reported that Zuckerberg had fired two board directors and replaced one of them with a longtime friend, which the paper called "the culmination of the chief executive's campaign [...] to consolidate decision-making at Facebook." Facebook's lead independent board director, Susan Desmond-Hellmann, left in October 2017 in part because management wasn't considering board feedback. Kenneth Chenault, former American Express CEO and a close confidant of Zuckerberg, left the board after growing disillusioned. Zuckerberg originally treated Chenault as a "kind uncle" who understood running a big institution. Chenault had proposed an outside advisory group that would study Facebook's problems and deliver reports to the board directly. The idea sank. In 2018, about a dozen senior or highly visible executives disclosed their resignations or left Facebook. Public Citizen said, "with a mega-company such

NOW – FACEBOOK BECAME A DATA VACUUM THAT SUCKED UP INFORMATION ON A QUARTER OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION

- ***Facebook held the personal data of more than a quarter of the world's population – 2.8 billion out of 7.9 billion.*** NBC News wrote that Zuckerberg "oversaw plans to consolidate [Facebook's] power and control competitors by treating its users' data as a bargaining chip." A U.S. House Antitrust Subcommittee wrote that Facebook's data advantage "compounded over time, cementing Facebook's market position." WIRED wrote that in the digital era, power came "from controlling data, making sense of it all, and using it to influence how people behave." Tech Crunch wrote that "data is to the 21st century what oil was to the 20th."
- ***Facebook boasted to advertisers about their platform's access to users, promoting that it could help advertisers target and sway users.*** Facebook often emphasized its ability to sway its users with advertisers, portraying itself as an effective mechanism to help promote their products. When someone logged into

Facebook, there were typically about 1,500 items the company could display in that person's news feed. But, it only showed 300 of them. The New Yorker wrote that as private companies amassed more data about us and became the main civic forum for business and life, "their weaknesses could become more consequential."

- **Facebook allowed third party developers access personal data from a users' friends without the friend's knowledge of consent.** In 2018, Facebook's Deputy General Counsel, Paul Grewal, claimed "protecting people's information [was] at the heart of everything we [did]." But that same year, it was reported that Facebook had allowed developers to access the personal data of friends of the people who used their apps on their platform, without the knowledge or express consent of those friends. In 2018, a Platforms Operations Manager at Facebook, Sandy Paraklis, said tens or even hundreds of thousands of developer may have had friend permission data.

NOW –FAILED TO IMPLEMENT SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR THIRD – PARTY ACCESS TO USER DATA

- **Facebook had no control over user data once it reached third party developers.** Facebook's Platform Operations Manager, Paraklis, said when it came to the control Facebook had over the data given to outside developers, Facebook had "Zero. Absolutely none." Paraklis said when he encouraged executives to proactively audit developers, he was discouraged from the approach, with one executive asking him, "do you really want to know what you'll find?" Paraklis estimated that "a majority of Facebook users" could have had their data harvested by app developers.
- **Facebook knew that third-party developers had misused users data in the past.** In 2010, Wall Street Journal reported that many of the most popular apps on Facebook had been "transmitting identifying information [...] to dozens of advertising and internet tracking companies." The issue affected users who had set their profiles to Facebook's strictest privacy settings. The Wall Street Journal wrote "the practice [broke] Facebook's rules and renew[ed] questions about its ability to keep identifiable information about its users' activities secure. Later, in 2019, Facebook suspended tens of thousands of apps for improperly sucking up users' personal information. The New York Times wrote that the admission and suspension of apps was "a tacit admission that the scale of its data privacy issues was far larger than it had previously acknowledged."

NOW –FREQUENTLY HARVESTED USER DATA WITHOUT ANYONE'S KNOWLEDGE AND HANDED IT TO THIRD PARTIES

- **Facebook frequently abused their ability to harvest user data without anyone's knowledge.** In 2018, the New York Times reported that Facebook overrode users who denied Facebook permission to share information with third parties, continuing to provide their data to device makers. Facebook's sharing of information to third parties was a violation of their 2011 consent decree with the FTC, which barred Facebook from overriding users' privacy settings without first getting explicit consent. In 2019, the Department of Justice and FTC accused Facebook of violating an administrative order issued by the FTC in 2012 by misleading users about the extent to which third-party apps could access users' personal information. The DOJ and FTC complaint accused Facebook of violating the Federal Trade Commission Act by deceiving users about their user of their data. In 2020, Australian regulators said Facebook's Onavo Protect mobile app had been used by Facebook for research and identifying future acquisition targets, despite telling customers it would keep their data private. In 2021, WhatsApp was fined \$270 million by Irish authorities for not being transparent about how it used data collected from users. Irish regulators said WhatsApp was not clear that its data was being shared with Facebook. Facebook also admitted that it used phone numbers for two factor authentication to also target them with ads.
- **Facebook continued to share user data with 52 hardware and software companies years after they promised to stop doing so – some of which were based in China.** The reports about data-sharing agreements with device makers caused renewed controversy because the practice continued years after Facebook began restricting access to the user information available to app makers, with the Washington Post noting Facebook portrayed the news "as a sign that it had grown more careful in guarding user privacy." Defending themselves, Facebook said the sharing of user data was part of agreements designed to make its social media platform work more effectively on smartphones and other devices.

NOW – BECAME A MAGNET FOR MASSIVE DATA BREACHES BUT WORKED TO NORMALIZE THE PROBLEM

- **Facebook was no stranger to data beaches, but sought to normalize them rather than defend against them.** In 2018, Facebook software bugs allowed the exposure of personal information of nearly 50 million users. In April 2021, Facebook suffered a data breach that leaked the data from 553 million people in 106 countries onto a hacking forum. Facebook brushed off the reports, saying the data was old and from a previously reported leak. Facebook denied any wrongdoing by saying the data was scraped from publicly available information on the site, yet Facebook refused to notify the more than 530 million users whose personal data was stolen in the breach. A leaked internal Facebook memo said the company’s “long-term strategy” for dealing with data breaches was to “both frame this as a broad industry issue and normalize the fact that this activity happens regularly.” Between 2016 – 2021, Facebook spent \$13 billion on “safety and security,” which represented 4% of revenue. In 2019, Facebook spent \$3.7 million on safety and security on its platform. However, in October 2021, Facebook announced that it planned to spend \$10 billion on its Facebook Reality Labs project for the development of AR and VR products.

NOW – SECRETLY RECORDED FACEBOOK MESSENGER USERS AND SENDS THE AUDIO TO THIRD-PARTIES

- **Facebook secretly harvested audio from users then provided it to third-party contractors for transcription.** Facebook long denied that it collected audio from users to inform ads or help determine what people saw on their news feed. Zuckerberg once called the idea a “conspiracy theory” that Facebook listened “to what’s going on your microphone and use that for ads. We don’t do that.” Further, Facebook’s data-use policy did not make mention of audio, nor did it disclose to users that Facebook might use third parties to review their audio. But in fact, Facebook paid hundreds of outside contractors to transcribe clips from users of its service. The contractors paid by Facebook said they were hearing Facebook users’ conversations, but did not know why Facebook needed them transcribed. Facebook responded to the reports by saying users who had their conversations transcribed had chosen the option in the messenger app to have their voice chats transcribed.

NOW – ALLOWED POLITICAL CONSULTANTS TO EXPLOIT USERS’ PSYCHOLOGY TO SNATCH MORE VOTES

- **Facebook’s third-party data collection permissions allowed Cambridge Analytica to build psychological profiles of millions of Americans.** In 2014, Contractors and employees of Cambridge Analytica acquired private Facebook data of tens of millions of users, intending to sell psychological profiles of American voters to political campaigns. Cambridge Analytica had purchased the user data from an outside researcher who claimed to be collecting it for academic purposes. Cambridge Analytica used the data of Facebook users to help target voters, and used private information from 50 million Facebook users without their permission, making it one of the largest data leaks in Facebook’s history. The data Cambridge Analytica took included users’ identities, friend networks and their likes on the platform. Only a fraction of the users Cambridge Analytica harvested data from had agreed to release their information to a third party. The head of Cambridge Analytica, Alexander Nix, boasted of having “a massive database of 4-5,000 data points on every adult in America.” The researchers that sold Cambridge Analytica user data had developed a technique to map personality traits based on what people had liked on Facebook. The researchers paid users small sums to take a personality quiz and download an app that would scrape some private information from their profiles and those of their friends – activity that Facebook permitted at the time.
- **Cambridge Analytica served as a consultant for Trump’s 2016 campaign and led to one of Facebook’s largest scandals ever.** Cambridge Analytica was backed by the conservative power-family the Mercers, and Steve Bannon served on Cambridge Analytica’s board – choosing the name for the company. Cambridge Analytica worked with Trump’s 2016 campaign on activities like designing target audiences for digital and fund-raising appeals, modeling voter turnout, buying \$5 million in TV ads and determining where Trump should travel to drum up support. Facebook had learned about the Cambridge Analytica data leak back in September 2015, with three Facebook employees requesting an investigation into the Cambridge Analytica data scarping – three months before public reporting on it. But in October 2015, a Facebook employee wrote “it’s very likely these companies [were] not in violation of any of our terms. However, Zuckerberg testified that the company only learned about Cambridge Analytica from The Guardian’s reporting. The Guardian later wrote that the

Cambridge Analytica scandal “plunged Facebook into the greatest crisis in its then 14 year history.” After reports of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, Facebook user’s confidence in the company had plunged by 66% and forced Zuckerberg to go on apology tour. Further, The Justice Department and the SEC opened investigations related to Cambridge Analytica. The FTC fined Facebook \$5 billion over Cambridge Analytica – it’s largest settlement ever. Later, Meta agreed to pay \$725 million to settle a lawsuit over sharing users’ personal information with Cambridge Analytica.

- **Facebook was repeatedly attacked and fined over their gross privacy violations and wanton disregard for keeping user data safe.** In 2019, the New York Times wrote that Facebook had shown “a willingness to fight charges of privacy violations.” In 2020, Canada levied a \$9 million CSD penalty for making “false or misleading claims about the privacy of Canadians’ personal information. Facebook agreed to pay \$90 million to settle a decade old class action lawsuit over a practice that allowed the site to track users’ activity across the internet, even if they had logged out of the platform. In 2019, Brazil fined Facebook the equivalent of \$1.6 million for improperly sharing user data. The Canadian Competition Bureau found that Facebook falsely represented how much information a user could control. The bureau found that third-party developers were able to access some user data in ways that were inconsistent with Facebook’s policies.

NOW – REWARDED OUTRAGE AND SENSATIONALISM TO INCREASE USER ENGAGEMENT

- **In 2018, Facebook changed its newsfeed algorithm, purportedly to help users – but really it was to increase user engagement.** In 2018, Facebook altered its news feed to prioritize what people’s friends and family shared and commented on, while de-emphasizing content from publishers and brands. The news feed would overall highlight posts that friends interacted with rather than viral videos and news articles shared by media companies. Zuckerberg called it a sacrifice to Facebook’s user engagement metrics that would be good for the community in the long-term. In 2017, Zuckerberg had written that one of his goals of 2018 was “making sure that time spent on Facebook [was] time well spent.” Zuckerberg said the news feed changes were intended to maximize the amount of content with “meaningful interaction.” Zuckerberg had said that the “no. 1 value” at Facebook was the “focus on Impact.
- **Zuckerberg said the changes were driven in an effort to strengthen bonds between users and improve their well-being.** Facebook in fact made the changes to its news feed algorithm partly because user engagement was declining. Social interactions on Facebook were declining in favor of passive media consumption. Zuckerberg said the news feed changes were intended to maximize the amount of content with meaningful interaction. No one at Facebook “never really figured out why metrics declined” according to a 2020 internal memo. And according to the Wall Street Journal, even as Zuckerberg was claiming the algorithm change would strengthen user wellbeing, Facebook researchers were warning that the change was making Facebook an “angrier” place.

NOW – REFUSED TO MAKE ALGORITHM CHANGES DESPITE BEING AWARE OF ITS HARM

- **Facebook employees quickly found out that the algorithm change was backfiring and negatively impacting user well-being.** A 2021 Wall Street Journal article was headlined “Facebook tried to make its platform a healthier place. It got angrier instead.” Facebook employees warned internally that the algorithm change was having a negative effect on user well-being and mental health. Facebook researchers found that algorithm changes “had unhealthy side effects on important slices of public content” like news and politics. Facebook researchers found the Algorithm’s heavy weighting on reshared material in news feed made the angry voices on the platform louder. According to internal Facebook research: “misinformation, toxicity, and violent content are inordinately prevalent among reshares.” In the summer of 2018, Facebook data scientists surveyed users and found that many felt the quality of their feed had decreased.

NOW – DROVE POLITICAL PARTIES TO INCREASE NEGATIVE MESSAGING

- **Facebook’s algorithm change incentivized publishers and politicians to post sensationalist and negative content because it was successful.** Facebook researchers found that after Facebook changed its news feed algorithm, publishers and political parties reoriented their posts towards outrage and sensationalism. The Wall Street Journal reported the tactic “produced high levels of comments and reactions that translated into success on Facebook.” In April 2019, Facebook researchers found in Spain, political parties “learnt that

harsh attacks on their opponents net the highest engagement” due to the algorithm change. Facebook Whistleblower Frances Haugen explained “anger and hate [was] the easiest way to grow on Facebook.”

- ***Both publishers and political parties warned Facebook that the algorithm changes were forcing them to shift towards sensationalist content.*** In the Fall of 2018, BuzzFeed editor Jonah Peretti raised concerns to Facebook about how their news feed algorithm changed incentivized divisive content. Peretti wrote that the algorithm change was reward divisiveness and not rewarding “content that drives meaningful social interactions.” Peretti told Facebook it wasn’t just divisive content that saw success on Facebook, but also “fad/junky science” along with “extremely disturbing news” and “gross images.” Political parties in Europe told Facebook their 2018 algorithm change had made them shift their policy positions so they would resonate more on the platform. Political parties in Europe felt Facebook’s algorithm change made it more difficult to directly communicate with their supporters, incentivizing them to create posts feeding on people’s anger to increase visibility. The political parties noted that the incentive to post more negative and sensationalist content raised concerns about its long-term effect on democracy. A political party in Poland shifted the proportion of their posts from 50/50 positive/negative to 80% negative, explicitly because of the algorithm change. In 2018, Facebook acknowledged that social media could have negative effects on democracy.

NOW – ALLOWED MISINFORMATION TO PROLIFERATE AND DECLINED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

- ***Misinformation was the most engaged with content on the platform, and Zuckerberg & co were well aware of the problem.*** Fake news and false rumors reached more people, penetrated deeper into social networks and spread much faster than accurate stories. A false story on social media reached 1,500 people six times quicker than a true story did. Researchers from NYU found that Facebook users engaged with misinformation more than other kinds of information on the platform. Brookings wrote that misinformation was “the logical result of a revenue model that reward[ed] the volume of information over its veracity.” Brookings: When lies pay as well as the truth, there is little incentive to only tell the truth.”
- ***Facebook knew it was exposing users to misinformation, but chose not to do anything about it.*** According to a 2019 internal Facebook memo, Facebook was “knowingly exposing user to misinformation that we ha[d] the processes and resource to mitigate.” Internal Facebook documents showed that the platform’s own researchers had identified the platform’s ill effects in areas like political discourse. Auditors found that company Facebook’s algorithms continued to push people toward self-reinforcing echo chambers, which potentially deepened polarization. Internal Facebook documents found that the platform aggravated polarization and tribal behavior.

NOW – KNOWINGLY RECOMMENDED SENSATIONALIST CONTENT DESPITE ITS HARMS TO USER WELL-BEING

- ***Facebook understood its news feed and recommendation changes fostered rage, misinformation and disinformation.*** Washington Post ran an article headlined “Five points for anger, one for a ‘like’: how Facebook’s formula fostered rage and misinformation.” Facebook weighted “angry” emoji reactions five-times more heavily than likes, leading to a spread of misinformation, toxicity and low-quality news. Facebook was also the No. 1 social network for disinformation. Internal Facebook research repeatedly found that recommendation tools pushed users into extremist groups. According to a 2016 presentation, Facebook researchers found “64% of all extremist group joins [were] due to our recommendation tools.” An Internal Facebook presented to executives in 2018 found that the company was well aware its products, specifically its recommendation engine, stoked divisiveness and polarization. Internal researchers for Facebook found that Facebook’s “core product mechanics” let disinformation and hate speech flourish on the site. In a 2018 presentation, a Facebook team wrote that their algorithm “exploit[ed] the human brain’s attraction to divisiveness.” In a 2018 article, WIRED wrote “social media platforms ha[d] come to seem like a prime culprit for liberal democracies decline,” saying that social media and “an automated media landscape reward[ed] demagoguery with clicks.
- ***Zuckerberg resisted attempts to fix the algorithm causing division and tribal behavior, worrying about the impacts on profits.*** According to NBC, Facebook had “long known its algorithm and recommendation systems push[ed] users to extremes.” Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen said at Facebook, she saw conflicts of interest between what was good for the public and what was good for Facebook. Haugen remarked “and Facebook, over and over again, chose to optimize for its own interest.” The Wall Street Journal wrote that Zuckerberg and Facebook executives “largely shelved” research showing Facebook was causing

divisiveness and polarization. A Facebook team said building features to keep Facebook's algorithms from recommending extremist content would come at the cost of user engagement. The research team said the changes would require Facebook to "take a moral stance." The Wall Street Journal reported that "fixing the polarization problem on Facebook" would require it "to rethink some of its core products." But Zuckerberg rejected proposed fixes to the algorithm because he worried it would hurt Facebook users' engagement. According to the New York Times, "any action taken to reduce popular content, even if its fake news, could hurt [Facebook's] priority of keeping its users engaged on the platform." The Washington Post wrote an article titled "the case against Mark Zuckerberg: insiders say Facebook CEO chose growth over safety." Zuckerberg would not approve of restricting Facebook's algorithm from boosting content most likely to be shared by a lot of users if there was a "material trade off" with 'meaningful social interaction.' Zuckerberg in fact rejected proposed changes to increase the algorithms safety specifically because it would impact meaningful social interactions. And according to the Wall Street Journal, "Facebook executives shut down efforts to make the site less divisive."

NOW –ALLOWED FOREIGN ACTORS TO THREATEN NATIONAL SECURITY AND RUN DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS IN THE U.S.

- ***Facebook became a hub for political disinformation campaigns in the U.S., which were run by foreign actors, terrorists and extremists.*** Facebook acknowledged that the U.S. was the most frequent target of disinformation campaigns. Russia and Iran were the leading purveyors of disinformation on Facebook between 2018 – 2021. The New Yorker wrote that online disinformation was "an ongoing threat to our country" that was "already damaging our political system and undermining public health." National security leaders sounded the alarm on the threat disinformation posed, with former NSA General Counsel, Glenn Gerstell explaining disinformation was a national security threat because it "either sows discord in our society or undermines confidence in democratic institutions. The American Security Project wrote that disinformation could "degrade the fundamentals of democratic societies: trust in institutions, a free media, civil society" and "trust in free and fair elections." The American Security project further explained that the propagation of disinformation "could work towards increasing Russian and Chinese spheres of influence" and risked "negatively impacting the U.S' standing in the world as a global leader and cooperative partner." And yet, in April 2020, TIME reported that Facebook was "reluctant to crack down on political disinformation."
- ***Facebook consistently understaffed counterespionage and counterterrorism operations – and once exposed the personal details of its content moderators to suspected terrorists.*** According to whistleblower Frances Haugen, Facebook had a "consistent understaffing of the counter-espionage information operations and counterterrorism teams," telling lawmakers that she believed Facebook had become a "national security issue." Stratfor wrote that Big Tech was "no more immune to potential espionage and foreign influence" than any business with vast international ties. Worse yet, in 2017, Facebook was found to have inadvertently exposed the personal details of its content moderators to suspected terrorists. The security lapse affected more than 1,000 workers across 22 departments at Facebook. Moderators had their personal profiles viewed by accounts with ties to ISIS, Hezbollah and the Kurdistan Workers Party and were automatically appearing in the activity logs of the groups they were shutting down. The moderators reported receiving friend requests from people affiliated with the terrorist organization they were scrutinizing. The computer glitch that exposed moderators profiles to terrorists was not fixed for a month and had been retroactively exposing the personal profiles of moderators that had censored accounts as far back as a year prior.

NOW – BECAME RUSSIA AND IRAN'S PLATFORM OF CHOICE FOR PROPAGANDA

- ***Russia expertly harnessed Facebook to spread propaganda and sow division in the U.S.*** In 2014, Russia began to promote propaganda and target American voters with polarizing messaging on Facebook. Russia's troll farm, the Internet Research Agency, used the same internet marketing tools and techniques that common digital advertising campaigns did. Russia bought ad space on Facebook to target Americans with politically charged advertising. By 2016, Russia had started more than 20 disinformation campaigns in 13 countries, 46% of which were on Facebook. But it was reported by the New York Times that it was "difficult to quantify the amount of disinformation that was being produced at any time by Russians or other adversarial powers. Facebook failed to discover the Russia-based Internet Research Agency's campaign to spread hyper-partisan content and disinformation during the 2016 election Facebook admitted that Russian based operatives had published about 80,000 posts on the platform over a two-year period in an effort to sway U.S. politics. Facebook further acknowledged that up to 126 million American may have seen the posts during that time. Most of the posts focused on divisive social and political messages like race relations. Russia propagandists on

Facebook even tried to organize more than a dozen pro-Trump rallies in Florida during the 2016 election, which brought dozens of Trump supporters together in real life.

- ***Despite becoming aware of Russian agents were harnessing Facebook, the platform did little to blunt their efforts.*** Despite banning ads from Russian state media and restricting recommendations for such outlets, Facebook hadn't stopped pro-Russian countries from using their state channels to buy ads pushing pro-Russian propaganda. Researchers from NYU performing a security analysis on Facebook's foreign ad policies said that the then-policies and implementation of Facebook's ad library was not "designed to provide strong security against adversarial advertisers." In August 2021, it was reported that Instagram had removed hundreds of accounts linked to Russia who were engaged in a misinformation campaign on the platform. In March 2022, Politico reported that Facebook was not making enough efforts to stop Russian propaganda and misinformation in majority Spanish-speaking counties, and thus, "it continue[d] to spread."
- ***Iran used Facebook to spy, spread covid vaccine misinformation and run pro-Trump ads, while China ran similar disinformation campaigns as Russia.*** Iran had spread COVID disinformation through videos, cartoons, and news stories from state media outlets on social media platforms to appeal to U.S. and western audiences. The Iranian government had used Facebook to conduct espionage on other state actors. In 2020, the Iranian government sent emails and videos in Arizona, Florida and Alaska, purporting to be from the Proud Boys, saying "vote for Trump or we will come after you." Chinese agents created fake social media accounts akin to Russian-backed trolls that pushed out false messages designed to create chaos in the U.S.

NOW – LET ADVERSARIAL NATIONS BUY ADS IN AMERICA TO PUSH THEIR MESSAGE

- ***Foreign actors hoping to spread dysfunction in America bought ads on Facebook to push their message.*** Facebook found 470 accounts linked to Russian propaganda pushing about 3,000 paid ads. Facebook disclosed that it had identified more than \$100,000 worth of divisive ads on hot button issues purchased by a shadowy Russian company linked to the Kremlin. In 2020, it was reported that Facebook sold more than \$5 billion a year worth of ad space to Chinese businesses and government agencies looking to promote their messages abroad. China was Facebook's biggest country for revenue after the U.S. A 2022 Harvard study found that "Facebook advertisements from Chinese state media [were] linked to changes in the tone and content of news reporting on China.
- ***Confronted with the fact that disinformation was being spread on his platform, Zuckerberg ignored warnings and worked to suppress the evidence.*** The New York Times wrote "bent on growth," Zuckerberg and Sandberg ignored warning signs that Facebook could be used to disrupt elections, spread propaganda and inspire violence, "then sought to conceal them from public view." Zuckerberg said he was "on the side of giving people a voice and pushing back on censorship." Facebook's legal and policy team was at odds with Facebook's security team on the issue, because the security team generally pushed for more disclosure on how nation states misused their platforms. Whistleblower Frances Haugen said Facebook was "very aware" that their platform was being used by American adversaries to push and promote their interests at the expense of Americans.

NOW – UNDER INVESTED ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS IN PLACE TO STEM FOREIGN INFLUENCE

- ***In 2019, Facebook began labeling posts from state-owned media outlets, but the effectiveness and enforcement of those efforts was questioned by researchers.*** In October 2019, Facebook said it would "begin labelling media outlets that [were] wholly or partially under the editorial control of their government as state-controlled media." Facebook said applying labels to state-controlled media outlets would offer "greater transparency" to readers. Facebook noted that it had developed its own "definition and standards for state-controlled media organizations" using input from "40 experts around the world specializing in media, governance, human rights and development." In June 2020, Facebook said it would block any ads from state-controlled media outlets that targeted U.S. users. But in March 2020, NYU announced that a study by data scientists in their NYU Tandon School of Engineering found "systemic flaws in Facebook's political ad monitoring and enforcement processes." NYU said their researchers "found no instance of meaningful long-term enforcement," despite Facebook's policy banning political advertising by foreign entities. The NYU researchers noted in their research that "to a large extent," Facebook relied on ad sponsors cooperating and proactively complying with Facebook's sponsor disclosure policy. The researchers found \$37 million worth of political advertising that failed to identify its funding source, and the researchers noted that the pattern of "frequent non-disclosure occurred often without any visible enforcement level," even when they were foreign

companies or governments. In February 2022, the Center for Countering Digital Hate released a study that found 91% of Facebook posts containing propaganda from Kremlin-funded media did not carry any warning labels about the content being from state run media/

NOW – FACEBOOK’S LACK OF EFFORT TO STEM DISINFORMATION, FALSE POLITICAL ADS AND EXTREMISM SWAYED ELECTIONS AND SOWED DIVISIONS

- ***Misinformation on elections was some of the most popular content on Facebook.*** A 2016 CNBC article was headlined “Facebook users engaged with top fake election news than most popular real reporting, report says.” It was found that fake news generated more engagement on Facebook than real, mainstream news among top election-related articles. In the final three months of the 2016 presidential election, 20 top-performing false elections stories from hoax sites and hyper-partisan blogs generated 8,711,000 shares, reactions and comments on Facebook. Within the same period, the 20 best-performing election stories from 19 major news sites generated a total of 7,367,000 shares. A Facebook spokesman responded to the reports by saying the top stories didn’t reflect overall engagement on the platform.
- ***Zuckerberg said he would allow politicians to run ads on the platform that contained misinformation.*** Zuckerberg said political speech was “one of the most sensitive parts in a democracy, and people should be able to see what politicians [said].” In Jan. 2020, Facebook reaffirmed that it wouldn’t ban, fact-check or limit how political ads could be targeted to specific groups of people. Facebook said it would instead offer users slightly more control over how many political ads they saw, as well as made its online library of political ads easier to browse. In a blog post, Facebook’s Director of Product Management for Ads, Rob Leathern, said the company was “not deaf” to criticism about its rules around political ads. Defending the policy that allowed politicians to peddle ads containing misrepresentations and lies, Zuckerberg said: “I don’t think people want to live in a world where you can only say the things that tech companies decide are 100 percent true.” However, Zuckerberg claimed he “care[d] deeply about the democratic process and protecting its integrity.” Yet in 2019, Politico reported that Facebook had removed several ads placed by Elizabeth Warren’s presidential campaign that called for the breakup of Facebook and other Big Tech giants. Facebook only reposted Warren’s ads after Politico reported on the takedown. Warren’s ads had directed users to a petition on her campaign website that urged them to “support our plan to break up these big tech companies,” and were limited in size and reach, with each costing under \$100.
- ***Facebook had a secret policy that allowed high profile users to thwart content policies and them immune from enforcement action, even though they posed greater risks than regular users.*** Facebook’s ‘Xcheck’ program whitelisted some of its high-profile users, allowing them to post inflammatory claims even when they had been deemed false by Facebook’s fact checker, even though internal researchers had raised concerns about the fact that high profile accounts posed greater risks than regular ones and were the least policed. Some of the posts from users in the Xcheck program said vaccines were deadly, that Hillary Clinton had covered up pedophile rings and that Trump called all refugees seeking asylum “animals.” Posts by whitelisted users that contained misinformation had been viewed at least 16.4 billion times before being removed. The lists of those enrolled in the Xcheck program were “scattered throughout the company, without clear governance or ownership” according to Facebook’s internal documents. In fact, most Facebook employees were able to add users in the Xcheck system. The Xcheck program had at least 5.8 million users in 2020. An internal review of Facebook’s whitelisting said “we are not actually doing what we say we do publicly.” Facebook had lied to its own oversight board about Xcheck, saying the system was used in “a small number of decisions.”
- ***Zuckerberg rejected claims that Facebook swayed the 2016 election, calling it a “pretty crazy idea.”*** Zuckerberg said it was “extremely unlikely” that fake news shared on Facebook could have swayed the 2016 election. Denying that Facebook had influenced the 2016 election, Zuckerberg said “there’s a profound lack of empathy in asserting that the only reason why someone could’ve voted the way that they did [was] because they saw some fake news.” Later, Zuckerberg said he regretted dismissing concerns about Facebook’s role in influencing the 2016 election.

NOW – GAVE INSURRECTIONISTS A PLATFORM TO PUSH THEIR ELECTION DENIAL MESSAGES

- ***Facebook allowed election denial content to run rampant without push back, paving the way for the January 6th insurrection.*** Facebook had reportedly established a task force to police violent and hateful election disinformation ahead of the 2020 election, but Facebook disbanded the task force and rolled back

enforcement actions after the election. The Washington Post found during the 2022 midterm election cycle, at least 26 candidates posted inaccurate election claims for months and the platform had done “virtually nothing” to refute them. The Post also found that Facebook failed to challenge or make enforcement efforts against 17 candidates who were claiming the 2022 election would be rigged or that voting systems would be rigged. A civil rights audit found Facebook exempted politicians from third-party fact checking and was “far too reluctant to adopt strong rules to limit voting misinformation and voter suppression.” Washington Post and ProPublica found Facebook groups had at least 650,000 posts attacking the legitimacy of Joe Biden’s election as president between election day and the January 6th insurrection. Washington Post and ProPublica reported that its investigation provided “the clearest evidence yet that Facebook played a central role in the spread of false narratives that fomented the violence of January 6th.” Trump used Facebook as a “key platform” for his lies about the 2020 election right up until he was banned on January 6th.

NOW – LET EXTREMISTS, MILITIAS AND WHITE SUPREMACISTS GROW FOLLOWINGS AND RECRUIT MEMBERS

- **Facebook allowed extremists to cultivate followings on their platform and push outlandish content that sowed division.** A 2016 internal Facebook presentation found extremist content was thriving in more than one-third of large German political groups on the platform. Facebook knew its algorithms were responsible for the growth of extremist content on their platforms, saying in an internal presentation that “64% of all extremist group joins [were] due to our recommendation tools.” Facebook also profited off of white supremacists on their platform. Politico reported on Tech Transparency Project’s study finding that “Facebook continued to serve ads against searches for white-supremacist content, such as the phrase Ku Klux Klan and American Defense Skin heads.” TPP said white supremacists “continue[d] to have a home” on Facebook’s platforms. TPP found that more than 80 white supremacist groups had a presence on Facebook, including some the platform had labeled as “dangerous organizations.” TPP found that Facebook searches for some groups with Ku Klux Klan in their name generated ads for black churches, which they called “chilling” in the light of the Buffalo mass shooting. TPP found that more than a third of the 225 white supremacist groups deemed hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center and American Defamation League had a presence on Facebook.
- **White supremacists and militia groups were continuing to build followings on Facebook, and the platform was automatically creating pages for them.** TPP found that Facebook automatically created 24 pages for white supremacists after some listed a supremacist group as an interest or their employer. TPP also found that the Boogaloo Bois had returned to Facebook and were using to platform to funnel new recruits into smaller subgroups to coordinate offline meet-ups and training. TPP found that the Boogaloo Bois were posting propaganda videos, guides to sniper training and guerilla warfare tactics, atop how-tos for assembling untraceable guns. Over merely a few weeks, the group had gained over 2,000 followers.

NOW – BECAME A SOCIAL UTILITY FOR TERRORISTS TO ENGAGE WITH MAINSTREAM MUSLIMS

- **Terrorists harnessed Facebook to recruit mainstream Muslims, recognizing it was a place young Muslims thought was cool.** The United Nations wrote that the internet and social media had become “powerful tools for terrorist groups to radicalize, inspire and incite violence.” The DHS once found that Muslim extremists were urging terrorists to open Facebook accounts so they could reach, interact and encourage mainstream Muslims to become extremists. The DHS found that Al-Qaeda used Facebook to transmit its message through an outlet kids thought was cool.

NOW – WAS A HUB FOR FALSE INFORMATION ABOUT COVID AND VACCINES

- **During the COVID pandemic, Facebook did little to block false information and anti-vaccine content from spreading on the platform.** In April 2020 alone, Facebook had to put misinformation warning labels on nearly 50 million pieces of content related to COVID. An internal Facebook researcher said the platform’s “internal systems [were] not yet identifying, demoting and/or removing anti-vaccine comments fast enough.” The Department of Homeland Security believed China was waging a disinformation war during COVID to shift responsibility for the pandemic on other countries, including the United States.
- **Anti-vaccine content was the most engaged with and popular content on Facebook’s platforms.** In 2021, NPR found that articles connecting vaccines and death had been among the most highly engaged with content online in 2021. The Huffington Post reported in June 2021 that, for more than a week, the top featured results for the hashtag #vaccine returned anti-vax posts, including one that said, “the only thing vaccines

eradicated were healthy children.” As of late March 2021, 8 of the first 10 results returned in an Instagram search for “vaccine” were anti-vaccine or vaccine conspiracy accounts. In July 2021, Media Matters for America found 284 public and private anti-vaccine Facebook groups, with 520,000 followers combined. Accountable Tech found that during one week in July 2021, 11 out of the top 15 vaccine related posts on Facebook contained disinformation or were anti-vaccine. Center for Countering Digital Hate research revealed that anti-vax social media accounts gained nearly 1 million more followers in the last six months of 2020 alone. In 2020, the anti-vaxx movement was most popular on Facebook, where it had 31 million followers.

- **Researchers found that even when Facebook worked to tamp down anti-vaccine posts, its algorithm still pushed users to anti-vaccine content through its “related pages” feature.** When a researcher from AVAAZ created two new Facebook accounts to conduct an experiment about vaccine disinformation, in just two days the accounts were recommended 109 pages containing anti-vaccine information. The researcher found that when his accounts started searching “vaccine” or liked an anti-vaccine page, more anti-vaccine pages showed up in his results. The researcher found “opening and liking several of these pages, in turn, led our account further into a network of harmful pages.” The researcher said the pages were “seemingly linked together and boosted by Facebook’s recommendation algorithm.” Instagram’s algorithms pushed followers of wellness influencers linked to the antivax movement towards “verified” Instagram antivax accounts. A news story suggesting the COVID vaccine could have been involved in a doctor’s death was the most viewed link on Facebook in the U.S. in the first three months of 2021.
- **Facebook users were among the most likely to believe false claims about COVID vaccines.** The Washington Post found that Facebook users were among the most likely to believe false claims about COVID vaccines. The Washington Post tested whether demographic or other differences between Facebook users related to lower vaccination rate among users, but found no difference. People who got their news about COVID on Facebook were less likely to be vaccinated and more strident in their opposition to it than even those who got their news from Fox News.
- **Facebook’s permissive approach to lies about vaccines was directly linked to lower vaccination rates.** Research revealed that social media played a major role in vaccine hesitancy. A study by Harvard, Northwestern, Northeastern and Rutgers found that those most reliant on Facebook for information had substantially lower vaccination rates than those who relied on other sources. The World Health Organization ranked vaccine hesitancy as one of the top 10 threats to global health. The Associated Press reported that COVID cases “nearly tripled in the U.S. over two weeks amid an onslaught of vaccine misinformation.” In July 2021, in Mississippi, the state with the lowest vaccination rate, the state’s department of health had to shut down their Facebook comments because they had become dominated by misinformation.
- **Zuckerberg refused to work to stem the spread of vaccine misinformation on his platform in an effort to defend “freedom of expression.”** Zuckerberg admitted in a Congressional hearing that Facebook wouldn’t “stop its users from posting information that’s wrong” on vaccines. Zuckerberg said Facebook cared about “freedom of expression” and supported users “fair and open discussions.” Facebook’s head of health, Kang-Xing Jin, said vaccine conversations were “nuanced” and content couldn’t “always be clearly divided into helpful and harmful.”
- **Facebook and Biden had “combative” meetings over the spread of anti-vaccine content on the platform.** The White House reportedly grew so frustrated from Facebook’s answers during their meetings that at one point, the Biden administration demanded to hear from the data scientists at the company instead of the lobbyists. White House officials felt that Facebook was making it difficult for the administration to understand their data sets and how vaccine misinformation proliferated on their site. Despite meeting repeatedly with the Biden administration, Facebook did not come up with concrete solutions to curbing vaccine misinformation on their site.
- **Facebook stonewalled independent researchers attempting to study the spread of COVID misinformation on the platform.** Facebook refused to give researchers enough real-time data they needed to figure out exactly how much COVID misinformation was on the platform. Over a dozen independent researchers who studied Facebook – six of which were studying the spread of information about COVID – said Facebook made it difficult for them to access vital information. The information researchers were seeking was how many times people viewed COVID related articles, what health information Facebook took down and what was being shared on private pages and groups. Academics said a lack of access to Facebook data was limiting their ability to understand how many people were seeing COVID misinformation that could be causing vaccine hesitancy. Facebook’s own internal data scientists reported difficulty studying COVID misinformation on their platform.

- **Facebook made millions of dollars off of COVID misinformation and anti-vaccine content.** Facebook earned money from advertisements placed by anti-vaxxers. The Center for Countering Digital Hate found that the anti-vaxx movement's following of over 58 million users could be worth up to \$1 billion in annual revenue for Facebook through ad placements. CCDH predicted Facebook could earn up to \$23.2 million in revenue from ads directed at existing anti-vaxxer audiences.

NOW –LET MISINFORMATION ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE HEAT UP THEIR PLATFORM

- **Misinformation about climate change was “increasing substantially” on Facebook and the scale was “staggering.”** An article in The Guardian was titled “climate misinformation on Facebook ‘increasing substantially’ study says.” A study found that from 2020 – 2021, climate misinformation on Facebook had grown by 76.7%. The Guardian wrote “the scale of misinformation on Facebook” was “staggering” and “increasing quite substantially” according to an analysis of thousands of posts. In January 2021, Facebook displayed climate disinformation when users searched for climate change information. The Washington Post reported that Breitbart had “outsized influence over climate change denial” on the platform. A Facebook whistleblower alleged that Facebook executive Joel Kaplan proposed exempting Breitbart from misinformation rules. Further, Facebook reportedly suppressed information from a climate scientist aiming to correct misinformation. Facebook allowed reportedly allowed staff to make climate misinformation ineligible for fact-checking by deeming the misinformation to be the “opinion” of the poster or publisher.

NOW – EXPLOITING CHILDREN AND DIRECTING PREDATORS THEIR WAY

- **Facebook was hungry for young users, with Zuckerberg calling them the platform's “north star.”** In 2021, Zuckerberg said he was redirecting teams within his company to “make serving young adults their north star.” One of the more immediate shifts Facebook/Meta planned on was “significant changes” to Instagram like a focus on video. An October 2021 headline from The Verge read “Facebook says it's refocusing company on ‘serving young adults.’”
- **Facebook had spent years secretly plotting ways to attract preteen and tween users to its platforms.** An internal Facebook document called “twens” a “valuable but untapped audience.” In 2021, the Wall Street Journal reported that Facebook teams had “for years been laying plans to attract preteens that go beyond what is publicly known.” As far back as June 2012, Facebook had explored allowing children younger than 13 years old to use their platform. Facebook formed a team to study preteens, set a three-year goal to create more products for them and commissioned strategy papers about the long-term business opportunities young users presented. In December 2017, Facebook introduced an app for children 13 and under, Messenger Kids, so kids could message, add filters and doodle on photos they sent one another. Facebook said the point of Messenger Kids was to provide a more controlled environment for the types of activity that were already occurring across smartphones and tablets among family members.
- **Young users were already on Facebook in Doves and had been for a long time despite a policy and laws against it.** In 2016, the Atlantic reported that Facebook and Instagram's policy only allowing people over 13 years old did not “appear to be strictly enforced.” In May 2011, ABC News reported there were about 7.5 million children under 13 on Facebook, with about 5 million being under the age of 10. Facebook responded to reports of millions of children using their platform by saying it was not easy for an online company to enforce an age limit and had a policy against children against 13 or younger. Facebook noted that the reports of minors on their platform “highlighted just how difficult it [was] to implement age restrictions on the internet.” Facebook claimed there was “no single solution to ensuring younger children don't circumvent a system or lie about their age.” A 2014 study of children between the ages of 8-12 found that one-quarter of them reported using Facebook even though they were underage. In 2021, 45% of children aged 9-12 said they used Facebook daily. Big Tech was reportedly “fiercely opposed” to limiting what data could be collected on users under 13, with the industry group, The Internet Association, saying Big Tech was concerned that the rules would “not be workable because they fail[ed] to account for the technical realities of the internet.”
- **Facebook defrauded families by encouraging game developers to let children spend money without their parents permission.** Often times, underage users did not realize they were spending money on Facebook. The average age of children playing and spending money on the game Angry Birds on Facebook was 5 years old. Only 50% of Facebook customers received receipts for their transactions. Facebook ignored warning from their employees that they were defrauding children, passing over a proposal to fix the problem in

favor of maximizing revenue, with a Facebook employee writing that ending the “friendly fraud” on children would result in lower revenue.

- **Sexual predators were sharing mass amounts of children porn and connecting with real kids on Facebook’s platforms.** Zuckerberg asserted Facebook was “really focused on safety, especially children’s safety. Zuckerberg: “we really try to build a safe environment.” An internal Facebook presentation from 2020 titled “Child Safety: State of Play: acknowledged that Instagram employed “minimal safety protections” for children. An internal Meta document noted that one of its “people you may know” algorithm was known among employees to connect child users with potential predators.
- **Facebook reported tens of millions of child sexual abuse images on its platform every year.** In 2020, Meta reported 20 million child sexual abuse images between Facebook and Instagram. Facebook made 35 times more reports than the next highest reporter, Google. February 2021: The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children identified over 20.3 million reported incidents of child pornography or trafficking on Facebook, compared to 546,704 incidents on Google. A whistleblower told the SEC that Facebook didn’t know the full scale of the problem of child abuse material because it didn’t track it. At Facebook, senior managers would ask “what’s the return on investment” when it came to exploring the full scale of child abuse material on the platform.
- **Facebook did little to address the issue of child porn on their platform and rarely took down flagged content, including reporter’s flags.** A whistleblower said Meta broke up a team it set up to develop software for detecting indecent videos of children because it was seen as “too complex.” A whistleblower said Meta’s efforts to remove child abuse material were “inadequate” and “under-resourced.” Instagram failed to remove accounts that posted pictures of children in swimwear or partial clothing even after the accounts were flagged to Instagram through an in-app reporting tool. An account posting photos of children in sexualized poses was reported using the in-app reporting tool, but Instagram responded the same day, saying “due to high volume” it was unable to view the report. Instagram said its “technology ha[d] found that this account probably doesn’t go against our community guidelines. The account remained live days later with more than 33,000 followers. In April 2017, The Times UK found that Facebook was publishing child pornography after one of its reporters created a fake profile and was quickly able to find offensive and potentially illegal content. The Times UK reported the content to Facebook, but in most instances was told the imagery and videos did not violate the site’s community standards. When BBC approached Facebook about sexualized photos of children – like a 10 year old in a vest accompanied by the words “yum yum,” Facebook said it did not breach community standards and the image stayed up. BBC reported a whole group, called “We Love Schoolgirlz” that featured obscene content of children, and it did not get taken down.
- **Facebook recommended child sexualization groups after a reporter began flagging inappropriate profiles.** When a WIRED reporter attempted to report child exploitation profiles to Facebook, an automated message came back a few days later saying the group had been reviewed and did not violate any “specific community standards.” The reporter was then recommended more child sexualization groups after he reported the profiles. According to the WIRED reporter: “as reply after reply hit my inbox denying grounds for action, new child sexualization groups began getting recommended to me.” In 2016, BBC reported that pedophiles were using secret groups on Facebook to post and swap obscene images of children. The pedophile groups on Facebook had names that gave a clear indication of their content. BBC found a number of secret groups, created by and run for pedophiles – including one that was administered by a convicted pedophile who was still on the sex offenders register. Further, a man arrested for sexual exploitation of children online was able to continue to use two Instagram accounts to share images of minors for months after he was arrested. The predator continued to have an active account with nearly 90,000 followers, on which he regularly posted images of teenagers and younger children in swimming attire.
- **Facebook’s platforms easily connected children with predators, resulting in unwanted sexual interactions.** An internal 2021 Meta presentation estimated that 100,000 minors each days received photos of adult genitalia or other sexually abusive content. 22% of minors that used Instagram reported experiencing a sexually explicit interaction on the platform. In 2020, employees reported that the prevalence of “sex talk” to minors was 38 times greater on Instagram than on Facebook Messenger in the U.S. When a WIRED reporter searched the numbers “11, 12, 13,” on Facebook, “23 of the first 30 results were groups targeting children of those ages” for sexual interactions or pictures.
- **A bug in Facebook’s Messenger Kids app allowed minors to chat with unapproved adults.** A loophole in the app allowed users to invite kids to group chats even if unauthorized users were there too. The Verge wrote that, due to a the bug, “thousands of children were left in chats with unauthorized users, a violation of the core

promise of messenger kids.” A group of 100 experts, advocates and parenting organizations criticized Facebook’s Messenger Kids app, claiming that Facebook was “creating” the need in the market to target younger and younger children. Facebook failed to reach out to children safety advocates before launching the Messenger Kids app. The 2020 federal human trafficking report found that 65% of child sex trafficking victims recruited on social media were recruited on Facebook, with 14% being recruited on Instagram. In 2020, Facebook alone was used to facilitate over 366 cases of child exploitation between Jan 2013 – December 2019.

NOW – TEENAGERS WHO USED FACEBOOK’S PLATFORMS WERE REPORTING MAJOR DECLINES IN THEIR MENTAL HEALTH, SELF-IMAGE AND SELF CONTROL

- ***Teens reported compulsively using Facebook’s numerous platforms every day, some of whom reported being unable to control their use.*** 22 million teens logged onto Instagram every day. Roughly half of Facebook users between the age of 18 and 24 checked Facebook upon waking up. Instagram was seen as an addictive product that could send teens spiraling toward eating disorders, an unhealthy sense of their own bodies, and depression. Accountable Tech found that 74% of teens found themselves “Scrolling for too long” while 50% said they lost sleep because they felt “stuck” on social media.
- ***Teenagers were blaming Instagram for increased rates of anxiety, depression, and negative self-image.*** The Wall Street Journal wrote “the features that were core to Instagram were the most harmful to teens.” An internal Meta research slide said teens were blaming Instagram for “increases in the rate of anxiety and depression.” 13% of British teens and 6% of American teens who reported suicidal thoughts traced the desire to kill themselves to Instagram.
- ***Facebook ruined teenage girls’ body image and drove them towards eating disorders.*** An internal Facebook research deck said Instagram made “body image worse for one in three teen girls.” Meta’s internal research found Instagram risked pushing teens to eating disorders, depression and an unhealthy sense of their own bodies. Meta researchers concluded that some of the problems Instagram created with teen mental health were specific to Instagram and not found in social media broadly. Facebook found that more than 40% of teen Instagram users reported feeling “unattractive,” reporting the feeling began on the app. 32% of teenage girls said that when they felt bad about their bodies, Instagram made them feel worse. 14% of teen boys in the U.S. said Instagram made them feel worse about themselves, with one teenager saying, “every time I feel good about myself, I go over to Instagram, and then it all goes away. One teenager said looking at her peers was a “kick in the gut.” Frequent use of image-based social media like Instagram was linked to greater self-objectification. The Wall Street Journal remarked that “the tendency to share only the best moment” and “a pressure to look perfect” was at the core of Instagram’s platform and at the core of the mental health issue.
- ***Pressure to look perfect caused teenagers to seek out eating disorder content, which Facebook’s platforms promoted.*** An internal memo revealed that Meta knew Instagram was pushing girls to dangerous content like posts about eating disorders. In 2022, a report by FairPlay found that Instagram’s algorithm promoted an extensive network of pro-eating disorder content. The report said there were over 90,000 unique accounts promoting eating-disorder content, which could collectively reach nearly 20 million users around the world. Tech Transparency Project said Instagram made it “exceedingly easy to search for hashtags and terms associated with eating disorders on the platform.” TPP “Instagram not only fails to enforce its own policies, but it also proactively recommends toxic body image content to its adult and teen users.”
- ***Facebook’s platforms facilitated the bullying of teens, with thousands of users reporting being victims of bullying.*** In a McAfee study of 11,687 parents and children in 10 countries, nearly 80% of respondents reported cyberbullying on Instagram, compared to 50% on TikTok and Snapchat. According to the McAfee study, cyberbullying complaints were highest on Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram compared to other social media apps. Cyberbullying occurred at double the rate on Facebook than on Twitter, and four times more on WhatsApp than on Discord. Instagram provided “a uniquely powerful set of tools” for bullying according to The Atlantic, including anonymous profiles, lack of adult oversight, and potential for viral posts. Teenagers described how Instagram users used the ease of making anonymous profiles to create “hate pages” for bully victims.
- ***Teens could easily find drugs on Facebook’s platforms.*** Vice News reported that one in four kids had been advertised drugs on social media. DigitalTrends wrote that the American Addiction center found a “booming business” of codeine, MDMA, weed, painkillers and coke sales on Instagram. When one of TPP’s fake teen accounts started typing the phrase “buyxanax” into Instagram’s search bar, the platform started auto-filling

results for buying Xanax before the user was finished typing. TPP wrote “the entire process took seconds and involved two clicks.” TPP said Instagram’s algorithm had automatic features that “even sped up the process” for their teen accounts to buy drugs. TPP submitted 50 posts to Instagram that appeared to violate the platform’s policies against selling drugs, but after a review, Instagram responded that 72% of the flagged posts did not violate its guidelines despite them selling drugs.

NOW – FACILITATED HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND ALLOWED DRUG CARTELS TO USE THEIR PLATFORM

- **Facebook knew its platforms were being used to facilitate human trafficking but failed to take action.** Facebook knew people were using their platform for human trafficking but neglected to take widespread action until Apple threatened to remove their app from the App Store following reports on the trafficking. The Wall Street Journal reported how a Facebook researcher had asked “was this issue known to Facebook before BBC inquiry and Apple escalation?” According to the Journal, the response began with “yes.” A Polish trafficking expert wrote that 18 months after it first identified human trafficking on Facebook, there was no implementation of systems to find and remove trafficking posts. Facebook began forbidding any content that provided or facilitated human smuggling or that asked for human smuggling services after TPP found a surge in Facebook groups devoted to human smuggling. In 2020, Facebook deactivated a system that detected human trafficking networks on the platform.
- **Facebook continued to allow a drug cartel leader to use its platform even when security experts alerted them to the leader’s presence.** Facebook chose not to fully remove accounts linked to the Drug Jalisco Nueva Generacion’ after an employee was able to untangle the cartel’s activities throughout the platform. The employee and his team were able to untangle CJNG’s online network by examining posts on Facebook and Instagram, as well as private messages on those platforms. Facebook designated the CJNG cartel “dangerous individuals and organizations,” which should’ve led to their posts being automatically removed – but they weren’t. An investigation team at Facebook asked a team to make sure a ban on the cartel was enforced, but the team didn’t follow up on the job.

NOW – FACEBOOK ALLOWED HATE SPEECH TO FLOURISH ON THEIR PLATFORMS WITHOUT MECHANISMS TO BLOCK OR REDUCE ITS SPREAD

- **Facebook refused to disclose the amount of hate speech it removed from its platforms.** The Wall Street Journal reported that Facebook didn’t “publicly report what percentage of hate-speech it remove[d].” A Facebook civil rights audit found that it put free speech ahead of other values, which undermined its efforts to curb hate speech and voter suppression. The Anti-Defamation League pointed to whistleblower documents that showed Facebook failed to take down hate speech even though the posts violated its rules. The New York Times wrote that Facebook had been “roundly criticized over the way its platform ha[d] been used to spread hate speech and false information that prompted violence.”
- **Zuckerberg said being open to all viewpoints was at the “core of everything Facebook is and everything I want it to be.”** Zuckerberg understood that Facebook was “more than just a distributor of news,” but also “a new kind of platform for public discourse.” A Facebook spokesperson assured Facebook had “built a robust integrity team, strengthened our policies and practices to limit harmful content, and used research to understand our platform’s impact on society so we continue to improve.” Zuckerberg promised to stand up “against those who [said] the new types of communities forming on social media [were] dividing us.”
- **Facebook cut the amount of time human reviewers spent on hate speech.** Facebook pledged to add 3,000 more content reviewers and invest in tools to help remove objectionable content after a string of shootings, murders, rapes and assaults had been streamed on Facebook. The live broadcasts were viewable as recorded videos, often for days before being taken down. Facebook cut the time human reviewers focused on hate-speech complaints from users, making the company more dependent on AI. NPR wrote that subcontractors who worked to review flagged posts on Facebook were “told to go fast – very fast,” and were evaluated on speed, meaning workers made a decision about flagged content once every 10 seconds. When NPR tested Facebook’s flagging system in 2016, they found that Facebook reviewers “were not consistent and made numerous mistakes, including in instances where a user called for violence.” In 2016, Facebook received more than one million reports of violations from users every day, according to Facebook’s head of policy management, Monika Bickert.

- **Facebook relied on a faulty AI system to detect hate speech, but it was nowhere close to being effective.** Zuckerberg said he expected Facebook’s automated systems would remove “the vast majority of problematic content” by the end of 2019. Facebook was reliant on AI enforcement for content moderation, but its AI was unable to distinguish between cockfighting and car crashes. Facebook’s AI often fell short in flagging sensitive or controversial materials. Facebook was criticized for its lack of expediency over the removal of objectionable content. Internal Facebook documents showed that employees estimated Facebook’s AI only removed a sliver of posts that violated the platform’s rules. Employees responsible for keeping Meta’s platforms free from offensive and dangerous content acknowledged that the company was nowhere close to being able to reliably screen it. A Facebook engineer estimated that Facebook’s automated system removed just two percent of the views of hate speech on the platform. Facebook Engineer: We do not and possibly never will have a model that captures even a majority of integrity harms.”

NOW –NEGATIVELY IMPACTED USER’S WELL-BEING ON A FREQUENT AND SEVERE BASIS

- **Facebook researchers found that 1 in 8 of its users reported in engaging in compulsive use of social media that impacted their sleep, work, parenting and relationships.** Internal researchers reported that users lacked control over the time they spent on Facebook and had problems in their lives as a result. Facebook’s researchers estimated compulsive use of their platforms affected about 12.6% of Facebook users – more than 360 million people. According to the American Psychological Association, Facebook and Instagram was built to capitalize on users’ biological drive for social belonging and nudged them to keep on scrolling. APA said Instagram was problematic because of its “addictive nature” and lack of “stopping cues.”
- **A large body of literature linked Facebook use with detrimental outcomes such as decreased in mental well-being.** A meta study on scientific papers on social media’s influence on mental health found social media use was linked to increased levels of psychological distress, thoughts of self-harm and suicide and poor sleep. One in eight Facebook users reported that their use of the platform harmed their sleep, work, relationships and parenting.
- **Passive use of Facebook – browsing but not engaging on the platform – led to worse outcomes on well-being.** People who spent a lot of time passively using Facebook reported feeling worse afterwards. Selective confrontation with other’s success on Facebook could trigger repetitive negative thinking regarding one’s imperfections.
- **It was found that the amount someone used Facebook was the no. 1 variable that predicted depression among a study’s participants and those with lower well being used Facebook more.** Problematic use of Facebook was associated with lower well-being. Making matters worse, those with low subjective happiness were more susceptible to overusing Facebook. Facebook users with some level mental vulnerability were more at risk for problematic outcomes from their use of the platform.
- **Using Facebook for reasons other than social engagement created decreased well-being.** People who read Facebook for 10 minutes a day were in a worse mood than those just posting or talking to friends. People who reported higher levels of Facebook use experienced higher emotional and stronger needs to be connected.
- **Overuse of Facebook skewed user’s perspectives of themselves, the world around them and their social bonds.** Those who overused Facebook felt that other people were happier than them, experienced high levels of loneliness and withdrew socially. Facebook addiction was found to negatively affect life satisfaction. People who used Facebook for a long time reported feeling that others were happier than them. Students using Facebook for long durations reported enhanced loneliness. They also reported agreeing less with the idea that life was fair. The problematic use of Facebook led to an avoidance of real social relations.
- **Users who deactivated their Facebook and social media accounts felt greater life satisfaction and more positive emotions than continued users.** It was found that people’s life satisfaction increased significantly when they quit Facebook. They had more positive life satisfaction and positive emotions than Facebook users. The increase in well-being resulting from social media deactivation increased levels of subjective well-being by approximately 24-50% as much as standard psychological interventions. Deactivation of social media also led to a statistically significant decrease in depression and loneliness. A study of inpatient patients at a mental health center found that patients using Facebook during their treatment reported higher levels of negative mental health and recovered more slowly than non-users.

NOW – HAD AN AD SYSTEM THAT DISCRIMINATED AGAINST USERS

- **Facebook's ad targeting system was found to allow advertisers to exclude gender and race groups on ad targeting.** Facebook allowed advertisers to exclude certain groups on the base of race, gender and other sensitive factors that were prohibited by federal law in housing and employment. The Department of Housing and urban development sued Facebook for violating the fair housing act by allowing advertisers to limit housing ads based on race, gender and other characteristics. HUD said Facebook's ad system discriminated against users even when advertisers did not choose to do so. In March 2018, the National Fair Housing Alliance sued Facebook, alleging it allowed advertisers to discriminate against legally protected groups. In October 2019, Facebook was sued in a class action lawsuit that accused the platform of discriminating against older and female users by withholding advertising for financial services like bank accounts, insurance, investments and loans. The complaint was filed seven months after Facebook agreed to overhaul its targeted ad systems to settle lawsuits that it let advertisers discriminate by age, gender and zip code for housing and credit ads.
- **Facebook's handpicked auditors faulted the platform for infringing on users' civil rights – even after it had promised to stop.** In November 2021, Meta said it would look into whether its platforms treated users differently based on race after years of criticisms from black users about racial bias. In 2017, ProPublica reported that Facebook enabled advertisers to direct their ads to news feeds of people who expressed interest in the topics of "jew hater," "how to burn jews," or "history of 'why jews ruin the world.'" In 2020, Auditors handpicked by Facebook to examine its policies said the company had not done enough to protect people on the platform from discriminatory posts and ads. In the audit, Facebook was repeatedly faulted for prioritizing free expression over discrimination, and for not having a robust infrastructure to handle civil rights. According to a ProPublica headline, "Facebook's secret censorship rules protect white men from hate speech but not black children." Facebook's content rules only detected broad groups of people, like "white men," but would not flag hate speech if a protected group contained characteristics that wasn't protected, like "female drivers" or "black children."

NOW –DOMINATED THE ONLINE ADVERTISING BUSINESS AND LIED TO ADVERTISERS

- **Facebook held half of the total digital ad supply and captured a significant portion of its growth.** Facebook held 50% of the total digital display ad supply. The U.S. House Antitrust Subcommittee wrote that Google and Facebook captured "nearly all of [digital ad] growth in recent years." Facebook derived nearly all of its revenue from personalized advertisements shown on the site. In 2020, Facebook made \$86 billion in revenue, nearly all of which came from selling ads placed on users' news feeds. In 2020, Facebook said it had 8 million advertisers. The highest-spending brands account for \$4.2 billion in Facebook advertising in 2020, only 6% of the platform's ad revenue.
- **Facebook knowingly inflated metrics of ads repeatedly, and with multiple types of advertising.** In 2021, it was found that Facebook had inflated estimates for the total time spent watching a video and the total number of viewers by 150% - 900% according to court documents. Due to the miscalculated data, marketers may have misjudged the performance of video advertising purchased from Facebook, impacting how much they spent on Facebook video vs. other sellers. Facebook new of problems in how it measured viewership of video ads on its platform for more than a year before it disclosed them in 2016. Facebook admitted that its metric for the average time users spent watching videos was artificially inflated because it was only factoring in video views of more than three seconds. Facebook told ad buying agency, Publicis, that the earlier counting method likely overestimated average time spent watching videos by between 60% - 80%. The Wall Street Journal said the news was "an embarrassment for Facebook," which had been "touting the rapid growth of video consumption across its platform." Facebook admitted that it had miscalculated the total organic reach for business pages and the amount of time spent with instant articles. CNN: "In some cases, the metrics were significantly overstated." Facebook acknowledged the average time spent on instant articles was "over-reported' by 7% - 8%. Facebook admitted it had double counted the number of people businesses reached with unpaid posts on their Facebook pages.
- **Facebook employees expressed concerns that they were promoting "deeply wrong" data to advertisers.** Some at Facebook believed they were promoting "deeply wrong" data about how many users advertisers could reach. The Verge reported that when a product manager at Facebook proposed a fix that would fix their ad metric reporting, the company allegedly refused to make the changes, arguing it would have a "significant" impact on revenue. In a leaked email, a Facebook employee wrote "the status quo in ad reach estimation and reporting is deeply wrong."

NOW – KILLING THE NEWS INDUSTRY BY STEALING ITS PROFITS AND READERS WITHOUT COMPENSATION

- **Online market power like Facebook’s had a significant impact on the monetization of news and led to numerous newsroom closures.** A U.S. House Antitrust Subcommittee wrote “the rise of market power online has severely affected the monetization of news, diminishing the ability of publishers to deliver valuable reporting.” Columbia Journalism Review wrote that “many rightly [saw] the rise of Big Tech [...] as the root of journalism’s problems.” Open Markets Institute claimed “the largest single reason” for the decline in local news was “the loss of advertising revenue to the online advertising duopoly of Google and Facebook. Columbia Journalism Review noted that media companies were “addicted to Facebook’s algorithm-directed traffic.”
- **Facebook had immense power in shaping how news was distributed and consumed.** The Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) said Facebook was a “vital distribution channel for a number of media businesses.” University of Chicago’s Stigler Center said Facebook and Google had “unprecedented influence on news production, distribution and consumption.” ACCC said Big Tech “increasingly perform[ed] similar functions to media businesses, such as selecting and curating content, evaluating content, and ranking and arranging content online.” ACC Found that Facebook and Google had “significant and durable market power over the distribution of news online,” noting that news publishers were reliant on Google and Facebook for reaching people on line. WIRED’s editorial staff explained that “if Facebook wanted to, it could quietly turn any number of dials that would harm publishers – by manipulating its traffic, ad network and readers.”
- **Many users saw Facebook as a news source, and because that’s where many users got and read their news, it was one.** In 2015, 63% of Facebook users considered the service a news source. The New York Times wrote that Facebook was “the world’s most influential source of news.” After Facebook changed their algorithm in 2018 to show users more items shared by friends and family and less from professional publishers, publishers saw Facebook referrals drop dramatically. ACCC claimed Facebook benefitted from news and news extracts appearing on a user’s feed because it allowed them to “retain the user’s attention, enabling more advertisements to be displayed.” Tech Crunch reported that “again and again, Facebook ha[d] centralized attention typically spread across the web.” News Media Alliance wrote, with the vast majority of Americans consuming their news online, readers often skimmed through headlines and only read snippets found on search engines or social media sites. Many Facebook users who viewed news on the platform didn’t click through to the original article, but rather got the overview of the news from just the headline and preview blurb. Most local newspapers relied on digital display advertising for online ad revenue.
- **Facebook and Zuckerberg refused to compensate news outlets for their content, even though the platform sapped a majority of outlet’s revenue.** Google and Facebook were able to carry content created by news organizations without directly paying the organizations for creating it. News Media Alliance wrote that Google and Facebook had “leveraged their market dominance to force local news to accept little to no compensation for their intellectual property.” Tech Crunch further reported that publishers had “few major sources of traffic outside of Facebook and Google search.” A Star Tribune Editorial remarked that Big Tech had “taken the same content generated by newspapers, TV, radio and others and used it to reap massive profits while refusing to provide any compensation. Google and Facebook did not offer competitive terms to publishers, refusing to pay for content, traffic or data.
- **Zuckerberg said he had no intention of paying for news and held hostage those who tried to force compensation out of him.** In 2018, Zuckerberg said he had no interest in paying publishers for the right to show their stories. The Wall Street Journal wrote that Zuckerberg was “disappointed by regulatory efforts around the world looking to force platforms like Facebook [...] to pay publishers for any new content available on their platforms.” The Journal wrote that regulatory efforts had “dampened Mr. Zuckerberg’s enthusiasm for making news a bigger part of Facebook’s offerings.” News Media Canada wrote that Google and Facebook exercised “monopoly power” which created “a market where news publishers [were] coerced to accept anticompetitive and unfair terms” on usage of their content. If local papers refused to provide content rights to Google and Facebook, they lost the opportunity to be featured by Google and Facebook and seen by their users.
- **Zuckerberg and Facebook’s refusal to pay for news led to the closure of 1-in-4 local papers between 2004 – 2019, accelerating political polarization.** Between 2004 – 2019, one in every four U.S. newspapers shut down, which contributed to the widening political polarization according to Harvard. Brookings reported that

voters in communities that had experienced a newspaper closure were less likely to split their vote. Yale wrote that as local news declined, “local politics [became] increasingly nationalized,” which contributed to polarization.

- **When Australia proposed a law that would require Facebook to pay publishers, Zuckerberg blocked the countries emergency services from the platform.** After Australia released the final bill that required Facebook and Google to pay publishers for news content, Zuckerberg pushed to tweak its algorithm to restrict news content for Australians. Documents showed that Facebook had deliberately created an overly broad and sloppy process to take down pages, resulting in swaths of the Australian government and health services to be caught in its web just as the country was launching COVID vaccinations. After being alerted to the fact that they had blocked pages for medical, health and emergency services in Australia, Facebook *expanded* the use of the algorithm from 50% to 100%. Facebook also blocked pages for Australian health services such as the Children’s Cancer Institute and Doctors without border. Facebook also blocked medical and domestic violence services and women’s shelters. Facebook executives knew its process for classifying news for the removal of pages was so broad that it would likely hit government pages and other social services. The Wall Street Journal reported that Facebook’s goal with taking down the Australian government, health services and charity pages was to “exert maximum negotiating leverage over the Australian parliament.” Following the page shutdowns, Australia’s parliament amended the proposed journalism law to the degree that, a year after its passages, its most onerous provisions hadn’t been applied to Facebook or Meta. Facebook’s Head Of Partnerships, Campbell Brown, wrote “we landed exactly where we wanted to” in a congratulatory email brown sent minutes after the Australian senate voted to approve the watered-down bill. WSJ: “Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg And Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg chimed in with congratulations as well, with Ms. Sandberg praising the ‘thoughtfulness of the strategy’ and ‘precision of execution.’”

THEN – THEFACEBOOK.COM: A SMALL PROJECT WITH SMALL AMBITIONS

FACEBOOK WAS THE OFFSHOOT OF ZUCKERBERG’S FIRST WEBSITE, FASHMASH.COM

In November 2003, Zuckerberg Set Up Facemash.com, Which Gave Users Two Students Faces And Asked Them To Choose Who Was More Attractive. “(Thefacebook.com is not the first foray into a college site for Mr. Zuckerberg, a computer-sciences-turned-psychology major. As a prank in November 2003, he set up facemash.com, a site that “popped up two students’ photos and asked users to choose who was more attractive,” he said. Harvard officials were not amused and they put him on probation. But the university’s administration has not voiced any complaints with thefacebook.com, he said.)” [NY Times, [05/26/05](#)]

Harvard Officials Were Not Amused By FashMash And Put Zuckerberg On Probation For It. “(Thefacebook.com is not the first foray into a college site for Mr. Zuckerberg, a computer-sciences-turned-psychology major. As a prank in November 2003, he set up facemash.com, a site that “popped up two students’ photos and asked users to choose who was more attractive,” he said. Harvard officials were not amused and they put him on probation. But the university’s administration has not voiced any complaints with thefacebook.com, he said.)” [NY Times, [05/26/05](#)]

Students Were Outraged over Facemash.com. “Zuckerberg said that the extensive search capabilities are restricted by a myriad of privacy options for members who do not want everyone to be able to look up their information. “There are pretty intensive privacy options,” he said. “You can limit who can see your information, if you only want current students to see your information, or people in your year, in your house, in your classes. You can limit a search so that only a friend or a friend of a friend can look you up. People have very good control over who can see their information.” Zuckerberg said that he hoped the privacy options would help to restore his reputation following student outrage over facemash.com, a website he created in the fall semester.” [Harvard Crimson, [2/9/04](#)]

Zuckerberg Hoped The Privacy Options On The 2004 Facebook Would Help Restore His Reputation After Student Outrage Over FaceMash. “Zuckerberg said that the extensive search capabilities are restricted by a myriad of privacy options for members who do not want everyone to be able to look up their information. “There are pretty intensive privacy options,” he said. “You can limit who can see your information, if you only want current students to see your information, or people in your year, in your house, in your classes. You can limit a search so that only a friend or a friend of a friend can look you up. People have very good control over who can see their information.” Zuckerberg said that he hoped the privacy options would help to restore his reputation following student outrage over facemash.com, a website he created in the fall semester.” [Harvard Crimson, [2/9/04](#)]

ZUCKERBERG STARTED FACEBOOK WITH THE INTENTION OF BUILDING ONLINE VERSIONS OF REAL-LIFE RELATIONSHIPS

Zuckerberg Bragged In 2004 That Facebook “Literally Took Me A Week To Make.” “Thefacebook.com allows university students to create personal profiles listing their interests, contact info, relationship status, classes and more. It started locally at Harvard. It now has almost 160,000 members from across the country. ‘I do stuff like this all the time,’ Zuckerberg says in his relaxed tone. “The facebook literally took me a week to make.’ Coming from anyone else, the words may come across as arrogant. With Zuckerberg, they’re only a part of the demeanor he maintains when discussing what in today’s internet-saturated world qualifies as a phenomenal success.” [Harvard Crimson, [6/10/04](#)]

Zuckerberg’s Original Plan With Facebook Was To Build An Online Version Of The Relationships We Had In Real Life. “This addictive quality keeps Facebook’s typical user on the site for an average of 169 minutes a month, according to ComScore. Compare that with Google News, where the average reader spends 13 minutes a month checking up on the world, or the New York Times website, which holds on to readers for a mere ten minutes a month. The “stickiness” of the site is a key part of 24-year-old CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s original plan to build an online version of the relationships we have in real life. Offline we bump into friends and end up talking for hours. We flip through old photos with our family. We join clubs.” [CNN, [2/16/09](#)]

Zuckerberg Claimed Facebook “Almost Didn’t Happen,” And He Was “Just About To Can It And Go On To The Next Thing I Was About To Do.” “When he buried himself in his room to work on thefacebook.com late last January, his roommates almost forgot he was there. But all the work was nearly for naught. ‘If I hadn’t launched it that day, I was about to just can it and go on to the next thing I was about to do,’ he says. Such was the uncertain nature of the facebook’s birth. Zuckerberg admits that the site ‘almost didn’t happen.’ But to trace back to its beginnings, one has to look to an earlier, quickly aborted Zuckerberg undertaking: Facemash.” [Harvard Crimson, [6/10/04](#)]

Initially, Facebook Users – Then Only College Students – Could Just Send Messages To And Search For Peers At Their Respective Universities. “The total number of members to the Web site is around 19,600,’ Hughes said, with Penn students accounting for approximately 520 members. However, members can only send messages to and search for peers at their respective universities. ‘We’re trying to keep it to a realistic size so it’s not completely disconnected from the everyday lives of people that are using it,’ Hughes said. The Web site boasts all the amenities of a high-tech facebook -- including the ability to post your picture, find people in your classes and perhaps even score a date for the weekend.” [Daily Pennsylvanian, [3/18/04](#)]

IN 2004, ZUCKERBERG HAD NO GRAND VISION FOR FACEBOOK – SAYING IT WOULD BE “COOL” TO BE WILDLY SUCCESSFUL, BUT IT WASN’T “THE GOAL”

In 2005, The New York Times Wrote That Facebook Was “A Company Built On Substance Rather Than High Expectations.” “It is a business that has seen tremendous underlying, organic growth and the team itself is intellectually honest and breathtakingly brilliant in terms of understanding the college student experience,’ Mr. Breyer said. Five years after the Internet bubble burst, a new generation of Web start-ups is quietly attracting investment capital. Thefacebook.com typifies the breed: a company that is built on substance rather than high expectations. While \$13 million might seem paltry next to the free-flowing sums of the late 1990’s, Mr. Breyer said it was a “significant investment” from Accel’s new \$400 million fund.” [NY Times, [05/26/05](#)]

Zuckerberg Said Having Facebook “Be Wildly Successful Is Cool, I Guess, But I Mean, I Dunno, That’s Not The Goal.” “Coming from anyone else, the words may come across as arrogant. With Zuckerberg, they’re only a part of the demeanor he maintains when discussing what in today’s internet-saturated world qualifies as a phenomenal success. He’s full of ideas: “Half the things I do I don’t release,” he explains. “I spent five hours programming last night, and came up with something that was kind of cool, showed it to a bunch of my friends, and the rest of campus will never know about it.” He’s not in it for the cash: “I just like making it and knowing that it works and having it be wildly successful is cool, I guess, but I mean, I dunno, that’s not the goal.” And, finally, he doesn’t know what’s next: “People a lot of times are like, ‘What is the next big thing that’s coming out?’” he says, a bit sheepishly. The answer? Even after the success of thefacebook.com, he’s still not sure.” [Harvard Crimson, [6/10/04](#)]

In 2004, After Thefacebook.com’s Early Success, Zuckerberg Said He Didn’t “Really Know What The Next Best Thing [Was]” Because He Didn’t Spend His Time “Making Big Things.” “The answer? Even after the success of thefacebook.com, he’s still not sure. ‘I don’t really know what the next big thing is because I don’t spend my time making big things,’ he says. ‘I spend time making small things and then when the time comes I put them together.’ INTERESTS:

CODING When Zuckerberg starts a programming project, all else takes a backseat. He doesn't eat, doesn't sleep, doesn't talk to friends. When he buried himself in his room to work on thefacebook.com late last January, his roommates almost forgot he was there. But all the work was nearly for naught." [Harvard Crimson, [6/10/04](#)]

- **Zuckerberg: "I Spend Time Making Small Things And Then When The Time Comes I Put Them Together."** "The answer? Even after the success of thefacebook.com, he's still not sure. 'I don't really know what the next big thing is because I don't spend my time making big things,' he says. 'I spend time making small things and then when the time comes I put them together.' INTERESTS: CODING When Zuckerberg starts a programming project, all else takes a backseat. He doesn't eat, doesn't sleep, doesn't talk to friends. When he buried himself in his room to work on thefacebook.com late last January, his roommates almost forgot he was there. But all the work was nearly for naught." [Harvard Crimson, [6/10/04](#)]

In 2004, Zuckerberg Explained His Reasons Behind Building Facebook: "I'm Just Like A Little Kid. I Get Bored Easily And Computers Excite Me. Those Are The Two Driving Factors Here." "But nearly a semester after creating thefacebook.com, a social networking website launched on Feb. 4, Mark E. Zuckerberg '06 doesn't seem to have let things go to his head. Wearing a yellow t-shirt, blue jeans, and open-toe Adidas sandals, Zuckerberg sits on a ragged couch in the middle of a messy Kirkland House common room, surrounded by strewn clothes and half-closed boxes. Amidst this squalor, he smiles. 'I'm just like a little kid. I get bored easily and computers excite me. Those are the two driving factors here.' Thefacebook.com allows university students to create personal profiles listing their interests, contact info, relationship status, classes and more. It started locally at Harvard. It now has almost 160,000 members from across the country." [Harvard Crimson, [6/10/04](#)]

NY Times: "By All Accounts, Mr. Zuckerberg Is Motivated By His Passion For His Invention." "Mark is the kind of guy you worry needs to get other things in his life,' said David Sze, a partner with Greylock Partners, one of Facebook's venture capital investors. By all accounts, Mr. Zuckerberg is motivated by his passion for his invention, which he created less than three years ago as a Harvard undergraduate. The site quickly became an electronic bumblebee, pollinating many American colleges with gossip, flirtation and news of the next fraternity party. Editors' Picks Clown Cardio Doesn't Take Exercise Seriously Was This Man's Weakness Related to Recent Oral Surgery? N.F.L. Awards Voters Hit the Tape (or YouTube Highlights) He said the minimalist design sensibility of Google, and also Apple, influenced how Facebook should look." [NY Times, [9/22/06](#)]

FACEBOOK WAS INITIALLY A SMALL PROJECT CREATED WITH CLOSE FRIENDS

Zuckerberg's Harvard Roommate, Dustin Moskovitz, Helped Write The Bulk Of The Programming Needed To Add New Schools To The Platform. "Zuckerberg continues to improve the site with help from his roommate Dustin A. Moskovitz '06, who is writing the bulk of the programming needed to add the new schools. '[Expansion] seemed like the natural thing to do,' said Zuckerberg. In order to expand, Moskovitz and Zuckerberg had to write computer programs that would 'parse the course catalogs and student newspapers' of the additional schools. Following Columbia, Stanford and Yale, which Zuckerberg said took about three hours each to set up, he hopes to open the site up to Boston-area schools like Boston University and MIT." [Harvard Crimson, [3/1/04](#)]

In 2005, Zuckerberg Said Facebook Was Just As Much The Project Of His Roommate Moskovitz As It Was His. "The three friends stumbled into a glamorous life, but it wasn't all caviar and champagne. Tensions ran high this summer when Zuckerberg decided to reapportion ownership of the company, increasing Moskovitz's share to match the work he put in. The rest of the team was shocked, but Zuckerberg says it was only fair: he says TheFacebook is just as much the overlooked Moskovitz's project as it is his own. Conflict comes with the territory of mixing friends and business, especially when creative visions clash. Zuckerberg says they work it out as friends would—by talking it out—but according to a summer intern, Zuckerberg always has the last word." [Harvard Crimson, [2/24/05](#)]

Chris Hughes, One Of The Original Facebook Co-Founders, Was Mark Zuckerberg's Roommate. "By sophomore year, Hughes and Zuckerberg were roommates. Their dorm room makes a cameo in the "The Social Network," the 2010 movie about Facebook's early days, where Hughes is played by actor Patrick Mapel. Hughes said the film embellished some details. "Our dorm room did not in fact look like a luxury condo and (to my knowledge!) there was no sex in the bathroom.'" [Business Insider, [5/9/19](#)]

According To Zuckerberg, During Facebook's Early Days, Quarrels Over Money Rarely Came Up Because Money Wasn't Their Priority. "Everyone else was like, 'What the fuck are you doing?'" Zuckerberg says. "And I was like, what do you mean? This is the right thing to be doing. He clearly does a lot of work." In the end, Zuckerberg says, quarrels over money rarely come up because money is not their priority. "We're in a really interesting place because if you look at the assets we have, we're fucking rich," Zuckerberg adds. "But if you look at like the cash and the amount of money we have

to live with, we're dirt poor. All the stuff we own is tied up in random assets" like servers and the company itself." [Harvard Crimson, [2/24/05](#)]

During The Summer Of 2004, Zuckerberg And Moskovitz Moved To Silicon Valley. "When 19-year-olds Mark Zuckerberg and Dustin Moskovitz, along with 24-year-old Sean Parker, were kicked out of their first Silicon Valley rental in the summer of 2004, they urgently needed to find a new home — and a new home base for their burgeoning company. The Facebook co-founders were forced to move out of their previous Palo Alto spot following an incident involving a zip-line tied around a chimney, leading down to the pool — probably awesome; probably not authorized in their lease agreement." [NY Post, [4/21/19](#)]

- **Zuckerberg & Co Were Kicked Out Of Their First Silicon Valley Rental Following An Incident Involving A Zip-Line Tied Around A Chimney, Leading Down To The Pool.** "When 19-year-olds Mark Zuckerberg and Dustin Moskovitz, along with 24-year-old Sean Parker, were kicked out of their first Silicon Valley rental in the summer of 2004, they urgently needed to find a new home — and a new home base for their burgeoning company. The Facebook co-founders were forced to move out of their previous Palo Alto spot following an incident involving a zip-line tied around a chimney, leading down to the pool — probably awesome; probably not authorized in their lease agreement." [NY Post, [4/21/19](#)]

When Facebook Was First Being Developed, Zuckerberg And His Friends Called The Summer Home In Los Altos CA, "Casa Facebook." "Today Zuckerberg is loafing around in pajamas and a T-shirt, his typical work garb, and the same outfit he will wear when pitching his latest project, Wirehog, to Sequoia Capital, a world-famous investment firm, in late January. Located in Los Altos, California, the house Zuckerberg and his team have named "Casa Facebook" looks like an oversized extension of a Kirkland dorm room—the place where it all began." [Harvard Crimson, [2/24/05](#)]

ZUCKERBERG WASN'T DEVELOPING FACEBOOK FOR THE CASH, BUT RATHER BECAUSE IT WAS A FUN PROJECT THAT EXCITED HIM

In 2004, Zuckerberg Said He Did Not Create Facebook With The Intention Of Generating Revenue. "Zuckerberg said thefacebook.com has no such capabilities and does not violate University rules. While Zuckerberg promised that thefacebook.com would boast new features by the end of the week, he said that he did not create the website with the intention of generating revenue. 'I'm not going to sell anybody's e-mail address,' he said. 'At one point I thought about making the website so that you could upload a resume too, and for a fee companies could search for Harvard job applicants. But I don't want to touch that. It would make everything more serious and less fun.'" [Harvard Crimson, [2/9/04](#)]

In 2004, Zuckerberg Said He Wasn't Interested In Facebook Because Of The Cash, But Rather He Just Liked "Making It And Knowing That It Works." "And, finally, he doesn't know what's next: "People a lot of times are like, 'What is the next big thing that's coming out?'" he says, a bit sheepishly. The answer? Even after the success of thefacebook.com, he's still not sure. "I don't really know what the next big thing is because I don't spend my time making big things," he says. "I spend time making small things and then when the time comes I put them together." **INTERESTS: CODING** When Zuckerberg starts a programming project, all else takes a backseat. He doesn't eat, doesn't sleep, doesn't talk to friends. When he buried himself in his room to work on thefacebook.com late last January, his roommates almost forgot he was there." [Harvard Crimson, [6/10/04](#)]

In 2005, Zuckerberg Said They Were Not Focused On "Building Something And How To Make Money Out Of It," But Rather "Always Looking To Maximize The Long-Term Value." "Despite the success of facebook.com, which the founder said receives millions more daily page views than Google, Zuckerberg said he is not prepared to shift his focus from growing the site's infrastructure to maximizing profit. "We're focusing not on building something and how to make money out of it but, instead, always looking to maximize the long-term value," Zuckerberg said about his company, which he said prefers hiring tech experts to purely business-savvy applicants." [Harvard Crimson, [12/8/05](#)]

2007: Zuckerberg Claimed They Had "Constrained Growth" At First, But Had "Been Growing And Doubling About Once Every Six Months For Quite A While." "TIME: Facebook is undergoing a huge period of growth. With more than 150,000 new users signing up daily, it is growing three times as fast as rival MySpace. What do you attribute that spike to? Zuckerberg: For a while we actually constrained our growth. We made it so that only people in college could sign up. Initially it was only available to people at Harvard, where I was at college. We rolled it out to all the colleges, all the high schools, then a bunch of companies could sign up, and now everyone can sign up. It may seem like the growth is really accelerating at a crazy rate, but it's actually been growing and doubling about once every six months for quite a while." [TIME, [7/17/07](#)]

Harvard Crimson, 2005: Zuckerberg And The Friends Helping Him “Did Not Guess” That In A Little Over A Year, The Company Would Serve 1.5 Million Users Across The Country. “It was a decent enough idea, he figured, so he shared it with Eduardo L. Saverin '05. Saverin, a former president of the Harvard Investment Association, agreed to throw in \$1,000 in startup money. This capital, he and Zuckerberg reasoned, would keep the site live for at least two months [...]. They did not anticipate a personal meeting with the CEOs of Friendster and Google—or that they would soon take time off Harvard to share a house in California with the co-founder of Napster. And they certainly did not guess that today, only a little over a year after they first launched the site, TheFacebook.com would serve 1.5 million users from across the country, nearly all of whom visit the site at least once a week.” [Harvard Crimson, [2/24/05](#)]

WHEN FACEBOOK FIRST STARTED, ZUCKERBERG PAID HIMSELF A PALTRY \$65,000 AND PAID FOR THE \$85 A MONTH SERVERS OUT OF HIS OWN POCKET

In 2005, Zuckerberg’s Salary From Facebook Was Just \$65,000 A Year. “He said working for a startup company like facebook.com should be considered a viable alternative to consulting or investment banking, two of the most popular career paths for Harvard grads. “A lot of people know facebook as a site, but not many think of it as a cool company to work for,” he said. But students expecting a non-stop party in lieu of hard work may be disappointed. Zuckerberg characterized his company as “humble,” and added that his salary is just \$65,000 per year. Employees will also receive facebook.com stock.” [Harvard Crimson, [11/1/05](#)]

Zuckerberg Initially Paid For Facebook’s Server Space For \$85 Per Month Out Of His Own Pocket. “Following Columbia, Stanford and Yale, which Zuckerberg said took about three hours each to set up, he hopes to open the site up to Boston-area schools like Boston University and MIT. Zuckerberg currently pays for the server space—which he said costs about \$85 per month—out of pocket, but even that may change as thefacebook.com evolves. ‘It might be nice in the future to get some ads going to offset the cost of the servers,’ he said.” [Harvard Crimson, [3/1/04](#)]

- **Zuckerberg, 2004: “It Might Be Nice In The Future To Get Some Ads Going To Offset The Cost Of The Servers.”** “Following Columbia, Stanford and Yale, which Zuckerberg said took about three hours each to set up, he hopes to open the site up to Boston-area schools like Boston University and MIT. Zuckerberg currently pays for the server space—which he said costs about \$85 per month—out of pocket, but even that may change as thefacebook.com evolves. ‘It might be nice in the future to get some ads going to offset the cost of the servers,’ he said.” [Harvard Crimson, [3/1/04](#)]

When Zuckerberg Needed To Buy A Suit To Attend The Grammys, His Checking Account And Credit Cards Were Still Linked To His Parents, With His Dad Recounting That Mark Called And Said “Don’t Be Alarmed When You See The Bills.” “But sometimes a 21-year-old whiz kid is still a kid. In the whirlwind of expanding the company, attention to personal finances has not been a high priority. His cellphone, checking accounts and credit cards had until recently remained tied to his parents’, from his days as a college student. One consequence of this, Dr. Zuckerberg, said, was that when his son was invited to go the Grammy Awards and needed a new suit, ‘I got a phone call from him and he said, ‘Don’t be alarmed when you see the bills.’” [NY Times, [10/16/05](#)]

THEN – A PLACE FOR AUTHENTIC USERS TO CONNECT WITH REAL FRIENDS

WHEN FACEBOOK FIRST STARTED, ONLY COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH A SCHOOL EMAIL COULD SIGN UP

In March 2004, Facebook Expanded Beyond Harvard, Adding Schools Like Columbia University, Yale And Stanford University. “Harvard students are no longer the only ones cyber-stalking their classmates and professors on thefacebook.com. With the click of a keyboard and squeak of a mouse, students at Columbia University and Stanford University can now track down that hottie in section or get help with problem sets. Mark E. Zuckerberg '06, the website’s creator, opened his online networking service to Columbia last Wednesday and to Stanford the day after.” [Harvard Crimson, [3/1/04](#)]

Facebook Was Rolled Out To New Schools Slowly To Ensure It Could Handle The Increased Use. “The two intend to return to Harvard in the fall and nurture their company slowly, Mr. Zuckerberg said, adding schools to their roster slowly ‘because we wanted to create safe communities’ and make sure the system could handle the increased use. But events overtook them. Before heading west, Mr. Zuckerberg arranged a dinner with Sean Parker, the founder of Napster, to talk about his Web site, which had swept through Stanford University in a number of weeks.” [NY Times, [05/26/05](#)]

In September 2005, Facebook Opened Up To High School Students. “As if they needed one, local high school students now have another reason to go online. Facebook.com, a social networking site for college students begun last year by a Dobbs Ferry native, has started a site geared toward secondary-school students. It has been out there only a month, but Westchester youths, like their counterparts across the country, are succumbing to the site's practicality and versatility.” [NY Times, [10/16/05](#)]

In April 2006, Facebook Allowed Employees From Companies Sign Up For Accounts, Moving Beyond Students. “From the well-sourced rumor file: Facebook, which began allowing employees from a handful of companies to become members last week, may be adding another 1,000 companies on Tuesday. Facebook determines if a person is a member of a college, high school or corporate network based on their email address. As they add companies, anyone with an email address from that company can become a member of that company's network on Facebook.” [Tech Crunch, [4/30/06](#)]

FACEBOOK WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE MADE NEW FRIENDS, RATHER WAS INTENDED TO ACT AS A “SOCIAL UTILITY” FOR EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

In 2007, Zuckerberg Told WIRED He Didn't Care About Using The Internet To Make New Friends. “Zuckerberg designed Facebook to re-create online what he calls the "social graph" — the web of people's real-world relationships. That was different than most social networks. Sites like MySpace practically encouraged users to create new identities and meet and link to people they barely knew. Zuckerberg didn't care about using the Internet to make new friends. "People already have their friends, acquaintances, and business connections," he explains. "So rather than building new connections, what we are doing is just mapping them out." To that end, Facebook has always emphasized two qualities that tend to be undervalued online: authenticity and identity.” [WIRED, [9/6/07](#)]

- **Zuckerberg Said “People Already Have Their Friends, Acquaintances, And Business Connections, Explaining That Facebook Was “Just Mapping” People’s Connections “Rather Than Building New Connections.”** “Zuckerberg designed Facebook to re-create online what he calls the "social graph" — the web of people's real-world relationships. That was different than most social networks. Sites like MySpace practically encouraged users to create new identities and meet and link to people they barely knew. Zuckerberg didn't care about using the Internet to make new friends. "People already have their friends, acquaintances, and business connections," he explains. "So rather than building new connections, what we are doing is just mapping them out." To that end, Facebook has always emphasized two qualities that tend to be undervalued online: authenticity and identity.” [WIRED, [9/6/07](#)]

In 2007, Zuckerberg Was Quoted Calling Facebook A “Social Utility” Rather Than A “Social Network.” “TIME: Why do you describe Facebook as a "social utility" rather than a "social network?" Zuckerberg: I think there's confusion around what the point of social networks is. A lot of different companies characterized as social networks have different goals — some serve the function of business networking, some are media portals. What we're trying to do is just make it really efficient for people to communicate, get information and share information. We always try to emphasize the utility component.” [TIME, [7/17/07](#)]

- **In 2007, Zuckerberg Said The Goal Of Facebook Was “Just To Make It Really Efficient For People To Communicate, Get Information And Share Information.”** “TIME: Why do you describe Facebook as a "social utility" rather than a "social network?" Zuckerberg: I think there's confusion around what the point of social networks is. A lot of different companies characterized as social networks have different goals — some serve the function of business networking, some are media portals. What we're trying to do is just make it really efficient for people to communicate, get information and share information. We always try to emphasize the utility component.” [TIME, [7/17/07](#)]
- **Zuckerberg Said Facebook “Always [Tried] To Emphasize The Utility Component” Of Facebook.** “TIME: Why do you describe Facebook as a "social utility" rather than a "social network?" Zuckerberg: I think there's confusion around what the point of social networks is. A lot of different companies characterized as social networks have different goals — some serve the function of business networking, some are media portals. What we're trying to do is just make it really efficient for people to communicate, get information and share information. We always try to emphasize the utility component.” [TIME, [7/17/07](#)]

Zuckerberg Chose Not To Cover Every Facebook Page With Ads, Rather Charging Student Groups \$15 A Day To Make An Announcement At Their School, Because It Established A Trusting Relationship Between Facebook And Users. “Zuckerberg says the Facebook could cover every page of the website in advertisements, and make a ton of money doing it. But they don't. Instead, this fall they rolled out a local ad system, where student groups pay approximately

\$15 a day to make an announcement to their school. Local announcements, of course, do not raise as much as national banner advertising. They do, however, establish a trusting relationship between TheFacebook and its users. Saverin was at first wary of the profitability of local advertising, but he says he has come to appreciate the greater populist philosophy behind it.” [Harvard Crimson, [2/24/05](#)]

...WHICH WAS A DRIVING FORCE OF FACEBOOK’S EARLY SUCCESS

The Guardian: Facebook Took Off “In Part Because It Allowed People To Communicate Privately – Or At Least Among Small Groups Of Friends.” “Launched in 2004 as an exclusive network for Ivy League students, the site grew in part because allowed people to communicate privately – or at least among small groups of friends. The constant tug of war between public and private information that ensued led to a series of embarrassing incidents where individuals published information online thinking it was private, only to have it reach the public. These episodes are partly the result of the way people use Facebook, which has changed its service on several occasions in recent years. Each time the site brings more information into the public domain – and at each point it faces a series of protests and adverse reactions from users.” [The Guardian, [1/10/10](#)]

In 2010, Sheryl Sandberg Said What Most Drove The Effectiveness Of Social Networks Was Its Authenticity. “Indeed, with Facebook’s 400 million members and 100 million daily mobile users, the network enables brands to connect with more customers than ever before—or, as Sandberg explains, “On any given day, you can reach twice as many people in the U.S. as watch American Idol—and that only makes up 30% of our global audience.” What most drives the effectiveness of social networks is its authenticity, said Sandberg, echoing a claim recently made by Martha Stewart. The COO contended that many join Facebook’s social network because people use their real identities—she also claimed that users join because they entrust the network with personal information (although that may be changing given the company’s many problems around privacy controls of late).” [Fast Company, [6/16/10](#)]

- **Sandberg Contended That Many People Joined Facebook Because People Used Their Real Identities.** “What most drives the effectiveness of social networks is its authenticity, said Sandberg, echoing a claim recently made by Martha Stewart. The COO contended that many join Facebook’s social network because people use their real identities—she also claimed that users join because they entrust the network with personal information (although that may be changing given the company’s many problems around privacy controls of late).” [Fast Company, [6/16/10](#)]
- **Sandberg Said Users Joined Facebook Because They Entrusted The Platform With Personal Information.** “What most drives the effectiveness of social networks is its authenticity, said Sandberg, echoing a claim recently made by Martha Stewart. The COO contended that many join Facebook’s social network because people use their real identities—she also claimed that users join because they entrust the network with personal information (although that may be changing given the company’s many problems around privacy controls of late).” [Fast Company, [6/16/10](#)]

IN 2007, ZUCKERBERG STRESSED THAT THE “CRITICAL PART” OF FACEBOOK WAS THAT IT ONLY HAD REAL PEOPLE USING IT

Zuckerberg Said A “Critical Part” Of Facebook Was Its Focus On Authenticity Of Users. “TIME: Is Facebook’s popularity connected to its focus on authenticity? On your site, misrepresentation of your real self is a violation of company policy. Zuckerberg: That’s the critical part of it. Our whole theory is that people have real connections in the world. People communicate most naturally and effectively with their friends and the people around them. What we figured is that if we could model what those connections were, [we could] provide that information to a set of applications through which people want to share information, photos or videos or events. But that only works if those relationships are real.” [TIME, [7/17/07](#)]

FACEBOOK WAS SUPPOSED TO HELP PEOPLE “SHARE MORE EFFICIENTLY” WITH CLOSE FRIENDS AND FAMILY

ZUCKERBERG ORIGINALLY SAW FACEBOOK’S VALUE AS BEING A WAY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WITH THEIR CLOSE FRIENDS

Zuckerberg Said “Sharing” Was The Only Word On His Mind When He Dreamt Up Facebook At Harvard.

“Facebook is based on the idea of sharing. Not long after he walks into the room (an almost empty conference room apart from a table with tea and biscuits and a photographer readying his gear), Zuckerberg tells me ‘sharing’ was the only word

on his mind when he dreamt up Facebook in his college dormitory at Harvard in 2004. He was not thinking about money, nor personal aggrandizement; he just wanted to know more about the other students in his year. Harvard produced the traditional yearbook with grinning pictures and brief biographical sketches, but it would take a long time to appear each year and would be impossible to update until a year later.” [The Guardian, [11/16/08](#)]

2007: Zuckerberg Said Facebook Users Saw The Platform As “A More Efficient Way For Them To Communicate With Their Friends And Get Information About The People Around Them.” “TIME: In September you rebuffed Yahoo's offer to buy Facebook for nearly \$1 billion. Before that, Viacom put up a \$750 million bid. And about two months ago you clearly said Facebook would stay independent. Is that still the plan? Zuckerberg: That has always been the plan. As a company we're very focused on what we're building and not as focused on the exit. We just believe that we're adding a certain amount of value to people's lives if we build a very good product. That's the reason why more than half of our users use the product every day — it's a more efficient way for them to communicate with their friends and get information about the people around them than anything else they can do. We're not really looking to sell the company. We're not looking to IPO anytime soon. It's just not the core focus of the company.” [TIME, [7/17/07](#)]

Zuckerberg Said Facebook Helped People “Share More Efficiently” With The People They Talked To “All The Time,” Like People’s “Close Friends And Family.” “People have always spent a lot of time communicating, connecting, sharing with the people who are around them and are important to them,' Zuckerberg continues. 'It's a very human thing. Facebook helps you share more efficiently with the people you talk to all the time, your family and close friends, but I think where it really excels is helping you stay connected with the people you know but don't get to talk to that much.” [The Guardian, [11/16/08](#)]

Zuckerberg Said He And The Facebook Founders Believed “People Being Able To Share the Information They Wanted And Having Access To The Information They Wanted [Was] Just A Better World.” “Wired.com: What is your vision for Facebook? Mark Zuckerberg: When I started Facebook from my dorm room in 2004, the idea that my roommates and I talked about all the time was a world that was more open. We believed that people being able to share the information they wanted and having access to the information they wanted is just a better world: People can connect better with the people around them, understand more of what's going on with the people around them, and understand more in general.” [WIRED, Zuckerberg Interview, [6/30/09](#)]

Zuckerberg Said Facebook Was Trying To Position Itself As A “Social Operating System” For The Internet. “Now Facebook, based in Palo Alto, Calif., is inviting thousands of technology companies and programmers to contribute features to its service. They can even make money from the site's users by doing so, and, at least for now, Facebook will not take a cut [...] The move could foster some of the chaotic creativity that is more closely associated with MySpace, its larger competitor. It could also open the door to hazards like spam, and make Facebook's identity less clear. But Facebook is thinking big. In the parlance of its 23-year-old chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, the company is positioning itself as a “social operating system” for the Internet. It wants to sit at the center of its users' online lives in the same way that Windows dominates their experience on a PC — while improving its own prospects for a lucrative acquisition or an eventual public offering.” [NY Times, [5/25/07](#)]

CNN, 2009: Zuckerberg Hoped To Turn Facebook Into “The Planet’s Standardized Communication (And Marketing) Platform, As Ubiquitous And Intuitive As The Telephone.” “His ultimate goal is less poetic - and perhaps more ambitious: to turn Facebook into the planet's standardized communication (and marketing) platform, as ubiquitous and intuitive as the telephone but far more interactive, multidimensional - and indispensable. Your Facebook ID quite simply will be your gateway to the digital world, Zuckerberg predicts. 'We think that if you can build one worldwide platform where you can just type in anyone's name, find the person you're looking for, and communicate with them,' he told a German audience in January, 'that's a really valuable system to be building.’” [CNN, [2/16/09](#)]

Zuckerberg Said At Facebook, They Believed “We’re Adding A Certain Amount Of Value To People’s Lives If We Build A Very Good Product.” “TIME: In September you rebuffed Yahoo's offer to buy Facebook for nearly \$1 billion. Before that, Viacom put up a \$750 million bid. And about two months ago you clearly said Facebook would stay independent. Is that still the plan? Zuckerberg: That has always been the plan. As a company we're very focused on what we're building and not as focused on the exit. We just believe that we're adding a certain amount of value to people's lives if we build a very good product. That's the reason why more than half of our users use the product every day — it's a more efficient way for them to communicate with their friends and get information about the people around them than anything else they can do. We're not really looking to sell the company. We're not looking to IPO anytime soon. It's just not the core focus of the company.” [TIME, [7/17/07](#)]

THEN – A BASIC WEBSITE VOID OF ADS, DISTRACTIONS AND STRONG PRIVACY PROTECTIONS

FACEBOOK WAS BLUE BECAUSE ZUCKERBERG WAS RED-GREEN COLORBLIND

Facebook Was Blue Because Zuckerberg Was Red-Green Color-Blind, And Blue Was “The Richest Color” For Him, With Zuckerberg noting, “I Can See All Of Blue.” “He walked into the house, which is painted in various shades of blue and beige, except for the kitchen, which is a vibrant yellow. Colors don’t matter much to Zuckerberg; a few years ago, he took an online test and realized that he was red-green color-blind. Blue is Facebook’s dominant color, because, as he said, ‘blue is the richest color for me—I can see all of blue. Standing in his kitchen, leaning over the sink, he offered me a glass of water.’ [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

- **Zuckerberg: “Blue Is The Richest Color For Me—I Can See All Of Blue.”** “He walked into the house, which is painted in various shades of blue and beige, except for the kitchen, which is a vibrant yellow. Colors don’t matter much to Zuckerberg; a few years ago, he took an online test and realized that he was red-green color-blind. Blue is Facebook’s dominant color, because, as he said, ‘blue is the richest color for me—I can see all of blue. Standing in his kitchen, leaning over the sink, he offered me a glass of water.’ [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

ZUCKERBERG WANTED FACEBOOK TO BE CLEAN AND EASY TO NAVIGATE

Fortune, 2007: Facebook Had A “Strong History” Of “Retaining An Uncluttered, Highly Structured Look And Feel.” “Advertisers can create free Facebook pages for their products and services, build SocialAds that pair display and text advertising with personal recommendations, and access data about how Facebook members use their products. Building on its strong history of giving Facebook members control over their online profiles and retaining an uncluttered, highly structured look and feel, the company will let users select the advertising that will be displayed on their social networks, creating advertising inventory only in the network of fans that a brand builds virally online. No fans, no ads.” [Fortune, [11/6/07](#)]

Zuckerberg Said When It Came To Ads On Facebook, He Didn’t “Want Anything Flashing Or Colorful That Disrupt[ed] The Flow” Of Facebook. “Founder and CEO of thefacebook.com Mark E. Zuckerberg ’06-’07 said that the primary reason behind securing the capital was to gain greater flexibility in how the site displays advertisements, which will help him and his employees to expand features on the site. ‘The point of this whole investment is that we are going to try and move away from the current way we do advertising,’ he said. ‘I don’t want anything flashing or colorful that disrupts the flow of the site. If people want to see information about different products or events, that should be their prerogative.’ Currently thefacebook.com generates all of its revenue from advertising, and according to Zuckerberg it has been profitable since it was founded.” [Harvard Crimson, [5/27/05](#)]

- **Zuckerberg: “If People Want To See Information About Different Products Or Events, That Should Be Their Prerogative.”** “Founder and CEO of thefacebook.com Mark E. Zuckerberg ’06-’07 said that the primary reason behind securing the capital was to gain greater flexibility in how the site displays advertisements, which will help him and his employees to expand features on the site. ‘The point of this whole investment is that we are going to try and move away from the current way we do advertising,’ he said. ‘I don’t want anything flashing or colorful that disrupts the flow of the site. If people want to see information about different products or events, that should be their prerogative.’ Currently thefacebook.com generates all of its revenue from advertising, and according to Zuckerberg it has been profitable since it was founded.” [Harvard Crimson, [5/27/05](#)]

DURING FACEBOOK’S EARLY DAYS, ZUCKERBERG ASSURED USERS THAT HE WOULDN’T SELL THEIR INFORMATION

In 2010, Zuckerberg Promised Facebook “Never [Sold] Your Information,” Asserting “Advertisers Who [Were] Using The Site Never Get Access To Your Information.” “On selling your information “We never sell your information. Advertisers who are using the site never get access to your information.’ On mistakes (like the fact that some Facebook apps have, in fact, sold user information to advertisers) ‘Now, do we get it right all the time? No! But it’s something that we take really seriously, and every day we come to work and just try to do a good job on this.’” [CNN, [12/6/10](#)]

In A 2004 Interview With The Harvard Crimson, Zuckerberg Promised “I’m Not Going To Sell Anybody’s Email Address.” “Zuckerburg said thefacebook.com has no such capabilities and does not violate University rules. While Zuckerberg promised that thefacebook.com would boast new features by the end of the week, he said that he did not create the website with the intention of generating revenue. ‘I’m not going to sell anybody’s e-mail address,’ he said. ‘At

one point I thought about making the website so that you could upload a resume too, and for a fee companies could search for Harvard job applicants. But I don't want to touch that. It would make everything more serious and less fun.” [Harvard Crimson, [2/9/04](#)]

ZUCKERBERG WAS ORIGINALLY PROUD OF THE PRIVACY PROTECTIONS FACEBOOK OFFERED

In 2006, Zuckerberg Said Privacy Was Central To The Site. “To join, one must prove membership in an existing network using an e-mail address from a college, a high school or selected companies and organizations. As a result, Facebook has fewer than 10 million registered users, compared with some 108 million at News Corp.'s MySpace. Facebook's chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, said Thursday that privacy remains central to the site, but he acknowledged the company overstepped and ‘failed to communicate to our users actively what it actually meant for them.’ All of the information presented had been available before, but a person had to visit a friend's profile page and make note of any changes — for example, noticing that the friend now has 103 friends instead of 102, and identifying which one got added.” [CBS News, [9/7/06](#)]

Harvard Crimson, 2004: Zuckerberg Ensured Facebook’s Extensive Search Capabilities Were “Restricted By A Myriad Of Privacy Options For Members” That Didn’t Want “Everyone To Be Able To Look Up Their Information. “Zuckerberg said that the most innovative feature of the site is that people can search for other students in their classes so that they can branch out to form friendships and study groups. “If you’re in a class where you don’t vknow anyone and want to ask somebody for help, this is a way to find out the names of people in that class,” said thefacebook.com user Roberto C. Acosta '05. Zuckerberg said that the extensive search capabilities are restricted by a myriad of privacy options for members who do not want everyone to be able to look up their information. ‘There are pretty intensive privacy options,’ he said. ‘You can limit who can see your information, if you only want current students to see your information, or people in your year, in your house, in your classes. You can limit a search so that only a friend or a friend of a friend can look you up. People have very good control over who can see their information.’” [Harvard Crimson, [2/9/04](#)]

Zuckerberg Noted There Were “Pretty Intensive Privacy Options” That Limited “Who Can See Your Information.” “Zuckerberg said that the most innovative feature of the site is that people can search for other students in their classes so that they can branch out to form friendships and study groups. “If you’re in a class where you don’t vknow anyone and want to ask somebody for help, this is a way to find out the names of people in that class,” said thefacebook.com user Roberto C. Acosta '05. Zuckerberg said that the extensive search capabilities are restricted by a myriad of privacy options for members who do not want everyone to be able to look up their information. ‘There are pretty intensive privacy options,’ he said. ‘You can limit who can see your information, if you only want current students to see your information, or people in your year, in your house, in your classes. You can limit a search so that only a friend or a friend of a friend can look you up. People have very good control over who can see their information.’” [Harvard Crimson, [2/9/04](#)]

- **In 2004, Zuckerberg Assured That People Had “Very Good Control Over Who Can See Their Information.”** “Zuckerberg said that the most innovative feature of the site is that people can search for other students in their classes so that they can branch out to form friendships and study groups. “If you’re in a class where you don’t vknow anyone and want to ask somebody for help, this is a way to find out the names of people in that class,” said thefacebook.com user Roberto C. Acosta '05. Zuckerberg said that the extensive search capabilities are restricted by a myriad of privacy options for members who do not want everyone to be able to look up their information. ‘There are pretty intensive privacy options,’ he said. ‘You can limit who can see your information, if you only want current students to see your information, or people in your year, in your house, in your classes. You can limit a search so that only a friend or a friend of a friend can look you up. People have very good control over who can see their information.’” [Harvard Crimson, [2/9/04](#)]

CBS News, 2006: “Facebook Has Long Prided Itself On Privacy.” “Facebook has long prided itself on privacy. A user's profile details, including contact information, relationship status and hobbies, are generally hidden from others unless they are already part of that user's network of friends or institution, such as a college. In addition, users have the option of hiding specific details from certain users, even ones already designated as friends — choosing, for instance, to show photos to college buddies but not to co-workers.” [CBS News, [9/7/06](#)]

FACEBOOK’S EMPHASIS ON PRIVACY AND ROBUST PRIVACY CONTROLS WAS PART OF WHAT HELPED CATAPULT FACEBOOK

CBS News HEADLINE, 2007: “Facebook Promises More Consumer Privacy.” [CBS News, [11/30/07](#)]

2007: Facebook’s Chief Privacy Officer, Chris Kelly, Said Facebook Had Designed The Site From The Outset To Protect Users’ Privacy And Asserted Facebook Had Developed Additional Technologies To Offer Further

Protections. “MySpace has turned to background verification company Sentinel Tech Holding Corp., which has co-developed the first nationwide database of convicted U.S. sex felons to make it easy to detect offenders online. There were 600,000 registered U.S. sex offenders as of May. “It’s when adults and kids play in the same space that things get sticky and the effectiveness of age verification seems to go out the window,” Sentinel CEO and founder John Cardillo said of the dilemma facing social networks. Kelly said Facebook has designed its site from the outset to protect users’ privacy and has developed additional technologies since then to offer further protections. The company is evaluating technologies from outside vendors to help it increase its surveillance of potential predators.” [Reuters, [8/9/07](#)]

In 2007, Zuckerberg Said Facebook Had Succeeded “In Part Because It [Gave] People Control Over What And How They Share[d] Information.” “Accompanying the article on 02138mag.com were court documents from the ongoing ConnectU v. Facebook trial, including a copy of Zuckerberg’s application to Harvard. When Facebook lobbied to have the documents removed, a judge turned the request down. Zuckerberg has begun picking up the pieces with the changes to Beacon. ‘Facebook has succeeded so far in part because it gives people control over what and how they share information,’ he wrote in the post. ‘This is what makes Facebook a good utility.’” [CNET, [12/5/17](#)]

Zuckerberg Claimed That Something “That Initially Got People Comfortable” With Sharing Was That Facebook “Offer[ed] Extremely Robust Privacy Controls.” “‘If you go back 10 years, a lot of people were afraid of sharing things on the Internet,’ he said. ‘One of the things that initially got people comfortable is that we offer extremely robust privacy controls. A lot of folks now understand they know where their information is going. ... We’re really focused on safety, especially children’s safety ... We really try to build a safe environment.’ Facebook is trying to maintain that sense of privacy by simplifying its privacy controls and continually creating new innovations that protect users’ information, Zuckerberg said. Now, for example, if you log into your account from an unusual place, the site will ask you personal questions or show you pictures of friends that only the real user would recognize.” [Desert News, [3/25/11](#)]

Zuckerberg Acknowledged “No One Wants To Live In A Surveillance Society,” Noting With Facebook “People Choose To Share” The Information. “But we figured that over time that wouldn’t actually be the best approach. We figured it wouldn’t get the most information. It would only get stuff that was publicly available to everyone, and it wouldn’t give people the control that they needed to be really be comfortable. No one wants to live in a surveillance society, which, if you take that to its extreme, could be where that’s going. And there’s (Facebook) -- a kind of a ground-up approach -- where people choose to share all this information themselves. It’s a slower approach, right, because what it means is that people need to move through this process of realizing that sharing information is good, and slowly sharing more and more information over time.” [WIRED, Zuckerberg Interview, [6/30/09](#)]

FACEBOOK CLAIMED TO OFFER PRIVACY CONTROLS THAT REQUIRED USERS’ EXPLICIT PERMISSION TO SHARE THEIR INFORMATION (ALBEIT COMPLICATED ONES)

Facebook Promised Its Users Will Now Have To Give Their Explicit Consent, Or ‘Opt-In,’ Before Any Information Was Passed Along. “Facebook provided two different opportunities to block the details from being shared, but many users said they never saw the ‘opt-out’ notices before they disappeared from the screen. With the reforms, Facebook promised its users will now have to give their explicit consent, or ‘opt-in,’ before any information is passed along. The concessions were made after more than 50,000 Facebook users signed an online petition blasting the system, called ‘Beacon,’ as a galling intrusion that put the Palo Alto-based startup’s pursuit of profit ahead of its members’ privacy interests.” [CBS News, [11/30/07](#)]

Zuckerberg Claimed “One Of The Most Fundamental Things On The Internet” Was “Privacy” And “Making Sure That People Ha[d] Control Over Their Information.” “On mistakes (like the fact that some Facebook apps have, in fact, sold user information to advertisers) ‘Now, do we get it right all the time? No! But it’s something that we take really seriously, and every day we come to work and just try to do a good job on this.’ On internet privacy ‘I mean, privacy and making sure that people have control over their information is, I think, one of the most fundamental things on the internet.’” [CNN, [12/6/10](#)]

- **Zuckerberg: “I Mean, Privacy And Making Sure That People Have Control Over Their Information Is, I Think, One Of The Most Fundamental Things On The Internet.”** “On mistakes (like the fact that some Facebook apps have, in fact, sold user information to advertisers) ‘Now, do we get it right all the time? No! But it’s something that we take really seriously, and every day we come to work and just try to do a good job on this.’ On internet privacy ‘I mean, privacy and making sure that people have control over their information is, I think, one of the most fundamental things on the internet.’” [CNN, [12/6/10](#)]

ZUCKERBERG WANTED TO CREATE “SAFE COMMUNITIES” FREE OF HATE SPEECH

Zuckerberg Said Facebook Was Being Rolled Out To New Schools Slowly “Because We Wanted To Create Safe Communities,” And To Ensure It Could Handle The Increased Use. “The two intend to return to Harvard in the fall and nurture their company slowly, Mr. Zuckerberg said, adding schools to their roster slowly ‘because we wanted to create safe communities’ and make sure the system could handle the increased use. But events overtook them. Before heading west, Mr. Zuckerberg arranged a dinner with Sean Parker, the founder of Napster, to talk about his Web site, which had swept through Stanford University in a number of weeks.” [NY Times, [05/26/05](#)]

Facebook Said It Was Able To “Handle Abuses With The Accountability Of Having A Real-Name Culture Versus A ‘Screen-Name’ Culture. “Kelly acknowledged Facebook has detected sexual predators and other abusive practices on the site but said the numbers were small. “There is a non-zero number. We have been able to handle abuses with the accountability of having a real-name culture versus a ‘screen-name’ culture,” he said. Kelly said Facebook had been notified Monday afternoon by the Connecticut attorney general’s office of three specific profiles set up by known sex offenders and that the Palo Alto, California-based company had quickly removed these Web pages.” [Reuters, [8/9/07](#)]

In 2008, Zuckerberg Said Facebook Wanted “To Be Very Neutral” On What Speech Was Allowed On The Platform, But At The Same Time “Really Careful In Not Allowing Hate Speech. “But what about Facebook for bad, those looking to increase support for terrorism or race-hate groups? ‘The way it works is that if anyone on the site finds something like that and they want to tell us about it, then they can write in. There is a balance there. On the one hand we want to be very neutral, but at the same time we are really careful in not allowing hate speech.’ So the community regulates itself?” [The Guardian, [11/16/08](#)]

THEN – A SINGLE LAWSUIT FROM FELLOW HARVARD STUDENTS

IN 2004, ZUCKERBERG AND FACEBOOK WAS SUED FOR STEALING THE IDEA FROM TYLER AND CAMERON WINKLEVOSS

In 2004, Tyler And Cameron Winklevoss Sued Facebook And Zuckerberg Saying Zuckerberg Stole The Original Idea For Facebook From Them. “Some people go to court hoping to win millions of dollars. Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss have already won tens of millions. But six years into a legal feud with Facebook, they want to give it back for a chance to get more. The Winklevosses identical twins and Harvard graduates say that they, along with another Harvard student, Divya Narendra, had the original idea for Facebook, and that Mark Zuckerberg stole it. They sued Facebook and Mr. Zuckerberg in 2004, and settled four years later for \$20 million in cash and \$45 million in Facebook shares. They have been trying to undo that settlement since, saying they were misled on the value of the deal. But it has not been an easy decision.” [Ny Times, [12/31/10](#)]

- **The Winklevoss Twins Had Asked Zuckerberg To Help Them Write The Coding For A Social Network They Were Developing For Harvard And Other Campuses.** “In late 2003, the Winklevosses and Narendra asked Zuckerberg to help them write the coding for a social networking site they were developing for Harvard and other campuses. Zuckerberg entered into an oral agreement and was made a partner. In February 2004, however, Zuckerberg launched thefacebook.com, which he later renamed Facebook. The Winklevosses and Narendra filed suit later that year against Facebook and Zuckerberg. The trio alleged that Zuckerberg had stolen the idea for Facebook from them.” [CNN, [6/23/11](#)]

Zuckerberg Entered Into An Oral Agreement With The Winklevoss Twins And Was Made A Partner. “In late 2003, the Winklevosses and Narendra asked Zuckerberg to help them write the coding for a social networking site they were developing for Harvard and other campuses. Zuckerberg entered into an oral agreement and was made a partner. In February 2004, however, Zuckerberg launched thefacebook.com, which he later renamed Facebook. The Winklevosses and Narendra filed suit later that year against Facebook and Zuckerberg. The trio alleged that Zuckerberg had stolen the idea for Facebook from them.” [CNN, [6/23/11](#)]

ZUCKERBERG WORKED ON CODING THE WINKLEVOSS TWIN’S WEBSITE, BUT REPORTEDLY SLOW ROLLED THEM THEN CREATED THEFACEBOOK.COM

In Nov. 2003, Zuckerberg Told The Winklevosses At The Time That Completing Their Website Wouldn’t Be Difficult. “Winklevoss said a programmer who had to leave the project for personal reasons referred Zuckerberg, who verbally agreed to help write code for part of the website, originally called HarvardConnection. According to a Nov. 30 email obtained by The Daily Free Press, Zuckerberg told Cameron Winklevoss that he didn’t expect completion on the project, which had been in production for 10 months, to be difficult. ‘I read over all the stuff you sent and it seems like it

shouldn't take too long to implement, so we can talk about that after I get all the basic functionality up tomorrow night,' the email read." [Daily Free Press, [9/9/04](#)]

Zuckerberg Failed To Show The Winklevosses Any Progress On The Site, But Assured It Would Be Operational Shortly, Noting He Had Been "Completely Swamped" With Homework And Finals. "Zuckerberg put together a portion of the code, emailing Cameron Winklevoss the following day to say, "I have everything working on my system now. I'll keep you posted as I patch stuff up and it starts to become completely functional." Tyler Winklevoss said after that, Zuckerberg failed to show them any progress on the site but reassured them it would be operational shortly. Zuckerberg continued to delay work because of problem sets, other homework and final projects. In a Jan. 8 email, Zuckerberg said he was "completely swamped with work [that] week" but had "made some of the changes ... and they seem[ed] to be working great" on his computer. He said he could discuss the site starting the following Tuesday, on Jan. 13. According to whois.com, Zuckerberg registered the domain www.thefacebook.com on Jan. 11, 2004." [Daily Free Press, [9/9/04](#)]

The Winklevosses Said Zuckerberg Slow Rolled Them And Launched His Own Project Instead. "The duo sued in 2004, alleging that Zuckerberg agreed to help the twins with their social network project, only to slowroll them and launch his own project instead. After mediation, the parties agreed to trade \$20 million cash and more than a million Facebook shares for the Winklevoss twins' company ConnectU. The litigation, which played a central role in the hit 2010 film *The Social Network*, continued when the twins alleged that Facebook had deceived them about the value of the shares and that they were entitled to four times as many shares. A district court ruled in 2008 that the settlement should stand." [WIRED, [6/23/11](#)]

WHILE HELPING THE WINKLEVOSS TWINS, ZUCKERBERG REGISTERED THEFACEBOOK.COM

On Jan. 8th, 2004, Zuckerberg Wrote The Winklevosses Telling Them The Code "Seem[ed] To Be Working Great" And Would Discuss The Site On January 13th. "Tyler Winklevoss said after that, Zuckerberg failed to show them any progress on the site but reassured them it would be operational shortly. Zuckerberg continued to delay work because of problem sets, other homework and final projects. In a Jan. 8 email, Zuckerberg said he was "completely swamped with work [that] week" but had "made some of the changes ... and they seem[ed] to be working great" on his computer. He said he could discuss the site starting the following Tuesday, on Jan. 13. According to whois.com, Zuckerberg registered the domain www.thefacebook.com on Jan. 11, 2004. When the parties met three days later, on Jan. 14, Tyler Winklevoss said Zuckerberg reported progress on the website and told them he would continue to work on it. Zuckerberg also said he would email the group later in the week and then get in touch when spring semester began to discuss the site further, Winklevoss said." [Daily Free Press, [9/9/04](#)]

Zuckerberg Failed To Disclose To The Winklevosses That He Was Working On A Similar Site, Instead Merely Mentioned That He Was Working On A "Personal Project." "According to whois.com, Zuckerberg registered the domain www.thefacebook.com on Jan. 11, 2004. When the parties met three days later, on Jan. 14, Tyler Winklevoss said Zuckerberg reported progress on the website and told them he would continue to work on it. Zuckerberg also said he would email the group later in the week and then get in touch when spring semester began to discuss the site further, Winklevoss said. "He gave no indication he was doing his own take on our idea," Tyler Winklevoss said, adding that Zuckerberg told the group he was working on a "personal project," although he did not mention thefacebook by name. On Jan. 22, Cameron Winklevoss sent an email to Zuckerberg to check the status of the site and never received a response. On Feb. 4, thefacebook.com was launched. The Winklevoss learned about the website the following Monday in an article in *The Harvard Crimson*." [Daily Free Press, [9/9/04](#)]

The Winklevosses Said Zuckerberg Was Helping Them When He Registered Thefacebook.com On January 11th, 2004. "Founders of ConnectU.com have filed a federal lawsuit against the creator of thefacebook.com, Mark Zuckerberg, claiming Zuckerberg stole their concept while working on code for the Harvard graduates' version of an online social networking service, said ConnectU co-founder Tyler Winklevoss Tuesday. Zuckerberg, now a Harvard junior, was helping program Winklevoss' website when he registered thefacebook.com on Jan. 11. "Yes, we have filed a lawsuit, but we do not wish to comment on it at this time," said Winklevoss, who founded ConnectU along with his twin brother, Cameron, and their friend Divya Narendra, all 2004 Harvard alumni." [Daily Free Press, [9/9/04](#)]

THEN – NEWSFEED INTRODUCED, STARTING FACEBOOK'S JOURNEY TOWARDS "OPENNESS" AND "SHARING"

AFTER FACEBOOK INTRODUCED NEWSFEED, USERS BEGAN VOICING CONCERNS OVER THE PRIVACY INTRUSIONS IT LED TO

Facebook Received Backlash After Introducing News Feed, With Users Saying “Very Few Of Us Want Everyone Automatically Knowing What We Update,” Calling News Feed “Too Creepy, Too Stalker-Esque.” “The backlash is over Facebook’s decision this week to deliver automated, customized alerts known as News Feeds about a user’s closest friends, classmates and colleagues. Users who log on might instantly find out that someone they know has joined a new social group, posted more photos or begun dating their best friend. “You went a bit too far this time, Facebook,” read an introductory message for Students against Facebook News Feeds, a protest group created on the site. “Very few of us want everyone automatically knowing what we update. ... News Feed is just too creepy, too stalker-esque, and a feature that has to go.” [CBS News, [9/7/06](#)]

WIRED: When Facebook Rolled Out Its Newsfeed Feature In 2006, Users Were “Outraged That Facebook Was Broadcasting Their Updates, Profile Changes And New Friend Connections.” “This isn’t the first time Facebook has trampled on users’ privacy. When the company rolled out its news -feeds feature in September, 2006, users were outraged that Facebook was broadcasting their updates, profile changes and new friend connections. After weeks of complaints, Facebook finally consented to offer privacy controls so individuals could control whether their activities on Facebook were made public.” [WIRED, [12/5/07](#)]

ZUCKERBERG ACKNOWLEDGED USERS’ CONCERNS OVER NEWSFEED AND PROMISED TO ENSURE THEIR PRIVACY WAS PROTECTED

After News Feed Earned User Ire, Zuckerberg Affirmed That Privacy Was Central To The Site. “To join, one must prove membership in an existing network using an e-mail address from a college, a high school or selected companies and organizations. As a result, Facebook has fewer than 10 million registered users, compared with some 108 million at News Corp.’s MySpace. Facebook’s chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, said Thursday that privacy remains central to the site, but he acknowledged the company overstepped and ‘failed to communicate to our users actively what it actually meant for them.” [CBS News, [9/7/06](#)]

After Newsfeed Received User Backlash, Zuckerberg Said Facebook Was Working On Giving Users Additional Privacy Options. “He added that anything someone chose to hide to a specific person before would not suddenly appear in that person’s feed. Zuckerberg said Facebook was working on giving users additional privacy options. The safeguards, expected as early as Friday, would let users block from feeds entire categories — such as changes to the groups they belong to — while still allowing people to observe such changes by visiting the profile page. Previously, users had to remove items one at a time from their personal feeds.” [CBS News, [9/7/06](#)]

NEWSFEED WAS A STEP TOWARDS FACEBOOK’S “HIGH LEVEL IDEAL” TO CREATE “OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY”

Zuckerberg Said “The High Level Ideal” Of Facebook Was “This Concept Of Openness And Transparency.” “So, I just think it ends up being a stronger system than the first Facebook platform we had. The structural change comes from this point of openness. We talk about this concept of openness and transparency as the high level ideal that we’re moving towards at Facebook. The way that we get there is by empowering people to share and connect. The combination of those two things leads the world to become more open. And so as time has gone on, we’ve actually shifted a bit more of a focus not just on directly making it so people can use Facebook and share and be open on Facebook, but instead on making it so that the systems themselves have open properties.” [WIRED, Zuckerberg Interview, [6/30/09](#)]

- **Zuckerberg Believed “Over Time Things Trend Towards Becoming More Open.”** “Wired.com: So would you agree with the statement, then, that you can’t succeed on the internet by putting up walls? Zuckerberg: I think it’s not quite that black and white. What I think is true is that over time things trend towards becoming more open, right. I think early on they tend to start closed. And that’s important, right? It’s an important phase. One analogy and example that I look at is personal computers and how they evolved. You started off with people who just built the whole thing themselves.” [WIRED, Zuckerberg Interview, [6/30/09](#)]

Zuckerberg Wrote On His Facebook Page That His Philosophy Was “Trying To Make The World A More Open Place.” “Zuckerberg may seem like an over-sharer in the age of over-sharing. But that’s kind of the point. Zuckerberg’s business model depends on our shifting notions of privacy, revelation, and sheer self-display. The more that people are willing to put online, the more money his site can make from advertisers. Happily for him, and the prospects of his

eventual fortune, his business interests align perfectly with his personal philosophy. In the bio section of his page, Zuckerberg writes simply, 'I'm trying to make the world a more open place.'" [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

- **Zuckerberg Said The Thing He “Really Care[d]” About Was “The Mission” Of Facebook, Which Was “Making The World Open.”** “Wired.com: If you were building a Facebook competitor from scratch now is that the way you would go? Zuckerberg: The thing I really care about is the mission, making the world open. A lot of times, I run a thought experiment, "If I were not at Facebook, what would I be doing to make the world more open?" Because I think when I got started six years ago, building a social network was the best thing to do.” [WIRED, [5/28/10](#)]

ZUCKERBERG BELIEVED AN OPEN WEB WOULD LEAD TO A “RICHER WEB”

Zuckerberg Said Facebook Led Way To A “Richer Web” That Was “More Democratically Controlled By The People Who [Were] Sharing Stuff, As Opposed To By Some Central Entity That’s Going Out And Indexing All This Information.” “It's a slower approach, right, because what it means is that people need to move through this process of realizing that sharing information is good, and slowly sharing more and more information over time. But by doing that you get a lot richer information; you get information that people don't want to share with everyone, but they just want to share with some people around them. You get personal information, like photos from my vacation, or a trip that I want to share with people. And it just ends up being a richer web, and it's more democratically controlled by the people who are sharing stuff, as opposed to by some central entity that's going out and indexing all this information, right? And that's the path we've been on, and it's really interesting just watching the rate of information production change.” [WIRED, Zuckerberg Interview, [6/30/09](#)]

Zuckerberg: “A Lot Of The Founding Principles Of Facebook Are That If People Have Access To More Information And Are More Connected It Will Make The World Better; People Will Have More Understanding; More Empathy.” “As far as his advice to budding entrepreneurs goes, Zuckerberg foregoes technical prowess and recommends truly loving and believing in whatever you're doing since you'll inevitably encounter a lot of challenges along the way and it will become the seemingly 'rational thing for you to stop' if you don't. 'Find that thing you're super passionate about,' he said. 'A lot of the founding principles of Facebook are that if people have access to more information and are more connected it will make the world better; people will have more understanding; more empathy. That's the guiding principle for me. On hard days, I really just step back and that's the thing that keeps me going.’” [Desert News, [3/25/11](#)]

Zuckerberg Defined Facebook As A Company That Was “Trying To Bring Innovative Things To People That Help[ed] Them Share More And Make The World More Open.” “Wired.com: Except many believe that the rules that drove the PC industry don't apply to the rules that are evolving around business on the internet. They say that you actually need to start open and continue to be open. Zuckerberg: So I think one thing that's really important is that the rules are constantly changing. I think a lot of the issues that some of these other companies have had is they define themselves too narrowly as a company in a specific medium. Like e-mail could have easily moved into being what social networks are today. I think a lot of e-mail companies now are actually trying to move in that direction. But I feel like because they defined themselves as just e-mail companies, they didn't adapt quickly enough. We define ourselves more broadly, as a company that's trying to bring innovative things to people that help them share more and make the world more open. And I think that that mindset allows us to change very rapidly.” [WIRED, Zuckerberg Interview, [6/30/09](#)]

THEN – AN ADVERTISING FEATURE, BEACON, RESULTED IN FACEBOOK’S FIRST MAJOR PRIVACY SCANDAL OVER SHARING USER DATA WITH THIRD PARTIES

IN 2007, FACEBOOK CREATED BEACON, THE FIRST ATTEMPT AT EXPLOITING USER DATA

In November 2007, Facebook Introduced Beacon, A Feature That Tracked Users Activities Elsewhere On The Internet. “Facebook Social Advertising Event, Nov. 6, 2007 — Facebook announced today that 44 websites are using Facebook Beacon to allow users to share information from other websites for distribution to their friends on Facebook. These sites are participating in the launch of Beacon, a new way to socially distribute information on Facebook. Beacon is a core element of the Facebook Ads system for connecting businesses with users and targeting advertising to the audiences they want.” [Facebook, Facebook Press Release, [11/6/07](#)]

Facebook Promised That Beacon Was Aligned With Facebook’s “Philosophy Of User Control,” And Had “Advanced Privacy Controls So Facebook Users Can Decide” If They Shared Their Activities. “In keeping with Facebook’s philosophy of user control, Facebook Beacon provides advanced privacy controls so Facebook users can decide whether to distribute specific actions from participating sites with their friends. Fandango, the nation’s leading moviegoer destination, is using Beacon so when Facebook users purchase a movie ticket on Fandango.com, they can

share their movie plans with their friends on Facebook. Consumers gain a new way to tell their friends about their movie tastes, while Fandango is able to gain greater social distribution on Facebook.” [Facebook, Facebook Press Release, [11/6/07](#)]

Beacon Allowed Facebook To Track Its Users’ Purchases And Actions At Dozens Of Sites And Then Broadcast That Data On The Pages Of Their Listed Friends Within Its Social Network. “The privacy control, announced in a Wednesday apology by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, will likely limit the reach of an application called ‘Beacon.’ The tool is part of a month-old program that the Palo Alto-based startup had hailed as an advertising breakthrough. Facebook users attacked Beacon as a flagrant violation of privacy. The tool enables Facebook to track its users’ purchases and actions at dozens of Web sites and then broadcast the data on the pages of their listed friends within its social network. ‘We’ve made a lot of mistakes building this feature, but we’ve made even more with how we’ve handled them,’ Zuckerberg wrote on Facebook’s blog. ‘We simply did a bad job with this release, and I apologize for it.’” [CBS News, [12/5/07](#)]

- **When Users Bought Things On Beacon-Affiliated Sites, Their Friends Were Automatically Notified Of The Purchase, Before The User Had A Chance To Approve It.** “Beacon, which was meant to revolutionize advertising by allowing users to broadcast purchases they made on outside sites to their Facebook friends, turned out to be many users’ ultimate nightmare. Facebook apparently never considered that sometimes people want to keep their shopping habits to themselves. The crux of the problem was that when users bought things on Beacon-affiliated sites (such as Fandango or Overstock.com), their friends were automatically notified of the purchase. This notification happened before the purchaser had a chance to approve it.” [WIRED, [12/5/07](#)]

ZUCKERBERG PITCHED BEACON AS A INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ADVERTISING

Zuckerberg Believed Beacon Would Be Seen As A Friendly Product Endorsements That Generated More Sales Than Traditional Advertising. “Zuckerberg, whose stake in Facebook is worth \$3 billion, thought Beacon’s referral system would be seen as friendly product endorsements that generated more sales than traditional advertising. He hailed the distribution of peer recommendations as advertising’s “holy grail” when Beacon was introduced earlier this month. But Beacon may lose some of its luster with the tougher privacy controls. That’s because fewer people typically participate in services with opt-in provisions.” [CBS News, [11/30/07](#)]

More Than 40 Different Websites Had Embedded Beacon In Their Pages To Track Transactions Made By Facebook Users. “The concessions were made after more than 50,000 Facebook users signed an online petition blasting the system, called “Beacon,” as a galling intrusion that put the Palo Alto-based startup’s pursuit of profit ahead of its members’ privacy interests. More than 40 different Web sites, including Fandango.com, Overstock.com and Blockbuster.com, had embedded Beacon in their pages to track transactions made by Facebook users. Unless instructed otherwise, the participating sites alerted Facebook, which then notified a user’s friends within the social network about items that had been bought or products that had been reviewed.” [CBS News, [11/30/07](#)]

When Researchers And Security Experts Dug Deeper Into Beacon, They Found That Facebook Was Tracking Its Users After They’d Logged Out Of The Site. “Even then, the system fell short of what critics wanted: Each time users purchased items on a Beacon advertiser’s site, they were given the option to stop the notification. When researchers and security experts dug deeper into Beacon, however, they discovered something even more distressing: Facebook was tracking its users after they’d logged out of the site. Today, with Zuckerberg’s mea culpa, the company has finally agreed to let users opt out of Beacon altogether. Still, it may prove difficult for Facebook to undo the damage done. Jeff Chester, executive director of the Center for Digital Democracy (and an outspoken critic of Facebook, MySpace and Google) was hardly appeased by Facebook’s offer to let people turn off Beacon.” [WIRED, [12/5/07](#)]

BEACON WAS FACEBOOK’S FIRST BRUSH WITH USER OUTRAGE OVER EXPLOITING THEIR DATA

Facebook’s Beacon – Meant To Revolutionize Advertising By Allowing Users To Broadcast Purchases They Made On Outside Sites – “Turned Out To Be Many Users’ Ultimate Nightmare.” “It’s been an extremely challenging month for the high-flying social networking site. Beacon, which was meant to revolutionize advertising by allowing users to broadcast purchases they made on outside sites to their Facebook friends, turned out to be many users’ ultimate nightmare. Facebook apparently never considered that sometimes people want to keep their shopping habits to themselves.” [WIRED, [12/5/07](#)]

CBS News: Thousands Of Facebook Users “Lambasted” Beacon Referrals “As A Betrayal Of Trust.” “Facebook hoped Beacon’s marketing feeds would be seen as “trusted referrals” among friends, helping to drive more sales to the

sites using the system and eventually generate more ad revenue as the 3-year-old company tries to fulfill lofty expectations. But thousands of users lambasted the referrals as a betrayal of trust. 'I'm not proud of the way we've handled this situation and I know we can do better,' Zuckerberg wrote. It's the second time in 15 months that Zuckerberg, 23, has fended off a privacy-rights backlash." [CBS News, [12/5/07](#)]

CBS News: Facebook Users "Attacked Beacon As A Flagrant Violation Of Privacy." "Saying it went too far in its pursuit of profit, the popular Internet hangout Facebook Inc. is allowing its 55 million users to permanently turn off a new marketing tool that tracks their activities at other Web sites. The privacy control, announced in a Wednesday apology by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, will likely limit the reach of an application called "Beacon." The tool is part of a month-old program that the Palo Alto-based startup had hailed as an advertising breakthrough. Facebook users attacked Beacon as a flagrant violation of privacy. The tool enables Facebook to track its users' purchases and actions at dozens of Web sites and then broadcast the data on the pages of their listed friends within its social network." [CBS News, [12/5/07](#)]

USERS REVOLTED OVER BEACON, CREATING A PETITION THAT GATHERED 69,000 SIGNATURES

In Response To Beacon, 69,000 Peoples Signed An Online Petition Entitled, "Facebook, Stop Invading My Privacy!" "The billionaire founder of Facebook has apologized to the website's 57 million devotees for its handling of a controversial advertising feature which has sparked furious protests about privacy. Mark Zuckerberg admitted last night that the social networking site had made "lots of mistakes" in introducing Beacon - a feature which tracks members' activities elsewhere on the internet. The ad program prompted 69,000 people to sign up to an online petition entitled "Facebook, stop invading my privacy!". Many accused the site of adopting Big Brother tactics to make money." [The Guardian, [12/6/07](#)]

- **Users Accused Facebook Of Adopting Big Brother Tactics To Make Money.** "The billionaire founder of Facebook has apologized to the website's 57 million devotees for its handling of a controversial advertising feature which has sparked furious protests about privacy. Mark Zuckerberg admitted last night that the social networking site had made "lots of mistakes" in introducing Beacon - a feature which tracks members' activities elsewhere on the internet. The ad program prompted 69,000 people to sign up to an online petition entitled "Facebook, stop invading my privacy!". Many accused the site of adopting Big Brother tactics to make money." [The Guardian, [12/6/07](#)]

Facebook's Director Of Policy Communications, Barry Schnitt, Said The Beacon Ordeal "Underscored How Critical It Is To Provide Extensive User Control Over How Information Is Shared." "Facebook also plans to donate \$9.5 million to an organization that fights for online privacy, though the settlement proposal still awaits approval by a judge. Facebook's Director of Policy Communications Barry Schnitt said in a statement that the whole Beacon ordeal 'underscored how critical it is to provide extensive user control over how information is shared.' He said the company also learned how to communicate changes to users (you know, instead of just dumping things like Beacon on them without a peep), and that the introduction of Facebook Connect allows for much greater user control over how their Web antics get shared back to friends on Facebook." [Ars Technica, [9/21/09](#)]

MEDIA OUTLETS REFERENCED THE FACT THAT BEACON WAS A NEW, UNIQUE CHALLENGE FOR FACEBOOK AT THE TIME

WIRED: Facebook's Beacon "Immediately Earned The Ire Of Users." "The discovery has come at a pretty rotten time for Facebook, which is still making amends with the public for its controversial ad platform called Beacon. The platform launched last month and immediately earned the ire of users because of a fairly objectionable feature: When Facebook members shopped on advertisers' external sites, their friends were automatically notified of their purchases, often before they knew that the notifications were sent out. After fierce public outcry, Facebook modified the system last week so users now have to click "OK" before a notification is sent out to friends about a transaction." [WIRED, [12/5/07](#)]

- **WIRED: Facebook's Beacon – Meant To Revolutionize Advertising By Allowing Users To Broadcast Purchases They Made On Outside Sites – "Turned Out To Be Many Users' Ultimate Nightmare."** "It's been an extremely challenging month for the high-flying social networking site. Beacon, which was meant to revolutionize advertising by allowing users to broadcast purchases they made on outside sites to their Facebook friends, turned out to be many users' ultimate nightmare. Facebook apparently never considered that sometimes people want to keep their shopping habits to themselves." [WIRED, [12/5/07](#)]

CNET: Zuckerberg Was "Plagued By Allegations Of Everything From Deceptiveness To Invasion Of Privacy" In The Wake Of The Beacon Controversy. "Plagued by allegations of everything from deceptiveness to invasion of privacy,

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has publicly backed down on the social-networking site's controversial Beacon advertisements and announced new modifications. In a post on the company blog on Wednesday morning, the 23-year-old executive apologized for the mess surrounding Beacon, which shares information about users' activity on third-party partner sites and posts it to their friends' 'News Feeds.' 'We've made a lot of mistakes building this feature, but we've made even more with how we've handled them,' Zuckerberg wrote. 'We simply did a bad job with this release, and I apologize for it.'" [WIRED, [12/5/07](#)]

The Guardian, On The Beacon Controversy: "The Controversy Has Been One Of The Worst In The Short Life Of Facebook." "Beacon works by gathering information from other websites about members' online spending habits. Facebook has justified it as an initiative to share people's tastes - for example, by recommending recently purchased DVDs or books to members' friends. But to the anger of users, the feature was initially set up to work automatically unless they opted out of it. Facebook has now changed it to an "opt in" program. The controversy has been one of the worst in the short life of Facebook, which was established in February 2004 and has rapidly become a global phenomenon. Microsoft recently bought a minority stake in the website, through a deal valuing the venture at \$15bn (£7.3bn) which gave Zuckerberg, 23, an estimated paper fortune of \$3bn." [The Guardian, [12/6/07](#)]

CBS News: Critics Blasted Beacon As "An Unwelcome Nuisance With Flimsy Privacy Protections That Had Already Exasperated And Embarrassed Some Users." "Facebook thought the marketing feeds would help its users keep their friends better informed about their interests while also serving as "trusted referrals" that would help drive more sales to the sites using the Beacon system. But thousands of Facebook users viewed the Beacon referrals as a betrayal of trust. Critics blasted the advertising tool as an unwelcome nuisance with flimsy privacy protections that had already exasperated and embarrassed some users. 'There are cases where Christmas presents people bought have been made public, spoiling the surprise, because friends now know what their friends bought them,' says CBS News technical analyst Larry Magid, after Beacon shared information from Overstock.com. Other users say they were unnerved when they discovered their friends had found out what movies they were watching through purchases made on Fandango." [CBS News, [11/30/07](#)]

ZUCKERBERG AND FACEBOOK SWIFTLY APOLOGIZED AFTER USERS REVOLTED OVER BEACON AND ATTEMPTED TO MAKE CHANGED TO STRENGTHEN USER PRIVACY

ZUCKERBERG SAID FACEBOOK "MADE A LOT OF MISTAKES" WITH BEACON

In December 2007, Zuckerberg Apologized, Saying Facebook Had "Made A Lot Of Mistakes Building This Feature." "The ad program prompted 69,000 people to sign up to an online petition entitled "Facebook, stop invading my privacy!". Many accused the site of adopting Big Brother tactics to make money. In a blog entry posted yesterday, Zuckerberg said: "We've made a lot of mistakes building this feature, but we've made even more with how we've handled them. We simply did a bad job with this release, and I apologise for it." Beacon works by gathering information from other websites about members' online spending habits." [The Guardian, [12/6/07](#)]

- **Zuckerberg Said He Was "Not Proud Of The Way" Facebook "Handled" The Beacon Controversy, Saying "I Know We Can Do Better."** "Just One Month after Facebook launched Beacon, a controversial advertising platform, the company has scaled back its plans and humbly apologized for stomping on its users' privacy. "I'm not proud of the way we've handled this situation and I know we can do better," wrote Mark Zuckerberg, the 24-year-old founder and CEO of Facebook, in a blog post. It's been an extremely challenging month for the high-flying social networking site. Beacon, which was meant to revolutionize advertising by allowing users to broadcast purchases they made on outside sites to their Facebook friends, turned out to be many users' ultimate nightmare." [WIRED, [12/5/07](#)]
- **Zuckerberg On Beacon: "We've Made A Lot Of Mistakes Building This Feature, But We've Made Even More With How We've Handled Them, We Simply Did A Bad Job With This Release, And I Apologize For It."** "In a post on the company blog on Wednesday morning, the 23-year-old executive apologized for the mess surrounding Beacon, which shares information about users' activity on third-party partner sites and posts it to their friends' 'News Feeds.' 'We've made a lot of mistakes building this feature, but we've made even more with how we've handled them,' Zuckerberg wrote. 'We simply did a bad job with this release, and I apologize for it.' Last week, Facebook announced some modifications to the advertising initiative, but some critics had argued that they weren't substantial enough." [WIRED, [12/5/07](#)]

ZUCKERBERG AND FACEBOOK TRIED TO STEM THE BACKLASH BY REFORMING THE SYSTEM TO PROVIDE FOR PRIVACY PROTECTIONS

In December 2007, Facebook Reversed Course And Announced It Would Limit The Reach Of Their Beacon Application. "Saying it went too far in its pursuit of profit, the popular Internet hangout Facebook Inc. is allowing its 55 million users to permanently turn off a new marketing tool that tracks their activities at other Web sites. The privacy control, announced in a Wednesday apology by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, will likely limit the reach of an application called "Beacon." The tool is part of a month-old program that the Palo Alto-based startup had hailed as an advertising breakthrough. Facebook users attacked Beacon as a flagrant violation of privacy. The tool enables Facebook to track its users' purchases and actions at dozens of Web sites and then broadcast the data on the pages of their listed friends within its social network." [CBS News, [12/5/07](#)]

Zuckerberg Said "The Problem With Our Initial Approach" To Beacon Was "Making It An Opt-Out System Instead Of Opt-In." "Last week, Facebook announced some modifications to the advertising initiative, but some critics had argued that they weren't substantial enough. Now, as a sort of olive branch, Zuckerberg also announced that there would be a way for users to turn Beacon off entirely. "We missed the right balance," Zuckerberg continued in his post. "At first we tried to make it very lightweight so people wouldn't have to touch it for it to work. The problem with our initial approach of making it an opt-out system instead of opt-in was that if someone forgot to decline to share something, Beacon still went ahead and shared it with their friends." [CNET, [12/5/17](#)]

Facebook Tried To Quell Rebellion Against Beacon By Revising It So The Information Gathered Was Only Shared When Users Specifically Gave Permission. "It's the second time in 15 months that Zuckerberg, 23, has fended off a privacy-rights backlash. Last year, after Facebook introduced its "news feed" tool that tracked changes to users' profiles, it was swamped with complaints. In response, it added a way to turn off the feature. Those news feeds are where the Beacon-generated referrals now appear. Facebook tried to quell the rebellion against Beacon by revising it so the information gathered was shared only when users specifically gave permission. Previously, consent was assumed unless users declined, but many said they never saw the notices that appeared for 20 seconds and then vanished." [CBS News, [12/5/07](#)]

In The Wake Of The Beacon Controversy, Companies Like Overstock.com And Travelocity Announced They Had Temporarily Or Permanently Pulled Out Of The Program. "Additionally, the Beacon debacle was more complicated than earlier Facebook privacy snafus because there were advertisers in the mix, too. Over the past few days, a number of Beacon participants, such as Overstock.com and Travelocity, confirmed that they had temporarily or permanently pulled out of the program. As a result, Facebook didn't just need to placate its user base and prominent activist groups, it also needed to save face among the major corporate partners whose advertisements it's counting on to grow a viable profit margin." [WIRED, [12/5/07](#)]

IN 2009, BEACON WAS SHUT DOWN AS THE RESULT OF A LAWSUIT

In September 2009, Beacon Was Shut Down As The Result Of A Lawsuit Settlement. "As quickly as it swooped into Facebook users' lives and revealed their secret purchasing habits to the world, Beacon has now been shut down as part of a lawsuit settlement. Facebook revealed late Friday that its controversial 'advertising' feature would be shuttered, saying that the company had "learned a great deal from the experience." Facebook also plans to donate \$9.5 million to an organization that fights for online privacy, though the settlement proposal still awaits approval by a judge. Facebook's Director of Policy Communications Barry Schnitt said in a statement that the whole Beacon ordeal 'underscored how critical it is to provide extensive user control over how information is shared.'" [Ars Technica, [9/21/09](#)]

- **Facebook Said It Had "Learned A Great Deal" From The Beacon Experience.** "As quickly as it swooped into Facebook users' lives and revealed their secret purchasing habits to the world, Beacon has now been shut down as part of a lawsuit settlement. Facebook revealed late Friday that its controversial 'advertising' feature would be shuttered, saying that the company had "learned a great deal from the experience." Facebook also plans to donate \$9.5 million to an organization that fights for online privacy, though the settlement proposal still awaits approval by a judge. Facebook's Director of Policy Communications Barry Schnitt said in a statement that the whole Beacon ordeal 'underscored how critical it is to provide extensive user control over how information is shared.'" [Ars Technica, [9/21/09](#)]

THEN – A PLATFORM FOR ADVERTISERS, NOT A GATEKEEPER FOR ADVERTISERS

ZUCKERBERG RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVERTISEMENTS FOR FACEBOOK, BUT WAS CAUTIOUS DURING THE EARLY DAYS

In 2006, The New York Times Said The “Key Question” For Facebook Was “Whether It [Would] Be Able To Find Ways To Weave Advertising Into Its Site In A Way That Its Audience [Would] Accept.” “In some cases, the larger companies are willing to gamble on growth — as eBay did when it bought the Skype chat service last year for \$2.6 billion. But in other cases the asking prices of the entrepreneurs and the offers of their potential acquirers have failed to line up. For Facebook the key question is whether it will be able to find ways to weave advertising into its site in a way that its audience will accept. Its larger rival, MySpace, is on a track to do so, spurred on by the News Corporation, which bought it last year. Google recently agreed to pay MySpace at least \$900 million over three years to sell text and banner advertisements on its site.” [NY Times, [9/22/06](#)]

ZUCKERBERG SHUNNED INVESTORS, FOCUSING ON NATURAL WAYS FOR ADVERTISERS TO REACH AND COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE

Zuckerberg Originally Shunned Venture Capitalists, Seeking Advertisers To Pay For The Site. “While Zuckerberg says TheFacebook plans to steer clear of venture capital firms for now, that doesn’t mean things won’t change. After all, the boys have already been tempted once—last summer, as debts piled up. Ultimately, Zuckerberg chose not to partner with a venture firm, essentially setting the company’s current investor policy. Instead, he sought advertisers, earned back the debt money he owed himself, and kept TheFacebook free of venture capitalists.” [Harvard Crimson, [2/24/05](#)]

Fortune: Until 2007, Facebook’s Advertising Had Been “Been Limited To Banner Ads That Run Down The Side Of Pages And Smaller Ads That Appear In Newsfeeds.” “Facebook Ads follows an Oct. 24 announcement that Microsoft (MSFT) will take a \$240 million equity stake in the site, valuing Facebook at \$15 billion. The company is private and does not disclose numbers, but it is widely reported that Facebook earned a profit of \$30 million this year on \$150 million in sales. With a \$15 billion valuation, that translates into 500 times earnings. Industry analysts have long wondered how the startup plans to make money. Until now, Facebook’s advertising opportunities have been limited to banner ads that run down the side of pages and smaller ads that appear in newsfeeds. Advertisers can also pay to sponsor groups.” [Fortune, [11/6/07](#)]

IN LATE 2007, MICROSOFT INVESTED \$240 MILLION IN FACEBOOK, SETTING OFF A PIVOT TOWARDS MAKING ADS A CENTRAL FOCUS

AFTER A MAJOR INVESTMENT BY MICROSOFT, FACEBOOK BEGAN REFOCUSING THEIR EFFORTS ON ADS

In October 2007, Microsoft Invested \$240 Million In Facebook. “Rapidly rising Internet star Facebook Inc. has sold a 1.6 percent stake to Microsoft Corp. for \$240 million, spurning a competing offer from online search leader Google Inc. Culminating weeks of negotiations, the investment announced Wednesday values Palo Alto-based Facebook at \$15 billion — a stunning figure for an online hangout started in a Harvard University dorm room less than four years ago.” [NBC News, [10/24/07](#)]

- **In Oct. 2007, NBC News Reported That Facebook “Hope[d] To Become An Advertising Magnet.”** “Zuckerberg, 23, has indicated he would like to hold off on an initial public offering for at least two more years. In the meantime, Facebook hopes to become an advertising magnet by substantially increasing its current worldwide audience of nearly 50 million active users, who connect with friends on the site through messaging, photo-sharing and other tools it offers. Although News Corp.’s MySpace.com remains the largest social network, Facebook has been growing much faster the past year.” [NBC News, [10/24/07](#)]

Fortune: The Announcement Of Facebook Ads “Follow[ed] An Oct. 24 Announcement That Microsoft [Would] Take A \$240 Million Equity Stake In The Site.” “Last, without revealing personally identifiable information about users, Facebook will provide analytics and reporting to advertisers about consumer behavior. “In a fundamental way, the Facebook Ad platform may change the way people view advertising,” says IDC analyst Rachel Happe. ‘A brand will have to earn the affiliation of its customers in order to have the opportunity to advertise to a broader network.’ Facebook Ads follows an Oct. 24 announcement that Microsoft (MSFT) will take a \$240 million equity stake in the site, valuing Facebook at \$15 billion. The company is private and does not disclose numbers, but it is widely reported that Facebook earned a profit of \$30 million this year on \$150 million in sales. With a \$15 billion valuation, that translates into 500 times earnings.” [Fortune, [11/6/07](#)]

Facebook Initially Promised To Let Users Select Advertising That Would Be Displayed On Their Social Networks.

“Building on its strong history of giving Facebook members control over their online profiles and retaining an uncluttered, highly structured look and feel, the company will let users select the advertising that will be displayed on their social networks, creating advertising inventory only in the network of fans that a brand builds virally online. No fans, no ads.” [Fortune, [11/6/07](#)]

- **Fortune: Facebook Allowing Users To Control Which Ads They Saw Built On Its “Strong History Of Giving Facebook Members Control Over Their Online Profiles.** “Advertisers can create free Facebook pages for their products and services, build SocialAds that pair display and text advertising with personal recommendations, and access data about how Facebook members use their products. Building on its strong history of giving Facebook members control over their online profiles and retaining an uncluttered, highly structured look and feel, the company will let users select the advertising that will be displayed on their social networks, creating advertising inventory only in the network of fans that a brand builds virally online. No fans, no ads.” [Fortune, [11/6/07](#)]

In 2007, Zuckerberg Said As Facebook’s User Base Grew, It Would Give “More Ways For Advertisers To Reach People And Communicate In A Very Natural Way.”

“TIME: Beyond Facebook's exclusive advertising deal with Microsoft, which gives the software giant the right to sell ads on the site, what are some of your ideas about monetizing your 30 million users? Zuckerberg: Advertising works most effectively when it's in line with what people are already trying to do. And people are trying to communicate in a certain way on Facebook — they share information with their friends, they learn about what their friends are doing —so there's really a whole new opportunity for a new type of advertising model within that. And I think we'll see more in the next couple months or years on that.” [TIME, [7/17/07](#)]

In November 2007, Facebook Unveiled Facebook-Ads, A Three-Part Strategy To Help Advertisers Better Connect To Customers On The Site.

“A hush fell over a packed sixth-floor room this afternoon in a nondescript Manhattan warehouse as Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg took the stage. ‘Once every 100 years, the way that media works fundamentally changes,’ he said haughtily. So began one of the most highly anticipated launch events this fall as Zuckerberg unveiled Facebook Ads, a three-part strategy to help advertisers better connect to customers on the social networking site. Advertisers can create free Facebook pages for their products and services, build SocialAds that pair display and text advertising with personal recommendations, and access data about how Facebook members use their products.” [Fortune, [11/6/07](#)]

THEN – MARK ZUCKERBERG HAD A HIGH SHARE OF FACEBOOK STOCK, BUT STILL WAS STILL A SCRAPPY, SHY FOUNDER WHO NEEDED GUIDANCE

IN 2006, ZUCKERBERG HAD AN “UNUSUALLY HIGH SHARE” OF FACEBOOK STOCK

NY Times, 2006: Zuckerberg Had “An Unusually High Share Of The Stock In Facebook,” Which Gave Him “The Dominant Say In Its Fate.” “He also modeled his management style as Facebook’s chief executive on that of Google’s founders — Larry Page and Sergey Brin — as well as Steve Jobs of Apple. Mr. Zuckerberg keeps tight control over the company’s activities. He still writes some of the site’s program code, designs most of its features and represents the site in public. And he has been able to keep an unusually high share of the stock in Facebook, giving him the dominant say in its fate. For Yahoo, an acquisition of Facebook would solve many problems. Yahoo has been trying, with little success, to build its own social networking service called Yahoo 360.” [NY Times, [9/22/06](#)]

New York Times: Zuckerberg “Arranged The Ownership Of Facebook So As To Give Himself Extraordinary Power To Steer The Company.

“Early on he was persuaded of the vast potential of the social network he built in his dorm room, say friends, investors and detractors. He pushed his team to be fast and take risks. He resisted efforts to change the way Facebook looked and worked, even if, in the beginning, it meant giving up revenue. Most important, he arranged the ownership of Facebook so as to give himself extraordinary power to steer the company. By the time Facebook filed for a \$5 billion public offering on Wednesday, Mr. Zuckerberg had managed to hold on to more than one-fourth of the shares in the company, and his agreements with other investors enhanced his voting power to almost 60 percent of total shares.” [NY Times, [2/3/12](#)]

DURING THE EARLY DAYS, ZUCKERBERG STAYED CONNECTED WITH RANK-AND-FILE STAFF

Zuckerberg: “If You’re Gonna Be A Good Businessman, Really What It’s About, Is Finding Situations Where People Win. It’s Not About Tricking People Into Doing Stuff, It’s Not About Being A Hardass. It’s About Being Comfortable And Working In Your Pajamas, Because That’s Gonna End Up Being What’s Best For Everyone.”

“Part of what I’m learning in being out here—and this probably sounds like way too serious for me—is how to be a businessman,’ he says. ‘I always pictured it like some older people who, like, take themselves really seriously and have lawyers do everything and try to like write contracts that are just really advantageous to them. And like, I’m kind of learning, that’s not it. “If you’re gonna be a good businessman, really what it’s about, is finding situations where people win. It’s not about tricking people into doing stuff, it’s not about being a hardass. It’s about being comfortable and working in your pajamas, because that’s gonna end up being what’s best for everyone.” [Harvard Crimson, [2/24/05](#)]

In 2010, Zuckerberg Was Described By His Employees As An “Intense Listener.” “Zuckerberg’s desk is near the middle of the office, just a few steps away from his glass-walled conference room and within arm’s length of his most senior employees. Before arriving each morning, he works out with a personal trainer or studies Mandarin, which he is learning in preparation for the trip to China. Zuckerberg is involved in almost every new product and feature. His daily schedule is typically free from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and he spends that block of time meeting with engineers who are working on new projects. Debate is a hallmark of the meetings; at least a dozen of his employees pointed out, unprompted, what an ‘intense listener’ Zuckerberg is.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

CBS News: In 2008, Zuckerberg Sat “As A Desk Like The Other Software Engineers, Writing Code. “Facebook’s headquarters in downtown Palo Alto look like a dorm room; the 400 employees, who get free food and laundry, show up late, stay late, and party really late. Zuckerberg, who’s made the cover of Newsweek and is reportedly worth \$3 billion, sits at a desk like the other software engineers, writing computer code. ‘Have you changed your lifestyle? You don’t look like you’re buyin’ really expensive clothes,’ Stahl asks Zuckerberg, who showed up to the interview in a sweatshirt and sandals. “No, I’m not buying really expensive clothes,” Zuckerberg replies, laughing.” [CBS News, [1/10/08](#)]

In 2010, The New Yorker Wrote That Zuckerberg Was Said To Be “Involved In Almost Every New Product And Feature.” “Zuckerberg’s desk is near the middle of the office, just a few steps away from his glass-walled conference room and within arm’s length of his most senior employees. Before arriving each morning, he works out with a personal trainer or studies Mandarin, which he is learning in preparation for the trip to China. Zuckerberg is involved in almost every new product and feature. His daily schedule is typically free from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and he spends that block of time meeting with engineers who are working on new projects. Debate is a hallmark of the meetings; at least a dozen of his employees pointed out, unprompted, what an ‘intense listener’ Zuckerberg is.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

ZUCKERBERG WAS INITIALLY A SHY EXECUTIVE, PREFERRING NOT TO SPEAK TO THE PRESS OR MAKING PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Zuckerberg Did Not Enjoy Speaking To The Press Or Public Appearances. “Despite his goal of global openness, however, Zuckerberg remains a wary and private person. He doesn’t like to speak to the press, and he does so rarely. He also doesn’t seem to enjoy the public appearances that are increasingly requested of him. Backstage at an event at the Computer History Museum, in Silicon Valley, this summer, one of his interlocutors turned to Zuckerberg, minutes before they were to appear onstage, and said, “You don’t like doing these kinds of events very much, do you?” Zuckerberg replied with a terse “No,” then took a sip from his water bottle and looked off into the distance.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

CBS News, 2008: “We Were Warned That [Zuckerberg] Can Be Awkward And Reluctant To Talk About Himself.” “Like the founders of Google, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, Mark Zuckerberg is looked up to in Silicon Valley as a visionary. ‘You seem to be replacing Larry and Sergey as the people out here who everyone’s talking about,” Stahl remarks. Zuckerberg doesn’t reply, only stares at her at length. “You’re just staring at me,” she adds. “Is that a question?” Zuckerberg asks. We were warned that he can be awkward and reluctant to talk about himself, so we turned for help to his Facebook page, which says he’s a Harvard alum. ‘You’re not a Harvard alum,’ Stahl remarks, looking at his own list of networks. ‘That’s true. We don’t have a setting for dropout,’ Zuckerberg explains.” [CBS News, [1/10/08](#)]

In 2008, CBS News Reported That Zuckerberg Was “Learning Fast” According To Those Around Him, But “Might Still Wear A Hoodie And No Socks.” “Asked if Zuckerberg is a good CEO, Swisher says, “I don’t know. I think he’s very young.” But those around Zuckerberg say he is learning fast. He might still wear a hoodie and no socks, but he’s becoming a suit, as he ponders whether to take his company public this year. ‘This would be a good place to announce that,’ Stahl tells him. ‘I think what I can announce is that it is highly unlikely that we will go public in 2008,” Zuckerberg says. “And when going public makes sense to do, we’ll do that. And maybe that’s two years out. Maybe it’s three years out.” [CBS News, [1/10/08](#)]

The New Yorker Wrote That “Despite His Goal Of Global Openness, However, Zuckerberg Remain[ed] A Wary And Private Person.” “In the October issue of Vanity Fair, Zuckerberg is named No. 1 in the magazine’s power ranking of the New Establishment, just ahead of Steve Jobs, the leadership of Google, and Rupert Murdoch. The magazine declared him ‘our new Caesar.’ Despite his goal of global openness, however, Zuckerberg remains a wary and private

person. He doesn't like to speak to the press, and he does so rarely. He also doesn't seem to enjoy the public appearances that are increasingly requested of him." [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

The Guardian: "Despite His Love Of Worldwide Sharing, The Founder Of Facebook Is Less Keen To Share Information On Himself." "When the company changed the layout on everyone's profile pages a few weeks ago, the outcry was bitter and prolonged. It was as if Zuckerberg had personally come round to shift the seating arrangements in your living room. Despite his love of worldwide sharing, the founder of Facebook is less keen to share information on himself. His Facebook page lets you know that he's a little tired after his European tour, but it's fairly tame stuff compared to the 'I had the best sex of my life last night' material volunteered by others." [The Guardian, [11/16/08](#)]

IN 2008, FACEBOOK HIRED SHARYL SANDBERG, WHO BROUGHT "STABILITY TO FACEBOOK"

Facebook Hired Sandberg In 2008 While She Was The Vice President For Global Online Sales And Operations At Google. "Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook is not stepping aside for a chief executive as Larry Page and Sergey Brin did at Google or as Jerry Yang and David Filo did at Yahoo. He is following the Bill Gates model and holding the top post as he hires a Google executive, Sheryl Sandberg, as chief operating officer. Ms. Sandberg, currently vice president for global online sales and operations at Google, joined the search giant in 2001 and helped to develop its immensely lucrative online advertising programs, AdWords and AdSense. She will join Facebook this month to work closely with Mr. Zuckerberg, a co-founder of Facebook, the company said Tuesday." [NY Times, [3/5/08](#)]

NY Times: Sandberg Brought "Stability To Facebook." "Revenue, once little more than an afterthought, is expected to balloon to around \$1.6 billion this year, according to estimates from Wedbush Securities. (Facebook, a private company, doesn't disclose its revenue.) Part of the reason for that sales growth is Ms. Sandberg's close ties to many of the world's largest advertisers, relationships she first developed as a senior executive at Google. Ms. Sandberg also brought stability to Facebook, which had suffered from a long period of turmoil and the departure of several executives and early employees, including the company's other co-founder." [NY Times, [10/3/10](#)]

Sandberg Was "Known For Her Interpersonal Skills As Much As For Her Sharp Intellect." "If all of that sounds a bit touchy-feely, well, it is. Ms. Sandberg, a well-regarded Internet executive, is known for her interpersonal skills as much as for her sharp intellect. And her regular meetings with the famously introverted Mr. Zuckerberg have helped to keep one of Silicon Valley's most unusual business partnerships working wonders for Facebook." [NY Times, [10/3/10](#)]

SANDBERG WAS EXPECTED TO GUIDE HOW FACEBOOK PRESENTED "ITSELF AND ITS INTENTIONS TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD" AND HOW IT COMPETED WITH OTHERS

NY Times: Sandberg Would Oversee Facebook's Marketing, Human Resources And Privacy Departments, "Essentially Guiding How Facebook Presents Itself And Its Intentions To The Outside World." "Ms. Sandberg will help Facebook expand overseas and develop an advertising network that will help justify its \$15 billion valuation, set last year when Microsoft invested \$240 million for 1.6 percent of the company. She will also oversee Facebook's marketing, human resources and privacy departments essentially guiding how Facebook presents itself and its intentions to the outside world. Ms. Sandberg's departure is a blow to Google, where she was a well-regarded executive." [NY Times, [3/5/08](#)]

When Hiring Sandberg, Zuckerberg Said "A Big Theme Of This Hire Is That There Are Parts Of Our Operations [...] Need To Be Taken To The Next Level." "Ms. Sandberg, currently vice president for global online sales and operations at Google, joined the search giant in 2001 and helped to develop its immensely lucrative online advertising programs, AdWords and AdSense. She will join Facebook this month to work closely with Mr. Zuckerberg, a co-founder of Facebook, the company said Tuesday. 'A big theme of this hire is that there are parts of our operations that to use a pretty trite phrase, need to be taken to the next level,' Mr. Zuckerberg said in an interview. Ms. Sandberg will help Facebook expand overseas and develop an advertising network that will help justify its \$15 billion valuation, set last year when Microsoft invested \$240 million for 1.6 percent of the company." [NY Times, [3/5/08](#)]

The New York Times Wrote That Sandberg's Appointment Came "As The Competition Between Google And Facebook Intensifie[d]." "The company has suffered a larger number of defections among vice presidents, senior managers and engineers in recent months as its size has ballooned to more than 16,000 workers. Most employees who joined before the company's 2004 initial public offering have seen their initial grant of stock options fully vested. Ms. Sandberg's appointment comes as the competition between Google and Facebook intensifies. The two companies are growing rapidly and find themselves going after many of the same top engineering talent in Silicon Valley. In addition, Google competed furiously for a part of Facebook's advertising business last year and lost to Microsoft." [NY Times, [3/5/08](#)]

BY 2010, ALL OF ZUCKERBERG'S FRIENDS WHO WORKED ON FACEBOOK DURING ITS INFANCY HAD LEFT...

In October 2008, Facebook Co-Founder Dustin Moskovitz Announced He Was Leaving The Company. “Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz said today he's leaving the company along with engineering manager Justin Rosenstein to start a new software business. Moskovitz was Mark Zuckerberg's roommate at Harvard University when they founded the social networking website while still students.” [Computer World, [10/3/08](#)]

Moskovitz Asked Facebook To Remove His Bio And Photograph From The Company's PR Site. “Dustin Moskovitz, Mark Zuckerberg's Harvard roommate, recently stopped speaking to him. This has made things awkward at Facebook's Palo Alto campus, as Moskovitz is the last reminder walking around that Zuckerberg was not Facebook's sole founder. The two have resumed talking, but Moskovitz, seeking to dissociate himself from his college chum's creation, had dropped the title of vice president and asked for his bio and photograph to be taken off the company's PR website.” [Huffington Post, [5/1/08](#)]

In 2010, It Was Reported That Most Of Zuckerberg's Close Friends, Who Worked For Facebook At The Start, Had Left. “Meanwhile, however, most of Zuckerberg's close friends, who worked for Facebook at the start, have left. Adam D'Angelo, who has been friends with Zuckerberg since their hacking and programming days at Exeter, teamed up with another former Facebook employee, Charlie Cheever, to start Quora.com, a social network that aggregates questions and answers on various topics. Chris Hughes, Zuckerberg's Harvard roommate, left to join the Obama campaign and later founded the philanthropic site Jumo.com. In part, the exodus reflects the status that former Facebook employees have in the tech world. But the departures also point to the difficulty some people have working for Zuckerberg.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

- **The Fact That All Of Zuckerberg's Friends Who Worked On Facebook During Its Infancy Had Departed Pointed To “The Difficulty Some People Ha[d] Working For Zuckerberg.”** “Meanwhile, however, most of Zuckerberg's close friends, who worked for Facebook at the start, have left. Adam D'Angelo, who has been friends with Zuckerberg since their hacking and programming days at Exeter, teamed up with another former Facebook employee, Charlie Cheever, to start Quora.com, a social network that aggregates questions and answers on various topics. Chris Hughes, Zuckerberg's Harvard roommate, left to join the Obama campaign and later founded the philanthropic site Jumo.com. In part, the exodus reflects the status that former Facebook employees have in the tech world. But the departures also point to the difficulty some people have working for Zuckerberg.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

...MAKING MARK ZUCKERBERG THE FACE OF FACEBOOK, LEADING TO HARSH REVELATIONS ABOUT HIM

Zuckerberg Was Described As “A Robot” Who Had Been “Overprogrammed.” “His affect can be distant and disorienting, a strange mixture of shy and cocky. When he's not interested in what someone is talking about, he'll just look away and say, “Yeah, yeah.” Sometimes he pauses so long before he answers it's as if he were ignoring the question altogether. The typical complaint about Zuckerberg is that he's “a robot.” One of his closest friends told me, “He's been overprogrammed.” Indeed, he sometimes talks like an Instant Message—brusque, flat as a dial tone—and he can come off as flip and condescending, as if he always knew something that you didn't. But face to face he is often charming, and he's becoming more comfortable onstage.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

When Preparing For The Winklevoss Trial, Facebook's Legal Team Searched Zuckerberg's Computer And Found IMs Portraying Zuckerberg As Backstabbing, Conniving, And Insensitive. “To prepare for litigation against the Winklevosses and Narendra, Facebook's legal team searched Zuckerberg's computer and came across Instant Messages he sent while he was at Harvard. Although the IMs did not offer any evidence to support the claim of theft, according to sources who have seen many of the messages, the IMs portray Zuckerberg as backstabbing, conniving, and insensitive. A small group of lawyers and Facebook executives reviewed the messages, in a two-hour meeting in January, 2006, at the offices of Jim Breyer, the managing partner at the venture-capital firm Accel Partners, Facebook's largest outside investor.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

In 2011, GQ Ranked Zuckerberg The Worst-Dressed Man Of Silicon Valley. “Mark Zuckerberg is known for a lot of things — starting Facebook, inspiring the Aaron Sorkin-David Fincher movie The Social Network — but fashion is not one of them. The CEO and co-founder of the social networking giant has been ranked the worst dressed man of Silicon valley according to a new poll by GQ. The news comes less than a year after he was named to Esquire's worst-dressed list in January.” [Hollywood Reporter, [8/4/11](#)]

In 2010, Esquire Named Zuckerberg In Their Celebrity Style Hall Of Shame. “Mark Zuckerberg is known for a lot of things — starting Facebook, inspiring the Aaron Sorkin-David Fincher movie The Social Network — but fashion is not one of them. The CEO and co-founder of the social networking giant has been ranked the worst dressed man of Silicon valley according to a new poll by GQ. The news comes less than a year after he was named to Esquire’s worst-dressed list in January.” [Hollywood Reporter, [8/4/11](#)]

LATER - FACEBOOK BECAME A MONOLITH THAT HARVESTED USER DATA ON A DAILY BASIS, WITH ZUCKERBERG HAVING NEAR TOTAL CONTROL

LATER – FACEBOOK GREW RAPIDLY INTO A GLOBAL COMPANY THAT HAD A MICROSCOPE ON BILLIONS OF PEOPLE

FACEBOOK GREW FROM 123.9 MILLION USERS TO 1 BILLION USERS IN A MERE FOUR YEARS

BETWEEN 2008 – 2012, FACEBOOK SAW EXPLOSIVE GROWTH, PROVIDING A PATH TO ITS PUBLIC \$104 BILLION VALUATION

In June 2008, Facebook Overtook Myspace In Unique Monthly Visitors, Getting 123.9 Million Users Compared To Myspaces 114.6 Million. “New figures from metrics firm comScore show that, in May, the battle of the social-networking sites may have gained a new front-runner: Facebook appears to have surpassed long-time rival MySpace in worldwide unique visitors for the first time. ComScore representatives said that Facebook’s lead began in April, when the site passed MySpace by a hair, and widened in May. Facebook, according to comScore, pulled in 123.9 million unique visitors in the month of May, beating MySpace’s 114.6 million, and 50.6 billion page views, compared to MySpace’s 45.4 billion. It has been a slow but steady upward climb for Facebook, founded by then-Harvard undergraduate Mark Zuckerberg in 2004.” [Zdnet, [6/23/08](#)]

In August 2008, Facebook Hit 100 Million Active Users. “Facebook has hit 100 million active users. No formal press release has been issued, so you’re going to have to believe the guy who built the site. The news came straight from the source: Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and several of his fellow executives put it in their status messages on the social network, and platform manager Dave Morin broadcast it in his Twitter feed. At least one of them referred to the number being “active users,” the statistic that Facebook prefers to use, rather than registered accounts overall.” [CNET, [8/26/08](#)]

In July 2010, Facebook Reached 500 Million Users. “If Facebook were a country, it would be the third largest one in the world. But on the day that the massive social network achieved its most significant milestone yet – crossing the 500-million-member mark – the site’s young CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, said that it’s the users who deserve all the credit.” [ABC News, [7/21/10](#)]

- **In 2010, Zuckerberg Was Named TIME Person Of The Year.** “Many ask whether at a mere 26, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg could possibly merit being named Person of the Year by Time magazine. For them it’s like Obama getting the Nobel Prize in the first year of his presidency. Perhaps merited, but premature. From my vantagepoint, having chronicled Facebook and Zuckerberg’s story, there is irrefutable logic in recognizing Zuckerberg’s uniquely historic impact on the world. A legitimate question remains—should it have been this year?—but only because I suspect that he will likely have even more impact next year. And perhaps more after that.” [Daily Beast, [12/15/10](#)]

In October 2012, Facebook Reached 1 Billion Users. “It’s finally happened: Facebook exceeded 1 billion users. Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg announced Thursday that his social media site had hit the milestone. “This morning, there are more than one billion people using Facebook actively each month,” he said. “Helping a billion people connect is amazing, humbling and by far the thing I am most proud of in my life.” Topping the 1 billion mark means that Facebook now reaches one out of every 7 people on the planet.” [CNN, [10/4/12](#)]

In May 2012, Facebook Went Public With An IPO Of \$104 Billion, The Third Largest Public Offering In The History Of The U.S. “As investors raced to buy shares, the sprawling social network raised \$16 billion on Thursday, in an initial public offering that valued Facebook at \$104 billion. While the I.P.O. shares, 421 million of them, are being sold at \$38 each, the feverish anticipation of their debut could drive them higher on Friday when the stock starts trading about 11 a.m. Newly public technology stocks — particularly ones that have captured investors’ attention like Facebook — often achieve double-digit gains in a one-day pop [...] The I.P.O. signals a rapid evolution for the company. In just eight years,

Facebook has gone from a scrappy college service founded in a Harvard dormitory to the third-largest public offering in the history of the United States, behind General Motors and Visa.” [NY Times, [5/17/12](#)]

AFTER REACHING A BILLION USERS, FACEBOOK BEGAN ITS JOURNEY TO GLOBAL DOMINATION (AND ITS HABIT OF GROSSLY VIOLATING USER PRIVACY)

AFTER REACHING A BILLION USERS, ZUCKERBERG ASKED “SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?”

After Facebook Reached 1 Billion Users, Zuckerberg Said “It Was Like, O.K. Wow, So What Do We Do Now.”

“Zuckerberg has been thinking about Facebook’s long-term future at least since the site exceeded a billion users in 2012. ‘This was something that had been this rallying cry inside the company,’ he says. ‘And it was like, O.K., wow, so what do we do now?’ (It’s tempting to clean up Zuckerberg’s quotes to give them more gravitas, but that’s how he talks.) One answer was to put down bets on emerging platforms and distribution channels, in the form of some big-ticket acquisitions: the photo-sharing app Instagram for \$1 billion (a head snapper at the time, but in hindsight a steal); the virtual-reality startup Oculus Rift for \$2 billion; the messaging service Whats App for \$22 billion (still a head snapper).” [TIME, [12/15/14](#)]

- **Time: “One Answer Was To Put Down Bets On Emerging Platforms And Distribution Channels, In The Form Of Some Big-Ticket Acquisitions” Like Instagram, Oculus And WhatsApp.** “Zuckerberg has been thinking about Facebook’s long-term future at least since the site exceeded a billion users in 2012. “This was something that had been this rallying cry inside the company,” he says. “And it was like, O.K., wow, so what do we do now?” (It’s tempting to clean up Zuckerberg’s quotes to give them more gravitas, but that’s how he talks.) One answer was to put down bets on emerging platforms and distribution channels, in the form of some big-ticket acquisitions: the photo-sharing app Instagram for \$1 billion (a head snapper at the time, but in hindsight a steal); the virtual-reality startup Oculus Rift for \$2 billion; the messaging service Whats App for \$22 billion (still a head snapper). But what about the bigger picture—the even bigger picture?” [TIME, [12/15/14](#)]

Zuckerberg Wasn’t Content With Facebook Reaching A Billion Users, Saying “If Your Mission Is To Connect The World [...] That Doesn’t Mean That You’re Anywhere Near Fulfilling The Actual Mission.” “One answer was to put down bets on emerging platforms and distribution channels, in the form of some big-ticket acquisitions: the photo-sharing app Instagram for \$1 billion (a head snapper at the time, but in hindsight a steal); the virtual-reality startup Oculus Rift for \$2 billion; the messaging service Whats App for \$22 billion (still a head snapper). But what about the bigger picture—the even bigger picture? ‘We were thinking about the first decade of the company, and what were the next set of big things that we wanted to take on, and we came to this realization that connecting a billion people is an awesome milestone, but there’s nothing magical about the number 1 billion. If your mission is to connect the world, then a billion might just be bigger than any other service that had been built. But that doesn’t mean that you’re anywhere near fulfilling the actual mission.” [TIME, [12/15/14](#)]

IN 2011, FACEBOOK WAS REPORTED TO HAVE WORKED TO “SPREAD ITS TENTACLES ACROSS THE WEB”

New York Times, 2011: Facebook Had “Long Worked To Spread Its Tentacles Across the Web.” “‘Listening to music is something that people do with their friends,’ Mr. Zuckerberg said. ‘Music, TV, news, books — those types of things I think people just naturally do with their friends. I hope we can play a part in enabling those new companies to get built, and companies that are out there producing this great content to become more social.’ Facebook has long worked to spread its tentacles across the Web, and to persuade media companies to use its data about connections between people to make their services more “social.” In France, Mr. Zuckerberg mentioned Netflix as one of the companies that had been in talks with Facebook.” [NY Times, [5/27/11](#)]

IN 2009, ZUCKERBERG BEGAN EVOLVING HIS VIEWS ON PRIVACY, REALIZING USER DATA WAS THE MODERN-DAY VERSION OF OIL OR GOLD

IN 2009, FACEBOOK BEGAN CONSTANTLY ALTERING THEIR TERMS OF SERVICE TO ALLOW IT MORE ACCESS AND CONTROL OVER USER DATA

When Facebook Updated Their Terms Of Service In 2009, The Company Deleted A Provision That Said Users Could Remove Their Content At Any Time. “The pages, called terms of service, generally outline appropriate conduct and grant a license to companies to store users’ data. Unknown to many users, the terms frequently give broad power to Web site operators. This month, when Facebook updated its terms, it deleted a provision that said users could remove

their content at any time, at which time the license would expire. Further, it added new language that said Facebook would retain users' content and licenses after an account was terminated. Mark Zuckerberg, the chief executive of Facebook, said in a blog post on Monday that the philosophy 'that people own their information and control who they share it with has remained constant.' Despite the complaints, he did not indicate the language would be revised." [NY Times, [2/17/09](#)]

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ZUCKERBERG SAID PEOPLE NEEDED TO GO THROUGH THE "PROCESS OF REALIZING" THAT SHARING INFORMATION WAS "GOOD"

Zuckerberg Said People Needed To Go Through The "Process Of Realizing That Sharing Information Is Good" And Then "Slowly Sharing More And More Information Over Time." "But we figured that over time that wouldn't actually be the best approach. We figured it wouldn't get the most information. It would only get stuff that was publicly available to everyone, and it wouldn't give people the control that they needed to be really be comfortable. No one wants to live in a surveillance society, which, if you take that to its extreme, could be where that's going. And there's (Facebook) -- a kind of a ground-up approach -- where people choose to share all this information themselves. It's a slower approach, right, because what it means is that people need to move through this process of realizing that sharing information is good, and slowly sharing more and more information over time. But by doing that you get a lot richer information; you get information that people don't want to share with everyone, but they just want to share with some people around them." [WIRED, Zuckerberg Interview, [6/30/09](#)]

Zuckerberg Said Facebook Was More Focused On How Much Users Were Sharing On The Platform, Rather Than How Much Time They Spent On It. "Instead, Zuckerberg spends much of his time thinking about how to keep Facebook expanding exponentially, and to keep people logging on (it is common for users to have a Facebook crush for a couple of weeks, a period where they say 'this is amazing', and even contact people they have never much liked, but the interest swiftly cools when they realise how much time it can consume, and how empty that level of communication can turn out to be). 'We're not focused on being cool,' Zuckerberg says. 'We're focused on sustainability, and what we're really focused on is not how much time people are spending with us, but how much they're sharing.' In a year's time he says he sees Facebook having millions more users." [The Guardian, [11/16/08](#)]

When Introducing New Feed, Facebook's VP Of Product Marketing, Chamath Palihapitiya, Said There Was "A Tremendous Amount Of Information Being Generated." "The biggest change: user profiles on the service will evolve from a single, flat and often cluttered page into four tabbed sub-pages dubbed feed, info, photos and applications. 'There is a tremendous amount of information being generated' on Facebook, said Chamath Palihapitiya, vice president of product marketing. 'We wanted a simpler and easier way for people to share it.' Feed, the primary page people will see when they visit other users on the service, will broadcast all of a user's recent Facebook activities — photos he or she uploaded, wall messages and new friends, for example." [NY Times, [5/21/08](#)]

In 2010, Zuckerberg Said Facebook Was "Building Toward A Web Where The Default [Was] Social." "Facebook on Wednesday announced plans to turn the web into one big cocktail party. 'The web is at a really important turning point right now,' Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's co-founder and CEO, said in a keynote address in San Francisco, California. 'We're building toward a web where the default is social. Every application and product will be redesigned from the ground up to use a person's real identity and friends.' Facebook calls this new social paradigm the 'Open Graph,' and Zuckerberg called the shift "the most transformative thing we've ever done for the web." [CNN, [4/21/10](#)]

Zuckerberg Recognized With Social Networking, "The Value That People Get [Was] Tied To How Much Information Everyone [Was] Sharing." "Penenberg: Were you aware of the network effects and viral growth from the very beginning? Zuckerberg: Yeah. I think the concept of network effects is pretty intuitive in something like this. Its basically that the value that people get is tied to how much information everyone is sharing. Penenberg: How early was the invitation system phased into the program?" [Fast Company, [9/21/09](#)]

IN 2009, FACEBOOK MADE USER PROFILES PUBLIC BY DEFAULT AND COMPLICATED THE PROCESS OF OPTING OUT

When Facebook Changed Its Privacy Settings To Make People’s Public by Default, Users Revolted, Claiming That Facebook Had Violated The Social Compact Upon Which The Company Was Based. “In December, 2009, Facebook made changes to its privacy policies. Unless you wrestled with a set of complicated settings, vastly more of your information—possibly including your name, your gender, your photograph, your list of friends—would be made public by default. The following month, Zuckerberg declared that privacy was an evolving “social norm.” The backlash came swiftly. The American Civil Liberties Union and the Electronic Privacy Information Center cried foul. Users revolted, claiming that Facebook had violated the social compact upon which the company is based. What followed was a tug-of-war about what it means to be a private person with a public identity. In the spring, Zuckerberg announced a simplified version of the privacy settings.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

- **New Yorker: “Unless You Wrestled With A Set Of Complicated Settings, Vastly More Of Your Information—Possibly Including Your Name, Your Gender, Your Photograph, Your List Of Friends—Would Be Made Public By Default.”** “In December, 2009, Facebook made changes to its privacy policies. Unless you wrestled with a set of complicated settings, vastly more of your information—possibly including your name, your gender, your photograph, your list of friends—would be made public by default. The following month, Zuckerberg declared that privacy was an evolving “social norm.” The backlash came swiftly. The American Civil Liberties Union and the Electronic Privacy Information Center cried foul. Users revolted, claiming that Facebook had violated the social compact upon which the company is based. What followed was a tug-of-war about what it means to be a private person with a public identity. In the spring, Zuckerberg announced a simplified version of the privacy settings.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

In 2010, Facebook Launched A “Like” Button Plug-In On Sites Across The Internet, Which Allowed It To Gather Data, Using Cookies, About Users Activity On The Site, Regardless If The User Used The Button Or Even Knew It Was There. “The case, filed in 2012, dates back to a 2010 update by Facebook called “Open Graph,” which was designed to give users’ friends a closer look at their activity and interests across the internet. As part of the update, the company launched a ‘Like’ button plug-in on sites across the internet, which users could hit to highlight their interests to their Facebook networks. The ‘Like’ button plug-in also allowed Facebook to gather data, using cookies, about users’ activity on that site — including, for example, what sites they visit, items they viewed or purchased, and communications they had with that site — regardless of whether the user actually used the button or even knew it was there, according to court documents.” [CNN, [2/15/22](#)]

- **To Alleviate Privacy Concerns, The Company Said At The Time That It Would Not Collect User-Identifying Cookies About A User’s Activity On Partner Websites While They Were Logged Out Of Facebook.** “The ‘Like’ button plug-in also allowed Facebook to gather data, using cookies, about users’ activity on that site — including, for example, what sites they visit, items they viewed or purchased, and communications they had with that site — regardless of whether the user actually used the button or even knew it was there, according to court documents. To alleviate privacy concerns, the company said at the time that it would not collect user-identifying cookies about a user’s activity on partner websites while they were logged out of Facebook. However, researchers found that Facebook continued to collect some identifying cookies on users’ internet activity even after they logged out of the platform, contrary to its promise.” [CNN, [2/15/22](#)]

IN 2010, ZUCKERBERG EVOLVED HIS VIEW ON PRIVACY, DESCRIBING IT AS AN EVOLVING SOCIAL NORM

The Guardian HEADLINE: “Privacy No Longer A Social Norm, Says Facebook Founder.” [The Guardian, [1/10/10](#)]

Zuckerberg Did Not Think Privacy Was A “Social Norm” Anymore. “The rise of social networking online means that people no longer have an expectation of privacy, according to Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Talking at the Crunchie awards in San Francisco this weekend, the 25-year-old chief executive of the world’s most popular social network said that privacy was no longer a ‘social norm’. ‘People have really gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people,’ he said.” [The Guardian, [1/10/10](#)]

- **Zuckerberg Believed That Because People Had “Gotten Comfortable Not Only Sharing More Information And Different Kinds, But More Openly And With More People,” The Social Norm Of Privacy Had “Evolved Over Time.”** “Talking at the Crunchie awards in San Francisco this weekend, the 25-year-old chief executive of the world’s most popular social network said that privacy was no longer a ‘social norm’. ‘People have really gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people,’ he

said. 'That social norm is just something that has evolved over time.' Zuckerberg said that the rise of social media reflected changing attitudes among ordinary people, adding that this radical change has happened in just a few years." [The Guardian, [1/10/10](#)]

Zuckerberg Said It Was Important For Companies Like His To Reflect Changing Social Norms In Order To Remain Relevant And Competitive. "That eventually led to the company settling a lawsuit for \$9.5m, but it did not prevent it from bringing in new privacy changes in December that one campaign group called 'plain ugly'. In his talk, however, Zuckerberg said it was important for companies like his to reflect the changing social norms in order to remain relevant and competitive. 'A lot of companies would be trapped by the conventions and their legacies of what they've built,' he said." [The Guardian, [1/10/10](#)]

- **Zuckerberg: "A Lot Of Companies Would Be Trapped By The Conventions And Their Legacies Of What They've Built."** "In his talk, however, Zuckerberg said it was important for companies like his to reflect the changing social norms in order to remain relevant and competitive. 'A lot of companies would be trapped by the conventions and their legacies of what they've built,' he said. "Doing a privacy change for 350 million users is not the kind of thing that a lot of companies would do." [The Guardian, [1/10/10](#)]

IN 2010, THE NEW YORKER WROTE THAT FACEBOOK'S BUSINESS DEPENDED ON "SHIFTING NOTIONS OF PRIVACY"

New Yorker, 2010: Facebook's Business Model "Depend[ed] On Our Shifting Notions Of Privacy, Revelation, And Sheer Self-Display." "Zuckerberg may seem like an over-sharer in the age of over-sharing. But that's kind of the point. Zuckerberg's business model depends on our shifting notions of privacy, revelation, and sheer self-display. The more that people are willing to put online, the more money his site can make from advertisers. Happily for him, and the prospects of his eventual fortune, his business interests align perfectly with his personal philosophy. In the bio section of his page, Zuckerberg writes simply, 'I'm trying to make the world a more open place.'" [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

- **The New Yorker Asserted That Facebook Could Make More Money From Advertisers "The More That People Are Willing To Put Online."** "Zuckerberg may seem like an over-sharer in the age of over-sharing. But that's kind of the point. Zuckerberg's business model depends on our shifting notions of privacy, revelation, and sheer self-display. The more that people are willing to put online, the more money his site can make from advertisers. Happily for him, and the prospects of his eventual fortune, his business interests align perfectly with his personal philosophy. In the bio section of his page, Zuckerberg writes simply, 'I'm trying to make the world a more open place.'" [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

In January 2010, Zuckerberg Described Privacy As An Evolving "Social Norm." "...In December, 2009, Facebook made changes to its privacy policies. Unless you wrestled with a set of complicated settings, vastly more of your information—possibly including your name, your gender, your photograph, your list of friends—would be made public by default. The following month, Zuckerberg declared that privacy was an evolving "social norm." The backlash came swiftly. The American Civil Liberties Union and the Electronic Privacy Information Center cried foul. Users revolted, claiming that Facebook had violated the social compact upon which the company is based." [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

WIRED, 2009: Facebook Was "Pushing Users To Stop Being So Private With Their Information." "Facebook is pushing users to stop being so private with their information, and from the looks of it, founder Mark Zuckerberg is leading the charge by sharing photos of himself at parties and with his girlfriend. Facebook execs have in the past largely kept their profiles locked down, even as 80 percent of Facebook users stick with the default privacy settings that have long made all pictures public." [WIRED, Zuckerberg Interview, [6/30/09](#)]

Zuckerberg Believed Privacy Was The "Third-Rail Issue" Online, Complaining In 2010 That "A Lot Of People Who Are Worried About Privacy And Those Kinds Of Issues [Would] Take Any Minor Misstep [...] And Turn it Into As Big A Deal As Possible." "I asked Zuckerberg about this during our walk in Palo Alto. Privacy, he told me, is the "third-rail issue" online. "A lot of people who are worried about privacy and those kinds of issues will take any minor misstep that we make and turn it into as big a deal as possible," he said. He then excused himself as he typed on his iPhone 4, answering a text from his mother. 'We realize that people will probably criticize us for this for a long time, but we just believe that this is the right thing to do.'" [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

- **Zuckerberg: "We Realize That People Will Probably Criticize Us For This For A Long Time, But We Just Believe That This Is The Right Thing To Do."** "I asked Zuckerberg about this during our walk in Palo Alto. Privacy, he told me, is the "third-rail issue" online. "A lot of people who are worried about privacy and those kinds of issues will take any minor misstep that we make and turn it into as big a deal as possible," he said. He then

excused himself as he typed on his iPhone 4, answering a text from his mother. 'We realize that people will probably criticize us for this for a long time, but we just believe that this is the right thing to do.'" [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

In 2010, Zuckerberg Said Facebook Was “Trying To Tell People To Share Information And Be Comfortable With That.” “Wired.com: Does that mean every Facebook user will have control over how public his/her information is and be able to decide whether or not it can be crawled by search engines? Zuckerberg: We've already started moving in that direction. Just a couple of weeks ago we announced this open privacy setting where prior to that it was impossible for someone to take their profile and say that they wanted it to be open. Now they can do that. They can say it's open to everyone. And what I would just expect is that as time goes on, we're just going to keep on moving more and more in that direction. We launched stuff like Platform, and we get a lot of praise for that. We also get a lot of people saying "But this isn't as open as it needs to be." And in a lot of ways I think they're right, but this stuff takes time. We're moving a community of 200 million people along this spectrum trying to tell people to share information and be comfortable with that. Just from the launches that we've had, it's pretty clear that we haven't mastered the art of moving people along in terms of change, making these changes; but I think we're getting better at it.” [WIRED, [6/30/09](#)]

At Facebook’s 2010 F8 Conference, The Company Announced It Was Sending User Profile Information In Bulk To Companies Like Yelp, Pandora And Microsoft. “Zuckerberg defended the change -- largely intended to keep up with the publicness of Twitter, saying that people's notions of privacy were changing. He took no responsibility for being the one to drag many Facebook users into the net's public sphere. Then last week at its f8 conference, Facebook announced it was sending user profile information in bulk to companies like Yelp, Pandora and Microsoft. Thus, when users show up at those sites while logged in to Facebook, they see personalized versions of the those services (unless the user opts out of each site, somewhere deep in the bowels of Facebook's privacy control center).” [WIRED, [4/28/10](#)]

IN 2010, FACEBOOK WAS REPORTED TO BE CHANGING THEIR PRIVACY POLICIES “ALMOST ALWAYS” TO ALLOW INFORMATION “TO BE EXPOSED IN MORE WAYS” ...

NBC News HEADLINE, 2010: “Privacy Is Dead On Facebook. Get Over It.” [NBC News, [1/13/10](#)]

The Guardian Reported That “The Rise Of Social Networking Online [Meant] That People No Longer Ha[d] An Expectation Of Privacy.” “The rise of social networking online means that people no longer have an expectation of privacy, according to Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Talking at the Crunchie awards in San Francisco this weekend, the 25-year-old chief executive of the world's most popular social network said that privacy was no longer a ‘social norm’. ‘People have really gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people,’ he said.” [The Guardian, [1/10/10](#)]

In 2010, The New Yorker Noted That Facebook’s Privacy Policy Changes Were “Almost Always Allowing More Information To Be Exposed In More Ways.” “Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook in his college dorm room six years ago. Five hundred million people have joined since, and eight hundred and seventy-nine of them are his friends. The site is a directory of the world’s people, and a place for private citizens to create public identities. You sign up and start posting information about yourself: photographs, employment history, why you are peeved right now with the gummy-bear selection at Rite Aid or bullish about prospects for peace in the Middle East. Some of the information can be seen only by your friends; some is available to friends of friends; some is available to anyone. Facebook’s privacy policies are confusing to many people, and the company has changed them frequently, almost always allowing more information to be exposed in more ways.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

- **New Yorker, 2010: “Facebook’s Privacy Polies Are Confusing To Many People, And The Company Has Changed Them Frequently.”** “Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook in his college dorm room six years ago. Five hundred million people have joined since, and eight hundred and seventy-nine of them are his friends. The site is a directory of the world’s people, and a place for private citizens to create public identities. You sign up and start posting information about yourself: photographs, employment history, why you are peeved right now with the gummy-bear selection at Rite Aid or bullish about prospects for peace in the Middle East. Some of the information can be seen only by your friends; some is available to friends of friends; some is available to anyone. Facebook’s privacy policies are confusing to many people, and the company has changed them frequently, almost always allowing more information to be exposed in more ways.” [New Yorker, [9/20/10](#)]

FACEBOOK WAS UNCONCERNED WITH THE PUBLIC BACKLASH THEY KNEW THEY’D RECEIVE FROM ENCROACHING ON USER PRIVACY

Washington Post Noted That Whenever It Released A New Product, Facebook “Would Wait For The Inevitable Negative Reaction On Privacy, Then Announce Minimal Changes Without Fundamentally Altering The New Feature.” “All that ubiquity challenges how we think about what should be private, and what we broadcast to our “friends” — a term that now includes anyone we happen to remember from high school, that temp job from a few years ago, or last night’s party. With every new product launch, from News Feed to the doomed Beacon advertising play, it seemed Facebook would wait for the inevitable negative reaction on privacy, then announce minimal changes without fundamentally altering the new feature. It would explain away the fuss with careful spin: ‘We are listening to our users,’ or ‘We look forward to your feedback.’ Each time, the people at Facebook reassured us all they really want to do is make “the world more open and connected.” [Washington Post, [2/3/14](#)]

NPR, 2010: Facebook Had Been “Plagued By Periodic Privacy Concerns.” “While Facebook has enjoyed nothing short of phenomenal growth, it hasn’t come without a few glitches. Just this week, the site was hit by two major outages in as many days, and it also has been plagued by periodic privacy concerns. Scott Piergrossi, vice president of creative development at the Brand Institute, agrees with the Bill Gates comparison. Zuckerberg, he said, is the young geek who makes a billion but then unwittingly becomes a target when the technology fails to match up to expectations.” [NPR, [9/24/10](#)]

Sandberg Acknowledged In 2010 That It Was “Completely Fair To Say We Have Had Our Challenges Around Privacy.” “While Ms. Sandberg is not ultimately responsible for the features on the Facebook site — that’s Mr. Zuckerberg’s job — she is deeply involved in the planning that revolves around them. She readily acknowledges that Facebook has made mistakes. “It is completely fair to say that we have had our challenges around privacy,” she says. Ms. Sandberg says that Facebook built powerful privacy controls, but that they became too complicated for the average user. Facebook recently simplified those settings. “Mark took the step to apologize,” about the privacy problems, she notes.” [NY Times, [10/3/10](#)]

- **Sandberg Noted That “Mark Took Steps To Apologize” About Privacy Problems At The Site.** “While Ms. Sandberg is not ultimately responsible for the features on the Facebook site — that’s Mr. Zuckerberg’s job — she is deeply involved in the planning that revolves around them. She readily acknowledges that Facebook has made mistakes. “It is completely fair to say that we have had our challenges around privacy,” she says. Ms. Sandberg says that Facebook built powerful privacy controls, but that they became too complicated for the average user. Facebook recently simplified those settings. “Mark took the step to apologize,” about the privacy problems, she notes.” [NY Times, [10/3/10](#)]

Sandberg Claimed That Facebook Had Built Powerful Privacy Controls, But They Had Become Too Complicated For The Average User, And So Facebook Simplified Those Settings. “While Ms. Sandberg is not ultimately responsible for the features on the Facebook site — that’s Mr. Zuckerberg’s job — she is deeply involved in the planning that revolves around them. She readily acknowledges that Facebook has made mistakes. ‘It is completely fair to say that we have had our challenges around privacy,’ she says. Ms. Sandberg says that Facebook built powerful privacy controls, but that they became too complicated for the average user. Facebook recently simplified those settings. “Mark took the step to apologize,’ about the privacy problems, she notes.” [NY Times, [10/3/10](#)]

IN 2010, FACEBOOK LAUNCHED A FACIAL RECOGNITION FEATURE THAT HELPED AUTOMATICALLY TAG FRIENDS IN PHOTOS DESPITE LAWS AGAINST IT

In December 2010, Facebook Introduced Facial Recognition For Photos To Make The Tagging Process Easier. “Facebook users in the United States will be able to use a face detection feature for photos, making the tagging process easier. The feature, which debuts next week, uses face recognition software to look through your current photos and will match people in new photos to those who you have already tagged. The new feature, part of the photos application on Facebook, will group similar photos together and suggest the name of your friend in the photos. This will be especially handy when you want to tag a group of photos from the same event, so you won’t have to manually tag the same people in the entire album.” [PC World, [12/16/10](#)]

- **Users Had To Opt-Out Of The Program If They Didn’t Want Their Name Suggested In other People’s Albums.** “Facebook engineer Justin Mitchell explained in a blog post that the social network, boasting more than 500 million users worldwide, took several steps to ensure that another privacy fiasco wouldn’t break out. If you don’t want your name suggested in other people’s albums, you can disable the feature from the site’s privacy settings menu. This way, your name will no longer be suggested in photo tags, but (again, depending on your settings) your friends will be able to tag you manually in photos.” [PC World, [12/16/10](#)]

- **The Feature Used Facial Recognition Software To Look Through Your Tags In Current Photos To Match People In New Photos.** “Facebook users in the United States will be able to use a face detection feature for photos, making the tagging process easier. The feature, which debuts next week, uses face recognition software to look through your current photos and will match people in new photos to those who you have already tagged. The new feature, part of the photos application on Facebook, will group similar photos together and suggest the name of your friend in the photos. This will be especially handy when you want to tag a group of photos from the same event, so you won’t have to manually tag the same people in the entire album.” [PC World, [12/16/10](#)]

LATER, FACEBOOK HAD TO PAY \$550 MILLION TO SETTLE A CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT OVER THEIR USE OF FACIAL RECOGNITION

Facebook Agreed To Pay \$550 Million To Settle A Class-Action Lawsuit Over Its Use Of Facial Recognition Technology. “Facebook said on Wednesday that it had agreed to pay \$550 million to settle a class-action lawsuit over its use of facial recognition technology in Illinois, giving privacy groups a major victory that again raised questions about the social network’s data-mining practices. The case stemmed from Facebook’s photo-labeling service, Tag Suggestions, which uses face-matching software to suggest the names of people in users’ photos.” [NY Times, [1/29/20](#)]

- **The Suit Said Facebook Had Violated An Illinois Biometric Privacy Law By Harvesting Facial Data For Tag Suggestions Without User Permission Or Disclosing How Long The Data Would Be Kept.** “The case stemmed from Facebook’s photo-labeling service, Tag Suggestions, which uses face-matching software to suggest the names of people in users’ photos. The suit said the Silicon Valley company violated an Illinois biometric privacy law by harvesting facial data for Tag Suggestions from the photos of millions of users in the state without their permission and without telling them how long the data would be kept. Facebook has said the allegations have no merit.” [NY Times, [1/29/20](#)]

LATER – FACEBOOK SETTLED CHARGES WITH THE FTC AFTER IT WAS ACCUSED OF DECEIVING USERS BY SAYING THEY HAD CONTROL OF THEIR PRIVACY

THE FTC ACCUSED FACEBOOK OF PROMISING USERS COULD KEEP THEIR INFORMATION PRIVATE, THEN REPEATEDLY MAKING IT PUBLIC

In November 2011, The FTC Announced The Commission And Facebook Had Agreed To Settle Charges That Facebook Deceived Customers Over Privacy Protections. “The social networking service Facebook has agreed to settle Federal Trade Commission charges that it deceived consumers by telling them they could keep their information on Facebook private, and then repeatedly allowing it to be shared and made public. The proposed settlement requires Facebook to take several steps to make sure it lives up to its promises in the future, including giving consumers clear and prominent notice and obtaining consumers’ express consent before their information is shared beyond the privacy settings they have established.” [FTC.gov, [11/29/11](#)]

The FTC Said Facebook Had Engaged In “Unfair And Deceptive Practices” Over Privacy Controls On The Site. “Accusing Facebook of engaging in “unfair and deceptive” practices, the federal government on Tuesday announced a broad settlement that requires the company to respect the privacy wishes of its users and subjects it to regular privacy audits for the next 20 years. The order, announced by the Federal Trade Commission in Washington, stems largely from changes that Facebook made to the way it handled its users’ information in December 2009. The commission contended that Facebook, without warning its users or seeking consent, made public information that users had deemed to be private on their Facebook pages.” [NY Times, [11/30/11](#)]

The FTC Said Facebook Had “Deceived Consumers By Telling Them They Could Keep Their Information On Facebook Private, And Then Repeatedly Allowing it To Be Shared And Made Public.” “The social networking service Facebook has agreed to settle Federal Trade Commission charges that it deceived consumers by telling them they could keep their information on Facebook private, and then repeatedly allowing it to be shared and made public. The proposed settlement requires Facebook to take several steps to make sure it lives up to its promises in the future, including giving consumers clear and prominent notice and obtaining consumers’ express consent before their information is shared beyond the privacy settings they have established.” [FTC.gov, [11/29/11](#)]

Under A 2011 Consent Decree With The FTC, Facebook Was Required To Obtain Permission Before Sharing A User’s Private Information With A Third Party In A Way That Exceeded The User’s Existing Privacy Settings. “News reports revealing that Facebook data had been used in this way triggered an investigation by the Federal Trade

Commission, which is probing whether Facebook violated a 2011 consent decree on its privacy practices, and also generated sharp bipartisan complaints about data management by the company. Reports about the sharing of data with device makers sharpened that scrutiny. Under the 2011 decree with the FTC, Facebook is required to obtain permission before sharing a user's private information with a "third party" in a way that exceeds that user's existing privacy settings. Facebook officials said that device makers such as Samsung or BlackBerry were suppliers, not "third parties."
[Washington Post, [6/30/18](#)]

THE FTC SAID FACEBOOK HAD ALLOWED OUTSIDE APP DEVELOPERS TO ACCESS USER INFORMATION – INCLUDING PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

The FTC Said Facebook Had Allowed Advertisers To Glean Personally Identifiable Information When A Facebook User Clicked On An Advertisement. "The commission contended that Facebook, without warning its users or seeking consent, made public information that users had deemed to be private on their Facebook pages. The order also said that Facebook, which has more than 800 million users worldwide, in some cases had allowed advertisers to glean personally identifiable information when a Facebook user clicked on an advertisement on his or her Facebook page. The company has long maintained that it does not share personal data with advertisers." [NY Times, [11/30/11](#)]

The FTC Said Facebook Had Shared User Information With Outside Application Developers – Even After A User Deleted An Account - Contrary To Representations Made To Its Users. "And the order said that Facebook had shared user information with outside application developers, contrary to representations made to its users. And even after a Facebook user deleted an account, according to the F.T.C., the company still allowed access to photos and videos. All told, the commission listed eight complaints. It levied no fines and did not accuse Facebook of intentionally breaking the law. However, if Facebook violated the terms of the settlement in the future, it would be liable to pay a penalty of \$16,000 a day for each count, the F.T.C. said." [NY Times, [11/30/11](#)]

FACEBOOK WAS REQUIRED TO OBTAIN USERS "AFFIRMATIVE EXPRESS CONSENT" BEFORE IT COULD OVERRIDE USER'S PRIVACY SETTINGS

The FTC Required Facebook To Obtain Users' "Affirmative Express Consent" Before It Could Override The User's Privacy Settings. "The settlement with the F.T.C. will undoubtedly require it to introduce more such friction. The order requires Facebook to obtain its users' "affirmative express consent" before it can override their own privacy settings. For example, if a user designated certain content to be visible only to "friends," Facebook could allow that content to be shared more broadly only after obtaining the user's permission." [NY Times, [11/30/11](#)]

The FTC Required Facebook To Undergo An Independent Privacy Audit Every Two Years For 20 Years. "Facebook is also obliged to undergo an independent privacy audit every two years for the next 20 years, according to the terms of the settlement. Marc Rotenberg, executive director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center, which is part of a coalition of consumer groups that filed a complaint with the F.T.C., commended the order but said settlements with individual companies fall short of what is needed: a federal law to protect consumer privacy." [NY Times, [11/30/11](#)]

LATER – FACEBOOK BEGAN SECRETLY EXPERIMENTED ON USERS TO HELP DETERMINE OUT THE POWER OF THEIR PLATFORM

IN 2012, FACEBOOK CONDUCTED A ONE WEEK EXPERIMENT TO STUDY HOW EMOTIONS COULD BE SPREAD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2012, Facebook Conducted A Study For One Week Testing The Effects Of Manipulating News Feed Based On Emotions. "Everything You Need to Know About Facebook's Controversial Emotion Experiment Facebook conducted a study for one week in 2012 testing the effects of manipulating News Feed based on emotions. The results have hit the media like a bomb. What did the study find? Was it ethical? And what could or should have been changed?" [WIRED, [6/30/14](#)]

Facebook Manipulated The News Feeds Of Over Half A Million Users To Study How Emotions Could Be Spread On Social Media. "But last week, Facebook revealed that it had manipulated the news feeds of over half a million randomly selected users to change the number of positive and negative posts they saw. It was part of a psychological study to examine how emotions can be spread on social media. The company says users consent to this kind of manipulation when they agree to its terms of service. But in the quick judgment of the Internet, that argument was not universally accepted." [NY Times, [6/30/14](#)]

Facebook Engineers Ran Experiments That Sought To Manipulate The Emotional Valence Of Posts Shown In Users' Feeds To Be More Positive Or More Negative, And Then Observed Whether Their Own Posts Changed To Match Those Moods. “The culture of experimentation ran deep at Facebook, as engineers pulled levers and measured the results. An experiment in 2012 that was published in 2014 sought to manipulate the emotional valence of posts shown in users' feeds to be more positive or more negative, and then observed whether their own posts changed to match those moods, raising ethical concerns, The Post reported at the time. Another, reported by Haugen to Congress this month, involved turning off safety measures for a subset of users as a comparison to see if the measures worked at all. A previously unreported set of experiments involved boosting some people more frequently into the feeds of some of their randomly chosen friends — and then, once the experiment ended, examining whether the pair of friends continued communication, according to the documents. A researcher hypothesized that, in other words, Facebook could cause relationships to become closer.” [Washington Post, [10/26/21](#)]

FACEBOOK DID NOT ASK USERS' FOR THEIR PERMISSION BEFORE EXPERIMENTING WITH THEIR NEWSFEEDS

Facebook Didn't Ask For Explicit Permission From Those It Selected To Conduct Their Experiment On. “The researchers found that moods were contagious. The people who saw more positive posts responded by writing more positive posts. Similarly, seeing more negative content prompted the viewers to be more negative in their own posts. Although academic protocols generally call for getting people's consent before psychological research is conducted on them, Facebook didn't ask for explicit permission from those it selected for the experiment. It argued that its 1.28 billion monthly users gave blanket consent to the company's research as a condition of using the service.” [NY Times, [6/30/14](#)]

RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT EMOTIONAL STATES COULD BE TRANSFERRED ON FACEBOOK WITHOUT THE USERS' AWARENESS

Facebook Found That “Emotional States [Could] Be Transferred To Others Via Emotional Contagion, Leading People To Experience The Same Emotions Without Their Awareness.” “As far as the study was concerned, this meant that it had shown “that emotional states can be transferred to others via emotional contagion, leading people to experience the same emotions without their awareness.” It touts that this emotional contagion can be achieved without “direct interaction between people” (because the unwitting subjects were only seeing each others' News Feeds).” [The Atlantic, [6/29/14](#)]

The Study Found That Emotions Were Contagious, With People Who Saw More Positive Posts In Turn Wrote More Positive Posts, And Users Who Saw Negative Posts Prompted Them To Be More Negative In Their Own Posts. “In an academic paper published in conjunction with two university researchers, the company reported that, for one week in January 2012, it had altered the number of positive and negative posts in the news feeds of 689,003 randomly selected users to see what effect the changes had on the tone of the posts the recipients then wrote. Editors' Picks Alina Cojocar: A Freelance Ballerina, Forging Her Own Path Exploring Caribbean Food, Island by Island How to Call Off Your Wedding The researchers found that moods were contagious. The people who saw more positive posts responded by writing more positive posts. Similarly, seeing more negative content prompted the viewers to be more negative in their own posts. Although academic protocols generally call for getting people's consent before psychological research is conducted on them, Facebook didn't ask for explicit permission from those it selected for the experiment.” [NY Times, [6/30/14](#)]

FACEBOOK DEFENDED THEIR LACK OF DISCLOSURE OR CONSENT WITH THE NEWSFEED EXPERIMENT, SAYING USERS AGREE TO NEWSFEED MANIPULATION UPON SIGN-UP

Facebook Claimed Users Consented To News Feed Manipulation When They Agreed To The Site's Terms Of Service. “But last week, Facebook revealed that it had manipulated the news feeds of over half a million randomly selected users to change the number of positive and negative posts they saw. It was part of a psychological study to examine how emotions can be spread on social media. The company says users consent to this kind of manipulation when they agree to its terms of service. But in the quick judgment of the Internet, that argument was not universally accepted.” [NY Times, [6/30/14](#)]

LATER – FACEBOOK BEGAN ENGAGING POLITICAL LEADER THROUGH LOBBYING AND CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

BETWEEN 2011 – 2013, FACEBOOK GREATLY RAMPED UP SPENDING ON LOBBYING AND POLITICAL DONATIONS

2011: In An WaPo Article On Facebook Hiring DC Staffers, A Facebook Spokesman Said It Was “Imperative That We Scale[d] Our Policy Team So That We Ha[d] The Resources In Place To Demonstrate To Policymakers That We [Were] Industry Leaders In Privacy, Data Security And Safety.” “Facebook continues D.C. hiring spree with White House, privacy expert hires. The hirings have created a politically connected team in Washington, with inroads in both parties and years of experience on the Hill and in the White House. Louisa Terrell, special assistant to President Obama for legislative affairs, will join the Silicon Valley-based firm in October as director of public policy. [...] ‘It’s imperative that we scale our policy team so that we have the resources in place to demonstrate to policymakers that we are industry leaders in privacy, data security and safety,’ said Facebook spokesman Andrew Noyes.” [Washington Post, [9/13/11](#)]

BETWEEN 2009 – 2012, FACEBOOK WENT FROM HAVING TWO LOBBYISTS TO HAVING 38

In 2012, Facebook Hired 38 Lobbyists, Up From Two In 2009. “Facebook officials said their lobbying expenses increased dramatically during the first quarter of this year because of a one-time compensation boost as restricted stock was transferred to some employees. Even so, the company has increased its presence in Washington. Thirty-eight federal lobbyists represented the company in 2012, up from two lobbyists in 2009, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, a non-partisan group that monitors lobbying spending.” [USA Today, [4/29/13](#)]

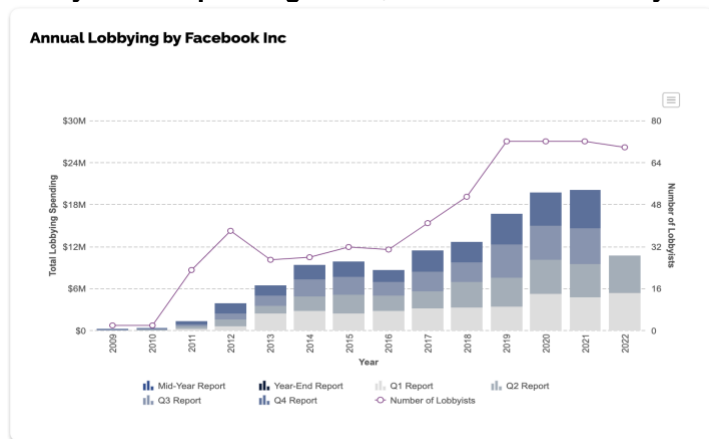
'09-'10, The First Years Of Recorded Lobbying By Facebook, The Platform Spent \$559,268

Year	Amount	Source
2009	\$207,878	Link
2010	\$351,390	Link
Total:	\$559,268	

Between 2011 – 2013, Facebook Spent \$11,630,000 On Lobbying.

Year	Amount	Source
2011	\$1,350,000	Link
2012	\$3,850,000	Link
2013	\$6,430,000	Link
Total	\$11,630,000	

Between 2011-2022 Facebook’s Lobbying Expenditures And Lobbying Hires Grew From Nearly Zero Spent On Lobbyists To Spending Over \$6 Million On 38 Lobbyists.



[Open Secrets, Accessed [9/15/22](#)]

BETWEEN 2010 – 2014, FACEBOOK INCREASED THEIR POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY 1,671%

Between 2010 & 2014, Facebook Increased Their Political Contribution Spending By 1,671%, From \$46,770 In 2010 To \$828,574 In 2014.

Cycle	Total
2010	\$46,770

2012	\$638,233
2014	\$828,574
Increase '10 - '14	\$781,804 -- 1,671%

[OpenSecrets.org, Accessed [9/15/22](#)]

FACEBOOK BEGAN STRATEGICALLY CONTRIBUTION TO POLITICAL FIGURES, GOING FROM A NEAR TOTAL FOCUS ON DEMOCRATS TO AN EVEN SPLIT BETWEEN PARTIES

Between 2010 – 2014, Facebook Went From Directing 70% Of Their Political Spending To Democrats In '10 To A Near Even Split Between Democrats And Republicans In '14.

Cycle	Democrats	% To Dems	Republicans	% To Republicans
2010	\$32,620	71.66%	\$12,900	28.34%
2012	\$410,732	64.79%	\$223,251	35.21%
2014	\$426,700	52.07%	\$392,800	47.93%

[OpenSecrets.org, Accessed [9/15/22](#)]

IN 2012, 90% OF FACEBOOK'S POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS WENT TO INCUMBENTS

In 2012 Directed 90% Of Their Political Spending Towards Incumbents.

Status	Amount	Percentage
Incumbents	\$333,701	90.51%
Non-Incumbents	\$35,000	9.49%

[OpenSecrets.org, Accessed [9/15/22](#)]

LATER – MARK ZUCKERBERG SOLIDIFIES HIS POWER BY CREATING A DUAL-CLASS STOCK STRUCTURE

ZUCKERBERG HAD “LITTLE INTEREST” IN STEPPING ASIDE AND ALLOW A MORE EXPERIENCED LEADER TO RUN FACEBOOK

In 2008, The New York Times Reported That Zuckerberg Had “Little Interest In Handing Over The Reins Of His Company To More Experienced Leadership.” “STILL NO. 1 Mark Zuckerberg, the 23-year-old chief executive of the social network Facebook, has little interest in handing over the reins of his company to more experienced leadership. ‘We decided it was more appropriate for me to stay as the C.E.O.,’ he said last week while discussing the hiring of Sheryl Sandberg, 38, a sales executive from Google who will become Facebook’s chief operating officer. ‘It’s a more honest way to describe the arrangement than at some other places where you have someone called the C.E.O. but the founder is still running the company.’” [NY Times, [3/9/08](#)]

In November 2009, Facebook Created A Dual-Class Stock Structure, Creating Public Class A Shares And Class B Shares That Had 10 Votes Each On Matters Of Corporate Governance. “Facebook is taking a rudimentary step down the path to becoming a public company. The company said on Tuesday that it was creating a dual-class stock structure for itself, and converting all of its current shares into so-called Class B shares, which will have 10 votes each on matters of corporate governance. Class A shares, which would be sold in an initial public offering, would carry one vote. Facebook said it had “no plans to go public at this time.” [NY Times, [11/24/09](#)]

At The Time, Facebook Said It Had “No Plans To Go Public” When They Created A Dual-Class Stock Structure. “Facebook is taking a rudimentary step down the path to becoming a public company. The company said on Tuesday that it was creating a dual-class stock structure for itself, and converting all of its current shares into so-called Class B shares, which will have 10 votes each on matters of corporate governance. Class A shares, which would be sold in an initial public offering, would carry one vote. Facebook said it had “no plans to go public at this time.” [NY Times, [11/24/09](#)]

Facebook’s Spokesman, Larry Yu, Said Facebook Created The Dual-Class Stock Structure “Because Existing Shareholders Wanted To Maintain Control Over Voting To Ensure The Company [Could] Continue To Focus On The Long Term To Build A Great Business.” “In the event Facebook does sell shares, Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook’s

founder and chief executive, would firmly retain control over the company and its board of directors. 'We did introduce a dual-class stock structure because existing shareholders wanted to maintain control over voting on certain issues to help ensure the company can continue to focus on the long term to build a great business,' a Facebook spokesman, Larry Yu, said in an e-mailed statement. 'This revision to the stock structure should not be construed as a signal the company is planning to go public.'" [NY Times, [11/24/09](#)]

ZUCKERBERG HAD A DIRECT HAND IN CONTROLLING HOW FACEBOOK WORKED...

Zuckerberg Had Always Kept A Direct Hand In Controlling The Way The Facebook Site Worked. "In 2008, Mr. Zuckerberg brought in Sheryl Sandberg, a veteran executive from Google with expertise in online advertising, to be chief operating officer. She has become a prominent public face for Facebook, but it is always clear who is in charge. Mr. Zuckerberg has always kept a direct hand in controlling the way the Facebook site works, his associates and advisers say, refusing early on to clutter the news feed with advertising. He tweaked the site constantly, sometimes even earning the ire of users, as when it suddenly made some information that people had made visible only to friends available for all to see." [NY Times, [2/3/12](#)]

Fast Company: Microsoft's Investment In Facebook "[Did] Little To Dilute The Power Of" Zuckerberg, With His Reported 20% Stake. "It's a great deal, theoretically, for all concerned. Facebook gets a sky-high valuation and cash to expand its rapidly growing and sometimes unwieldy site. And the deal does little to dilute the power of the company's original investors. Founder Mark Zuckerberg, with his reported 20 percent stake, is now a twentysomething paper billionaire several times over. Meanwhile, Microsoft gets, for what is basically chump change, access to one, the most promising platform for delivering advertising on the Web since the popup and two, a whole new set of eyeballs as Facebook expands internationally." [Fast Company, [10/25/07](#)]

- **Fast Company: With The Microsoft Investment, "Facebook Took Very Little Skin Out Of The Game."** "The degree to which Facebook can deliver on its promise of an enhanced advertising environment — where the magic of the social graph provides a more robust way to put compelling advertising messages in front of targeted users — will determine whether the companies will be able to say they made a killer deal. Microsoft's investment is a relatively low cost, low-risk way in, and Facebook took very little skin out of the game. So, until the advertising results are in, it remains an elegant handshake for both companies." [Fast Company, [10/25/07](#)]

...WHICH HE BELIEVED LED FACEBOOK TO MASSIVE SUCCESS

Zuckerberg Believed Facebook's Success Was Enabled By It's Unusual Corporate Structure, Which Gave Him Permanent And Near-Total Control Over It. "But Zuckerberg has also made a series of savvy decisions that have allowed the company to maintain momentum as others have stumbled. And Facebook stock price is about 90 times its annual earnings (the stock market's overall average is about 24), suggesting that Wall Street expects the company to continue outperforming other companies of its size. Zuckerberg believes Facebook's success has been enabled by Facebook's unusual corporate structure, which gives him permanent and near-total control over the company he founded — despite owning fewer than 18 percent of Facebook shares. On Wednesday, Zuckerberg announced a new plan that would allow him to sell most of his shares — or donate them to charity — further reducing his stake in the company without losing his majority of the firm's voting rights." [Vox, [4/28/16](#)]

Zuckerberg Felt Tech Companies Ran Into The Issue Of Having "Define[d] Themselves Too Narrowly As A Company In A Specific Medium." "Wired.com: Except many believe that the rules that drove the PC industry don't apply to the rules that are evolving around business on the internet. They say that you actually need to start open and continue to be open. Zuckerberg: So I think one thing that's really important is that the rules are constantly changing. I think a lot of the issues that some of these other companies have had is they define themselves too narrowly as a company in a specific medium. Like e-mail could have easily moved into being what social networks are today. I think a lot of e-mail companies now are actually trying to move in that direction. But I feel like because they defined themselves as just e-mail companies, they didn't adapt quickly enough." [WIRED, Zuckerberg Interview, [6/30/09](#)]

ZUCKERBERG'S OUTSIZED POWER WASN'T IMPACTED BY FACEBOOK GOING PUBLIC

When Facebook Went Public, Zuckerberg Managed To Hold On To More Than One-Fourth Of The Shares In The Company. "Since the moment he dropped out of Harvard University, Mark Zuckerberg has stayed remarkably focused on two things: Facebook, and being the boss of Facebook [...] Most important, he arranged the ownership of Facebook so as to give himself extraordinary power to steer the company. By the time Facebook filed for a \$5 billion public offering on Wednesday, Mr. Zuckerberg had managed to hold on to more than one-fourth of the shares in the company, and his agreements with other investors enhanced his voting power to almost 60 percent of total shares." [NY Times, [2/3/12](#)]

- **When Facebook Went Public, Zuckerberg Had Agreements With Other Investors That Enhanced His Voting Power To Almost 60% Of Total Shares.** “Since the moment he dropped out of Harvard University, Mark Zuckerberg has stayed remarkably focused on two things: Facebook, and being the boss of Facebook [...] Most important, he arranged the ownership of Facebook so as to give himself extraordinary power to steer the company. By the time Facebook filed for a \$5 billion public offering on Wednesday, Mr. Zuckerberg had managed to hold on to more than one-fourth of the shares in the company, and his agreements with other investors enhanced his voting power to almost 60 percent of total shares.” [NY Times, [2/3/12](#)]
- **Zuckerberg’s 60% Voting Power Was More Control Than Bill Gates Had When Microsoft Went Public (49%) And Far Greater Than The Co-Founders Of Google Had In 2004 (16% Each).** “Most important, he arranged the ownership of Facebook so as to give himself extraordinary power to steer the company. By the time Facebook filed for a \$5 billion public offering on Wednesday, Mr. Zuckerberg had managed to hold on to more than one-fourth of the shares in the company, and his agreements with other investors enhanced his voting power to almost 60 percent of total shares. That’s a greater measure of control than Bill Gates had at Microsoft when it went public in 1986 (49 percent), and far greater than what the co-founders of Google had in 2004 (16 percent each). Typically, say Silicon Valley veterans, a first-time entrepreneur gets to the public market with a far smaller stake in his or her creation. Mr. Zuckerberg’s arrangement leaves little room for investors to have much input on the company’s direction.” [NY Times, [2/3/12](#)]
- **New York Times: Zuckerberg’s Voting Power Left “Little Room For Investors To Have Much Input On The Company’s Direction.”** “That’s a greater measure of control than Bill Gates had at Microsoft when it went public in 1986 (49 percent), and far greater than what the co-founders of Google had in 2004 (16 percent each). Typically, say Silicon Valley veterans, a first-time entrepreneur gets to the public market with a far smaller stake in his or her creation. Mr. Zuckerberg’s arrangement leaves little room for investors to have much input on the company’s direction. Mr. Zuckerberg’s success is an object lesson in what works in crowded, competitive Silicon Valley: Remain in charge, stave off potential predators and expand the company so quickly that no one can challenge the boss.” [NY Times, [2/3/12](#)]

In 2022, Despite A Majority Shareholders Voting To Terminate Dual-Class Voting And To Strip Zuckerberg Of His Board Chair, The Efforts Failed Because Of The Dual Class Stocks. “And yet the tenure of Zuckerberg doesn’t even seem to be up for debate. That’s because Zuckerberg controls the company through what’s known as dual-class stock. Most companies issue a single class of common stock. This gives each shareholder equal voting rights and ensures that the board of directors are accountable to the shareholders [...] Facebook shareholders voted by a 68 percent plurality to strip Zuckerberg of his role as chair. But Zuckerberg’s super-votes nixed that true majority. In a well governed company, the entire board oversees the CEO. But again, Zuckerberg controls the shares that elect the board. And yes, independent shareholders attempted to terminate the dual-class system, voting by a margin of 83 percent in 2019. But the effort also failed because of the dual-class.” [Public Citizen, [2/7/22](#)]

NOW – FACEBOOK BOUGHT UP COMPETITORS THEY VIEWED AS A THREAT TO THEIR LONG-TERM GROWTH

FACEBOOK DIDN’T BELIEVE IN COMPETITION – THEY BELIEVED IN BUYING IT OUT

House Antitrust Subcommittee: Facebook Maintained Its Monopoly By Buying, Copying, Or Killing Its Competitors. “In particular, the report noted that Facebook shores up its monopoly by identifying competitors that could pose a threat to the company and either acquiring them, copying them or killing them. One example of this presented by the report is a 2012 exchange between Zuckerberg and his chief financial officer at the time regarding the \$1 billion Instagram acquisition. ‘One way of looking at this is that what we’re really buying is time,’ Zuckerberg said, according to the report. ‘Even if some new competitors springs up, buying Instagram now ... will give us a year or more to integrate their dynamics before anyone can get close to their scale again.’” [CNBC, [10/6/20](#)]

Between 2004 - 2020, Facebook Acquired At Least 63 Companies. “Since its founding in 2004, Facebook has acquired at least 63 companies.⁸⁵⁴ The majority of these acquisitions have involved software firms, such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Face.com, Atlas, LiveWire, and Onavo.⁸⁵⁵ Facebook has also acquired several virtual reality and hardware companies, such as Oculus.⁸⁵⁶ More recently, the company has acquired several niche social apps,⁸⁵⁷ a blockchain platform,⁸⁵⁸ Oculus game developers,⁸⁵⁹ and a prominent GIF-making and sharing company.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

House Antitrust Subcommittee: “Facebook’s Serial Acquisitions Reflect The Company’s Interest In Purchasing Firms That Had The Potential To Develop Into Rivals Before They Could Fully Mature.” “Facebook’s internal documents indicate that the company acquired firms it viewed as competitive threats to protect and expand its dominance in the social networking market. As discussed earlier in this Report, Facebook’s senior executives described the company’s mergers and acquisitions strategy in 2014 as a ‘land grab’ to ‘shore up our position.’ 861 In 2012, Mr. Zuckerberg told Facebook’s former Chief Financial Officer that the purpose of acquiring nascent competitors like Instagram was to neutralize competitive threats and to maintain Facebook’s position. Documents show that when Facebook acquired WhatsApp, Mr. Zuckerberg and other senior executives, as well as data scientists, viewed WhatsApp as a potential threat to Facebook Messenger, as well as an opportunity to further entrench Facebook’s dominance. Facebook used critical acquisitions to increase the adoption of its social graph and expand its reach in markets. Finally, Facebook’s serial acquisitions reflect the company’s interest in purchasing firms that had the potential to develop into rivals before they could fully mature into strong competitive threats.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

ZUCKERBERG SAW ACQUISITIONS AS A WAY TO “SHORE UP OUR POSITION”

Zuckerberg Described Buying Companies As A “Land Grab” To “Shore Up Our Position.” “Facebook’s internal documents indicate that the company acquired firms it viewed as competitive threats to protect and expand its dominance in the social networking market. As discussed earlier in this Report, Facebook’s senior executives described the company’s mergers and acquisitions strategy in 2014 as a ‘land grab’ to ‘shore up our position.’ 861 In 2012, Mr. Zuckerberg told Facebook’s former Chief Financial Officer that the purpose of acquiring nascent competitors like Instagram was to neutralize competitive threats and to maintain Facebook’s position. Documents show that when Facebook acquired WhatsApp, Mr. Zuckerberg and other senior executives, as well as data scientists, viewed WhatsApp as a potential threat to Facebook Messenger, as well as an opportunity to further entrench Facebook’s dominance. Facebook used critical acquisitions to increase the adoption of its social graph and expand its reach in markets. Finally, Facebook’s serial acquisitions reflect the company’s interest in purchasing firms that had the potential to develop into rivals before they could fully mature into strong competitive threats.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

Zuckerberg: Facebook “Can Likely Always Just Buy Any Competitive Startups.” “Facebook has monopoly power in the market for social networking. Internal communications among the company’s Chief Executive Officer, Mark Zuckerberg, and other senior executives indicate that Facebook acquired its competitive threats to maintain and expand its dominance. For example, a senior executive at the company described its acquisition strategy as a ‘land grab’ to ‘shore up’ Facebook’s position, 11 while Facebook’s CEO said that Facebook ‘can likely always just buy any competitive startups,’ 12 and agreed with one of the company’s senior engineers that Instagram was a threat to Facebook.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

Facebook’s Purchases Of WhatsApp And Instagram Exemplified Facebook’s “Buy Or Bury” Strategy Against Competitors. “Almost a decade ago, the Federal Trade Commission raised no objections as Facebook spent billions of dollars to swoop up the trendy photo-sharing app Instagram and the messaging service WhatsApp. Now the same agency is demanding that Facebook sell both off companies, calling the earlier deals a prime example of the social network’s ‘buy or bury’ strategy for crushing competition. What happened in between is a shift in attitudes by antitrust regulators on what constitutes a dangerous monopoly — a development that poses risks not just to Facebook but to other dominant companies across industries including tech, pharmaceuticals and finance.” [Politico, 12/13/20]

ZUCKERBERG SAW INSTAGRAM AS A MAJOR COMPETITOR TO FACEBOOK AND PUSHED FOR ACQUIRING IT –ISSUING THREATS TO ITS FOUNDERS IF THEY DIDN’T SELL

In 2012, Facebook Bought Instagram For \$1 Billion. “That indicates Facebook bought WhatsApp to add value to its existing messaging services, as well as for the long-term potential of the company. Facebook bought Instagram for \$1 billion in 2012 for similar reasons: As young social network users gravitated towards photo-sharing, Facebook wanted to scoop up what could have eventually become a big rival. Like Instagram, WhatsApp will function as an autonomous unit within Facebook, with all the existing employees coming in as part of the deal.” [CNN, 2/19/14]

- **CNN: “As Young Social Network Users Gravitated Towards Photo-Sharing, Facebook Wanted To Scoop Up What Could Have Eventually Become A Big Rival.”** “That indicates Facebook bought WhatsApp to add value to its existing messaging services, as well as for the long-term potential of the company. Facebook bought Instagram for \$1 billion in 2012 for similar reasons: As young social network users gravitated towards photo-sharing, Facebook wanted to scoop up what could have eventually become a big rival. Like Instagram, WhatsApp

will function as an autonomous unit within Facebook, with all the existing employees coming in as part of the deal.” [CNN. [2/19/14](#)]

Zuckerberg: Instagram And Other Social Networks “Could Be Very Disruptive To Us.” “According to Facebook’s internal documents, Facebook acquired Instagram to neutralize a nascent competitive threat. In 2012, Mark Zuckerberg wrote to several Facebook executives citing concerns that Instagram posed a risk to Facebook. In February 2012, he said to David Ebersman, Facebook’s Chief Financial Officer, that he had ‘been thinking about . . . how much [Facebook] should be willing to pay to acquire mobile app companies like Instagram . . . that are building networks that are competitive with our own.’ 875 Mr. Zuckerberg told Mr. Ebersman that these ‘businesses are nascent but the networks are established, the brands are already meaningful and if they grow to a large scale they could be very disruptive to us.’ In response, Mr. Ebersman asked Mr. Zuckerberg whether the goals of the acquisition would be to: (1) neutralize a potential competitor; (2) acquire talent; or (3) integrate Instagram’s product with Facebook’s to improve its service.877 Mr. Zuckerberg replied that a purpose of the transaction would be to neutralize Instagram, saying that the goals of the deal were ‘a combination of (1) and (3).’” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

Zuckerberg Identified Instagram Had A Mobile Advantage And Could Hurt Facebook. “In one 2012 email, made public through a separate investigation by the US House judiciary subcommittee, Zuckerberg highlighted how Instagram had an edge on mobile, an area where Facebook was falling behind. In another, the CEO said Instagram could hurt Facebook even if it did not become huge. ‘The businesses are nascent but the networks are established, the brands are already meaningful and if they grow to a large scale they could be disruptive to us,’ Zuckerberg wrote. Instagram’s co-founder also fretted that his company might be targeted for destruction by Zuckerberg if he refused the deal.” [Guardian, 12/9/20]

FACEBOOK WARNED INSTAGRAM’S FOUNDERS THAT FACEBOOK PLANNED TO COPY AND BURY INSTAGRAM IF THEY DIDN’T SELL

House Antitrust Subcommittee: Zuckerberg Issued Veiled Threat To Instagram Founder To Sell Or Else. “In the negotiations of the deal, the report also notes a message exchange between Zuckerberg and Instagram cofounder Kevin Systrom. The report describes the exchange as Zuckerberg suggesting that ‘refusing to enter into a partnership with Facebook, including an acquisition, would have consequences for Instagram.’ The report quotes Zuckerberg as saying: ‘At some point soon, you’ll need to figure out how you actually want to work with us. This can be an acquisition, through a close relationship with Open Graph, through an arms length relationship using our traditional APIs, or perhaps not at all ... Of course, at the same time we’re developing our own photos strategy, so how we engage now will determine how much we’re partners vs. competitors down the line -- and I’d like to make sure we decide that thoughtfully as well.’” [CNBC, 10/6/20]

Zuckerberg Told Instagram’s Founder That “Refusing To Enter Into A Partnership With Facebook, Including An Acquisition, Would Have Consequences For Instagram.” “In the negotiations of the deal, the report also notes a message exchange between Zuckerberg and Instagram cofounder Kevin Systrom. The report describes the exchange as Zuckerberg suggesting that ‘refusing to enter into a partnership with Facebook, including an acquisition, would have consequences for Instagram.’ The report quotes Zuckerberg as saying: ‘At some point soon, you’ll need to figure out how you actually want to work with us. This can be an acquisition, through a close relationship with Open Graph, through an arms length relationship using our traditional APIs, or perhaps not at all ... Of course, at the same time we’re developing our own photos strategy, so how we engage now will determine how much we’re partners vs. competitors down the line -- and I’d like to make sure we decide that thoughtfully as well.’” [CNBC, 10/6/20]

Instagram’s Founder Was Concerned That His Company Would Be Targeted For Retribution If He Refused To Sell To Facebook. “In one 2012 email, made public through a separate investigation by the US House judiciary subcommittee, Zuckerberg highlighted how Instagram had an edge on mobile, an area where Facebook was falling behind. In another, the CEO said Instagram could hurt Facebook even if it did not become huge. ‘The businesses are nascent but the networks are established, the brands are already meaningful and if they grow to a large scale they could be disruptive to us,’ Zuckerberg wrote. Instagram’s co-founder also fretted that his company might be targeted for destruction by Zuckerberg if he refused the deal.” [Guardian, [12/9/20](#)]

Zuckerberg To Instagram Founder: “How We Engage Now Will Determine How Much We’re Partners Vs. Competitors Down The Line.” “In the negotiations of the deal, the report also notes a message exchange between Zuckerberg and Instagram cofounder Kevin Systrom. The report describes the exchange as Zuckerberg suggesting that ‘refusing to enter into a partnership with Facebook, including an acquisition, would have consequences for Instagram.’ The report quotes Zuckerberg as saying: ‘At some point soon, you’ll need to figure out how you actually want to work with us. This can be an acquisition, through a close relationship with Open Graph, through an arms length relationship using

our traditional APIs, or perhaps not at all ... Of course, at the same time we're developing our own photos strategy, so how we engage now will determine how much we're partners vs. competitors down the line -- and I'd like to make sure we decide that thoughtfully as well." [CNBC, [10/6/20](#)]

ZUCKERBERG TOLD INSTAGRAM FACEBOOK WAS CREATING A CLONE OF THEIR PRODUCT

Facebook Was Building Its Own Instagram “Clone” While Discussing Buying Instagram. “In response, another engineer asked, ‘Isn’t that why we’re building an Instagram clone?’ referencing Facebook’s development of Facebook Camera, a standalone photo app.⁹⁷² During negotiations to acquire Instagram, Mr. Zuckerberg referenced Facebook’s development of a similar app to Kevin Systrom, Instagram’s Chief Executive Officer.⁹⁷³ In messages between Mr. Zuckerberg and Mr. Systrom, Mr. Systrom said that it was difficult to evaluate the transaction independently of reports that Facebook was developing a similar product. He told Mr. Zuckerberg that he ‘wouldn’t feel nearly as strongly [about the acquisition] if independently you weren’t building a mobile photos app that makes people choose which engine to use.’⁹⁷⁴ Similarly, Mr. Zuckerberg suggested that refusing to enter into a partnership with Facebook, including an acquisition, would have consequences for Instagram, referencing the product Facebook was developing at the time: At some point soon, you’ll need to figure out how you actually want to work with us. This can be an acquisition, through a close relationship with Open Graph, through an arms length relationship using our traditional APIs, or perhaps not at all. . . Of course, at the same time we’re developing our own photos strategy, so how we engage now will determine how much we’re partners vs. competitors down the line—and I’d like to make sure we decide that thoughtfully as well.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

Zuckerberg To Instagram Founder: “We’re Developing Our Own Photos Strategy, So How We Engage Now Will Determine How Much We’re Partners Vs. Competitors Down The Line.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

FOLLOWING FACEBOOK’S ACQUISITION OF INSTAGRAM, ZUCKERBERG PROMISED IT WAS A ONE-OFF MOVE, EVEN THOUGH IT FOR SURE WASN’T

When Purchasing Instagram, Zuckerberg Said “We Don’t Plan On Doing Many More Of These, If Any At All.” “Facebook has agreed to buy photo sharing network Instagram for \$1 billion in a combination of cash and stock, the company announced Monday. It’s Facebook’s biggest acquisition ever, in both price and reach. With around 30 million active users, Instagram has the largest audience of any startup Facebook has purchased, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a blog post. ‘We don’t plan on doing many more of these, if any at all,’ Zuckerberg wrote. “But providing the best photo sharing experience is one reason why so many people love Facebook and we knew it would be worth bringing these two companies together.” [CNN, [4/9/12](#)]

FACEBOOK’S PURCHASE OF INSTAGRAM GAVE IT NEAR TOTAL CONTROL OVER THE SOCIAL MEDIA SPACE

Facebook And Its Subsidiaries Like Instagram Accounted For 75% Of All Time Spent On Social Media. “Facebook and its subsidiaries, including Instagram, account for 75% of all time spent on social media. In a new paper, Yale SOM economist Fiona Scott Morton writes that the company took control of the industry by misleading consumers and buying up rivals. Scott Morton is the founder and director of the Thurman Arnold Project at Yale, which performs and disseminates research on antitrust policy and enforcement.” [Yale.edu, [6/18/20](#)]

FACEBOOK BOUGHT WHATSAPP IN 2014 FOR \$19 BILLION, BELIEVING WHATSAPP WAS A THREAT TO FACEBOOK MESSENGER

Facebook Bought WhatsApp For \$19 Billion. “Zuckerberg made similar comments to Facebook’s growth and product teams regarding WhatsApp, according to the report. WhatsApp posed a threat to the company’s Messenger service, and in 2014, Facebook bought WhatsApp for \$19 billion.” [CNBC, 10/6/20]

- **The WhatsApp Deal Was The Largest Facebook Made In Its History.** “But a Facebook spokeswoman said that the deal has been approved in the United States, though it has not yet been approved in Europe. “We’re pleased the FTC has completed its review and cleared our acquisition of WhatsApp. Naturally, both companies will continue to comply with all applicable laws after the transaction closes,” Facebook said in a statement. The move brings Facebook, the world’s No. 1 online social network, closer to completing the largest deal in its 10-year

history, which will give Facebook an important asset in the fast-growing mobile messaging market.” [Reuters, [4/10/14](#)]

WhatsApp Was The Most Popular Messaging App For Smartphones When Facebook Bought It. “In a play to dominate messaging on phones and the Web, Facebook has acquired WhatsApp for \$19 billion. That’s a stunning sum for the five-year old company [...] WhatsApp is the most popular messaging app for smartphones, according to OnDevice Research. Buying WhatsApp will only bolster Facebook’s already strong position in the crowded messaging world. Messenger, Facebook’s a standalone messaging app for mobile devices, is second only to WhatsApp in its share of the smartphone market.” [CNN. [2/19/14](#)]

ZUCKERBERG AND FACEBOOK EXECUTIVES VIEWED WHATSAPP AS A THREAT

Facebook Executives Considered WhatsApp As A Threat To Facebook Messenger. “Facebook’s internal documents indicate that the company acquired firms it viewed as competitive threats to protect and expand its dominance in the social networking market. As discussed earlier in this Report, Facebook’s senior executives described the company’s mergers and acquisitions strategy in 2014 as a ‘land grab’ to ‘shore up our position.’ 861 In 2012, Mr. Zuckerberg told Facebook’s former Chief Financial Officer that the purpose of acquiring nascent competitors like Instagram was to neutralize competitive threats and to maintain Facebook’s position. Documents show that when Facebook acquired WhatsApp, Mr. Zuckerberg and other senior executives, as well as data scientists, viewed WhatsApp as a potential threat to Facebook Messenger, as well as an opportunity to further entrench Facebook’s dominance. Facebook used critical acquisitions to increase the adoption of its social graph and expand its reach in markets. Finally, Facebook’s serial acquisitions reflect the company’s interest in purchasing firms that had the potential to develop into rivals before they could fully mature into strong competitive threats.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

Zuckerberg Told Facebook Teams That WhatsApp was A Threat To Facebook’s Network. “Zuckerberg made similar comments to Facebook’s growth and product teams regarding WhatsApp, according to the report. WhatsApp posed a threat to the company’s Messenger service, and in 2014, Facebook bought WhatsApp for \$19 billion. According to the report: ‘In the context of market strategies for Messenger competing with WhatsApp, Mr. Zuckerberg told the company’s growth and product management teams that ‘being first is how you build a brand and a network effect.’ He also told them that Facebook has ‘an opportunity to do this at scale, but that opportunity won’t last forever. I doubt we have even a year before WhatsApp starts moving in this direction.’” [CNBC, 10/6/20]

Facebook Believed Buying WhatsApp Was An Opportunity To Further Entrench Its Dominance. “Facebook’s internal documents indicate that the company acquired firms it viewed as competitive threats to protect and expand its dominance in the social networking market. As discussed earlier in this Report, Facebook’s senior executives described the company’s mergers and acquisitions strategy in 2014 as a ‘land grab’ to ‘shore up our position.’ 861 In 2012, Mr. Zuckerberg told Facebook’s former Chief Financial Officer that the purpose of acquiring nascent competitors like Instagram was to neutralize competitive threats and to maintain Facebook’s position. Documents show that when Facebook acquired WhatsApp, Mr. Zuckerberg and other senior executives, as well as data scientists, viewed WhatsApp as a potential threat to Facebook Messenger, as well as an opportunity to further entrench Facebook’s dominance. Facebook used critical acquisitions to increase the adoption of its social graph and expand its reach in markets. Finally, Facebook’s serial acquisitions reflect the company’s interest in purchasing firms that had the potential to develop into rivals before they could fully mature into strong competitive threats.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

IN 2014, FACEBOOK BOUGHT OCULUS VR, BELIEVING VR COULD BE THE NEXT BIG THING

In March 2014, Facebook Bought Oculus VR. “Facebook sees the future — a 3-D virtual world where you feel as if you are hanging out with your friends rather than staring at their pictures. To fulfill that vision, the company announced on Tuesday that it had reached a \$2 billion agreement to buy Oculus VR, the maker of a virtual reality headset. It’s a bet that a technology commonly associated with science fiction can help eventually turn social networking into an immersive, 3-D experience.” [NY Times, [3/26/14](#)]

Zuckerberg Said Facebook’s Purchase Of Oculus Reflected His Belief That Virtual Reality Could Be The Next Big Computing Platform After Mobile. “Virtual reality technologies give people the illusion that they are physically present in a digital world. Mark Zuckerberg, a co-founder and the chief executive of Facebook, said the deal reflected his belief that virtual reality could be the next big computing platform after mobile, a technology the company has spent most of the last several years adapting to, for the most part successfully. Facebook’s deal came as a surprise, because Oculus, a small

start-up that has not yet shipped a product to the broader public, is working on what some view as a niche technology aimed at hard-core video game players.” [NY Times, [3/26/14](#)]

New York Times: The Purchase Of Oculus Was “One Of Several Bets” Facebook Was Making “In Its Effort To Anticipate The Future And Secure Its Dominance Of Social Communication.” “Google has taken a different approach with Glass, its high-tech eyewear that overlays maps, messages and other data on a transparent lens in front of people’s eyes, through which they can still view their surroundings. The acquisition is one of several bets that Facebook, with about 1.2 billion users worldwide, is making in its effort to anticipate the future and secure its dominance of social communication. For example, last month, the company announced it would buy WhatsApp, a mobile messaging app, for \$16 billion plus as much as \$3 billion in future payouts.” [NY Times, [3/26/14](#)]

FACEBOOK’S ACQUISITIONS CEMENTED ITS POWER OVER SOCIAL NETWORKING

A Facebook Presentation Said It Controlled “95% Of All Social Media” In U.S. In Terms Of Monthly Minutes Of Use. “Since at least 2012, Facebook’s documents show that Facebook believed it controlled a high share of the social networking market.⁷⁶⁹ In a presentation prepared for Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook’s Chief Operating Officer, to deliver at a large telecommunications firm, Facebook said that it controlled ‘95% of all social media’ in the United States in terms of monthly minutes of use—as compared to Twitter, Tumblr, Myspace, and all other social media—and noted that the ‘industry consolidates as it matures.’” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

Regulators In The United Kingdom, Germany, And Australia Found Facebook Dominated The Social Network Market. “Several antitrust enforcement agencies have examined Facebook’s monopoly in recent years and reached similar conclusions. In July 2020, the United Kingdom’s Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that Facebook is dominant in the markets for social networks and digital display ads, and that its market power ‘derives in large part from strong network effects stemming from its large network of connected users and the limited interoperability it allows to other social media platforms.’⁷³⁵ In July 2019, Germany’s Federal Cartel Office (Bundeskartellamt) found that ‘Facebook is the dominant company in the market for social networks,’ and that in Germany’s social network market, ‘Facebook achieves a user-based market share of more than 90%.’⁷³⁶ And in June 2019, the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) found that ‘Facebook has substantial market power in a number of markets and that this market power is unlikely to erode in the short to medium terms.’” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

A U.S. House Antitrust Subcommittee Found Facebook Was A Monopoly And Needed To Be Broken Up. “The House Judiciary subcommittee on antitrust determined Facebook wields monopoly powers in social network and has maintained its position by acquiring, copying or killing its competitors, according to a report the group released on Tuesday. The report from the Democratic majority staff, which also addresses antitrust concerns regarding Amazon, Apple, Google parent-company Alphabet, recommends that Congress review a series of potential remedies. This includes ‘structural separation,’ which could require the companies to split parts of their businesses. For instance, Facebook could be forced to divest or operationally separate photo-sharing service Instagram and messaging app WhatsApp, both of which it acquired. The report also recommends that Congress consider any acquisition by the big tech companies to be anticompetitive unless the companies can prove that the merger would be in the public’s benefit and could not be otherwise achieved.” [CNBC, 10/6/20]

House Antitrust Subcommittee: Facebook’s “Monopoly Power Is Firmly Entrenched And Unlikely To Be Eroded By Competitive Pressure From New Entrants Or Existing Firms.” “Specific to Facebook, the report concluded ‘Facebook’s monopoly power is firmly entrenched and unlikely to be eroded by competitive pressure from new entrants or existing firms.’ Facebook is entrenched as a monopoly due to its strong network effects, high switching costs for users and the company’s significant data advantage.” [CNBC, 10/6/20]

A U.S. House Antitrust Subcommittee: Facebook Owned Three Of The Seven Most Popular Mobile Apps In The U.S. “Facebook’s family of products includes three of the seven most popular mobile apps in the United States by monthly active persons, reach, and percentage of daily and monthly active persons. As a standalone product, the Facebook app had the third highest reach of all mobile apps,⁷⁵⁷ with 200.3 million users in the United States, reaching 74% of smartphone users as of December 2019.⁷⁵⁸ Facebook Messenger had the fourth highest reach, with 183.6 million monthly active persons, reaching 54.1% of U.S. smartphone users.⁷⁵⁹ Finally, Instagram had the sixth highest reach, with 119.2 million users, reaching 35.3% of smartphone users.⁷⁶⁰ In contrast, Snapchat, the mobile app with the seventh highest reach, had 106.5 million users in the United States, reaching 31.4% of smartphone users.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Majority Staff Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, 10/6/20]

NOW – ZUCKERBERG SITS AS A DICTATOR OVER THE WORLD'S LARGEST SOCIAL NETWORK

ZUCKERBERG CONSOLIDATED POWER AT FACEBOOK, GIVING HIM A FIRM HAND OVER ALL ASPECTS OF HIS COMPANY

Vox HEADLINE: “Mark Zuckerberg Is Essentially Untouchable At Facebook.” [Vox, [12/19/18](#)]

Wall Street Journal HEADLINE: “Mark Zuckerberg Asserts Control Of Facebook, Pushing Aside Dissenters.” [Wall Street Journal, [4/28/20](#)]

Zuckerberg Called Facebook A “Founder-Led Company.” “The proposal speaks to a very Silicon Valley ethos where company founders often reign supreme — and where corporate structures have shifted to accommodate that philosophy. Over the past decade, more tech companies have adopted two classes of stock so that their founders can cement their voting power at the firms. In 2012, Google announced that it was creating a third class of shares to prevent its founders’ voting power from diminishing. Mr. Zuckerberg on Wednesday cited the Silicon Valley mantra of founders in explaining the new class of stock, calling Facebook a “founder-led company.” In a conference call, he added, ‘Facebook has been built on a series of bold moves. When I look out on the future, I see more bold moves ahead of us, not behind us.’” [NY Times, [4/28/16](#)]

Zuckerberg And His Allied Controlled Almost 70% Of All Voting Shares In Facebook. “That means that whatever shareholders are voting on — typically at Facebook’s annual meeting, usually in May — Zuckerberg and those closest to him are always going to win out. Bob Pisani at CNBC estimated earlier this year that Zuckerberg and the group of insiders control almost 70 percent of all voting shares in Facebook. Zuckerberg alone controls about 60 percent. “Anything that requires a shareholder vote, he gets to ultimately decide whether it’s going to get a majority or not,” Jonas Kron, a senior vice president at Trillium Asset Management, an activist shareholder group with about \$2.8 billion in assets under management, told me. ‘That’s clear as day.’” [Vox, [12/19/18](#)]

Facebook’s Board Was Notified About The Instagram Acquisition A Few Days Before It Was Announced. “The Instagram deal underscored how Mr. Zuckerberg has cemented his power over the last eight years. Facebook’s board, which got a brief e-mail about the deal a few days before it was announced, according to those close to the company, never pushed back. And so now, as C.E.O., Mark Zuckerberg has never been more secure — or, given the coming I.P.O., more exposed. By most accounts, he has few close friends outside the company. He has a girlfriend, Priscilla Chan, and a dog, Beast. Like his master, Beast, a Puli with thick dreadlocks, has a page on Facebook. (It has 541,786 “likes.”)” [NY Times, [2/3/12](#)]

WSJ: “As Both Chairman And CEO And With A Lock On The Majority Of Facebook’s Supervoting Shares, Mr. Zuckerberg Has Few Checks On His Power.” “Ms. Sandberg’s comments in particular have angered many people on those teams, according to people familiar with the matter, given how closely she tracked and managed Facebook’s media strategy, sometimes getting involved in wording changes. In the internal Q&A Friday, Ms. Sandberg said she took full responsibility for the actions of the communications team. As both chairman and CEO and with a lock on the majority of Facebook’s supervoting shares, Mr. Zuckerberg has few checks on his power. Still, Facebook’s board has taken a more active role of late. In September 2017, Erskine Bowles, the head of the audit committee and a former Clinton White House official, told Ms. Sandberg and Mr. Zuckerberg that he felt they needed to take the issue of Russian interference on the platform much more seriously.” [WSJ, [11/19/18](#)]

FACEBOOK WAS A LARGE ENOUGH COMPANY THAT DIDN’T JUSTIFY ZUCKERBERG’S SUPER SIZED CONTROL OVER IT

Public Citizen Said “With A Mega-Company Such As Facebook, There [Was] No Justification Or Support For A Dual-Class Stock System.” “Then again, once a company goes public and invites the average person to risk their savings, that’s the time to demonstrate a product is more than just a promising idea. Relatives, friends, or venture capitalists serve to fund promising but not yet unprofitable ideas. With a mega-company such as Facebook, there is no justification or support for a dual-class. Look at the shareholder votes at Facebook on this issue. As a matter of public policy, it is also dangerous to strip away one of the key tools of discipline for a mega-company.” [Public Citizen, [2/7/22](#)]

- **Public Citizen Said “As A Matter Of Public Policy It [Was] Dangerous To Strip Away One Of The Key Tools Of Discipline For A Mega-Company.”** “With a mega-company such as Facebook, there is no justification or support for a dual-class. Look at the shareholder votes at Facebook on this issue. As a matter of public policy, it is

also dangerous to strip away one of the key tools of discipline for a mega-company. Facebook's impact on society is immense. Washington regulators can and do bring enforcement actions for misconduct. But shareholders also serve on the front line of discipline." [Public Citizen, [2/7/22](#)]

ZUCKERBERG LIVED WITH AN AUTHORITARIAN COMPLEX, FORCING OUT THOSE THAT DISAGREED WITH HIM AND REWARDING ALLIES

Wall Street Journal: In 2018, "Zuckerberg Took On The Role Of A Wartime Leader" At Facebook, "Who Needed To Act Quickly, And, Sometimes, Unilaterally." "Mr. Zuckerberg had long relied on Sheryl Sandberg, his chief operating officer and de facto deputy, to handle policy and operational issues, and on Chris Cox, chief product officer and a longtime friend, to oversee many of the biggest changes to the platform. But as he tired of playing defense, Mr. Zuckerberg in 2018 took on the role of a wartime leader who needed to act quickly and, sometimes, unilaterally. He announced a series of products that took Facebook in new directions, starting with the March 2019 announcement that the company would emphasize private, encrypted messaging instead of the public posts that made it famous." [Wall Street Journal, [4/28/20](#)]

In 2018, Zuckerberg Gave Himself Power Over Instagram And WhatsApp, Units He Had Promised to Leave Independent. "But as he tired of playing defense, Mr. Zuckerberg in 2018 took on the role of a wartime leader who needed to act quickly and, sometimes, unilaterally. He announced a series of products that took Facebook in new directions, starting with the March 2019 announcement that the company would emphasize private, encrypted messaging instead of the public posts that made it famous. The new focus would make Facebook more like a living room than a town square, he said. It also gave Mr. Zuckerberg new power over Instagram and WhatsApp, units he had promised to leave independent. Shortly after the announcement, Mr. Cox, viewed as a potential successor to Mr. Zuckerberg, unexpectedly stepped down after 13 years." [Wall Street Journal, [4/28/20](#)]

Business Insider Reported That Zuckerberg Was "Quick To Push Those He Disagree[d] With Out Of The Company." "Gideon didn't get along with Facebook's top management. One source close to Facebook tells us Gideon was "not a fan" of Facebook's COO Sheryl Sandberg. Kara Swisher says that Gideon also had an 'increasingly strained relationship' with CEO Mark Zuckerberg 'over a series of strategic disagreements over a wide range of issues from increasing ad revenue to fundraising discussions with investors.' Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is quick to push those he disagrees with out of the company. We asked a former Facebook employee why such a hot startup sees so much turnover. This former employee (who asked to remain anonymous so as to not burn bridges) told us: Is there a common thread to the other people leaving? I don't know." [Business Insider, [4/1/09](#)]

ZUCKERBERG'S ROLE LEADING FACEBOOK WAS CONCERNING CONSIDERING HIS MESSIAH COMPLEX

Time Reporter: Zuckerberg Was "Not A Man Much Given To Quiet Reflection." "I've interviewed Zuckerberg before—I wrote about him in 2010, when he was TIME's Person of the Year—and as far as I can tell, he is not a man much given to quiet reflection. But this year he reached a point in his life when even someone as un-introspective as he is might reasonably pause and reflect. Facebook, the company of which he is chairman, CEO and co-founder, turned 10 this year. Zuckerberg himself turned 30." [TIME, [12/15/14](#)]

Time Magazine Said Zucker's Was "Supremely Confident, Almost To The Point Of Being Aggressive." "In October he stunned an audience in Beijing when he gave an interview in halting but still credible Mandarin. Watch the video: he's grinning his face off. He's having a blast. He's like that most of the time. Zuckerberg can be extremely awkward in conversation, but that's not because he's nervous or insecure; nervous, insecure people rarely become the 14th richest person in the world. Zuckerberg is in fact supremely confident, almost to the point of being aggressive. But casual conversation is supposed to be playful, and he doesn't do playfulness well." [TIME, [12/15/14](#)]

ZUCKERBERG REFUSED TO TAKE ADVICE FROM HIS MORE SEASONED, EXPERIENCED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE BOARD MEMBERS

After Erskine Bowles, A Former Investment Banker And Clinton Administration Official, Left The Facebook Board, He Criticized Facebook's leaders For Failing To Take His Advice On Politics, His Area Of Expertise. "Last April, Facebook disclosed that two longtime independent directors would leave the board: Netflix Inc. CEO Reed Hastings and Erskine Bowles, a former investment banker and a Clinton administration official. After his departure, Mr. Bowles privately criticized Facebook leadership for failing to take his advice on politics, his area of expertise, according to a person with direct knowledge of his remarks. Mr. Bowles declined to comment. A spokeswoman for Mr. Hastings didn't respond to a request for comment." [WSJ, [4/28/20](#)]

In 2020, The Wall Street Journal Reported That Zuckerberg Had Fired Two Board Directors And Replaced One Of Them With A Longtime Friend, Which Was “The Culmination Of The Chief Executive’s Campaign [...] To Consolidate Decision-Making At Facebook. “Changes came, but they weren’t what everyone expected, according to people familiar with the gathering. Within months, Facebook announced the departure of two directors, and added a longtime friend of Mr. Zuckerberg’s to the board. The moves were the culmination of the chief executive’s campaign over the past two years to consolidate decision-making at the company he co-founded 16 years ago. The 35-year-old tycoon also jumped into action steering Facebook into a high-profile campaign in the coronavirus response, while putting himself in the spotlight interviewing prominent health officials and politicians.” [WSJ, [4/28/20](#)]

In October 2017, Facebook’s Lead Independent Board Director Since 2015, Susan Desmond-Hellmann, Left Facebook’s Board In Part Because Management Wasn’t Considering Board Feedback. “In October last year, Facebook said Susan Desmond-Hellmann, who had served as its lead independent director since June 2015, was leaving the board. Facebook quoted her saying the departure was for health and family reasons. Ms. Desmond-Hellmann conveyed to some people that she left Facebook in part because she didn’t think the board was operating properly, and that Facebook management wasn’t considering board feedback, a person familiar with the matter said. This month, Ms. Desmond-Hellmann joined pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc.’s board. Reached for comment last week, she said Facebook’s press release was accurate and disputed the person’s characterization.” [WSJ, [4/28/20](#)]

Kenneth Chenault, Former American Express CEO And A Close Confidant Of Zuckerberg, Left The Board After Growing Disillusioned. “He and Mr. Zuckerberg had at one time been close. Before Mr. Chenault joined the board in February 2018, the Facebook chief called him sometimes weekly for advice and treated him as a “kind uncle” who also understood running a big institution, according to a person familiar with their relationship. But Mr. Chenault had grown disillusioned. Soon after joining, he tried to create an outside advisory group that would study Facebook’s problems and deliver reports to the board directly, circumventing Mr. Zuckerberg, according to people familiar with the matter. Others on the board were opposed, and the idea sank. Mr. Chenault and Jeffrey D. Zients, a former economic adviser to President Obama, had spearheaded a group of independent directors who last year started holding separate meetings, worried their perspectives were being dismissed as Facebook faced regulatory woes, people familiar with the matter said.” [WSJ, [4/28/20](#)]

- **Zuckerberg Originally Treated Chenault As A “Kind Uncle” Who Understood Running A Big Institution.** “He and Mr. Zuckerberg had at one time been close. Before Mr. Chenault joined the board in February 2018, the Facebook chief called him sometimes weekly for advice and treated him as a “kind uncle” who also understood running a big institution, according to a person familiar with their relationship. But Mr. Chenault had grown disillusioned. Soon after joining, he tried to create an outside advisory group that would study Facebook’s problems and deliver reports to the board directly, circumventing Mr. Zuckerberg, according to people familiar with the matter. Others on the board were opposed, and the idea sank. Mr. Chenault and Jeffrey D. Zients, a former economic adviser to President Obama, had spearheaded a group of independent directors who last year started holding separate meetings, worried their perspectives were being dismissed as Facebook faced regulatory woes, people familiar with the matter said.” [WSJ, [4/28/20](#)]
- **Chenault Had Proposed An Outside Advisory Group That Would Study Facebook’s Problems And Deliver Reports To The Board Directly. The Idea Sank.** “He and Mr. Zuckerberg had at one time been close. Before Mr. Chenault joined the board in February 2018, the Facebook chief called him sometimes weekly for advice and treated him as a “kind uncle” who also understood running a big institution, according to a person familiar with their relationship. But Mr. Chenault had grown disillusioned. Soon after joining, he tried to create an outside advisory group that would study Facebook’s problems and deliver reports to the board directly, circumventing Mr. Zuckerberg, according to people familiar with the matter. Others on the board were opposed, and the idea sank. Mr. Chenault and Jeffrey D. Zients, a former economic adviser to President Obama, had spearheaded a group of independent directors who last year started holding separate meetings, worried their perspectives were being dismissed as Facebook faced regulatory woes, people familiar with the matter said.” [WSJ, [4/28/20](#)]

About A Dozen Senior Or Highly Visible Executives Disclosed Their Resignations Or Left Facebook In 2018. “A Facebook spokeswoman said in a statement: “We were absolutely too slow to identify a range of issues over the past two years, but once we did we took strong action to address them and prevent future abuse. We’ve made massive investments in safety and security. While we know we have more work to do, we believe we’ve made progress.” All told, about a dozen senior or highly visible executives disclosed their resignations or left Facebook in 2018. In May, Facebook announced a major reshuffling of top product executives in a way that helped free up Mr. Zuckerberg to oversee a broader portfolio within the company.” [WSJ, [11/19/18](#)]

NOW – FACEBOOK BECAME A DATA VACUUM WITH FEW CONCERNS OR GUARDRAILS OVER THE IMPACTS OF COLLECTING IT OR SAFETY OF SUCH VAST DATA COLLECTION

FACEBOOK BOASTED ABOUT THEIR ACCESS TO USERS', TELLING ADVERTISERS THAT THE PLATFORM COULD HELP TARGET AND SWAY USERS

FACEBOOK POSSESSED THE PERSONAL DATA OF MORE THAN A QUARTER OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION

Facebook Possessed The Personal Data Of More Than A Quarter Of The World's Population, Nearly 2.8 Billion Out Of 7.9 Billion People. "Since 2016, Facebook has become interested in election integrity here and elsewhere; the company has thirty-five thousand security specialists in total, many of whom function almost like a U.N. team of elections observers. But its early mantra, "Company over country," still resonates. The company is, in important respects, larger than any country. Facebook possesses the personal data of more than a quarter of the world's people, 2.8 billion out of 7.9 billion, and governs the flow of information among them. The number of Facebook users is about the size of the populations of China and India combined." [New Yorker, [7/26/21](#)]

NBC News: Zuckerberg "Oversaw Plans To Consolidate [Facebook's] Power And Control Competitors By Treating Its Users' Data As A Bargaining Chip." "A cache of leaked Facebook documents shows how the company's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, oversaw plans to consolidate the social network's power and control competitors by treating its users' data as a bargaining chip. The documents were obtained and are being published by NBC News. This trove comprises approximately 7,000 pages in total, of which about 4,000 are internal Facebook communications such as emails, web chats, notes, presentations and spreadsheets, primarily from 2011 to 2015. About 1,200 pages are marked as 'highly confidential.'" [NBC News, [11/6/19](#)]

House Antitrust Subcommittee: Facebook's Data Advantage "Compounded Over Time, Cementing Facebook's Market Position." "The report also cited Facebook's advantage in being able to collect data from its massive userbase, which is far larger than any social networking competitor's. This data advantage is two-fold, the report noted. Through its more than 3 billion monthly users, Facebook has access to more data than its competitors. Facebook uses that data to create a more targeted experience for each user, which in turn attracts more users and causes them to spend more time on the company's services, the report said. 'Facebook's data advantage is thus compounded over time, cementing Facebook's market position and making it even more difficult for new platforms to provide a competitive user experience,' the report said." [CNBC, [10/6/20](#)]

DATA WAS THE 21ST CENTURY VERSION OF OIL, AND FACEBOOK SAW MIND-MELTING PROFITS FROM EXPLOITING IT FOR ADVERTISEMENTS

WIRED: In The Digital Era "Power [Came] From Controlling Data, Making Sense Of It, And Using It To Influence How People Behave." "In the future, security cameras will track the ways our eyes dilate, and sensors on the wall will track our body temperature. In today's digital world, in China and the West alike, power comes from controlling data, making sense of it, and using it to influence how people behave. That power will only grow as the next generation of mobile networks goes live. Remember how it felt like magic to be able to browse real web pages on the second-generation iPhone? That was 3G, the mobile standard that became widespread in the mid-2000s." [WIRED, [10/23/18](#)]

- **Tech Crunch: "Data Is To The 21st Century What Oil Was To The 20th."** "And while Russia is rising as a threat in cyberspace, China represents a more powerful and strategic rival in the 21st century tech convergence arms race. Data is to the 21st century what oil was to the 20th, a key asset for driving wealth, power, and competitiveness. Only companies with access to the best algorithms and the biggest and highest quality data sets will be able to glean the insights and develop the models driving innovation forward." [Tech Crunch, [4/15/18](#)]

Facebook Often Emphasized Its Ability To Sway Its Users With Advertisers, Portraying Itself As An Effective Mechanism To Help Promote Their Products. "The postelection questioning caps a turbulent year for Facebook, during which its power to influence what its 1.79 billion users watch, read and believe has increasingly been criticized. Almost half of American adults rely on Facebook as a source of news, according to a study by the Pew Research Center. And Facebook often emphasizes its ability to sway its users with advertisers, portraying itself as an effective mechanism to help promote their products. Inside Facebook, employees have become more aware of the company's role in media after several incidents involving content the social network displayed in users' news feeds." [NY Times, [11/14/16](#)]

- **When Someone Logged Into Facebook, There Were Typically About 1,500 Items The Company Could Display In That Person’s Newsfeed, But It Only Showed About 300 Of Them.** “The uproar highlights the immense control Facebook exerts over what its users see. When someone logs in, there are typically about 1,500 items the company could display in that person’s news feed, but the service shows only about 300 of them. What you see is chosen by a mysterious algorithm that takes into account hundreds of factors, such as how often you comment on your Aunt Sally’s photos, how much your friends are talking about a colleague’s post about her new job, and whether you always watch those cat videos.” [NY Times, [6/30/14](#)]

New Yorker: As Private Companies Amassed More Data About Us And Became The Main Forum Of Civic And Business Life, “Their Weaknesses Could Become More Consequential.” “As cyber wrongdoing has piled up, however, it has shifted the balance of responsibility between government and the private sector. The federal government used to be solely responsible for what the Constitution calls our “common defense.” Yet as private companies amass more data about us, and serve increasingly as the main forum for civic and business life, their weaknesses become more consequential. Even in the heyday of General Motors, a mishap at that company was unlikely to affect our national well-being.” [New Yorker, [11/13/20](#)]

FACEBOOK ALLOWED DEVELOPERS TO ACCESS PERSONAL DATA FROM USER’S FRIENDS WITHOUT THE FRIEND’S KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT

THOUGH PUBLICLY, FACEBOOK EXECUTIVES WERE TOUTING THAT THEY PROTECTED USER PRIVACY...

In 2011, Zuckerberg Claimed Facebook Was Continually Creating New Innovations That Protected Users’ Information. “Another criticism of Facebook Zuckerberg did address, however, is the common concern regarding privacy and oversharing of personal information in a public forum. ‘If you go back 10 years, a lot of people were afraid of sharing things on the Internet,’ he said. [...] Facebook is trying to maintain that sense of privacy by simplifying its privacy controls and continually creating new innovations that protect users’ information, Zuckerberg said. Now, for example, if you log into your account from an unusual place, the site will ask you personal questions or show you pictures of friends that only the real user would recognize.” [Desert News, [3/25/11](#)]

In 2018, Facebook’s Deputy General Counsel, Paul Grewal, Claimed “Protecting People’s Information [Was] At The Heart Of Everything We Do.” “Since The Cambridge Analytica scandal erupted in March, Facebook has been attempting to make a moral stand for your privacy, distancing itself from the unscrupulous practices of the U.K. political consultancy. ‘Protecting people’s information is at the heart of everything we do,’ wrote Paul Grewal, Facebook’s deputy general counsel, just a few weeks before founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg hit Capitol Hill to make similar reassurances, telling lawmakers, ‘Across the board, we have a responsibility to not just build tools, but to make sure those tools are used for good.’” [The Intercept, [4/13/18](#)]

Facebook Allowed Developers To Access The Personal Data Of Friends Of People Who Used Apps On The Platform, Without The Knowledge Or Express Consent Of Those Friends. “Parakilas, 38, who now works as a product manager for Uber, is particularly critical of Facebook’s previous policy of allowing developers to access the personal data of friends of people who used apps on the platform, without the knowledge or express consent of those friends. That feature, called friends permission, was a boon to outside software developers who, from 2007 onwards, were given permission by Facebook to build quizzes and games – like the widely popular FarmVille – that were hosted on the platform. The apps proliferated on Facebook in the years leading up to the company’s 2012 initial public offering, an era when most users were still accessing the platform via laptops and computers rather than smartphones.” [The Guardian, [3/20/18](#)]

- **A Platform Operations Manager At Facebook, Sandy Parakilas, Said Tens Or Even Hundreds Of Thousands Of Developers May Have Friend Permission Data.** “The apps proliferated on Facebook in the years leading up to the company’s 2012 initial public offering, an era when most users were still accessing the platform via laptops and computers rather than smartphones. Facebook took a 30% cut of payments made through apps, but in return enabled their creators to have access to Facebook user data. Parakilas does not know how many companies sought friends permission data before such access was terminated around mid-2014. However, he said he believes tens or maybe even hundreds of thousands of developers may have done so.” [The Guardian, [3/20/18](#)]

AFTER FACEBOOK SHARED USER DATA WITH THIRD PARTY APP DEVELOPERS, THE PLATFORM LOST ALL CONTROL OF THAT DATA

Parakilas Said The Company Did Not Use Its Enforcement Mechanisms - Like Audits Of External Developers – To Ensure Data Was Not Being Misused. “Sandy Parakilas, the platform operations manager at Facebook responsible for policing data breaches by third-party software developers between 2011 and 2012, told the Guardian he warned senior executives at the company that its lax approach to data protection risked a major breach [...] Parakilas said Facebook had terms of service and settings that “people didn’t read or understand” and the company did not use its enforcement mechanisms, including audits of external developers, to ensure data was not being misused. Parakilas, whose job was to investigate data breaches by developers similar to the one later suspected of Global Science Research, which harvested tens of millions of Facebook profiles and provided the data to Cambridge Analytica, said the slew of recent disclosures had left him disappointed with his superiors for not heeding his warnings.” [The Guardian, [3/20/18](#)]

Parakilas Said When It Came To The Control Facebook Had Over The Data Given To Outside Developer, Facebook Had “Zero. Absolutely None.” “Parakilas, whose job was to investigate data breaches by developers similar to the one later suspected of Global Science Research, which harvested tens of millions of Facebook profiles and provided the data to Cambridge Analytica, said the slew of recent disclosures had left him disappointed with his superiors for not heeding his warnings. [...] Asked what kind of control Facebook had over the data given to outside developers, he replied: ‘Zero. Absolutely none. Once the data left Facebook servers there was not any control, and there was no insight into what was going on.’” [The Guardian, [3/20/18](#)]

- **Parakilas Said When He Encouraged Executives To Proactively Audit Developers, He Was Discouraged From The Approach, With One Executive Saying “Do You Really Want To See What You’ll Find?”** “Parakilas said he ‘always assumed there was something of a black market’ for Facebook data that had been passed to external developers. However, he said that when he told other executives the company should proactively “audit developers directly and see what’s going on with the data” he was discouraged from the approach. He said one Facebook executive advised him against looking too deeply at how the data was being used, warning him: ‘Do you really want to see what you’ll find?’ Parakilas said he interpreted the comment to mean that ‘Facebook was in a stronger legal position if it didn’t know about the abuse that was happening.’” [The Guardian, [3/20/18](#)]
- **Parakilas Estimated That “A Majority Of Facebook Users” Could Have Had Their Data Harvested By App Developers** “Parakilas does not know how many companies sought friends permission data before such access was terminated around mid-2014. However, he said he believes tens or maybe even hundreds of thousands of developers may have done so. Parakilas estimates that ‘a majority of Facebook users’ could have had their data harvested by app developers without their knowledge. The company now has stricter protocols around the degree of access third parties have to data. Parakilas said that when he worked at Facebook it failed to take full advantage of its enforcement mechanisms, such as a clause that enables the social media giant to audit external developers who misuse its data.” [The Guardian, [3/20/18](#)]

FACEBOOK DIDN’T AUDIT HOW THIRD-PARTY APP DEVELOPERS WERE USING USERS’ DATA

In October 2010, The Wall Street Journal Reported That Many Of The Most Popular Apps On Facebook Had Been “Transmitting Identifying Information [...] To Dozens Of Advertising And Internet Tracking Companies.” “Many of the most popular applications, or ‘apps,’ on the social-networking site Facebook Inc. have been transmitting identifying information—in effect, providing access to people’s names and, in some cases, their friends’ names—to dozens of advertising and Internet tracking companies, a Wall Street Journal investigation has found. The issue affects tens of millions of Facebook app users, including people who set their profiles to Facebook’s strictest privacy settings. The practice breaks Facebook’s rules, and renews questions about its ability to keep identifiable information about its users’ activities secure.” [WSJ, [10/18/10](#)]

- **The Issue Affected Users Who Had Set Their Profiles To Facebook’s Strictest Privacy Settings.** “Many of the most popular applications, or ‘apps,’ on the social-networking site Facebook Inc. have been transmitting identifying information—in effect, providing access to people’s names and, in some cases, their friends’ names—to dozens of advertising and Internet tracking companies, a Wall Street Journal investigation has found. The issue affects tens of millions of Facebook app users, including people who set their profiles to Facebook’s strictest privacy settings. The practice breaks Facebook’s rules, and renews questions about its ability to keep identifiable information about its users’ activities secure.” [WSJ, [10/18/10](#)]

- **WSJ: “The Practice Breaks Facebook’s Rules, And Renews Questions About Its Ability To Keep Identifiable Information About Its Users’ Activities Secure.”** “Many of the most popular applications, or ‘apps,’ on the social-networking site Facebook Inc. have been transmitting identifying information—in effect, providing access to people’s names and, in some cases, their friends’ names—to dozens of advertising and Internet tracking companies, a Wall Street Journal investigation has found. The issue affects tens of millions of Facebook app users, including people who set their profiles to Facebook’s strictest privacy settings. The practice breaks Facebook’s rules, and renews questions about its ability to keep identifiable information about its users’ activities secure.” [WSJ, [10/18/10](#)]

LATER, FACEBOOK HAD TO SUSPEND TENS OF THOUSANDS OF APPS FOR IMPROPER COLLECTION OF USER DATA

In 2019, Facebook Suspended Tens Of Thousands Of Apps For Improperly Sucking Up Users’ Personal Information. “Facebook said on Friday that it had suspended tens of thousands of apps for improperly sucking up users’ personal information and other transgressions, a tacit admission that the scale of its data privacy issues was far larger than it had previously acknowledged. The social network said in a blog post that an investigation it began in March 2018 — following revelations that Cambridge Analytica, a British consultancy, had retrieved and used people’s Facebook information without their permission — had resulted in the suspension of “tens of thousands” of apps that were associated with about 400 developers.” [NY Times, [9/20/19](#)]

- **New York Times Said The Admission And Suspension Of Apps Was “A Tacit Admission That The Scale Of Its Data Privacy Issues Was Far Larger Than It Had Previously Acknowledged.”** “Facebook said on Friday that it had suspended tens of thousands of apps for improperly sucking up users’ personal information and other transgressions, a tacit admission that the scale of its data privacy issues was far larger than it had previously acknowledged. The social network said in a blog post that an investigation it began in March 2018 — following revelations that Cambridge Analytica, a British consultancy, had retrieved and used people’s Facebook information without their permission — had resulted in the suspension of “tens of thousands” of apps that were associated with about 400 developers.” [NY Times, [9/20/19](#)]

FACEBOOK FREQUENTLY ABUSED THEIR ABILITY TO HARVEST USER DATA WITHOUT ANYONE’S KNOWLEDGE

Facebook Overrode Users Who Denied Facebook Permission To Share Information With Third Parties And Still Provided Their Data To Device Makers. “Facebook’s view that the device makers are not outsiders lets the partners go even further, The Times found: They can obtain data about a user’s Facebook friends, even those who have denied Facebook permission to share information with any third parties. In interviews, several former Facebook software engineers and security experts said they were surprised at the ability to override sharing restrictions.” [New York Times, [6/3/18](#)]

- **A 2011 Consent Decree With F.T.C. Barred Facebook From Overriding Users’ Privacy Settings Without First Getting Explicit Consent.** “The broad access Facebook provided to device makers raises questions about its compliance with a 2011 consent decree with the F.T.C. The decree barred Facebook from overriding users’ privacy settings without first getting explicit consent. That agreement stemmed from an investigation that found Facebook had allowed app developers and other third parties to collect personal details about users’ friends, even when those friends had asked that their information remain private.” [New York Times, [6/3/18](#)]

In 2019, The DOJ And FTC Accused Facebook Of Violating An Administrative Order Issued by The FTC In 2012 By Misleading Users About The Extent To Which Third-Party Apps Could Access Users’ Personal Information. “The Department of Justice, together with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), today announced a settlement that requires Facebook to implement a comprehensive, multi-faceted set of compliance measures designed to improve user privacy and provide additional protections for user information. The settlement also requires Facebook to pay an unprecedented \$5 billion civil penalty — the most ever imposed in an FTC case and among the largest civil penalties ever obtained by the federal government.” [Department of Justice, [7/24/19](#)]

- **The DOJ And FTC’s Complaint Accused Facebook Of Violating The Federal Trade Commission Act By Deceiving Users About Their Use Of Users’ Data.** “In a complaint filed today, the United States alleges that Facebook violated an administrative order issued by the FTC in 2012 by misleading users about the extent to which third-party application developers could access users’ personal information. The complaint further alleges that Facebook violated the Federal Trade Commission Act by deceiving users about their use of this and additional sensitive information.” [Department of Justice, [7/24/19](#)]

In 2020, Regulator's Said The Onavo Protect Mobile App, Which Facebook Ended In 2019, Told Customers It Would Keep Their Data Private, but It Had Instead Been Used By Facebook For Research And Identifying Future Acquisition Targets. "Australia's competition regulator said on Wednesday it filed a lawsuit against Facebook Inc (FB.O), opens new tab for allegedly misleading consumers over the use of data collected by a now-discontinued mobile analytic app. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) said the Onavo Protect mobile app, which Facebook ended in 2019, told customers it would keep their data private but it had instead been used by Facebook for research and identifying future acquisition targets." [Reuters, [12/15/20](#)]

- **ACCC Chair, Rod Sims, Said "Consumers Often Use VPN Services Because They Care About Their Online Privacy, And That Is What This Facebook Product Claimed To Offer" But Instead "Channelled Significant Volumes Of Their Personal Activity Data Straight Back To Facebook."** "The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) said the Onavo Protect mobile app, which Facebook ended in 2019, told customers it would keep their data private but it had instead been used by Facebook for research and identifying future acquisition targets. The regulator alleged Onavo Protect, which let customers use a virtual private network (VPN) service, misled consumers in Australia between February 2016 and October 2017." [Reuters, [12/15/20](#)]

In 2021, WhatsApp Was Fined \$270 Million By Irish Authorities For Not Being Transparent About How It Used Data Collected From Users. "The 265-page decision is the first major ruling against Facebook under the European Union's far-reaching General Data Protection Regulation, or G.D.P.R., a three-year-old law that many have criticized for not being properly enforced. Irish regulators said WhatsApp was not clear with users about how data was shared with other Facebook properties like its main social network and Instagram. WhatsApp said it would appeal the decision, setting up what is expected to be a lengthy legal battle." [NY Times, [9/2/21](#)]

- **Irish Regulators Said WhatsApp Was Not Clear With Users About How Data Was Shared With Other Facebook Properties Like Its Main Social Network And Instagram.** "The 265-page decision is the first major ruling against Facebook under the European Union's far-reaching General Data Protection Regulation, or G.D.P.R., a three-year-old law that many have criticized for not being properly enforced. Irish regulators said WhatsApp was not clear with users about how data was shared with other Facebook properties like its main social network and Instagram. WhatsApp said it would appeal the decision, setting up what is expected to be a lengthy legal battle." [NY Times, [9/2/21](#)]

Facebook Admitted It Used Phone Numbers That Users Provided For Two Factor Authentication To Also Target Them With Ads. "Facebook has confirmed it does in fact use phone numbers that users provided it for security purposes to also target them with ads. Specifically a phone number handed over for two factor authentication (2FA) — a security technique that adds a second layer of authentication to help keep accounts secure. Facebook's confession follows a story Gizmodo ran a story yesterday, related to research work carried out by academics at two U.S. universities who ran a study in which they say they were able to demonstrate the company uses pieces of personal information that individuals did not explicitly provide it to, nonetheless, target them with ads." [TechCrunch, [9/27/18](#)]

FACEBOOK CONTINUED TO SHARE DATA WITH CERTAIN DEVELOPERS AND HARDWARE MANUFACTURERS YEARS AFTER THEY PROMISED TO STOP

Facebook's Sharing Of User Data With 52 Hardware And Software Companies Occurred For Years After It Stopped Doing So With Most App Makers. "Facebook shared user information with 52 hardware and software makers, including some based in China, under agreements designed to make its social media platform work more effectively on smartphones and other devices, the company said in information furnished to Congress late Friday night." The acknowledgment, which came in more than 700 pages of replies to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, is the fullest to date regarding reports that Facebook shared user data with some companies for years after it stopped doing so with most app makers. Some of the partnerships continued into this year, and some continue to this day, the documents say. [Washington Post, [6/30/18](#)]

In 2018, It Was Reported That Facebook Had Shared User Information With 52 Hardware And Software Makers, Including Some Based In China. "Facebook shared user information with 52 hardware and software makers, including some based in China, under agreements designed to make its social media platform work more effectively on smartphones and other devices, the company said in information furnished to Congress late Friday night." [Washington Post, [6/30/18](#)]

Washington Post: "Reports About The Data-Sharing Arrangements With Device Makers Caused Renewed Controversy Because The Practice Continued Years After Facebook Began Restricting Access To The User

Information Available To App Makers. "Facebook also said at least five other developers 'theoretically could have accessed limited friends' data' as part of a beta test, but the company did not further elaborate on the matter. Reports about the data-sharing arrangements with device makers caused renewed controversy because the practice continued years after Facebook began restricting access to the user information available to app makers — a move Facebook portrayed as a sign that it had grown more careful in guarding user privacy. Before the data sharing was discontinued, Apple, for example, allowed Facebook users to download profile photos for their friends and use them in their iPhone contact lists." [Washington Post, [6/30/18](#)]

- **Washington Post: "The Move Facebook Portrayed As A Sign That It Had Grown More Careful In Guarding User Privacy."** "Facebook also said at least five other developers 'theoretically could have accessed limited friends' data' as part of a beta test, but the company did not further elaborate on the matter. Reports about the data-sharing arrangements with device makers caused renewed controversy because the practice continued years after Facebook began restricting access to the user information available to app makers — a move Facebook portrayed as a sign that it had grown more careful in guarding user privacy. Before the data sharing was discontinued, Apple, for example, allowed Facebook users to download profile photos for their friends and use them in their iPhone contact lists." [Washington Post, [6/30/18](#)]

Facebook's Sharing Of User Data Was Part Of Agreements Designed To Make Its Social Media Platform Work More Effectively On Smartphones And Other Devices. "Facebook shared user information with 52 hardware and software makers, including some based in China, under agreements designed to make its social media platform work more effectively on smartphones and other devices, the company said in information furnished to Congress late Friday night." [Washington Post, [6/30/18](#)]

FACEBOOK SUFFERED FROM NUMEROUS DATA BREACHES BUT DIDN'T SWEAT IT

HEADLINE: "Facebook Security Breach Exposes Accounts Of 50 Million Users." [New York Times, [9/28/18](#)]

September 2018: Facebook Software Bugs Allowed The Exposure Of Personal Information Of Nearly 50 Million Users. "Facebook, already facing scrutiny over how it handles the private information of its users, said on Friday that an attack on its computer network had exposed the personal information of nearly 50 million users. The breach, which was discovered this week, was the largest in the company's 14-year history. The attackers exploited a feature in Facebook's code to gain access to user accounts and potentially take control of them. The news could not have come at a worse time for Facebook. It has been buffeted over the last year by scandal, from revelations that a British analytics firm got access to the private information of up to 87 million users to worries that disinformation on Facebook has affected elections and even led to deaths in several countries. [...] The software bugs were particularly awkward for a company that takes pride in its engineering: The first two were introduced by an online tool meant to improve the privacy of users. The third was introduced in July 2017 by a tool meant to easily upload birthday videos." [New York Times, [9/28/18](#)]

In April 2021, Facebook Suffered A Data Breach In Which The Data From 553 Million People In 106 Countries Was Published On A Hacking Forum. "Later, a spokesperson added that LinkedIn and Clubhouse had also faced "data scraping" issues. Data from 533 million people in 106 countries was published on a hacking forum earlier this month. Facebook said the data was old, from a previously reported leak in 2019. It has denied any wrongdoing, saying that the data was scraped from publicly available information on the site." [BBC, [4/20/21](#)]

- **Facebook Claimed The Data Was Old, From A Previously Reported Leak In 2019, Denying Any Wrongdoing By Saying The Data Was Scraped From Publicly Available Information On The Site.** "Data from 533 million people in 106 countries was published on a hacking forum earlier this month. Facebook said the data was old, from a previously reported leak in 2019. It has denied any wrongdoing, saying that the data was scraped from publicly available information on the site. But it now faces a probe from the Irish data commissioner about whether it broke GDPR rules, and a mass legal action from affected EU citizens, who had a range of personal data leaked, including phone numbers." [BBC, [4/20/21](#)]

Facebook Refused To Notify More Than 530 Million Users Whose Personal Data Was Stolen In A Data Breach Sometime Before August 2019. "Facebook decided not to notify over 530 million of its users whose personal data was lifted in a breach sometime before August 2019 and was recently made available in a public database. Facebook also has no plans to do so, a spokesperson said. Phone numbers, full names, locations, some email addresses, and other details from user profiles were posted to an amateur hacking forum on Saturday, Business Insider reported last week. The leaked data includes personal information from 533 million Facebook users in 106 countries. In response to the reporting, Facebook said in a blog post on Tuesday that 'malicious actors' had scraped the data by exploiting a vulnerability in a now-defunct feature on the platform that allowed users to find each other by phone number. The social media company

said it found and fixed the issue in August 2019 and its confident the same route can no longer be used to scrape that data." [NPR, 4/9/21]

RATHER, FACEBOOK SOUGHT TO NORMALIZE DATA BREACHES, CALLOUSING THE PUBLIC OVER TIME

A Leaked Internal Facebook Said The Company's "Long-Term Strategy" For Dealing With Data Breaches Was To "Both Frame This As A Broad Industry Issue And Normalize The Fact That This Activity Happens Regularly." "In a section headed 'Long-term strategy', Facebook said it did not plan additional statements on the issue. 'We expect more scraping incidents and think it's important to both frame this as a broad industry issue and normalize the fact that this activity happens regularly,' it said. It added that its plan would include a blogpost talking about its anti-scraping work, that offered transparency on how the firm was dealing with the problem." [BBC, [4/20/21](#)]

FACEBOOK INVESTED MORE IN THEIR VR BET THAN THEY DID IN SAFETY AND SECURITY ON THE PLATFORM

'Between 2016 And Oct. 2021, Facebook Spent \$13 Billion On "Safety And Security," Which Represented 4% Of Its Revenue. "Facebook says it has spent about \$13 billion on "safety and security" since 2016, or nearly 4% of its revenue in that time. Mr. Rosen said that in 2016, Facebook's content-moderation system relied largely on user complaints and that the company has since built AI tools to find the objectionable content. In 2018, Mr. Zuckerberg told a Senate committee that he was optimistic that within five to 10 years, Facebook would have the AI tools to proactively detect most hate speech. 'Over the long term, building AI tools is going to be the scalable way to identify and root out most of this harmful content,' he said at the time." [WSJ, [10/17/21](#)]

In 2019, Facebook Spent \$3.7 Billion On Safety And Security On Its Platform. "Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg vowed Monday to spend more than \$3.7 billion on safety and security on the company's platform this year. Zuckerberg made the commitment in a post to his Facebook profile that celebrated the company's 15 year anniversary. In the post, Zuckerberg wrote: 'This year we plan to spend more on safety and security than our whole revenue at the time of our IPO.'" [Variety, [2/5/19](#)]

- **In Oct. 2021, Facebook Announced That It Planned To Spend \$10 Billion On Its Facebook Reality Labs Project For The Development AR And VR Products.** "Facebook plans to spend at least \$10 billion this year on Facebook Reality Labs, its metaverse division tasked with creating AR and VR hardware, software, and content. 'We are committed to bringing this long-term vision to life and we expect to increase our investments for the next several years,' the company wrote in its third-quarter earnings release this afternoon. Facebook sees AR and VR as being core to 'the next generation of online social experiences.'" [The Verge, [10/25/21](#)]

FACEBOOK SECRETLY HARVESTED AUDIO FROM USERS AND PROVIDING IT TO THIRD-PARTIES FOR TRANSCRIPTION

FACEBOOK HID THAT FACT IT HARVESTED AUDIO FROM USERS, WITH ZUCKERBERG CALLING THE CLAIM A "CONSPIRACY THEORY"

Facebook Long Denied That It Collected Audio From Users To Inform Ads Or Help Determine What People Saw On Their News Feeds. "The social networking giant, which just completed a \$5 billion settlement with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission after a probe of its privacy practices, has long denied that it collects audio from users to inform ads or help determine what people see in their news feeds. Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg denied the idea directly in Congressional testimony. 'You're talking about this conspiracy theory that gets passed around that we listen to what's going on on your microphone and use that for ads,' Zuckerberg told U.S. Senator Gary Peters in April 2018. "We don't do that.'" [Bloomberg, [8/13/19](#)]

- **Zuckerberg: "You're Talking About This Conspiracy Theory That Gets Passed Around That We Listen To What's Going On Your Microphone And Use That For Ads, We Don't Do That."** "The social networking giant, which just completed a \$5 billion settlement with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission after a probe of its privacy practices, has long denied that it collects audio from users to inform ads or help determine what people see in their news feeds. Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg denied the idea directly in Congressional testimony. "You're talking about this conspiracy theory that gets passed around that we listen to what's going on on your microphone and use that for ads," Zuckerberg told U.S. Senator Gary Peters in April 2018. 'We don't do that.' In follow-up answers for Congress, the company said it "only accesses users' microphone if the user has given our

app permission and if they are actively using a specific feature that requires audio (like voice messaging features.)” [Bloomberg, [8/13/19](#)]

Facebook’s Data-Use Policy Did Not Make Mention Of Audio. “The social networking giant, which just completed a \$5 billion settlement with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission after a probe of its privacy practices, has long denied that it collects audio from users to inform ads or help determine what people see in their news feed [...] The Facebook data-use policy, revised last year to make it more understandable for the public, includes no mention of audio. It does, however, say Facebook will collect ‘content, communications and other information you provide’ when users ‘message or communicate with others.’” [Bloomberg, [8/13/19](#)]

FACEBOOK PROVIDED AUDIO CAPTURED FROM USERS TO CONTRACTORS FOR TRANSCRIPTION...

Facebook Did Not Disclose To Users That Third Parties Might Review Their Audio. “In follow-up answers for Congress, the company said it ‘only accesses users’ microphone if the user has given our app permission and if they are actively using a specific feature that requires audio (like voice messaging features.)’ The Menlo Park, California-based company doesn’t address what happens to the audio afterward. Facebook hasn’t disclosed to users that third parties may review their audio. That’s led some contractors to feel their work is unethical, according to the people with knowledge of the matter. At least one firm reviewing user conversations is TaskUs Inc., a Santa Monica, California-based outsourcing firm with outposts around the world, the people said.” [Bloomberg, [8/13/19](#)]

Facebook Paid Hundreds Of Outside Contractors To Transcribe Clips Of Audio From Users Of Its Service.

“Facebook Inc. has been paying hundreds of outside contractors to transcribe clips of audio from users of its services, according to people with knowledge of the work. The work has rattled the contract employees, who are not told where the audio was recorded or how it was obtained -- only to transcribe it, said the people, who requested anonymity for fear of losing their jobs. They’re hearing Facebook users’ conversations, sometimes with vulgar content, but do not know why Facebook needs them transcribed, the people said.” [Bloomberg, [8/13/19](#)]

- **The Contractors Paid By Facebook Said They Were Hearing Facebook Users’ Conversations, But Did Not Know Why Facebook Needed Them Transcribed.** “Facebook Inc. has been paying hundreds of outside contractors to transcribe clips of audio from users of its services, according to people with knowledge of the work. The work has rattled the contract employees, who are not told where the audio was recorded or how it was obtained -- only to transcribe it, said the people, who requested anonymity for fear of losing their jobs. They’re hearing Facebook users’ conversations, sometimes with vulgar content, but do not know why Facebook needs them transcribed, the people said.” [Bloomberg, [8/13/19](#)]

...DEFENDING THEIR ACTIONS BY SAYING USERS AGREED TO IT IN THE FINE PRINT OF THE MESSENGER APP

Facebook Said The Users Who Had Their Conversations Transcribed Had Chose The Option In The Messenger App To Have Their Voice Chats Transcribed. “Facebook confirmed that it had been transcribing users’ audio and said it will no longer do so, following scrutiny into other companies. “Much like Apple and Google, we paused human review of audio more than a week ago,” the company said Tuesday. The company said the users who were affected chose the option in Facebook’s Messenger app to have their voice chats transcribed. The contractors were checking whether Facebook’s artificial intelligence correctly interpreted the messages, which were anonymized.” [Bloomberg, [8/13/19](#)]

FACEBOOK’S THIRD-PARTY DATA COLLECTION POLICIES ALLOWED CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA TO BUILD PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILES OF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA – A POLITICAL CONSULTING FIRM USED BY TRUMP IN 2016 – BOUGHT USER DATA FROM A THIRD-PARTY RESEARCHER FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA OBTAINED USER DATA WITHOUT USER PERMISSION OR KNOWLEDGE... LEADING TO ONE OF THE LARGEST DATA LEAKS

In 2014 Contractors And Employees Of Cambridge Analytica Acquired Private Facebook Data Of Tens Of Millions Of Users, Intending To Sell Psychological Profiles Of American Voters To Political Campaigns. “The Times reported that in 2014 contractors and employees of Cambridge Analytica, eager to sell psychological profiles of American

voters to political campaigns, acquired the private Facebook data of tens of millions of users — the largest known leak in Facebook history. There was more. Our article first showed how Cambridge received warnings from its own lawyer, Laurence Levy, as it employed European and Canadian citizens on campaigns, potentially violating American election law.” [NY Times, [4/4/18](#)]

Cambridge Analytica Used The Data Of Facebook Users To Help Target Voters. “Mr. Sanni’s allegations have come to light because of a tangle of connections to an online consulting company with ties to the campaign that elected President Trump — Cambridge Analytica. Mr. Sanni is friends with Christopher Wylie, a former research director of Cambridge Analytica who has recently provided information to journalists indicating that the company improperly obtained the data of 50 million Facebook users in order to help target voters. The Vote Leave campaign relied heavily for online ad placement on a Canadian company called AggregateIQ, which according to documents and testimony submitted to the Electoral Commission by Mr. Wylie was a satellite business set up to support Cambridge Analytica.” [NY Times, [3/24/18](#)]

- **Cambridge Analytica Paid To Acquire The Personal Information Of Facebook Users From An Outside Researcher Who Claimed To Be Collecting It For Academic Purposes.** “Interviews with a half-dozen former employees and contractors, and a review of the firm’s emails and documents, have revealed that Cambridge not only relied on the private Facebook data but still possesses most or all of the trove. Cambridge paid to acquire the personal information through an outside researcher who, Facebook says, claimed to be collecting it for academic purposes. During a week of inquiries from The Times, Facebook downplayed the scope of the leak and questioned whether any of the data still remained out of its control. But on Friday, the company posted a statement expressing alarm and promising to take action.” [NY Times, [3/17/18](#)]

Cambridge Analytica Harvested Private Information From 50 Million Facebook Users Without Their Permission, Making It One Of The Largest Data Leaks In Facebook’s History. “So the firm harvested private information from the Facebook profiles of more than 50 million users without their permission, according to former Cambridge employees, associates and documents, making it one of the largest data leaks in the social network’s history. The breach allowed the company to exploit the private social media activity of a huge swath of the American electorate, developing techniques that underpinned its work on President Trump’s campaign in 2016.” [NY Times, [3/17/18](#)]

The Data Cambridge Analytica Took On Facebook Users Included Details On Users’ Identities, Friend Networks And “Likes.” “The documents also raise new questions about Facebook, which is already grappling with intense criticism over the spread of Russian propaganda and fake news. The data Cambridge collected from profiles, a portion of which was viewed by The Times, included details on users’ identities, friend networks and ‘likes.’ Only a tiny fraction of the users had agreed to release their information to a third party. ‘Protecting people’s information is at the heart of everything we do,’ Mr. Grewal said. ‘No systems were infiltrated, and no passwords or sensitive pieces of information were stolen or hacked.’” [NY Times, [3/17/18](#)]

Only A Fraction Of The Users Cambridge Analytica Harvest Data From Had Agreed To Release Their Information To A Third Party. “The documents also raise new questions about Facebook, which is already grappling with intense criticism over the spread of Russian propaganda and fake news. The data Cambridge collected from profiles, a portion of which was viewed by The Times, included details on users’ identities, friend networks and ‘likes.’ Only a tiny fraction of the users had agreed to release their information to a third party. ‘Protecting people’s information is at the heart of everything we do,’ Mr. Grewal said. ‘No systems were infiltrated, and no passwords or sensitive pieces of information were stolen or hacked.’” [NY Times, [3/17/18](#)]

THE HEAD OF CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA BOASTED ABOUT HAVING 4-5,000 DATA POINTS ON EVERY ADULT IN AMERICA THAT COULD MAP THEIR PERSONALITY

The Head Of Cambridge Analytica, Alexander Nix, Boasted Of Having “A Massive Database Of 4-5,000 Data Points On Every Adult In America. “Clinton, of course, had her own analytics effort, and digital market research is a normal part of any political campaign. But the quantity of data compiled on individuals during the run-up to the election is striking. Alexander Nix, head of Cambridge Analytica, has claimed to “have a massive database of 4-5,000 data points on every adult in America.” Immediately after the election, the company tried to take credit for the win, claiming that its dataOpens in a new tab helped the Trump campaign set the candidate’s travel schedule and place online ads that were viewed 1.5 billion times. Since then, the company has been de-emphasizingOpens in a new tab its reliance on psychological profiling.” [The Intercept, [3/30/17](#)]

The Researchers Cambridge Analytica Got Their Data From Had Developed A Technique To Map Personality Traits Based On What People Had Liked On Facebook. “Mr. Wylie found a solution at Cambridge University’s Psychometrics Centre. Researchers there had developed a technique to map personality traits based on what people had

liked on Facebook. The researchers paid users small sums to take a personality quiz and download an app, which would scrape some private information from their profiles and those of their friends, activity that Facebook permitted at the time. The approach, the scientists said, could reveal more about a person than their parents or romantic partners knew — a claim that has been disputed.” [NY Times, [3/17/18](#)]

- **The Researchers Paid Users Small Sums To Take A Personality Quiz And Download An App That Would Scrape Some Private Information From Their Profiles And Those Of Their Friends – Activity That Facebook Permitted At The Time.** “Mr. Wylie found a solution at Cambridge University’s Psychometrics Centre. Researchers there had developed a technique to map personality traits based on what people had liked on Facebook. The researchers paid users small sums to take a personality quiz and download an app, which would scrape some private information from their profiles and those of their friends, activity that Facebook permitted at the time. The approach, the scientists said, could reveal more about a person than their parents or romantic partners knew — a claim that has been disputed.” [NY Times, [3/17/18](#)]

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA USED THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILES TO HELP TRUMP’S 2016 CAMPAIGN

Cambridge Analytica Was An Offshoot Of British Behavioral Company SCL Group, And Was Backed By The Conservative Mercer Family, With Steve Bannon Serving On Its Board. “Cambridge Analytica first broke into American politics in 2013 as the offshoot of British behavioral company SCL Group. The company, which had attracted backing from the Mercer family, was known for its financing of conservative candidates. Rebekah Mercer and her sister Jennifer, daughters of hedge-fund billionaire Robert Mercer, were on the company’s board. Former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon also served on the board before joining the White House. Three Republican presidential campaigns—those of Mr. Trump, Sen. Ted Cruz and neurosurgeon Ben Carson—hired the firm.” [WSJ, [5/2/18](#)]

- **Steve Bannon Chose The Name Cambridge Analytica.** “Just as Dr. Kogan’s efforts were getting underway, Mr. Mercer agreed to invest \$15 million in a joint venture with SCL’s elections division. The partners devised a convoluted corporate structure, forming a new American company, owned almost entirely by Mr. Mercer, with a license to the psychographics platform developed by Mr. Wylie’s team, according to company documents. Mr. Bannon, who became a board member and investor, chose the name: Cambridge Analytica. The firm was effectively a shell. According to the documents and former employees, any contracts won by Cambridge, originally incorporated in Delaware, would be serviced by London-based SCL and overseen by Mr. Nix, a British citizen who held dual appointments at Cambridge Analytica and SCL.” [NY Times, [3/17/18](#)]

Cambridge Analytica Worked With Trump’s 2016 Campaign On Activities Like Designing Target Audiences For Digital And Fund-Raising Appeals, Modeling Voter Turnout, Buying \$5 Million In Television Ads And Determining Where Trump Should Travel To Drum Up Support. “Under the guidance of Brad Parscale, Mr. Trump’s digital director in 2016 and now the campaign manager for his 2020 re-election effort, Cambridge performed a variety of services, former campaign officials said. That included designing target audiences for digital ads and fund-raising appeals, modeling voter turnout, buying \$5 million in television ads and determining where Mr. Trump should travel to best drum up support. Cambridge executives have offered conflicting accounts about the use of psychographic data on the campaign. Mr. Nix has said that the firm’s profiles helped shape Mr. Trump’s strategy — statements disputed by other campaign officials — but also that Cambridge did not have enough time to comprehensively model Trump voters.” [NY Times, [3/17/18](#)]

IN 2015, FACEBOOK WAS AWARE OF CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA OBTAINING USER DATA, BUT CHOSE NOT TO AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE THE BREACH

Facebook Learned About Cambridge Analytica’s Use Of User Data In September 2015. “A long sought-after internal document, obtained Friday morning by NBC News and subsequently made public by Facebook and the D.C. attorney general’s office, throws into question what and when the social media giant first learned about the violation of tens of millions of users’ private data. The document reveals that Facebook first learned about unconfirmed reports of a potential data violation in September 2015. The company sought to address the issue then but was not made aware of the full scope of the problem until a Guardian report was published in December 2015.” [NBC News, [8/23/19](#)]

Facebook Employees Had Requested An Investigation Into Cambridge Analytics Data Scraping In September 2015 – Three Months Before Public Reporting On Cambridge Analytica. “The timeline is significant because Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has testified that the company only learned from the Guardian’s report that developer Aleksandr Kogan sold user data to Cambridge Analytica, a violation of Facebook’s policy prohibiting researchers from selling or sharing data with third parties. But the Securities and Exchange Commission filed a complaint in July stating that

Facebook employees had "requested an investigation" into Cambridge's "possible 'scraping'" of data in September 2015 — three months before the Guardian report was published." [NBC News, [8/23/19](#)]

In October 2015, A Facebook Employee Wrote “It’s Very Like These Companies [Were] Not In Violation Of Any Of Our Terms.” “Another employee responded: "I'm passing this to DevOps for initial review. They can help investigate. ... At a high level it is possible these services comply with our terms, but it is also possible they do not." The next day, an employee wrote: "I imagine it would be *very* difficult to engage in data-scraping activity as you described while still being compliant with [Facebook's privacy policy]." But later that day, another employee wrote: "It's very likely these companies are not in violation of any of our terms." The debate continued, and by Oct. 13 one employee stated that ;there are likely a few data policy violations here.” [NBC News, [8/23/19](#)]

...DESPITE ZUCKERBERG TESTIFYING IN CONGRESS THAT FACEBOOK WAS UNAWARE OF THE CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA LEAK UNTIL PUBLIC REPORTING IN DEC. 2015

Zuckerberg Testified That The Company Only Learned About Cambridge Analytica Obtaining User Data From The Guardian’s Reporting Was Published. “The document reveals that Facebook first learned about unconfirmed reports of a potential data violation in September 2015. The company sought to address the issue then but was not made aware of the full scope of the problem until a Guardian report was published in December 2015. The timeline is significant because Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has testified that the company only learned from the Guardian's report that developer Aleksandr Kogan sold user data to Cambridge Analytica, a violation of Facebook's policy prohibiting researchers from selling or sharing data with third parties.” [NBC News, [8/23/19](#)]

THE CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA SCANDAL FACEBOOK’S GREATEST CRISIS AT THE TIME

The Guardian: The Cambridge Analytica Scandal “Plunged Facebook Into The Greatest Crisis In Its Then 14 Year History.” “The so-called pivot to privacy is in many ways the logical conclusion to the earth-shaking (and market-moving) response to the Cambridge Analytica story, which plunged Facebook into the greatest crisis in its then 14-year history. After nearly a year of its critics demanding that it respect users’ privacy, here was Facebook saying: “Fine, privacy you shall have.” (More on whether what’s being offered is actually privacy later.)” [The Guardian, [3/17/19](#)]

After The Cambridge Analytica Scandal, Facebook Users’ Confidence In The Company Had Plunged By 66% As A Result Of The Revelations. “Facebook users' confidence in the company has plunged by 66 percent as a result of revelations that data analysis firm Cambridge Analytica inappropriately acquired data on tens of millions of Facebook users — and CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s public mea culpa during two days of congressional hearings last week did not change that, a new report reveals.” [NBC News, [4/18/18](#)]

USER TRUST IN FACEBOOK PLUMMETED 66% IN THE WAKE OF THE CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA SCANDAL...

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Cambridge Analytica Scandal Led Facebook To Go On An Apology Tour. “Facebook has been at the center of a firestorm surrounding how it handles its users’ data after the country learned that the personal information of an estimated 87 million American users was improperly harvested by a researcher and then used by Cambridge Analytica, a data analysis firm hired by President Donald Trump’s election campaign. Following the revelations, Zuckerberg and his representatives have gone on an apology tour with the promise to “do better.” [NBC News, [4/3/18](#)]

...AND LED TO SEVERE LEGAL CONSEQUENCES FROM REGULATORS AND THE PUBLIC

The Justice Department And SEC Opened Investigations Related To The Cambridge Analytica Scandal. “Even as it resolves the FTC privacy inquiry, Facebook is still grappling with regulatory scrutiny on several other fronts -- including the prospect of a new investigation by the FTC’s antitrust section under an agreement with the Justice Department that divided oversight of four of the biggest tech companies. One area of focus is likely to be the company’s acquisitions of the photo-sharing app Instagram and the Whatsapp messaging service. Elsewhere in the U.S., the Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission opened investigations related to the Cambridge Analytica scandal. Separately,

the attorney general for Washington, D.C., has sued the company, claiming it failed to safeguard users' data. Other state attorneys general are also investigating." [Bloomberg, [7/12/19](#)]

Facebook Was Fined \$5 Billion By The FTC To Resolve The Cambridge Analytica Data Scandal. "U.S. officials approved a record \$5 billion privacy settlement with Facebook Inc. to resolve the Cambridge Analytica data scandal, people said, prompting an immediate outcry from lawmakers and privacy advocates who said it didn't go far enough. Although details of the settlement with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission weren't announced, the fine is steep but far from devastating for Facebook. The company, which reported revenue of almost \$56 billion in 2018, had set aside \$3 billion in anticipation of the fine." [Bloomberg, [7/12/19](#)]

- **The Settlement Was The Largest Privacy Fine In The FTC's History.** "The resolution caps a probe that opened in March 2018 after news that Cambridge Analytica, a consulting firm hired by President Donald Trump's campaign, obtained user data from a researcher who created a personality quiz app on the social network. The settlement is the largest privacy fine in the FTC's history and also marks the most significant action yet against Facebook over a series of mishaps that have compromised users' data and sent the company reeling from one crisis to another. The agency's two Democratic commissioners, Rebecca Kelly Slaughter and Rohit Chopra, voted against it, according to one of the people." [Bloomberg, [7/12/19](#)]

Meta Agreed To Pay \$725 Million To Settle A Lawsuit Over Sharing Users' Personal Information With Cambridge Analytica. "Facebook's corporate parent has agreed to pay \$725 million to settle a lawsuit alleging the world's largest social media platform allowed millions of its users' personal information to be fed to Cambridge Analytica, a firm that supported Donald Trump's victorious presidential campaign in 2016. Terms of the settlement reached by Meta Platforms, the holding company for Facebook and Instagram, were disclosed in court documents filed late Thursday. It will still need to be approved by a judge in a San Francisco federal court hearing set for March." [Associated Press, [12/23/22](#)]

FACEBOOK WAS REPEATEDLY ATTACKED AND FINED OVER THEIR GROSS PRIVACY VIOLATIONS AND WANTON DISREGARD FOR KEEPING USER DATA SAFE

NY Times: Facebook Had Shown "A Willingness To Fight Charges Of Privacy Violations." "In Europe, officials in Britain, France, Germany and Ireland are scrutinizing the social media company's practices. Governments in Australia, India, New Zealand and Singapore have passed or are considering new restrictions on social media. Editors' Picks Tight on Time? How to Make the Most of a Short Workout. How Much Water Do I Need to Drink? Can This Viral Bedtime 'Mocktail' Actually Help You Fall Asleep? Facebook has shown its willingness to fight charges of privacy violations. On Thursday, Facebook disputed findings by Canada's privacy commissioners in an investigation into how Cambridge Analytica, a British political consulting firm that worked for the Trump presidential campaign, gained access to information about Facebook users." [NY Times, [4/25/19](#)]

In 2020, Canada Levied A \$9 CSD Fine On Facebook For Making "False Or Misleading Claims About The Privacy Of Canadians' Personal Information. "Facebook has been ordered to pay a \$9-million penalty after making "false or misleading claims about the privacy of Canadians' personal information," according to a news release from the Competition Bureau. The decision follows an investigation into the social media company's privacy practices between 2012 and 2018. The Competition Bureau said they found Facebook falsely represented how much information users could control — including the personal information of users' friends who had installed 'certain third-party applications.'"

Facebook Agreed To Pay \$90 Million To Settle A Decade-Old Class Action Lawsuit Over A Practice That Allowed Site To Track Users' Activity Across The Internet, Even If They Had Logged Out Of The Platform. "Facebook (FB)-parent Meta has agreed to pay \$90 million to settle a decade-old class action lawsuit over a practice that allowed the social network to track users' activity across the internet, even if they had logged out of the platform. The settlement, announced on Tuesday, is one of the largest in the history of the social media company, but it's unlikely to impact the bottom line of the \$590 billion internet giant. If approved, the agreement will also rank among the 10 largest data privacy class action settlements in the United States, according to DiCello Levitt Gutzler, one of the law firms involved in bringing the case." [CNN, [2/15/22](#)]

In December 2019, Brazil Fined Facebook The Equivalent Of \$1.6 Million For Improperly Sharing User Data. "Brazil's Ministry of Justice said on Monday it fined U.S. tech giant Facebook Inc 6.6 million reais (\$1.6 million) for improperly sharing user data. The ministry's department of consumer protection said it had found that data from 443,000 Facebook users was improperly made available to developers of an App called "thisisyourdigitallife." The data was being shared for "questionable" purposes, the ministry said in a statement." [Reuters, [12/30/19](#)]

- **Brazil's Ministry Of Justice Said It Had Found That Data From 443,000 Facebook Users Was Improperly Made Available To Developers.** "Brazil's Ministry of Justice said on Monday it fined U.S. tech giant Facebook Inc 6.6 million reais (\$1.6 million) for improperly sharing user data. The ministry's department of consumer protection said it had found that data from 443,000 Facebook users was improperly made available to developers of an App called "thisisyourdigitallife." The data was being shared for "questionable" purposes, the ministry said in a statement." [Reuters, [12/30/19](#)]

The Canadian Competition Found That Facebook Falsely Represented How Much Information Users Could Control. "Facebook has been ordered to pay a \$9-million penalty after making "false or misleading claims about the privacy of Canadians' personal information," according to a news release from the Competition Bureau. The decision follows an investigation into the social media company's privacy practices between 2012 and 2018. The Competition Bureau said they found Facebook falsely represented how much information users could control — including the personal information of users' friends who had installed 'certain third-party applications.'" [CBC, [5/19/20](#)]

- **The Bureau Found That Third-Party Developers Were Able To Access Some User Data In Ways That Were Inconsistent With Facebook's Policies.** "Facebook has been ordered to pay a \$9-million penalty after making "false or misleading claims about the privacy of Canadians' personal information," according to a news release from the Competition Bureau. The decision follows an investigation into the social media company's privacy practices between 2012 and 2018. The Competition Bureau said they found Facebook falsely represented how much information users could control — including the personal information of users' friends who had installed 'certain third-party applications [...] The Bureau's findings relate to data on both Facebook and Messenger, where users were given the impression they could control who can see and access their personal information. Instead, third-party developers were able to access some of that information in ways inconsistent with Facebook policies.'" [CBC, [5/19/20](#)]

NOW – FACEBOOK'S DRIVE FOR PROFITS TRUMPED ITS GOAL OF BEING A SOCIAL UTILITY, RESULTING IN A PLATFORM THAT REWARDED ANGER AND OUTRAGE

IN 2018, FACEBOOK CHANGED ITS NEWSFEED ALGORITHM, PURPORTEDLY TO HELP USERS, BUT REALLY IT WAS TO INCREASE USER ENGAGEMENT

In 2018, Facebook Altered Its News Feed To Prioritize What Their Friends And Family Shared And Commented On, While De-Emphasizing Content From Publishers And Brands. "Facebook has introduced sweeping changes to the kinds of posts, videos and photos that its more than two billion members will see most often, saying on Thursday that it would prioritize what their friends and family share and comment on while de-emphasizing content from publishers and brands. The shift is the most significant overhaul in years to Facebook's News Feed, the cascading screen of content that people see when they log into the social network." [Ny Times, [1/11/18](#)]

January 2018: Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg Announced The Change To The News Feed Algorithm, Calling It A Sacrifice To Facebook's User Engagement Metrics That Would Be Good For The Community In The Long-Term. "In January 2018, Facebook was coming off a trying year. It was on the defensive in Washington about what U.S. intelligence officials said was Russia's use of the platform to meddle in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Mr. Zuckerberg announced he was changing Facebook product managers' goal from helping people find relevant content to helping them interact more with friends and family. He said the shift was driven by research showing that passive media consumption on Facebook—notably video, which had been exploding on the platform—wasn't as good for well-being as interacting with other people. He framed the change as a sacrifice. 'Now, I want to be clear: by making these changes, I expect the time people spend on Facebook and some measures of engagement will go down,' he wrote on Facebook. 'But I also expect the time you do spend on Facebook will be more valuable. And if we do the right thing, I believe that will be good for our community and our business over the long term too.'" [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

- **Facebook's News Feed Would Overall Highlight Posts That Friends Had Interacted With Rather Than Viral Videos And News Articles Shared By Media Companies.** "The shift is the most significant overhaul in years to Facebook's News Feed, the cascading screen of content that people see when they log into the social network. Over the next few weeks, users will begin seeing fewer viral videos and news articles shared by media companies. Instead, Facebook will highlight posts that friends have interacted with — for example, a photo of your dog or a status update that many of them have commented on or liked." [Ny Times, [1/11/18](#)]

In December 2017, Zuckerberg Wrote That One Of His Goals For 2018 Was "Making Sure That Time Spent On Facebook [Was] Time Well Spent." "After the 2016 election, for instance, Mr. Zuckerberg initially shrugged off qualms

about Facebook's effect on the outcome, even as outsiders pointed to the proliferation of fake news stories on the site that had attacked Hillary Clinton. Mr. Zuckerberg later said he had been too hasty and dismissive of the concerns. More recently, he began signaling that Facebook was rethinking what it shows people on the site. Last week, he posted on Facebook about his goals for 2018, including 'making sure that time spent on Facebook is time well spent' and adding that 'this will be a serious year of self-improvement and I'm looking forward to learning from working to fix our issues together.'" [Ny Times, [1/11/18](#)]

Zuckerberg Said The News Feed Changes Were intended To Maximize The Amount Of Content With “Meaningful Interaction.” “Over the next few weeks, users will begin seeing fewer viral videos and news articles shared by media companies. Instead, Facebook will highlight posts that friends have interacted with — for example, a photo of your dog or a status update that many of them have commented on or liked. The changes are intended to maximize the amount of content with ‘meaningful interaction’ that people consume on Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, the company’s chief executive, said in an interview. Facebook, he said, had closely studied what kinds of posts had stressed or harmed users.” [Ny Times, [1/11/18](#)]

Zuckerberg Said The “No. 1 Value” At Facebook Was The “Focus On Impact.” “Bloomberg Businessweek: Congratulations on your first billion users. What does this mean for Facebook? Mark Zuckerberg: The No. 1 value here is focus on impact. We’ve always been small in terms of number of employees. We have this stat that we throw out all the time here: There is on the order of 1,000 engineers and now on the order of a billion users, so each engineer is responsible for a million users.” [Bloomberg, [10/4/12](#)]

ZUCKERBERG SAID THE CHANGES WERE DRIVEN TO STRENGTHEN BONDS BETWEEN USERS

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg Claimed That The Algorithm Change Was Intended To Strengthen Bonds Between Users And Improve Their Wellbeing. "Facebook's chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, said the aim of the algorithm change was to strengthen bonds between users and to improve their well-being. Facebook would encourage people to interact more with friends and family and spend less time passively consuming professionally produced content, which research suggested was harmful to their mental health." [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

- **Facebook Made The Change To Its News Feed Algorithm Partly Because User Engagement Was Declining.** “Within the company, though, staffers warned the change was having the opposite effect, the documents show. It was making Facebook’s platform an angrier place. Company researchers discovered that publishers and political parties were reorienting their posts toward outrage and sensationalism. That tactic produced high levels of comments and reactions that translated into success on Facebook. [...] Facebook employees also discussed the company’s other, less publicized motive for making the change: Users had begun to interact less with the platform, a worrisome trend, the documents show.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

Zuckerberg Said The News Feed Changes Were intended To Maximize The Amount Of Content With “Meaningful Interaction.” “Over the next few weeks, users will begin seeing fewer viral videos and news articles shared by media companies. Instead, Facebook will highlight posts that friends have interacted with — for example, a photo of your dog or a status update that many of them have commented on or liked. The changes are intended to maximize the amount of content with ‘meaningful interaction’ that people consume on Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, the company’s chief executive, said in an interview. Facebook, he said, had closely studied what kinds of posts had stressed or harmed users.” [Ny Times, [1/11/18](#)]

(FACEBOOK DIDN'T ACTUALLY KNOW WHAT WAS CAUSING A DECLINE IN ENGAGEMENT)

In 2020, A Facebook Data Scientist Wrote In An Internal Memo That After Studying Engagement On The Platform, “Never Really Figured Out Why Metrics Declined.” “The fear was that eventually users might stop using Facebook altogether. One data scientist said in a 2020 memo that Facebook teams studied the issue and “never really figured out why metrics declined.” The team members ultimately concluded that the prevalence of video and other professionally produced content, rather than organic posts from individuals, was likely part of the problem. The goal of the algorithm change was to reverse the decline in comments, and other forms of engagement, and to encourage more original posting. It would reward posts that garnered more comments and emotion emojis, which were viewed as more meaningful than likes, the documents show.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

Facebook Made The Change To Its News Feed Algorithm Partly Because User’s Social Interactions Were Declining In Favor Of Passive Media Consumption. “In January 2018, Facebook was coming off a trying year. It was on the defensive in Washington about what U.S. intelligence officials said was Russia’s use of the platform to meddle in

the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Mr. Zuckerberg announced he was changing Facebook product managers' goal from helping people find relevant content to helping them interact more with friends and family. He said the shift was driven by research showing that passive media consumption on Facebook—notably video, which had been exploding on the platform—wasn't as good for well-being as interacting with other people. He framed the change as a sacrifice. 'Now, I want to be clear: by making these changes, I expect the time people spend on Facebook and some measures of engagement will go down,' he wrote on Facebook. 'But I also expect the time you do spend on Facebook will be more valuable. And if we do the right thing, I believe that will be good for our community and our business over the long term too.'" [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

The Wall Street Journal: Even As Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg Claimed That The Algorithm Change Would Strengthen User Wellbeing, Facebook Researchers Were Warning That The Change Was Making Facebook An “Angrier” Place. "Facebook's chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, said the aim of the algorithm change was to strengthen bonds between users and to improve their well-being. Facebook would encourage people to interact more with friends and family and spend less time passively consuming professionally produced content, which research suggested was harmful to their mental health. [...] Within the company, though, staffers warned the change was having the opposite effect, the documents show. It was making Facebook's platform an angrier place." [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

FACEBOOK EMPLOYEES QUICKLY FOUND THAT THE ALGORITHM CHANGE WAS BACKFIRING AND NEGATIVELY IMPACTING USER WELL-BEING

Wall Street Journal HEADLINE: “Facebook Tried To Make Its Platform A Healthier Place. It Got Angrier Instead.”
[Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

Facebook Employees Warned The Algorithm Change Was Having A Negative Effect On User Well-Being And Mental Health. "Facebook's chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, said the aim of the algorithm change was to strengthen bonds between users and to improve their well-being. Facebook would encourage people to interact more with friends and family and spend less time passively consuming professionally produced content, which research suggested was harmful to their mental health. Within the company, though, staffers warned the change was having the opposite effect, the documents show. It was making Facebook's platform an angrier place. Company researchers discovered that publishers and political parties were reorienting their posts toward outrage and sensationalism. That tactic produced high levels of comments and reactions that translated into success on Facebook. 'Our approach has had unhealthy side effects on important slices of public content, such as politics and news,' wrote a team of data scientists, flagging Mr. Peretti's complaints, in a memo reviewed by the Journal. 'This is an increasing liability,' one of them wrote in a later memo. They concluded that the new algorithm's heavy weighting of reshared material in its News Feed made the angry voices louder. [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

- **Facebook Researchers Found The Algorithm Changes “Had Unhealthy Side Effects On Important Slices Of Public Content” Like News And Politics.** "Within the company, though, staffers warned the change was having the opposite effect, the documents show. It was making Facebook's platform an angrier place. Company researchers discovered that publishers and political parties were reorienting their posts toward outrage and sensationalism. That tactic produced high levels of comments and reactions that translated into success on Facebook. 'Our approach has had unhealthy side effects on important slices of public content, such as politics and news,' wrote a team of data scientists, flagging Mr. Peretti's complaints, in a memo reviewed by the Journal. 'This is an increasing liability,' one of them wrote in a later memo. They concluded that the new algorithm's heavy weighting of reshared material in its News Feed made the angry voices louder. [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]
- **Facebook Researchers Found The Algorithm's Heavy Weighting On Reshared Material In News Feed Made The Angry Voices Louder.** "Within the company, though, staffers warned the change was having the opposite effect, the documents show. It was making Facebook's platform an angrier place. Company researchers discovered that publishers and political parties were reorienting their posts toward outrage and sensationalism. That tactic produced high levels of comments and reactions that translated into success on Facebook. 'Our approach has had unhealthy side effects on important slices of public content, such as politics and news,' wrote a team of data scientists, flagging Mr. Peretti's complaints, in a memo reviewed by the Journal. 'This is an increasing liability,' one of them wrote in a later memo. They concluded that the new algorithm's heavy weighting of reshared material in its News Feed made the angry voices louder. [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]
- **Facebook Internal Research: “Misinformation, Toxicity, And Violent Content Are Inordinately Prevalent Among Reshares.”** "Facebook's chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, said the aim of the algorithm change was to strengthen bonds between users and to improve their well-being. [...] It was making Facebook's platform an angrier place. Company researchers discovered that publishers and political parties

were reorienting their posts toward outrage and sensationalism. That tactic produced high levels of comments and reactions that translated into success on Facebook. ‘Our approach has had unhealthy side effects on important slices of public content, such as politics and news,’ wrote a team of data scientists, flagging Mr. Peretti’s complaints, in a memo reviewed by the Journal. ‘This is an increasing liability,’ one of them wrote in a later memo. They concluded that the new algorithm’s heavy weighting of reshared material in its News Feed made the angry voices louder. ‘Misinformation, toxicity, and violent content are inordinately prevalent among reshares,’ researchers noted in internal memos.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

USER’S WEREN’T IMPRESSED WITH THE CHANGES

Summer Of 2018: Facebook Data Scientists Surveyed Users And Found That Many Felt The Quality Of Their Feeds Had Decreased. “In an early sign of trouble, during the summer of 2018, Facebook data scientists repeatedly surveyed users and found that many felt the quality of their feeds had decreased, the documents show.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

FACEBOOK’S ALGORITHM CHANGE INCENTIVIZED PUBLISHERS AND POLITICIANS TO POST SENSATIONALIST AND NEGATIVE CONTENT BECAUSE IT WAS SUCCESSFUL

Facebook’s Researchers Found That After Facebook Changed Its News Feed Algorithm, Publishers And Political Parties Reoriented Their Posts Toward Outrage And Sensationalism.” “In the fall of 2018, Jonah Peretti, chief executive of online publisher BuzzFeed, emailed a top official at Facebook Inc. The most divisive content that publishers produced was going viral on the platform, he said [...] Mr. Peretti blamed a major overhaul Facebook had given to its News Feed algorithm earlier that year to boost ‘meaningful social interactions’ [...] Within the company, though, staffers warned the change was having the opposite effect, the documents show. It was making Facebook’s platform an angrier place. Company researchers discovered that publishers and political parties were reorienting their posts toward outrage and sensationalism. That tactic produced high levels of comments and reactions that translated into success on Facebook.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

- **Wall Street Journal: “That Tactic Produced High Levels Of Comments And Reactions That Translated Into Success On Facebook.”** “In the fall of 2018, Jonah Peretti, chief executive of online publisher BuzzFeed, emailed a top official at Facebook Inc. The most divisive content that publishers produced was going viral on the platform, he said [...] Mr. Peretti blamed a major overhaul Facebook had given to its News Feed algorithm earlier that year to boost ‘meaningful social interactions’ [...] Within the company, though, staffers warned the change was having the opposite effect, the documents show. It was making Facebook’s platform an angrier place. Company researchers discovered that publishers and political parties were reorienting their posts toward outrage and sensationalism. That tactic produced high levels of comments and reactions that translated into success on Facebook.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

FACEBOOK EMPLOYEES WERE INTERNALLY WARNING OF THE CHANGES PUBLISHERS AND POLITICIANS WERE MAKING TO THEIR POSTS AFTER THE ALGORITHM CHANGE

In April 2019, A Facebook Data Scientist Wrote That Political Operatives And Publishers Were Saying They Relied More On Negativity And Sensationalism After The Algorithm Change. “In April 2019, one Facebook data scientist proposed reducing the spread of ‘deep reshares,’ which means the viewer is not a friend or follower of the original poster, according to an internal memo. ‘While the FB platform offers people the opportunity to connect, share and engage, an unfortunate side effect is that harmful and misinformative content can go viral, often before we can catch it and mitigate its effects,’ he wrote. ‘Political operatives and publishers tell us that they rely more on negativity and sensationalism for distribution due to recent algorithmic changes that favor reshares.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

Facebook’s Internal Research Found Changes To The News Feed Incentivized Publishers To Post Sensationalist Content That Produced Outrage. “Facebook’s chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, said the aim of the algorithm change was to strengthen bonds between users and to improve their well-being. Facebook would encourage people to interact more with friends and family and spend less time passively consuming professionally produced content, which research suggested was harmful to their mental health. Within the company, though, staffers warned the change was having the opposite effect, the documents show. It was making Facebook’s platform an angrier place. Company researchers discovered that publishers and political parties were reorienting their posts toward outrage and sensationalism. That tactic produced high levels of comments and reactions that translated into success on Facebook. ‘Our approach has had unhealthy side effects on important slices of public content, such as politics and news,’ wrote a team of data scientists, flagging Mr. Peretti’s complaints, in a memo reviewed by the Journal.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

April 2019: Facebook Researchers Found In Spain, Political Parties “Learnt That Harsh Attacks On Their Opponents Net The Highest Engagement” Due To The Algorithm Change. "The Facebook researchers, wrote in their report that in Spain, political parties run sophisticated operations to make Facebook posts travel as far and fast as possible. 'They have learnt that harsh attacks on their opponents net the highest engagement,' they wrote. 'They claim that they 'try not to,' but ultimately 'you use what works.'"
[Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

Facebook Whistleblower Frances Haugen: “Anger And Hate Is The Easiest Way To Grow On Facebook.” “‘Anger and hate is the easiest way to grow on Facebook,’ Haugen told the British Parliament on Monday. In several cases, the documents show Facebook employees on its ‘integrity’ teams raising flags about the human costs of specific elements of the ranking system — warnings that executives sometimes heeded and other times seemingly brushed aside. Employees evaluated and debated the importance of anger in society: Anger is a ‘core human emotion,’ one staffer wrote, while another pointed out that anger-generating posts might be essential to protest movements against corrupt regimes.”
[Washington Post, [10/26/21](#)]

PUBLISHERS AND POLITICIANS HAD WARNED FACEBOOK THAT IT WAS INCENTIVIZING SENSATIONALIST CONTENT

Fall 2018: BuzzFeed Editor Jonah Peretti Raised Concerns To Facebook About How Their News Feed Algorithm Change Incentivized Divisive Content. "In the fall of 2018, Jonah Peretti, chief executive of online publisher BuzzFeed, emailed a top official at Facebook Inc. The most divisive content that publishers produced was going viral on the platform, he said, creating an incentive to produce more of it. He pointed to the success of a BuzzFeed post titled '21 Things That Almost All White People are Guilty of Saying,' which received 13,000 shares and 16,000 comments on Facebook, many from people criticizing BuzzFeed for writing it, and arguing with each other about race. Other content the company produced, from news videos to articles on self-care and animals, had trouble breaking through, he said. Mr. Peretti blamed a major overhaul Facebook had given to its News Feed algorithm earlier that year to boost 'meaningful social interactions,' or MSI, between friends and family, according to internal Facebook documents reviewed by The Wall Street Journal that quote the email." [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

- **Buzzfeed CEO Jonah Peretti Wrote That The Algorithm Change Was Rewarding Divisiveness And Not Rewarding “Content That Drives Meaningful Social Interactions.”** "Buzzfeed's Mr. Peretti, in his email, wrote that the new algorithm seemed to be disproportionately rewarding divisiveness, based on what the publisher saw in its own numbers and his observations about how other publishers' posts performed. 'MSI ranking isn't actually rewarding content that drives meaningful social interactions,' Mr. Peretti wrote in his email to the Facebook official, adding that his staff felt 'pressure to make bad content or underperform.' It wasn't just material that exploited racial divisions, he wrote, but also 'fad/junky science,' 'extremely disturbing news' and gross images." [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]
- **Peretti Told Facebook It Wasn't Just Divisive Content That Saw Success On Facebook, But Also “Fad/Junky Science” Along With “Extremely Disturbing News” And “Gross Images.”** "Buzzfeed's Mr. Peretti, in his email, wrote that the new algorithm seemed to be disproportionately rewarding divisiveness, based on what the publisher saw in its own numbers and his observations about how other publishers' posts performed. 'MSI ranking isn't actually rewarding content that drives meaningful social interactions,' Mr. Peretti wrote in his email to the Facebook official, adding that his staff felt 'pressure to make bad content or underperform.' It wasn't just material that exploited racial divisions, he wrote, but also 'fad/junky science,' 'extremely disturbing news' and gross images." [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

POLITICAL PARTIES IN EUROPE TOLD FACEBOOK THE ALGORITHM SHIFT LED THEM TO SHIFT POLICY POSITIONS TO RESONATE MORE ON THE PLATFORM

Political Parties In Europe Told Facebook Their 2018 Algorithm Change Had Made Them Shift Their Policy Positions So They Would Resonate More On The Platform. “They concluded that the new algorithm's heavy weighting of reshared material in its News Feed made the angry voices louder. 'Misinformation, toxicity, and violent content are inordinately prevalent among reshares,' researchers noted in internal memos. Some political parties in Europe told Facebook the algorithm had made them shift their policy positions so they resonated more on the platform, according to the documents. 'Many parties, including those that have shifted to the negative, worry about the long term effects on democracy,' read one internal Facebook report, which didn't name specific parties.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

Political Parties In Europe Felt Facebook's Algorithm Change Made It More Difficult To Directly Communicate With Their Supporters, Incentivizing Them To Create Posts Feeding On Peoples Anger To Increase Visibility.

“Nina Jankowicz, who studies social media and democracy in Central and Eastern Europe as a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, said she has heard complaints from many political parties in that region that the algorithm change made direct communication with their supporters through Facebook pages more difficult. They now have an incentive, she said, to create posts that rack up comments and shares—often by tapping into anger—to get exposure in users’ feeds.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

Political Parties In Europe Told Facebook That The Algorithm Shift Made Them Shift Their Policy Positions To Be More Negative To Resonate On The Platform, Which Raised Concerns About Its Long-Term Effect On Democracy.

“Some political parties in Europe told Facebook the algorithm had made them shift their policy positions so they resonated more on the platform, according to the documents. ‘Many parties, including those that have shifted to the negative, worry about the long term effects on democracy,’ read one internal Facebook report, which didn’t name specific parties.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

POLITICAL PARTIES WERE WARNING OF DEVASTATING IMPACTS ON DEMOCRACY RESULTING OF THE ALGORITHM CHANGE

After Facebook Changed Its Algorithm, A Political Party In Poland Shifted The Proportion Of Their Posts From 50/50 Positive/Negative To 80% Negative, Explicitly Because Of The Algorithm Change. “In Poland, the changes made political debate on the platform nastier, Polish political parties told the company, according to the documents. The documents don’t specify which parties. ‘One party’s social media management team estimates that they have shifted the proportion of their posts from 50/50 positive/negative to 80% negative, explicitly as a function of the change to the algorithm,’ wrote two Facebook researchers in an April 2019 internal report.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

In 2018, Facebook Acknowledged That Social Media Could Have Negative Effects On Democracy. “Facebook is doing some soul-searching. In a new commentary, the social media giant acknowledges the possibility that social media can have negative ramifications for democracy. This comes after repeated criticism that it didn’t do enough to prevent the spread of fake news that had the potential to impact the 2016 U.S. presidential election.” [NPR, [1/22/18](#)]

NOW – MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION PROLIFERATED ON FACEBOOK, SOWING CONFUSION IN SOCIETY AND DIVIDING POPULACES ALONG IDEOLOGICAL FAULT LINES

MISINFORMATION WAS THE MOST ENGAGED WITH CONTENT ON THE PLATFORM, WITH ZUCKERBERG AND EXECUTIVES WELL AWARE OF THE PROBLEM

ACCORDING TO EXPERTS, FACEBOOK USERS ENGAGED WITH MISINFORMATION MORE THAN OTHER KINDS OF INFORMATION ON THE PLATFORM

Fake News And False Rumors Reached More People, Penetrated Deeper Into Social Networks And Spread Much Faster Than Accurate Stories. “The massive new study analyzes every major contested news story in English across the span of Twitter’s existence—some 126,000 stories, tweeted by 3 million users, over more than 10 years—and finds that the truth simply cannot compete with hoax and rumor. By every common metric, falsehood consistently dominates the truth on Twitter, the study finds: Fake news and false rumors reach more people, penetrate deeper into the social network, and spread much faster than accurate stories. ‘It seems to be pretty clear [from our study] that false information outperforms true information,’ says Soroush Vosoughi, a data scientist at MIT who has studied fake news since 2013 and who led this study.” [The Atlantic, [3/8/18](#)]

A False Story On Social Media Reached 1,500 People Six Times Quicker Than A True Story Did. “Though the study is written in the clinical language of statistics, it offers a methodical indictment of the accuracy of information that spreads on these platforms. A false story is much more likely to go viral than a real story, the authors find. A false story reaches 1,500 people six times quicker, on average, than a true story does. And while false stories outperform the truth on every subject—including business, terrorism and war, science and technology, and entertainment—fake news about politics regularly does best.” [The Atlantic, [3/8/18](#)]

Researchers From NYU Found That Facebook Users Engaged With Misinformation More Than Other Kinds Of Information On The Platform” “Facebook’s move drew condemnation from free speech advocates and lawmakers, who accused Facebook of squelching independent research. The FTC criticized Facebook’s decision, saying the company’s initial rationale was ‘inaccurate.’ And Edelson says Facebook is trying to stifle her work, which has shown that Facebook has failed to disclose who pays for some political ads and that Facebook users engage with misinformation more than

other kinds of information on the platform. ‘It doesn’t like what we’re finding, and I think it is taking measures to silence us,’ Edelson told Recode in her first in-depth interview since the accounts were suspended.” [Vox, [8/6/21](#)]

Brookings: “Misinformation Is The Logical Result Of A Revenue Model That Rewards The Volume Of Information Over Its Veracity. When Lies Pay As Well As The Truth, There Is Little Incentive To Only Tell The Truth.” “Such abuse falls into three categories: the dissemination of misinformation and hate; the distortion of markets to become non-competitive; and the violation of consumers’ rights. Misinformation is the logical result of a revenue model that rewards the volume of information over its veracity. When lies pay as well as truth, there is little incentive to only tell the truth. Market distortion results when companies assume the role of gatekeepers to the new economy.” [Brookings, [2/10/21](#)]

FACEBOOK KNEW IT WAS EXPOSING USERS TO MISINFORMATION, BUT CHOSE NOT TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT

Facebook Was “Knowingly Exposing Users To Misinformation That We Ha[d] The Processes And Resources To Mitigate” According To A 2019 Internal Memo From Facebook’s Researchers. “The leeway given to prominent political accounts on misinformation, which the company in 2019 acknowledged in a limited form, baffled some employees responsible for protecting the platforms. High-profile accounts posed greater risks than regular ones, researchers noted, yet were the least policed. ‘We are knowingly exposing users to misinformation that we have the processes and resources to mitigate,’ said a 2019 memo by Facebook researchers, called ‘The Political Whitelist Contradicts Facebook’s Core Stated Principles.’ Technology website The Information previously reported on the document.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

Internal Facebook Documents Showed That The Platform’s Own Researchers Had Identified The Platform’s Ill Effects, In Areas Like Political Discourse “Facebook’s stated ambition has long been to connect people. As it expanded over the past 17 years, from Harvard undergraduates to billions of global users, it struggled with the messy reality of bringing together disparate voices with different motivations—from people wishing each other happy birthday to Mexican drug cartels conducting business on the platform. Those problems increasingly consume the company. Time and again, the documents show, in the U.S. and overseas, Facebook’s own researchers have identified the platform’s ill effects, in areas including teen mental health, political discourse and human trafficking. Time and again, despite congressional hearings, its own pledges and numerous media exposés, the company didn’t fix them.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

The Auditors Found The Company’s Algorithms Continued To Push People Toward Self-Reinforcing Echo Chambers, Which Potentially Deepened Polarization. “They added that they ‘would have liked to see the company go further to address civil rights concerns in a host of areas.’ The auditors pointed to extremist and white nationalist content, as well as to hate organizations, saying Facebook needed to do more to identify and remove them from its site. The company’s algorithms also continued to push people toward self-reinforcing echo chambers, they said, potentially deepening polarization. In a post on Wednesday about the audit, Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook’s chief operating officer, said the report was ‘the beginning of the journey, not the end.’” [NY Times, [7/8/20](#)]

Internal Facebook Documents Found That The Platform Aggravated Polarization And Tribal Behavior. “That presentation went to the heart of a question dogging Facebook almost since its founding: Does its platform aggravate polarization and tribal behavior? The answer it found, in some cases, was yes. Facebook had kicked off an internal effort to understand how its platform shaped user behavior and how the company might address potential harms.” [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

FACEBOOK’S CHANGES TO ITS NEWS FEED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOSTERED RAGE AND MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION, WITH FACEBOOK WELL AWARE OF THE ISSUE

Washington Post Headline: “Five Points For Anger, One For A ‘Like’: How Facebook’s Formula Fostered Rage And Misinformation.” “Five years ago, Facebook gave its users five new ways to react to a post in their news feed beyond the iconic ‘like’ thumbs-up: ‘love,’ ‘haha,’ ‘wow,’ ‘sad’ and ‘angry.’ Behind the scenes, Facebook programmed the algorithm that decides what people see in their news feeds to use the reaction emoji as signals to push more emotional and provocative content — including content likely to make them angry. Starting in 2017, Facebook’s ranking algorithm treated emoji reactions as five times more valuable than ‘likes,’ internal documents reveal. The theory was simple: Posts that prompted lots of reaction emoji tended to keep users more engaged, and keeping users engaged was the key to Facebook’s business. Facebook’s own researchers were quick to suspect a critical flaw. Favoring ‘controversial’ posts — including those that make users angry — could open ‘the door to more spam/abuse/clickbait inadvertently,’ a staffer, whose name was redacted, wrote in one of the internal documents. A colleague responded, ‘It’s possible.’ The warning proved prescient.” [Washington Post, [10/26/21](#)]

- Facebook Weighted “Angry” Emoji Reactions Five-Times More Heavily Than “Likes,” Leading To A Spread Of Misinformation, Toxicity, And Low-Quality News.** “Five years ago, Facebook gave its users five new ways to react to a post in their news feed beyond the iconic ‘like’ thumbs-up: ‘love,’ ‘haha,’ ‘wow,’ ‘sad’ and ‘angry.’ Behind the scenes, Facebook programmed the algorithm that decides what people see in their news feeds to use the reaction emoji as signals to push more emotional and provocative content — including content likely to make them angry. Starting in 2017, Facebook’s ranking algorithm treated emoji reactions as five times more valuable than ‘likes,’ internal documents reveal. The theory was simple: Posts that prompted lots of reaction emoji tended to keep users more engaged, and keeping users engaged was the key to Facebook’s business. [...] The warning proved prescient. The company’s data scientists confirmed in 2019 that posts that sparked angry reaction emoji were disproportionately likely to include misinformation, toxicity and low-quality news. [...] Anger was the least used of the six emoji reactions, at 429 million clicks per week, compared with 63 billion likes and 11 billion ‘love’ reactions, according to a 2020 document. Facebook’s data scientists found that angry reactions were ‘much more frequent’ on problematic posts: ‘civic low quality news, civic misinfo, civic toxicity, health misinfo, and health antivax content,’ according to a document from 2019. Its research that year showed the angry reaction was ‘being weaponized’ by political figures.” [Washington Post, [10/26/21](#)]

Facebook Was The No. 1 Social Network For Disinformation. “They found that the number of countries with political disinformation campaigns more than doubled to 70 in the last two years, with evidence of at least one political party or government entity in each of those countries engaging in social media manipulation. In addition, Facebook remains the No. 1 social network for disinformation, the report said. Organized propaganda campaigns were found on the platform in 56 countries. Social media technology tends to empower propaganda and disinformation in really new ways, said Samantha Bradshaw, a researcher at the Oxford Internet Institute, a department at Oxford University, and co-author of the study.” [Economic News, 9/26/19]

FACEBOOK’S OWN TOOLS WERE DRIVING USERS TOWARDS DIVISIVE CONTENT...

Internal Facebook Research Repeatedly Found That Recommendation Tools Pushed Users Into Extremist Groups. “For years, company researchers had been running experiments like Carol Smith’s to gauge the platform’s hand in radicalizing users, according to the documents seen by NBC News. This internal work repeatedly found that recommendation tools pushed users into extremist groups, findings that helped inform policy changes and tweaks to recommendations and news feed rankings. Those rankings are a tentacled, ever-evolving system widely known as “the algorithm” that pushes content to users.” [NBC News, [10/22/21](#)]

According To A 2016 Presentation, Facebook Researchers Found “64% Of All Extremist Group Joins [Were] Due To Our Recommendation Tools.” “The high number of extremist groups was concerning, the presentation says. Worse was Facebook’s realization that its algorithms were responsible for their growth. The 2016 presentation states that “64% of all extremist group joins are due to our recommendation tools” and that most of the activity came from the platform’s “Groups You Should Join” and “Discover” algorithms: “Our recommendation systems grow the problem.” [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

An Internal Facebook Report Presented To Executives In 2018 Found That The Company Was Well Its Products, Specifically Its Recommendation Engine, Stoked Divisiveness And Polarization. “An internal Facebook report presented to executives in 2018 found that the company was well aware that its product, specifically its recommendation engine, stoked divisiveness and polarization, according to a new report from The Wall Street Journal.” [The Verge, [5/26/20](#)]

Internal Researchers For Facebook Found that Facebook’s “Core Product Mechanics” Let Disinformation And Hate Speech Flourish On The Site. “What researchers found was often far from positive. Time and again, they determined that people misused key features or that those features amplified toxic content, among other effects. In an August 2019 internal memo, several researchers said it was Facebook’s “core product mechanics” — meaning the basics of how the product functioned — that had let misinformation and hate speech flourish on the site. ‘The mechanics of our platform are not neutral,’ they concluded.” [New York Times, [10/25/21](#)]

In A 2018 Presentation, A Facebook Team Wrote That Their Algorithm “Exploit[ed] The Human Brain’s Attraction To Divisiveness.” “A Facebook Inc. team had a blunt message for senior executives. The company’s algorithms weren’t bringing people together. They were driving people apart. “Our algorithms exploit the human brain’s attraction to divisiveness,” read a slide from a 2018 presentation. ‘If left unchecked,’ it warned, Facebook would feed users “more and more divisive content in an effort to gain user attention & increase time on the platform.’ That presentation went to the heart of a question dogging Facebook almost since its founding: Does its platform aggravate polarization and tribal behavior?” [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

...AND DRIVING THE DEMISE OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES ACROSS THE WORLD

WIRED Said “Social Media Platforms Ha[d] Come To Seem Like A Prime Culprit” For Liberal Democracies.”

Demise. While the crisis of democracy has many causes, social media platforms have come to seem like a prime culprit. The recent wave of anti-establishment politicians and nativist political movements—Donald Trump in the United States; Brexit in the UK; the resurgent right wing in Germany, Italy, or across Eastern Europe—has revealed not only a deep disenchantment with the global rules and institutions of Western democracy, but also an automated media landscape that rewards demagoguery with clicks. Political opinions have become more polarized, populations have become more tribal, and civic nationalism is disintegrating.” [WIRED, [10/23/18](#)]

WIRED Wrote That Social Media And “An Automated Media Landscape Reward[ed] Demagoguery With Clicks.”

“While the crisis of democracy has many causes, social media platforms have come to seem like a prime culprit. The recent wave of anti-establishment politicians and nativist political movements—Donald Trump in the United States; Brexit in the UK; the resurgent right wing in Germany, Italy, or across Eastern Europe—has revealed not only a deep disenchantment with the global rules and institutions of Western democracy, but also an automated media landscape that rewards demagoguery with clicks. Political opinions have become more polarized, populations have become more tribal, and civic nationalism is disintegrating.” [WIRED, [10/23/18](#)]

ZUCKERBERG RESISTED ATTEMPTS TO FIX THE ALGORITHM CAUSING DIVISION AND TRIBAL BEHAVIOR, WORRYING ABOUT HOW IT MIGHT IMPACT PROFITS

IN 2021, IT WAS REPORTED THAT FACEBOOK HAD “LONG KNOWN” IT WAS ALGORITHMS WERE PUSHING USERS TO EXTREMES

NBC News: According To Internal Documents, Facebook Had “Long Known Its Algorithms And Recommendation Systems Push[ed] Users To Extremes.” “The documents released by Haugen partly support those claims, but they also highlight the frustrations of some of the employees engaged in that research. Among Haugen’s disclosures are research, reports and internal posts that suggest Facebook has long known its algorithms and recommendation systems push some users to extremes. And while some managers and executives ignored the internal warnings, anti-vaccine groups, conspiracy theory movements and disinformation agents took advantage of their permissiveness, threatening public health, personal safety and democracy at large.” [NBC News, [10/22/21](#)]

Facebook Whistleblower Frances Haugen Said At Facebook, She Saw Conflicts Of Interest Between What Was Good For The Public And What Was Good For Facebook, “And Facebook, Over And Over Again, Chose To Optimize For Its Own Interests.” “On 60 Minutes on Sunday, the whistleblower came forward, identifying herself as former product manager Frances Haugen, who was hired in 2019 to protect against election interference on the platform and left in May after growing frustrated by the company’s apparent refusal to deal with the crises it was stoking. ‘The thing I saw at Facebook over and over again was there were conflicts of interest between what was good for the public and what was good for Facebook,’ Haugen said. ‘And Facebook, over and over again, chose to optimize for its own interests, like making more money.’” [NY Mag, [10/4/21](#)]

WSJ: Zuckerberg And Executives “Largely Shelved” Research Showing Facebook Was Causing Divisiveness And Polarization. “A Facebook Inc. team had a blunt message for senior executives. The company’s algorithms weren’t bringing people together. They were driving people apart. ‘Our algorithms exploit the human brain’s attraction to divisiveness,’ read a slide from a 2018 presentation. ‘If left unchecked,’ it warned, Facebook would feed users ‘more and more divisive content in an effort to gain user attention & increase time on the platform.’ [...] But in the end, Facebook’s interest was fleeting. Mr. Zuckerberg and other senior executives largely shelved the basic research, according to previously unreported internal documents and people familiar with the effort, and weakened or blocked efforts to apply its conclusions to Facebook products.” [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

RESEARCHERS TOLD FACEBOOK EXECUTIVES THAT COMBATTING POLARIZATION WOULD COME AT A COST OF LOWER ENGAGEMENT – ZUCK DECLINED

A Facebook Team Said Building Features To Keep Facebook’s Algorithms From Recommending Extremist Content Would Come At The Cost Of User Engagement. “Another idea, documents show, was to tweak recommendation algorithms to suggest a wider range of Facebook groups than people would ordinarily encounter. Building these features and combating polarization might come at a cost of lower engagement, the Common Ground team

warned in a mid-2018 document, describing some of its own proposals as “antigrowth” and requiring Facebook to “take a moral stance.” [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

- **The Research Team Said The Changes Would Require Facebook To “Take A Moral Stance.”** “Another idea, documents show, was to tweak recommendation algorithms to suggest a wider range of Facebook groups than people would ordinarily encounter. Building these features and combating polarization might come at a cost of lower engagement, the Common Ground team warned in a mid-2018 document, describing some of its own proposals as “antigrowth” and requiring Facebook to “take a moral stance.” [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

Wall Street Journal: “Fixing The Polarization Problem On Facebook Would Require Facebook “To Rethink Some Of Its Core Products.” “Facebook launched its research on divisive content and behavior at a moment when it was grappling with whether its mission to “connect the world” was good for society. Fixing the polarization problem would be difficult, requiring Facebook to rethink some of its core products. Most notably, the project forced Facebook to consider how it prioritized ‘user engagement’ —a metric involving time spent, likes, shares and comments that for years had been the lodestar of its system.” [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

Wall Street Journal: Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg Rejected Proposed Fixes To The Algorithm Because He Worried It Would Hurt Facebook Users’ Engagement. “Data scientists on that integrity team—whose job is to improve the quality and trustworthiness of content on the platform—worked on a number of potential changes to curb the tendency of the overhauled algorithm to reward outrage and lies. Mr. Zuckerberg resisted some of the proposed fixes, the documents show, because he was worried they might hurt the company’s other objective—making users engage more with Facebook.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

NY Times: “Any Action Taken To Reduce Popular Content, Even If It Is Fake News, Could Hurt The [Facebook’s] Priority Of Keeping Its Users Engaged On The Platform.” “The changes will not affect satirical sites like The Onion, which often jabs at political subjects through tongue-in-cheek humor. Facebook must take something else into consideration: its profit. Any action taken to reduce popular content, even if it is fake news, could hurt the company’s priority of keeping its users engaged on the platform. People spend an average of more than 50 minutes a day on Facebook, and the company wants that number to grow.” [NY Times, [12/15/16](#)]

Washington Post HEADLINE: “The Case Against Mark Zuckerberg: Insiders Say Facebook’s CEO Chose Growth Over Safety.” [Washington Post, [10/25/21](#)]

Zuckerberg Would Not Approve Restricting Facebook’s Algorithm From Boosting Content Mostly Likely To Be Shared By A Lot Of Users If There Was A “Material Trade Off” With ‘Meaningful Social Interactions’. “Mr. Peretti blamed a major overhaul Facebook had given to its News Feed algorithm earlier that year to boost “meaningful social interactions,” or MSI, between friends and family [...] Anna Stepanov, who led a team addressing those issues, presented Mr. Zuckerberg with several proposed changes meant to address the proliferation of false and divisive content on the platform, according to an April 2020 internal memo she wrote about the briefing. One such change would have taken away a boost the algorithm gave to content most likely to be reshared by long chains of users. “Mark doesn’t think we could go broad” with the change, she wrote to colleagues after the meeting. Mr. Zuckerberg said he was open to testing the approach, she said, but ‘e wouldn’t launch if there was a material tradeoff with MSI impact.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

April 2020: Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg Rejected Proposed Changes To Make The Algorithm Less Incendiary, With Facebook Executive Anna Stepanov Saying He Would Not Accept A Change If There Was A “Material Tradeoff With MSI Impact.” “Anna Stepanov, who led a team addressing those issues, presented Mr. Zuckerberg with several proposed changes meant to address the proliferation of false and divisive content on the platform, according to an April 2020 internal memo she wrote about the briefing. One such change would have taken away a boost the algorithm gave to content most likely to be reshared by long chains of users. ‘Mark doesn’t think we could go broad’ with the change, she wrote to colleagues after the meeting. Mr. Zuckerberg said he was open to testing the approach, she said, but ‘We wouldn’t launch if there was a material tradeoff with MSI impact.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

Wall Street Journal HEADLINE: “Facebook Executives Shut Down Efforts To Make The Site Less Divisive.” [Wall Street Journal, [5/26/20](#)]

NOW – FACEBOOK ALLOWED FOREIGN ACTORS TO THREATEN NATIONAL SECURITY, SOCIAL COHESION AND PUBLIC HEALTH

FACEBOOK BECAME A HUB FOR POLITICAL DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS IN THE U.S. RUN BY FOREIGN ACTORS, TERRORISTS AND EXTREMISTS

Facebook Said That The U.S. Was The Most Frequent Target Of Disinformation Campaigns. “Of the 150 disinformation campaigns that Facebook has caught and removed in the past four years, the U.S. has been the most frequent target by far, according to a new threat intelligence report from Facebook. Why it matters: While most of the campaigns targeting the U.S. have originated abroad, Facebook found that a significant number of campaigns targeting people in the U.S. have originated from inside the U.S.” [Axios, [6/1/21](#)]

Russia And Iran Were The Leading Purveyors Of Disinformation On Facebook Between 2018-2021. “Russia and Iran were the leading purveyors of disinformation on Facebook over the past four years, and the American public was the top target, according to a new report by Facebook summing up the social media network's efforts to purge itself of propaganda. Facebook says it shut down 150 networks of fake accounts between 2017 and the end of 2020 — many of them foreign disinformation efforts aimed at influencing Americans, others created in the U.S. by domestic extremists.” [NBC News, [5/26/21](#)]

New Yorker Said It Was Online Disinformation Was “An Ongoing Threat To Our Country.” “When we think of national security, we imagine concrete threats—Iranian gunboats, say, or North Korean missiles. We spend a lot of money preparing to meet those kinds of dangers. And yet it's online disinformation that, right now, poses an ongoing threat to our country; it's already damaging our political system and undermining our public health. For the most part, we stand defenseless. We worry that regulating the flow of online information might violate the principle of free speech.” [New Yorker, [11/13/20](#)]

- **New Yorker: “It's Already Damaging Our Political System And Undermining Our Public Health.** “When we think of national security, we imagine concrete threats—Iranian gunboats, say, or North Korean missiles. We spend a lot of money preparing to meet those kinds of dangers. And yet it's online disinformation that, right now, poses an ongoing threat to our country; it's already damaging our political system and undermining our public health. For the most part, we stand defenseless. We worry that regulating the flow of online information might violate the principle of free speech.” [New Yorker, [11/13/20](#)]

NATIONAL SECURITY LEADERS SOUNDED THE ALARM ON THE THREAT DISINFORMATION BY FOREIGN ACTORS POSED TO NATIONAL SECURITY

Former NSA General Counsel Glenn Gerstell: Disinformation Was A National Security Threat Because “It Either Sow[ed] Discord In Our Society Or It Undermine[d] Confidence In Our Democratic Institutions.” “Disinformation as national security threat: “Disinformation, whether it's foreign or domestic, is a national security threat very simply because it does one of two things. It either sows discord in our society or it undermines confidence in our democratic institutions, whether that's governmental institutions, the press, or other important societal structures. That's why it's a national security threat. What makes it effective is that disinformation falls on receptive eyes and ears.” [CBS News, [12/16/20](#)]

American Security Project: Disinformation Could “Degrade The Fundamentals Of Democratic Societies: Trust In Institutions, A Free Media, Civil Society And [...] Trust In Free And Fair Elections.” “Impacts on U.S. National Security: Tools of disinformation, especially as utilized by authoritarian regimes, can work to degrade the fundamentals of democratic societies: trust in institutions, a free media, civil society, and of course, trust in free and fair elections. Disinformation also undermines the confidence of scientific knowledge and public health institutions, crucial elements necessary to mitigating public health threats.” [American Security Project, [10/6/20](#)]

American Security Project: The Propagation Of Disinformation “Could Work Towards Increasing Russian And Chinese Spheres Of Influence.” “Disinformation also undermines the confidence of scientific knowledge and public health institutions, crucial elements necessary to mitigating public health threats. The propagation of disinformation, especially to U.S.-allied states and regions crucial to global strategic competition, could work towards increasing Russian and Chinese spheres of influence while negatively impacting the U.S.' standing in the world as a global leader and cooperative partner. The potential consequences might impact, amongst other things, the U.S.' ability to deter future public health or bioterrorism threats.” [American Security Project, [10/6/20](#)]

American Security Project: Disinformation Risked “Negatively Impacting The U.S.' Standing In The World As A Global Leader And Cooperative Partner.” “Disinformation also undermines the confidence of scientific knowledge and public health institutions, crucial elements necessary to mitigating public health threats. The propagation of disinformation, especially to U.S.-allied states and regions crucial to global strategic competition, could work towards increasing Russian

and Chinese spheres of influence while negatively impacting the U.S.' standing in the world as a global leader and cooperative partner. The potential consequences might impact, amongst other things, the U.S.' ability to deter future public health or bioterrorism threats." [American Security Project, [10/6/20](#)]

Time, April 2020: Facebook Was “Reluctant To Crack Down On Political Disinformation.” “Although activists have welcomed the news, there are still several obstacles preventing Facebook from issuing corrections on political falsehoods in the same way it can for public health ones. The last four years have shown Facebook is reluctant to crack down on political disinformation. Since Russia attempted to sway the 2016 U.S. election by flooding social media with false news stories, Facebook has cracked down on foreign interference. But it has made only limited attempts to crack down on home-grown disinformation, and is especially wary of infringing on first-amendment rights.” [Time, [4/16/20](#)]

FACEBOOK CONSISTENTLY UNDERSTAFFED COUNTER-ESPIONAGE AND COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS

According To Whistleblower Frances Haugen, Facebook Had A “Consistent Understaffing Of The Counter-Espionage Information Operations And Counterterrorism Teams.” “Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen told lawmakers Tuesday that she believes the social media giant is a ‘national security issue.’ The former civic project manager for Facebook’s misinformation team said the social media network saw ‘active participation’ of ‘the Iran government doing espionage on other state actors.’ ‘This is definitely a thing that is happening,’ she said during testimony Tuesday. ‘And I believe Facebook’s consistent understaffing of the counter-espionage information operations and counterterrorism teams is a national security issue.’” [Fox News, [10/5/21](#)]

- **Facebook Whistleblower Frances Haugen Told Lawmakers That She Believed Facebook Had Become A “National Security Issue.”** “Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen told lawmakers Tuesday that she believes the social media giant is a ‘national security issue.’ The former civic project manager for Facebook’s misinformation team said the social media network saw “active participation” of ‘the Iran government doing espionage on other state actors.’ ‘This is definitely a thing that is happening,’ she said during testimony Tuesday.” [Fox News, [10/5/21](#)]

Stratfor: Big Tech Was “No More Immune To Potential Espionage And Foreign Influence” Than Any Business With Vast International Ties. “In addition to its AI research, the extent of Google’s control over the search for and distribution of information is a national, strategic resource in itself. Statements by the company’s leaders suggest an attitude that Google’s importance and significance transcend national interests, though its international behavior at times seems to belie this mindset. Tech giants are no more immune to potential espionage and foreign influence than energy or defense companies or any other business with vast international ties and interests. And when Google’s actions are considered within the context of China’s interests and history, Thiel’s argument gains merit. In its attempt to adhere to its old “don’t be evil” mantra by disengaging with the Pentagon’s AI research, Google may learn how the proverbial road to hell is paved with good intentions.” [Stratfor, [11/12/19](#)]

FACEBOOK ONCE EXPOSED THE PERSONAL DETAILS OF ITS CONTENT MODERATORS TO SUSPECTED TERRORISTS

In 2017, Facebook Was Found To Have Inadvertently Exposed The Personal Details Of Its Content Moderators To Suspected Terrorists. “Facebook put the safety of its content moderators at risk after inadvertently exposing their personal details to suspected terrorist users of the social network, the Guardian has learned. The security lapse affected more than 1,000 workers across 22 departments at Facebook who used the company’s moderation software to review and remove inappropriate content from the platform, including sexual material, hate speech and terrorist propaganda.” [The Guardian, [6/16/17](#)]

- **The Security Lapse Affected More Than 1,000 Workers Across 22 Departments At Facebook.** “Facebook put the safety of its content moderators at risk after inadvertently exposing their personal details to suspected terrorist users of the social network, the Guardian has learned. The security lapse affected more than 1,000 workers across 22 departments at Facebook who used the company’s moderation software to review and remove inappropriate content from the platform, including sexual material, hate speech and terrorist propaganda.” [The Guardian, [6/16/17](#)]

Moderators Had Their Personal Profiles Viewed By Accounts With Ties to ISIS, Hezbollah And The Kurdistan Workers Party And Were Automatically Appearing In The Activity Logs Of The Groups They Were Shutting Down. “Facebook put the safety of its content moderators at risk after inadvertently exposing their personal details to suspected terrorist users of the social network, the Guardian has learned. The security lapse affected more than 1,000 workers

across 22 departments at Facebook who used the company's moderation software to review and remove inappropriate content from the platform, including sexual material, hate speech and terrorist propaganda [...] The moderator said that others within the high-risk six had their personal profiles viewed by accounts with ties to Isis, Hezbollah and the Kurdistan Workers Party. Facebook complies with the US state department's designation of terrorist groups." [The Guardian, [6/16/17](#)]

The Moderators Received Friend Requests From People Affiliated With The Terrorist Organization They Were Scrutinizing. "Facebook put the safety of its content moderators at risk after inadvertently exposing their personal details to suspected terrorist users of the social network, the Guardian has learned. The security lapse affected more than 1,000 workers across 22 departments at Facebook who used the company's moderation software to review and remove inappropriate content from the platform, including sexual material, hate speech and terrorist propaganda [...] Facebook moderators like him first suspected there was a problem when they started receiving friend requests from people affiliated with the terrorist organizations they were scrutinizing. An urgent investigation by Facebook's security team established that personal profiles belonging to content moderators had been exposed." [The Guardian, [6/16/17](#)]

The Computer Glitch Exposing Moderators Personal Profiles To Terrorist Was Not Fixed For A Month, And Had Been Retroactively Exposing The Personal Profile As Far Back As A Year Prior. "Facebook put the safety of its content moderators at risk after inadvertently exposing their personal details to suspected terrorist users of the social network, the Guardian has learned. The security lapse affected more than 1,000 workers across 22 departments at Facebook who used the company's moderation software to review and remove inappropriate content from the platform, including sexual material, hate speech and terrorist propaganda [...] The bug in the software was not fixed for another two weeks, on 16 November 2016. By that point the glitch had been active for a month. However, the bug was also retroactively exposing the personal profiles of moderators who had censored accounts as far back as August 2016." [The Guardian, [6/16/17](#)]

RUSSIA EXPERTLY HARNESSSED FACEBOOK TO SPREAD PROPAGANDA AND SOW DIVISION IN THE US

In 2014, Russia Began To Promote Propaganda And Target American Voters With Polarizing Messaging.

"Arguably, that shift began in 2013. Google and Facebook acquired smaller companies, including advertising exchanges and other platforms like YouTube and Instagram, which expanded their reach. Facebook launched Custom Audiences and Lookalike audiences, which paired the characteristics provided by the advertisers with Facebook's own algorithm. Essentially, they allow advertisers to target specific, individual users. Starting in 2014, a Russian troll farm called the Internet Research Agency began to promote propaganda and target American voters with polarizing messaging. In many ways, the agency behaved like a savvy Internet marketer, using the same tools and techniques that are common in digital advertising campaigns." [Washington Post, [11/18/19](#)]

Russia's Troll Farm, The Internet Research Agency, Used The Same Internet Marketing Tools And Techniques That Common Digital Advertising Campaigns Did. "Arguably, that shift began in 2013. Google and Facebook acquired smaller companies, including advertising exchanges and other platforms like YouTube and Instagram, which expanded their reach. Facebook launched Custom Audiences and Lookalike audiences, which paired the characteristics provided by the advertisers with Facebook's own algorithm. Essentially, they allow advertisers to target specific, individual users. Starting in 2014, a Russian troll farm called the Internet Research Agency began to promote propaganda and target American voters with polarizing messaging. In many ways, the agency behaved like a savvy Internet marketer, using the same tools and techniques that are common in digital advertising campaigns." [Washington Post, [11/18/19](#)]

Russia Bought Ad Space On Facebook To Target Americans Voters With Politically Charged Advertising. "Earlier this month it was revealed that politically-charged advertising had been targeted at American voters, paid for, Facebook believed, by Russian actors with links to the Kremlin. The adverts did not support a specific candidate, Facebook said, but instead posted inflammatory information on hot topics, such as immigration. The company said it would share details of those advertisements with a wide-ranging US investigation into Russian meddling in 2016's presidential election." [BBC, [9/22/17](#)]

By 2016, Russia Had Started More Than 20 Disinformation Campaigns In 13 Countries, 46% Of The Campaigns Were On Facebook. "What we have here is a multi-strategy, multithreaded approach to influencing and to dividing. And they are using the best tool at their disposal to do that. And that's not always in coordination, but it potentially could be someday," said Renee DiResta, technical research manager at the Stanford Internet Observatory and co-author of a recent report on GRU online operations. By 2016, Russia had started more than 20 campaigns in 13 countries. Forty percent of these campaigns were on Facebook and nearly 90 percent were on Twitter, according to a report from Jacob Shapiro and Diego Martin at Princeton University's Empirical Studies of Conflict Project." [Washington Post, [11/18/19](#)]

It Was Difficult To Quantify The Amount Of Disinformation That Was Being Produced At Any Time By Russians Or Other Adversarial Powers. “But in addition to overt messaging promoting their own vaccines, Moscow has also spread conspiracy theories. Last year, the department began warning about how Russia was using fringe websites to promote doubts around vaccinations. It is difficult to quantify the amount of disinformation being produced at any time by the Russians or other adversarial powers, government officials and outside experts said. But the rise of the Delta variant of the coronavirus — and shifting scientific advice on how to defend against a more infectious strain and the need for booster shots or masks — has created an atmosphere for misinformation to more easily spread, experts said.” [New York Times, [8/5/21](#)]

March 2022: CBS News Reported That Redfish, A Facebook Page Labeled As Russian-State Controlled Media, Built Up A U.S. And Liberal-Leaning Audience Of More Than 800K. “Redfish, a Facebook page that is labeled as Russian-state controlled media, has built up a mostly U.S. and liberal-leaning audience of more than 800,000 followers over the years. The page has in recent days posted anti-U.S. sentiment and sought to down play Russian’s invasion of Ukraine, calling it a “military operation” and dedicating multiple posts to highlighting anti-war protests across Russia. One Facebook post also used a picture of a map to highlight airstrikes in other parts of the world.” [CBS News, [3/1/22](#)]

Facebook Failed To Discover The Russia-Based Internet Research Agency Campaign To Spread Hyperpartisan Content And Disinformation During The 2016 Election. “Facebook didn’t discover a campaign by the Russia-based Internet Research Agency to spread hyperpartisan content and disinformation during the 2016 presidential election until months after Americans had voted. The company’s actions were late as well when Myanmar’s military leaders used Facebook to foment rapes, murders and forced migrations of minority Rohingya people. Facebook has apologized for failings in both cases.” [Washington Post, [1/4/22](#)]

FACEBOOK ACKNOWLEDGED RUSSIAN OPERATIVES HAD PUBLISHED 80,000 DIVISIVE POSTS SEEN BY OVER 100 MILLION AMERICAS

Facebook Admitted That Russian Based Operatives Had Published About 80,000 Posts On The Social Network Over A Two-Year Period In An Effort To Sway U.S. Politics. “Facebook Inc said on Monday that Russia-based operatives published about 80,000 posts on the social network over a two-year period in an effort to sway U.S. politics and that about 126 million Americans may have seen the posts during that time. Facebook’s latest data on the Russia-linked posts - possibly reaching around half of the U.S. population of voting age - far exceeds the company’s previous disclosures. It was included in written testimony provided to U.S. lawmakers, and seen by Reuters, ahead of key hearings with social media and technology companies about Russian meddling in elections on Capitol Hill this week.” [Reuters, [10/30/17](#)]

- **Facebook Acknowledged That About 126 Million Americans May Have Seen The Posts During The Two Year Period.** “Facebook Inc said on Monday that Russia-based operatives published about 80,000 posts on the social network over a two-year period in an effort to sway U.S. politics and that about 126 million Americans may have seen the posts during that time. Facebook’s latest data on the Russia-linked posts - possibly reaching around half of the U.S. population of voting age - far exceeds the company’s previous disclosures. It was included in written testimony provided to U.S. lawmakers, and seen by Reuters, ahead of key hearings with social media and technology companies about Russian meddling in elections on Capitol Hill this week.” [Reuters, [10/30/17](#)]

Most Of The Posts Focused On Divisive Social And Political Messages Such As Race Relations. “These actions run counter to Facebook’s mission of building community and everything we stand for. And we are determined to do everything we can to address this new threat,” he wrote. The 80,000 posts were published between June 2015 and August 2017. Most of them focused on divisive social and political messages such as race relations, Facebook said. Twitter’s revised estimate of how many Russia-linked accounts were on its service comes a month after an influential Democratic senator, Mark Warner, slammed it for what he called an insufficient investigation.” [Reuters, [10/30/17](#)]

RUSSIA TRIED TO ORGANIZE PRO-TRUMP RALLIES ON FACEBOOK DURING THE 2016 ELECTION

Russian Propagandists On Facebook Tried To Organize More Than A Dozen Pro-Trump Rallies In Florida During The 2016 Election. “Suspected Russia propagandists on Facebook tried to organize more than a dozen pro-Trump rallies in Florida during last year’s election, The Daily Beast has learned. The demonstrations—at least one of which was promoted online by local pro-Trump activists—brought dozens of supporters together in real life. They appear to be the first case of Russian provocateurs successfully mobilizing Americans over Facebook in direct support of Donald Trump.” [Washington Post, [9/25/17](#)]

- **The Demonstrations Brought Dozens Of Trump Supporters In Real Life.** “Suspected Russia propagandists on Facebook tried to organize more than a dozen pro-Trump rallies in Florida during last year’s election, The Daily Beast has learned. The demonstrations—at least one of which was promoted online by local pro-Trump activists— brought dozens of supporters together in real life. They appear to be the first case of Russian provocateurs successfully mobilizing Americans over Facebook in direct support of Donald Trump.” [Washington Post, [9/25/17](#)]

DESPITE BECOMING AWARE OF RUSSIAN AGENTS HARNESSING FACEBOOK, THE PLATFORM DID LITTLE TO BLUNT THEIR EFFORTS

Despite Banning Ads From Russian State Media, Not Recommending Content From Such Outlets, Facebook Hasn’t Stopped Pro-Russia Countries From Using Their State Channels To Buy Ads Pushing Pro-Russian Propaganda. “Meta said last week it would ban ads from Russian state media and stop recommending content from such outlets. But that hasn’t stopped countries close to Moscow, like China, from using their state channels to buy ads pushing a pro-Russian line.” [Axios, [3/9/22](#)]

NYU Researchers Performing A Security Analysis On Facebook’s Foreign Ad Policies That The Then-Policies And Implementation Of Facebook’s Ad Library Was Not “Designed To Provide Strong Security Against Adversarial Advertisers.” “We have presented methods for a security analysis of Facebook’s Ad Library. Our study focused on Facebook since Google and Twitter did not make sufficient amounts of political ad data transparent to perform a similarly detailed analysis. Our security analysis showed that the current policies and implementation of Facebook’s Ad Library are not designed to provide strong security against adversarial advertisers, or even well meaning but not fully compliant advertisers. In order to enable reproducibility of our findings, we will release all of our analysis code, and we will also provide our data to any group that Facebook has approved to access the Ad Library API. Our hope is that this initial study will make the broader systems security community aware of the security issues present in political ad transparency products, and results in improved designs and auditing frameworks.” [Edelson, Laungier & McCoy, NYU, [5/20/20](#)]

August 2021: Instagram Removed Hundreds Of Accounts Linked To Russia Who Were Engaged In A Misinformation Campaign On The Platform. “Hundreds of accounts were removed from Instagram to curtail a COVID-19 misinformation campaign on the platform connected to a Russian advertising agency, the Associated Press reported. Fazze, the agency, reportedly contracted social media influences to spread misinformation through the app about the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines. Facebook, which owns Instagram, announced Tuesday that it removed 65 accounts from its own platform and 243 Instagram profiles that were linked to the smear campaign, the Associated Press reported. It is unknown who or what hired Fazze to damage the reputation of the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines.” [Newsweek, [8/10/21](#)]

March 2022: Politico Reported That Facebook Was Not Conducting Efforts To Stop Russian Propaganda And Misinformation In Majority Spanish-Speaking Countries, And Thus It “Continue[d] To Spread.” “Following Russia’s invasion and pressure from politicians like Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.), platforms have started to clamp down – with Facebook and YouTube demonetizing Russian state-run social media accounts and both platforms restricting access to Russia-funded RT and Sputnik in Europe. But similarly sweeping efforts aren’t happening in majority Spanish-speaking countries – and Spanish-language Russian propaganda and misinformation continues to spread.” [Politico, [3/1/22](#)]

IRAN USED FACEBOOK TO SPY, SPREAD COVID VACCINES AND PRO-TRUMP ADS

Iran Had Spread COVID 19 Disinformation Through Videos, Cartoons, And News Stories From State Media Outlets On Social Media Platforms To Appeal To U.S. And Western Audiences. “Tehran probably will continue to malign the United States for enforcing economic sanctions, arguing these sanctions hinder Iran’s ability to put forward an appropriate public health response to the pandemic. • Iranian actors have spread COVID-19 disinformation and false narratives through videos, cartoons, and news stories from state media outlets on popular social media platforms.” [DHS.Gov, Homeland Threat Assessment, [October 2020](#)]

The Iranian Government Used Facebook To Conduct Espionage On Other State Actors. “Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen told lawmakers Tuesday that she believes the social media giant is a ‘national security issue.’ The former civic project manager for Facebook’s misinformation team said the social media network saw ‘active participation’ of ‘the Iran government doing espionage on other state actors.’ ‘This is definitely a thing that is happening,’ she said during testimony Tuesday. ‘And I believe Facebook’s consistent understaffing of the counter-espionage information operations and counterterrorism teams is a national security issue.’” [Fox News, [10/5/21](#)]

In 2020, The Iranian Government Sent Emails And Videos To Voters In Arizona, Florida And Alaska, Purporting To Be From The Proud Boys, Saying “Vote For Trump Or We Will Come After You.” “A more determined and capable adversary could think bigger. In the run-up to this year’s Presidential election, e-mails and videos that most analysts attributed to the Iranian government were sent to voters in Arizona, Florida, and Alaska, purporting to be from the Proud Boys, a neo-Fascist, pro-Trump organization: “Vote for Trump,” they warned, “or we will come after you.” Calls to voters in swing states warned them against voting and text messages pushed a fake video about Joe Biden supporting sex changes for second graders.” [New Yorker, [11/13/20](#)]

CHINA RAN SIMILAR DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS AS RUSSIA TO CREATE CHAOS IN THE U.S.

Chinese Agents Created Fake Social Media Accounts Akin To Russian-Backed Trolls That Pushed Out False Messages Design To Create Chaos In The U.S. “According to U.S. officials, Chinese agents are creating fake social media accounts akin to Russia-backed trolls to push out false messages that are designed to create chaos in the United States. In mid-March, U.S. intelligence agencies asserted that Chinese operatives helped to push false messages that the Trump administration was planning to lock down the country. The rumors became so widespread that the National Security Council had to issue an announcement stating they were fake.”

FOREIGN ACTORS HOPING TO SPREAD DYSFUNCTION IN AMERICA BOUGHT FACEBOOK ADS TO PUSH THEIR MESSAGE

Facebook Found 470 Accounts Linked To Russian Propaganda Pushing About 3,000 Paid Ads. “In early September, Facebook announced that it found 470 accounts linked to Russian propaganda pushing about 3,000 paid ads. On Monday, ahead of a gauntlet of Capitol Hill hearings, Facebook moved beyond the paid ads and revised its estimate to include organic, non-paid content, pushed by Russia and shared by unsuspecting Americans. The company came up with a new number: some 126 million Americans, far more than journalistic estimates.” [The Daily Beast, [11/1/17](#)]

Facebook Disclosed That It Had Identified More Than \$100,000 Worth Of Divisive Ads On Hot-Button Issues Purchased By A Shadowy Russian Company Linked To The Kremlin. “Providing new evidence of Russian interference in the 2016 election, Facebook disclosed on Wednesday that it had identified more than \$100,000 worth of divisive ads on hot-button issues purchased by a shadowy Russian company linked to the Kremlin. Most of the 3,000 ads did not refer to particular candidates but instead focused on divisive social issues such as race, gay rights, gun control and immigration, according to a post on Facebook by Alex Stamos, the company’s chief security officer.” [NY Times, [9/6/17](#)]

In 2020, It Was Reported Facebook Sold More Than \$5 Billion A Year Worth Of Ad Space To Chinese Businesses And Government Agencies Looking To Promote Their Messages Abroad. “A spokeswoman said the team would serve ‘Asia as well as our global advertisers.’ Facebook sells more than \$5 billion a year worth of ad space to Chinese businesses and government agencies looking to promote their messages abroad, analysts estimate. That makes China Facebook’s biggest country for revenue after the United States, which delivered \$24.1 billion in advertising sales in 2018. Zuckerberg once hoped Facebook could find a way to operate its social network in China, making a high-profile visit to the country in 2016 and vowing to learn Mandarin.” [Reuters, [1/7/20](#)]

- **China Was Facebook’s Biggest Country For Revenue After The U.S.** “A spokeswoman said the team would serve ‘Asia as well as our global advertisers.’ Facebook sells more than \$5 billion a year worth of ad space to Chinese businesses and government agencies looking to promote their messages abroad, analysts estimate. That makes China Facebook’s biggest country for revenue after the United States, which delivered \$24.1 billion in advertising sales in 2018. Zuckerberg once hoped Facebook could find a way to operate its social network in China, making a high-profile visit to the country in 2016 and vowing to learn Mandarin.” [Reuters, [1/7/20](#)]
- **A 2022 Harvard Study Found That “Facebook Advertisements Form Chinese State Media [Were] Linked To Changes In The Tone And Content Of News Reporting On China.”** “Our findings highlight the potential for Chinese government propaganda disseminated via social media to shape other countries’ media environments. We found that Facebook advertisements from Chinese state media are linked to changes in the tone and content of news reporting on China. We examined countries that saw a sharp increase in the number of times these Facebook advertisements were shown on screens. In the week following the increase in advertisements, the tone of news coverage of China became more positive, and the number of articles containing keywords that suggest a stance favorable to China also increased.” [Harvard, [1/14/22](#)]

CONFRONTED WITH THE DISINFORMATION BEING SPREAD ON HIS PLATFORM, ZUCKERBERG HID INFORMATION AND SAID HE SUPPORTED FREE SPEECH

New York Times: “Bent On Growth,” Zuckerberg And Sandberg Ignored Warning Signs That Facebook Could Be Used To Disrupt Elections, Spread Propaganda And Inspire Violence, “Then Sought To Conceal Them From Public View.” “Along the way, Facebook accumulated one of the largest-ever repositories of personal data, a treasure trove of photos, messages and likes that propelled the company into the Fortune 500. But as evidence accumulated that Facebook’s power could also be exploited to disrupt elections, broadcast viral propaganda and inspire deadly campaigns of hate around the globe, Mr. Zuckerberg and Ms. Sandberg stumbled. Bent on growth, the pair ignored warning signs and then sought to conceal them from public view. At critical moments over the last three years, they were distracted by personal projects, and passed off security and policy decisions to subordinates, according to current and former executives.” [NY Times, [7/18/18](#)]

Zuckerberg Said He Was “On The Side Of Giving People A Voice And Pushing Back On Censorship.” “Zuckerberg said several times that, in the balance, he thinks of himself “as being on the side of giving people a voice and pushing back on censorship.” “Our default position is giving people a voice and then carving out places where there could be real harm, not down the line. [Where] if you allow this speech, it could lead to real, imminent harm. Then we try to craft policies that we can enforce at larger scale [and] try to be as open and as thoughtful as possible.” The policies are not perfect, he acknowledged.” [WSJ, [4/28/20](#)]

Facebook’s Legal And Policy Team Was At Odds With Its Security Team, Because The Security Team Generally Pushed For More Disclosure On How Nation States Had Misused The Sites. “The Legal And Policy Team Prioritized Business. “Several believe the company would have been better off saying little about Russian interference and note that other companies, such as Twitter, which have stayed relatively quiet on the issue, have not had to deal with as much criticism. One central tension at Facebook has been that of the legal and policy teams versus the security team. The security team generally pushed for more disclosure about how nation states had misused the site, but the legal and policy teams have prioritized business imperatives, said the people briefed on the matter.” [New York Times, [3/19/18](#)]

Whistleblower Frances Haugen Said Facebook Was “Very Aware” That Their Platform Was Being Used By American Adversaries To Push And Promote Their Interests At The Expense Of Americas. “Sen. Sullivan: you are saying in essence, whether at platform knows it or not, is being used by some of our adversaries in a way that helps push and promote their interest at the expense of Americas? Ms.Haugen: Facebook is very aware this is happening on the platform. I believe the fact that congress doesn't get a report on how money people are working on these things internally is unacceptable because you have the right to keep the American people safe.” [CSPAN, Haugen Senate Testimony, [10/5/21](#)] (VIDEO)

IN 2019, FACEBOOK BEGAN LABELING POSTS FROM STATE-OWNED MEDIA OUTLETS...

In October 2019, Facebook Said They Would “Begin Labeling Media Outlets That [Were] Wholly Or Partially Under The Editorial Control Of Their Government As State-Controlled Media.” “Labeling State-Controlled Media We want to help people better understand the sources of news content they see on Facebook so they can make informed decisions about what they’re reading. Next month, we’ll begin labeling media outlets that are wholly or partially under the editorial control of their government as state-controlled media. This label will be on both their Page and in our Ad Library. We will hold these Pages to a higher standard of transparency because they combine the opinion-making influence of a media organization with the strategic backing of a state.” [Facebook, [10/21/19](#)]

Facebook Said Applying Labels To State-Controlled Media Outlets Would Offer “Greater Transparency” To Readers. “The social media platform on Thursday kicked off efforts to label media organisations that were ‘wholly or partially’ under the editorial control of their government. It had announced plans to do so last October as part of a string of initiatives to curb election interference on its site. Applying labels to state-controlled media outlets would offer ‘greater transparency’ to readers who should know if the news comes from publications that might be under the influence of a government, Facebook’s head of cybersecurity policy, Nathaniel Gleicher, said in a post. He added that similar labels would be placed on ads from these publishers later this year.” [Zdnet, [6/4/20](#)]

Facebook Said It Had Developed Their “Own Definition And Standards For State-Controlled Media Organizations” Using Input From “40 Experts Around The World Specializing In Media, Governance, Human Rights And Development.” “We will hold these Pages to a higher standard of transparency because they combine the opinion-making influence of a media organization with the strategic backing of a state. We developed our own definition and standards for state-controlled media organizations with input from more than 40 experts around the world specializing in media, governance, human rights and development. Those consulted represent leading academic institutions, nonprofits

and international organizations in this field, including Reporters Without Borders, Center for International Media Assistance, European Journalism Center, Oxford Internet Institute, Center for Media, Data and Society (CMDS) at the Central European University, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and others.” [Facebook, [10/21/19](#)]

June 2020: Facebook Said It Would Block Any Ads From State Controlled Media Outlets That Targeted U.S. Users. “Facebook will start labeling Russian, Chinese, and other state-controlled media organizations, and later this summer it will block any ads from such outlets that target U.S. users, the company said on Thursday. The world’s biggest social network will apply the label to Russia’s Sputnik, Iran’s Press TV, and China’s Xinhua News, according to a partial list Facebook provided. The company will apply the label to about 200 pages at the outset. Facebook will not label any U.S.-based news organizations, as it determined that even U.S. government-run outlets have editorial independence, Nathaniel Gleicher, Facebook’s head of cybersecurity policy, said in an interview.” [Venture Beat, [6/5/20](#)]

...BUT ITS EFFECTIVENESS AND ENFORCEMENT WAS QUESTIONED BY RESEARCHERS

In March 2020, NYU Announced That A Study By Data Scientists In Their NYU Tandon School Of Engineering Found “Systemic Flaws In Facebook’s Political Ad Monitoring And Enforcement Processes.” “A new study by data scientists revealed systemic flaws in Facebook’s political ad monitoring and enforcement processes, which allow foreign entities or shady businesses to continue to advertise despite long-term violations. The researchers at New York University Tandon School of Engineering revealed numerous examples of advertisers employing disinformation tactics and discovered \$37 million in advertising — representing 55 percent of all pages with political ads during the study period — that failed to identify the funding source, in violation of Facebook policy.” [NYU, [3/6/20](#)]

NYU Said Their Researchers “Found No Instance Of Meaningful Long-Term Enforcement” Despite Facebook’s Policy Banning Political Advertising By Foreign Entities. “After the study, Facebook changed its policy and will now write the disclosure strings for certain large political advertisers, but the researchers pointed to prior instances when Facebook did not enforce its policies and said it is unclear whether enforcement will change. They cited the case of China Xinhua News, the state-run press agency recently designated by the U.S. State Department as a foreign government functionary rather than a news agency. Despite China Xinhua News repeatedly being caught failing to disclose political ads, the researchers found no instance of meaningful long-term enforcement. This was despite Facebook’s policy banning advertising by foreign entities. The importance of outside monitoring was illustrated by the fact that Facebook restored some 46,000 ads, worth at least \$7.37 million, when the NYU Tandon researchers reported them missing from the archive.” [NYU, [3/6/20](#)]

NYU Researchers Edelson, Tobias Laungier & Damon McCoy Noted In Their Research That “To A Large Extent” Facebook Relied On Ad Sponsors Cooperating And Proactively Complying With Their Sponsor Disclosure Policy. “Once the vetting process has completed, for each new ad that they create, ad sponsors can (and must) declare whether it is political by selecting a checkbox. As a consequence of declaring an ad as political, the ad will be archived in Facebook’s public Ad Library for seven years [4]. Furthermore, the disclosure string will be displayed with the ad when it is shown to users on Facebook or Instagram. To a large extent, Facebook relies on the cooperation of ad sponsors to comply proactively with this policy. Only vetted accounts can declare an ad as political, and even then, ad sponsors must “opt in” each individual ad. According to our understanding, Facebook uses a machine learning approach to detect political ads that their sponsors failed to declare. Undeclared ads detected prior to the start of the campaign are terminated, and not included in the Ad Library.” [Edelson, Laungier & McCoy, NYU, [5/20/20](#)]

- **NYU’s Researchers Found \$37 Million Worth Of Political Advertising On Facebook Failed To Identify The Funding Source.** “The researchers at New York University Tandon School of Engineering revealed numerous examples of advertisers employing disinformation tactics and discovered \$37 million in advertising — representing 55 percent of all pages with political ads during the study period — that failed to identify the funding source, in violation of Facebook policy. The NYU Tandon researchers noted failures of Facebook to enforce its own policies and called for outside monitoring of its political ad library, to increase transparency for voters. They pointed to the data the NYU Tandon team collected, by means of both machine learning algorithms and manual investigation, as evidence that independent monitoring is effective.” [NYU, [3/6/20](#)]

Edelson, Laungier & McCoy Noted The Pattern Of “Frequent Non-Disclosure Occurred Often Without Any Visible Enforcement At The Advertiser Level” Even When They Were Foreign Companies Or Governments. “Many advertisers have been able to run ads that meet the criteria for inclusion in Ad Library without disclosing who paid for the ads. This appears to be an ongoing problem that has not substantially improved over the life of the Ad Library. We also find that many advertisers were able to repeatably run undisclosed ads that were later included by Facebook in the Ad Library. This pattern of frequent nondisclosure occurred often without any visible enforcement at the advertiser level even when the advertisers were foreign companies and governments. Finally, likely because of the lack of vetting, disclosure

strings were often inaccurate. Facebook has recently released a new policy of vetting disclosure strings to make this attack more difficult." [Edelson, Laungier & McCoy, NYU, [5/20/20](#)]

February 2022: Center For Countering Digital Hate Study Found That 91% Of Facebook Posts Containing Propaganda From Kremlin-Funded Media Did Not Carry Any Warning Labels About The Content Being From State-Run Media. "In a new study, CCDH researchers analysed a sample of 3,593 articles posted by RT.com (formerly Russia Today), Sputnik News, TASS and Ruptly—a social media content producer owned by RT.com. All of these outlets have been identified by the US State Department as 'Kremlin-funded media' and part of 'Russia's disinformation and propaganda ecosystem' Researchers then used Facebook's own CrowdTangle tool to identify posts featuring the 100 most popular articles from this sample, to examine whether the platform applied warning labels stating that the content was from 'Russia state-controlled media'. This revealed that 91% of 1,304 posts containing articles from Kremlin-funded media did not carry any warning labels." [Center For Countering Digital Hate, [2/26/22](#)]

NOW – FACEBOOK'S LACK OF EFFORT TO STEM DISINFORMATION, FALSE POLITICAL ADS AND EXTREMISM SWAYED ELECTIONS AND SOWED DIVISION

MISINFORMATION ON ELECTIONS WAS SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR CONTENT ON FACEBOOK

CNBC HEADLINE: "More Facebook Users Engaged With Top Fake Election News Than Most Popular Real Reporting, Report Says." [CNBC, [11/16/16](#)]

Fake News Generated More Engagement On Facebook Than Real, Mainstream News Among Top Election-Related Articles. "Fake stories generated more engagement on Facebook than real, mainstream news among top election-related articles, according to data analyzed by BuzzFeed News. In the last three months of the presidential campaigns, top-performing false headlines from hoax sites and hyperpartisan blogs generated more than 8.7 million shares, reactions and comments, BuzzFeed News estimated. That's compared to nearly 7.4 million shares, reactions and Facebook comments on the 20 best-performing news stories from mainstream websites, according to BuzzFeed's Craig Silverman." [CNBC, [11/16/16](#)]

In The Final Three Months Of The 2016 Presidential Election, 20 Top-Performing False Election Stories From Hoax Sites And Hyper-Partisan Blogs Generated 8,711,000 Shares, Reactions, And Comments On Facebook. "In the final three months of the US presidential campaign, the top-performing fake election news stories on Facebook generated more engagement than the top stories from major news outlets such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Huffington Post, NBC News, and others, a BuzzFeed News analysis has found. During these critical months of the campaign, 20 top-performing false election stories from hoax sites and hyperpartisan blogs generated 8,711,000 shares, reactions, and comments on Facebook. Within the same time period, the 20 best-performing election stories from 19 major news websites generated a total of 7,367,000 shares, reactions, and comments on Facebook." [Buzzfeed News, [11/16/16](#)]

- **Within The Same Time Period, The 20 Best-Performing Election Stories From 19 Major News Sites Generated A Total Of 7,367,000 Shares.** "In the final three months of the US presidential campaign, the top-performing fake election news stories on Facebook generated more engagement than the top stories from major news outlets such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Huffington Post, NBC News, and others, a BuzzFeed News analysis has found. During these critical months of the campaign, 20 top-performing false election stories from hoax sites and hyperpartisan blogs generated 8,711,000 shares, reactions, and comments on Facebook. Within the same time period, the 20 best-performing election stories from 19 major news websites generated a total of 7,367,000 shares, reactions, and comments on Facebook." [Buzzfeed News, [11/16/16](#)]
- **A Facebook Spokesman Claimed The Top Stories Didn't Reflect Overall Engagement On The Platform.** "A Facebook spokesman told BuzzFeed News that the top stories don't reflect overall engagement on the platform. "There is a long tail of stories on Facebook," the spokesman said. "It may seem like the top stories get a lot of traction, but they represent a tiny fraction of the total." He also said that native video, live content, and image posts from major news outlets saw significant engagement on Facebook." [Buzzfeed News, [11/16/16](#)]

FACEBOOK AND ZUCKERBERG ALLOWED POLITICIANS TO RUN ADS FULL OF LIES AND DIDN'T INHIBIT POLITICIANS FROM TARGETING VOTERS WITH THOSE LIES

In October 2019, Zuckerberg Announced Facebook Would Allow Politicians To Run Ads On The Platform That Contained Misinformation. “Although Facebook does use independent fact-checkers who review content on its social networks, the point of the fact-checkers is to “really catch the worst of the worst stuff,” Zuckerberg said. [...] Facebook announced in October that it would allow politicians to run ads on the social network, even if they include misinformation. The company, however, does have lines that no one, including politicians, is allowed to cross, Zuckerberg said. No one is allowed to use Facebook to cause violence or harm themselves, or to post misinformation that could lead to voter suppression, Zuckerberg said.” [CNBC, [5/28/20](#)]

- **Zuckerberg Said Political Speech Was “One Of The Most Sensitive Parts In A Democracy, And People Should Be Able To See What Politicians Say.”** Twitter’s move came on Tuesday after Trump tweeted that mail-in ballots would be ‘substantially fraudulent.’ Earlier Tuesday, Twitter declined to censor or warn users after Trump tweeted baseless claims that MSNBC host Joe Scarborough should be investigated for the death of his former staffer. “I don’t think that Facebook or internet platforms in general should be arbiters of truth,” Zuckerberg told Sorkin in an interview that aired Thursday morning. “Political speech is one of the most sensitive parts in a democracy, and people should be able to see what politicians say.” Although Facebook does use independent fact-checkers who review content on its social networks, the point of the fact-checkers is to ‘really catch the worst of the worst stuff,’ Zuckerberg said.” [CNBC, [5/28/20](#)]

In Jan. 2020, Facebook Reaffirmed That It Wouldn’t Ban, Fact-Check Or Limit How Political Ads Could Be Targeted To Specific Groups Of People. “Despite escalating pressure ahead of the 2020 presidential election, Facebook reaffirmed its freewheeling policy on political ads Thursday, saying it won’t ban them, won’t fact-check them and won’t limit how they can be targeted to specific groups of people. Instead, Facebook said it will offer users slightly more control over how many political ads they see and make its online library of political ads easier to browse. These steps appear unlikely to assuage critics — including politicians, activists, tech competitors and some of the company’s own rank-and-file employees — who say that Facebook has too much power and that social media is warping democracy and undermining elections.” [Associated Press, [1/9/20](#)]

- **Facebook Said It Would Instead Offer Users Slightly More Control Over How Many Political Ads They Saw And Made Its Online Library Of Political Ads Easier To Browse.** “Despite escalating pressure ahead of the 2020 presidential election, Facebook reaffirmed its freewheeling policy on political ads Thursday, saying it won’t ban them, won’t fact-check them and won’t limit how they can be targeted to specific groups of people. Instead, Facebook said it will offer users slightly more control over how many political ads they see and make its online library of political ads easier to browse. These steps appear unlikely to assuage critics — including politicians, activists, tech competitors and some of the company’s own rank-and-file employees — who say that Facebook has too much power and that social media is warping democracy and undermining elections.” [Associated Press, [1/9/20](#)]

In A Blog Post, Facebook’s Director Of Product Management For Ads, Rob Leathern, Said The Company Was “Not Deaf” To Criticism About Its Rules Around Political Ads. “And the company announced it would provide more information in its public archive about the total number of people targeted in an ad campaign. In a blog post announcing the changes, Rob Leathern, Facebook’s director of product management for ads, wrote that the company is “not deaf” to criticism about its rules around political ads. But he maintained that the changes would ‘increase the level of transparency it provides for people and [give] them more control over the ads they see.’ Computer scientists who have studied Facebook’s ad tools cast doubt on that conclusion.” [Washington Post, [10/17/19](#)]

Zuckerberg Defended A Facebook Policy That Allowed Politicians To Peddle Ads Containing Misrepresentations And Lies. “Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said in an interview he worries “about an erosion of truth” online but defended the policy that allows politicians to peddle ads containing misrepresentations and lies on his social network, a stance that has sparked an outcry during the 2020 presidential campaign. ‘People worry, and I worry deeply, too, about an erosion of truth,’ Zuckerberg told The Washington Post ahead of a speech Thursday at Georgetown University. ‘At the same time, I don’t think people want to live in a world where you can only say things that tech companies decide are 100 percent true. And I think that those tensions are something we have to live with.’” [Washington Post, [10/17/19](#)]

- **Zuckerberg: “I Don’t Think People Want To Live In A World Where You Can Only Say Things That Tech Companies Decide Are 100 Percent True.”** “Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said in an interview he worries “about an erosion of truth” online but defended the policy that allows politicians to peddle ads containing misrepresentations and lies on his social network, a stance that has sparked an outcry during the 2020 presidential campaign. ‘People worry, and I worry deeply, too, about an erosion of truth,’ Zuckerberg told The Washington Post ahead of a speech Thursday at Georgetown University. ‘At the same time, I don’t think people want to live in a world where you can only say things that tech companies decide are 100 percent true. And I think that those tensions are something we have to live with.’” [Washington Post, [10/17/19](#)]

Zuckerberg Claimed He “Care[d] Deeply About The Democratic Process And Protecting Its Integrity.” “Under growing pressure from Congress and the public to reveal more about the spread of covert Russian propaganda on Facebook, the company said on Thursday that it was turning over more than 3,000 Russia-linked ads to congressional committees investigating the Kremlin’s influence operation during the 2016 presidential campaign. “I care deeply about the democratic process and protecting its integrity,” Facebook’s chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, said during an appearance on Facebook Live, the company’s video service. He added that he did not want anyone “to use our tools to undermine democracy.” “That’s not what we stand for,” he said.” [NY Times, [9/21/17](#)]

HOWEVER, FACEBOOK REMOVED A POLITICAL AD FROM WARREN’S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN CALLING FOR BIG TECH TO BE BROKEN UP

Facebook Removed Several Ads Placed By Elizabeth Warren’s Presidential Campaign That Called For The Breakup Of Facebook And Other Tech Giants. “Facebook removed several ads placed by Sen. Elizabeth Warren’s presidential campaign that called for the breakup of Facebook and other tech giants. But the social network later reversed course after POLITICO reported on the takedown, with the company saying it wanted to allow for ‘robust debate.’ The ads, which had identical images and text, touted Warren’s recently announced plan to unwind “anti-competitive” tech mergers, including Facebook’s acquisition of WhatsApp and Instagram.” [Politico, [3/11/19](#)]

- **Facebook Only Reposted Warren’s Ads After Politico Reported On The Takedown.** “Facebook removed several ads placed by Sen. Elizabeth Warren’s presidential campaign that called for the breakup of Facebook and other tech giants. But the social network later reversed course after POLITICO reported on the takedown, with the company saying it wanted to allow for ‘robust debate.’ The ads, which had identical images and text, touted Warren’s recently announced plan to unwind “anti-competitive” tech mergers, including Facebook’s acquisition of WhatsApp and Instagram.” [Politico, [3/11/19](#)]
- **Warrens Ads Directed Users To A Petition On Warren’s Campaign Website Urging Them To “Support Our Plan To Break Up These Big Tech Companies,” And Were Limited In Size And Reach, Each Costing Under \$100.** “The Massachusetts Democrat has staked out an aggressive stance toward Silicon Valley’s biggest companies, going further than many of the other Democratic 2020 candidates. The affected ads, which included a video, directed users to a petition on Warren’s campaign website urging them “to support our plan to break up these big tech companies.” The ads were limited in size and reach, with each costing under \$100, according to disclosure details listed online.” [Politico, [3/11/19](#)]

FACEBOOK HAD A SECRET POLICY THAT ALLOWED HIGH PROFILE USERS TO THAWRT ANY AND ALL ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS FACEBOOK HAD FOR TAMPING DOWN ABUSE

Facebook Had A Program, “XCheck” That Whitelisted Some Of Its High Profile Users And Made Them Immune From Enforcement Actions. “In private, the company has built a system that has exempted high-profile users from some or all of its rules, according to company documents reviewed by The Wall Street Journal. The program, known as “cross check” or “XCheck,” was initially intended as a quality-control measure for actions taken against high-profile accounts, including celebrities, politicians and journalists. Today, it shields millions of VIP users from the company’s normal enforcement process, the documents show. Some users are ‘whitelisted’—rendered immune from enforcement actions—while others are allowed to post rule-violating material pending Facebook employee reviews that often never come.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

Facebook’s Internal Researchers Noted That High Profile Accounts Posed Greater Risks Than Regular Ones But Were The Least Policed. “Mr. Stone said the company improved that ratio during 2020, though he declined to provide data. The leeway given to prominent political accounts on misinformation, which the company in 2019 acknowledged in a limited form, baffled some employees responsible for protecting the platforms. High-profile accounts posed greater risks than regular ones, researchers noted, yet were the least policed. “We are knowingly exposing users to misinformation that we have the processes and resources to mitigate,” said a 2019 memo by Facebook researchers.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

Facebook’s XCheck Allowed Whitelisted User To Post Inflammatory Claims Even When It Had Been Deemed False By Facebook’s Fact Checkers. “At times, the documents show, XCheck has protected public figures whose posts contain harassment or incitement to violence, violations that would typically lead to sanctions for regular users. In 2019, it allowed international soccer star Neymar to show nude photos of a woman, who had accused him of rape, to tens of millions of his fans before the content was removed by Facebook. Whitelisted accounts shared inflammatory claims that Facebook’s fact checkers deemed false, including that vaccines are deadly, that Hillary Clinton had covered up ‘pedophile

rings,' and that then-President Donald Trump had called all refugees seeking asylum 'animals,' according to the documents." [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

- **Some Of Posts Said That Vaccines Were Deadly, That Hillary Clinton Had Covered Up Pedophile Rings And That Trump Called Asylum Seekers Animals.** "At times, the documents show, XCheck has protected public figures whose posts contain harassment or incitement to violence, violations that would typically lead to sanctions for regular users. In 2019, it allowed international soccer star Neymar to show nude photos of a woman, who had accused him of rape, to tens of millions of his fans before the content was removed by Facebook. Whitelisted accounts shared inflammatory claims that Facebook's fact checkers deemed false, including that vaccines are deadly, that Hillary Clinton had covered up 'pedophile rings,' and that then-President Donald Trump had called all refugees seeking asylum 'animals,' according to the documents." [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

POSTS BY WHITELISTED USERS THAT CONTAINED MISINFORMATION WERE VIEWED BILLIONS OF TIMES

In 2020, Posts By Whitelisted Users That Contained Misinformation Had Been Viewed At Least 16.4 Billion Times Before Being Removed. "Even when the company does review the material, enforcement delays like the one on Neymar's posts mean content that should have been prohibited can spread to large audiences. Last year, XCheck allowed posts that violated its rules to be viewed at least 16.4 billion times, before later being removed, according to a summary of the program in late December. Facebook recognized years ago that the enforcement exemptions granted by its XCheck system were unacceptable, with protections sometimes granted to what it called abusive accounts and persistent violators of the rules, the documents show." [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

The Lists Of Those Enrolled In XCheck Were "Scattered Throughout The Company, Without Clear Governance Or Ownership" According To Facebook's Internal Documents. "A spokesperson for Neymar said the athlete adheres to Facebook's rules and declined to comment further. The lists of those enrolled in XCheck were "scattered throughout the company, without clear governance or ownership," according to a "Get Well Plan" from last year. 'This results in not applying XCheck to those who pose real risks and on the flip-side, applying XCheck to those that do not deserve it (such as abusive accounts, persistent violators). These have created PR fires.'" [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

- **Most Facebook Employees Were Able To Add Users Into The XCheck System.** "If Facebook's systems conclude that one of those accounts might have broken its rules, they don't remove the content—at least not right away, the documents indicate. They route the complaint into a separate system, staffed by better-trained, full-time employees, for additional layers of review. Most Facebook employees were able to add users into the XCheck system, the documents say, and a 2019 audit found that at least 45 teams around the company were involved in whitelisting. Users aren't generally told that they have been tagged for special treatment." [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

XCheck Included At Least 5.8 Million Users In 2020. "Despite attempts to rein it in, XCheck grew to include at least 5.8 million users in 2020, documents show. In its struggle to accurately moderate a torrent of content and avoid negative attention, Facebook created invisible elite tiers within the social network." [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

Internal Documents From Facebook Described A Chronic Under-Investment In Moderation Efforts For High Profile Users. "Facebook's special enforcement system for VIP users arose from the fact that its human and automated content-enforcement systems regularly flub calls. Part of the problem is resources. In response to what the documents describe as chronic underinvestment in moderation efforts, many teams around Facebook chose not to enforce the rules with high-profile accounts at all—the practice referred to as whitelisting. In some instances, whitelist status was granted with little record of who had granted it and why, according to the 2019 audit." [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

An Internal Review Of Facebook's Whitelisting Said "We Are Not Actually Doing What We Say We Do Publicly." "A 2019 internal review of Facebook's whitelisting practices, marked attorney-client privileged, found favoritism to those users to be both widespread and 'not publicly defensible.' 'We are not actually doing what we say we do publicly,' said the confidential review. It called the company's actions 'a breach of trust' and added: 'Unlike the rest of our community, these people can violate our standards without any consequences.'" [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

Facebook Lied To Its Own Oversight Board About XCheck, Saying The System Was Used In "A Small Number Of Decisions." "In describing the system, Facebook has misled the public and its own Oversight Board, a body that Facebook created to ensure the accountability of the company's enforcement systems. In June, Facebook told the Oversight Board in writing that its system for high-profile users was used in 'a small number of decisions.' In a written statement, Facebook spokesman Andy Stone said criticism of XCheck was fair, but added that the system 'was designed

for an important reason: to create an additional step so we can accurately enforce policies on content that could require more understanding.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/13/21](#)]

ZUCKERBERG REJECTED CLAIMS THAT FACEBOOK SWAYED THE 2016 ELECTION, CALLING IT A “PRETTY CRAZY IDEA”

Zuckerberg Said It Was “A Pretty Crazy Idea” That Facebook Had Affected The Outcome Of The 2016 Election.

“Late on Tuesday night, as it became clear that Donald J. Trump would defeat Hillary Clinton to win the presidential election, a private chat sprang up on Facebook among several vice presidents and executives of the social network. What role, they asked each other, had their company played in the election’s outcome? [...] Even as Facebook has outwardly defended itself as a nonpartisan information source — Mark. Zuckerberg, chairman and chief executive, said at a conference on Thursday that Facebook affecting the election was “a pretty crazy idea” — many company executives and employees have been asking one another if, or how, they shaped the minds, opinions and votes of Americans.” [NY Times, [11/14/16](#)]

Zuckerberg Said It Was “Extremely Unlikely” That Fake News Shared On Facebook Could Have Swayed The 2016 Election.

“in the wake of Donald Trump’s unexpected victory, many questions have been raised about Facebook’s role in the promotion of inaccurate and highly partisan information during the presidential race and whether this fake news influenced the election’s outcome. A few have downplayed Facebook’s impact, including CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who said that it is “extremely unlikely” that fake news could have swayed the election. But questions about the social network’s political significance merit more than passing attention. Do Facebook’s filtering algorithms explain why so many liberals had misplaced confidence in a Clinton victory (echoing the error made by Romney supporters in 2012).” [Scientific American, [11/17/16](#)]

Denying That Facebook Had Influenced The 2016 Election, Zuckerberg Said "There's A Profound Lack Of Empathy In Asserting That The Only Reason Why Someone Could Have Voted The Way That They Did Is Because They Saw Some Fake News."

“This is a marked change in tone from the week of the 2016 election, when Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said it's a ‘pretty crazy idea’ that fake news could have influenced the poll. ‘There's a profound lack of empathy in asserting that the only reason why someone could have voted the way that they did is because they saw some fake news,’ Zuckerberg said in November 2016, as NPR's Aarti Shahani reported. Since then Facebook has slowly shifted its view. Zuckerberg ‘is fast coming to terms with the power of his platform to cause harm,’ Aarti reported. In September, Zuckerberg wrote: ‘Calling that crazy was dismissive and I regret it. This is too important an issue to be dismissive.’” [NPR, [1/22/18](#)]

Zuckerberg Said He Regretted Dismissing Concerns About Facebook’s Role In Influencing The 2016 U.S. Presidential Election.

“Mark Zuckerberg said he regretted dismissing concerns about the Facebook’s role in influencing the US presidential race, his latest acknowledgement that misinformation on the platform has affected elections. Shortly after Trump’s surprise victory, the Facebook CEO had brushed aside charges that Facebook had had an impact on the race, calling it a ‘pretty crazy idea’ and saying that voters ‘make decisions based on their lived experience.’” [The Guardian, [9/27/17](#)]

FACEBOOK ALLOWED ELECTION DENIAL CONTENT TO RUN RAMPANT WITHOUT PUSH BACK

Facebook Had Reportedly Established Task Force To Police Violent And Hateful Election Disinformation Ahead Of The 2020 Election, But Disbanded The Task Force And Rolled Back Enforcement Actions After The Election.

"Facebook has heavily promoted groups since CEO Mark Zuckerberg made them a strategic priority in 2017. But the ones focused on U.S. politics have become so toxic, say former Facebook employees, that the company established a task force, whose existence has not been previously reported, specifically to police them ahead of Election Day 2020. The task force removed hundreds of groups with violent or hateful content in the months before Nov. 3, 2020, according to the ProPublica-Post investigation. Yet shortly after the vote, Facebook dissolved the task force and rolled back other intensive enforcement measures. The results of that decision were clear in the data ProPublica and The Post examined: During the nine increasingly tense weeks that led up to Jan. 6, the groups were inundated with posts attacking the legitimacy of Biden’s election, while the pace of removals noticeably slowed." [Washington Post, [1/4/22](#)]

Washington Post Found During The 2022 Midterm Election Cycle At Least 26 Candidates Posted Inaccurate Election Claims For Months And The Platform Had Done “Virtually Nothing” To Refute Them. "For years, Facebook and Twitter have pledged to fight falsehoods that could confuse users about America’s electoral system by tagging questionable posts with accurate information about voting and removing rule-breaking misinformation. But this electoral cycle, at least 26 candidates have posted inaccurate election claims since April, but the platforms have done virtually

nothing to refute them, according to a Washington Post review of the companies' misinformation labeling practices." [Washington Post, [11/6/22](#)]

Washington Post Found Posts By 17 Candidates Claiming The 2022 Election Would Be Rigged Or The Voting Systems Were Rigged In Some Way Went Unchallenged By Facebook. "The Post reviewed thousands of social media posts on Twitter, Facebook and other, smaller platforms from nearly 300 GOP elected officials and candidates to evaluate how they have been portraying the upcoming vote over the past six months and the platforms' reaction to that. The Post's review relied on a previous Post analysis from October that examined every Republican running for House, Senate or key statewide offices to see whether they had challenged or refused to accept the results of the 2020 election. That review found 17 candidates claiming that the 2022 election will be rigged or that aspects of the voting system are rigged, fraudulent or corrupt. Those claims were made in 40 posts on Facebook and Twitter. Those posts were left unchallenged by the social media companies, with no labeling from Facebook and Twitter, the review found." [Washington Post, [11/6/22](#)]

The Civil Rights Audit Found Facebook Exempted Politicians From Third-Party Fact Checking And Was "Far Too Reluctant To Adopt Strong Rules To Limit [Voting] Misinformation And Voter Suppression." "The announcement came as Meta gave an update on its response to a civil rights audit the company commissioned following widespread accusations that its products promote discrimination. The 2020 report, which came after two years of investigation by independent auditors, slammed the company for putting free speech ahead of other values, a decision the auditors said undermined its efforts to curb hate speech and voter suppression. The auditors said the company made 'vexing and heartbreaking decisions,' including refusing to take down posts by then-President Donald Trump that 'clearly violated' the company's policies on hate and violent speech and voter suppression; exempting politicians from third-party fact-checking; and being 'far too reluctant to adopt strong rules to limit [voting] misinformation and voter suppression.'" [NPR, [11/18/21](#)]

GIVING FACEBOOK A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE JANUARY 6TH INSURRECTION

Facebook Efforts To Police 2020 Election Misinformation Were Ineffective And Started Too Late. "But the ProPublica-Post investigation, which analyzed millions of posts between Election Day and Jan. 6 and drew on internal company documents and interviews with former employees, provides the clearest evidence yet that Facebook played a critical role in the spread of false narratives that fomented the violence of Jan. 6. Its efforts to police such content, the investigation also found, were ineffective and started too late to quell the surge of angry, hateful misinformation coursing through Facebook groups — some of it explicitly calling for violent confrontation with government officials, a theme that foreshadowed the storming of the Capitol that day amid clashes that left five people dead." [Washington Post, [1/4/22](#)]

Washington Post And ProPublica Found Facebook Groups Had At Least 650,000 Posts Attacking The Legitimacy Of Joe Biden's Election As President Between Election Day And The January 6th Insurrection. "Facebook groups swelled with at least 650,000 posts attacking the legitimacy of Joe Biden's victory between Election Day and the Jan. 6 siege of the U.S. Capitol, with many calling for executions or other political violence, an investigation by ProPublica and The Washington Post has found. The barrage — averaging at least 10,000 posts a day, a scale not reported previously — turned the groups into incubators for the baseless claims supporters of President Donald Trump voiced as they stormed the Capitol, demanding he get a second term. Many posts portrayed Biden's election as the result of widespread fraud that required extraordinary action — including the use of force — to prevent the nation from falling into the hands of traitors." [Washington Post, [1/4/22](#)]

Washington Post/ProPublica: Facebook Groups "Averaging At Least 10,000 Posts A Day, A Scale Not Reported Previously — Turned The Groups Into Incubators For The Baseless Claims Supporters Of President Donald Trump Voiced As They Stormed The Capitol." "Facebook groups swelled with at least 650,000 posts attacking the legitimacy of Joe Biden's victory between Election Day and the Jan. 6 siege of the U.S. Capitol, with many calling for executions or other political violence, an investigation by ProPublica and The Washington Post has found. The barrage — averaging at least 10,000 posts a day, a scale not reported previously — turned the groups into incubators for the baseless claims supporters of President Donald Trump voiced as they stormed the Capitol, demanding he get a second term. Many posts portrayed Biden's election as the result of widespread fraud that required extraordinary action — including the use of force — to prevent the nation from falling into the hands of traitors." [Washington Post, [1/4/22](#)]

- **Washington Post/ProPublica Reported Its Investigation "Provides The Clearest Evidence Yet That Facebook Played A Critical Role In The Spread Of False Narratives That Fomented The Violence Of Jan. 6."** "Facebook executives have played down the company's role in the Jan. 6 attack and have resisted calls, including from its own Oversight Board, for a comprehensive internal investigation. The company also has yet to turn over all the information requested by the congressional committee studying the Jan. 6 attack, though it says it is negotiating with the committee. But the ProPublica-Post investigation, which analyzed millions of posts between

Election Day and Jan. 6 and drew on internal company documents and interviews with former employees, provides the clearest evidence yet that Facebook played a critical role in the spread of false narratives that fomented the violence of Jan. 6." [Washington Post, [1/4/22](#)]

Former President Trump Used Facebook As A “Key Platform” For His Lies About The 2020 Election Right Up Until He Was Banned On January 6th. "Facebook officials have noted that more-extreme content flowed through smaller social media platforms in the buildup to the Capitol attack, including detailed planning on bringing guns or building gallows that day. But Trump also used Facebook as a key platform for his lies about the election right up until he was banned on Jan. 6. And Facebook’s reliance on groups to drive engagement gave those lies unequaled reach. This combined with the sag in post-election enforcement to make Facebook a key vector for pushing the ideas that fueled violence on Jan. 6." [Washington Post, [1/4/22](#)]

FACEBOOK ALLOWED EXTREMIST TO CULTIVATE A FOLLOWING ON THEIR PLATFORM AND PUBLISH OUTLANDISH CLAIMS THAT SOWED DIVISION

FACEBOOK KNEW AND PROFITED FROM EXTREMISM ON THEIR PLATFORM

In A 2016 Presentation, A Facebook Researcher, Monica Lee, Found Extremist Content Was Thriving In More Than One-Third Of Large German Political Groups On The Platform. “Even before the teams’ 2017 creation, Facebook researchers had found signs of trouble. A 2016 presentation that names as author a Facebook researcher and sociologist, Monica Lee, found extremist content thriving in more than one-third of large German political groups on the platform. Swamped with racist, conspiracy-minded and pro-Russian content, the groups were disproportionately influenced by a subset of hyperactive users, the presentation notes. Most of them were private or secret.” [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

Facebook Knew Its Algorithms Were Responsible For The Growth Of Extremist Groups On Their Platforms, Saying In An Internal Presentation That “64% Of All Extremist Group Joins [Were] Due To Our Recommendation Tools.” “The high number of extremist groups was concerning, the presentation says. Worse was Facebook’s realization that its algorithms were responsible for their growth. The 2016 presentation states that “64% of all extremist group joins are due to our recommendation tools” and that most of the activity came from the platform’s “Groups You Should Join” and “Discover” algorithms: ‘Our recommendation systems grow the problem.’” [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

FACEBOOK PROFITED OFF WHITE SUPREMACISTS USING THEIR PLATFORM

Politico Playbook Reported On TPP’s Study Finding That “Facebook Continued To Serve Ads Against Searches For White-Supremacist Content, Such As The Phrases Ku Klux Klan And American Defense Skinheads.” “Facebook under fire — A new report finds that despite Facebook’s ban on white nationalism, more than a hundred pages and groups with ties to white supremacist/hate groups remain on the platform, WaPo’s Naomi Nix scooped. And the Tech Transparency Project found that “Facebook continues to serve ads against searches for white-supremacist content, such as the phrases Ku Klux Klan and American Defense Skinheads, a longtime criticism of civil rights groups.” The company said it’s working to fix its systems.” [Politico, [8/10/22](#)]

Tech Transparency Project Released A Report Showing That Facebook Profited From White Supremacist Groups And Said White Supremacists “Continue[d] To Have A Home” On The Platform. “Facebook Profits from White Supremacist Groups. White supremacists continue to have a home on Facebook—and the platform is generating ad revenue off them. Facebook is failing to remove white supremacist groups and is often profiting from searches for them on its platform, according to a new investigation by the Tech Transparency Project (TTP) that shows how the social network fosters and benefits from domestic extremism.” [Tech Transparency Project, [8/10/22](#)]

- **TPP Found That More Than 80 White Supremacist Groups Had A Presence On Facebook, Including Some The Platform Had Labelled As “Dangerous Organizations.”** “In response to a civil rights audit that was highly critical of Facebook’s approach to racial justice issues, Facebook said last November that it had taken steps to ban “organized hate groups, including white supremacist organizations, from the platform.” But TTP found that more than 80 white supremacist groups have a presence on Facebook, including some that Facebook itself has labelled as “dangerous organizations.” What’s more, when our test user searched for the names of white supremacist groups on Facebook, the search results were often monetized with ads—meaning Facebook is profiting off them.” [Tech Transparency Project, [8/10/22](#)]
- **TPP Found That Facebook Searches For Some Groups With Ku Klux Klan In Their Name Generated Ads For Black Churches, Which Was Said Was “Chilling” In The Light Of The Buffalo Shooting.** “But TTP found

that more than 80 white supremacist groups have a presence on Facebook, including some that Facebook itself has labelled as ‘dangerous organizations.’ What’s more, when our test user searched for the names of white supremacist groups on Facebook, the search results were often monetized with ads—meaning Facebook is profiting off them. Even more disturbing: TTP discovered that Facebook searches for some groups with “Ku Klux Klan” in their name generated ads for Black churches, highlighting minority institutions to a user searching for white supremacist content. That’s a chilling result, given reports that the gunman who killed 10 people in the recent, racially motivated mass shooting in Buffalo, New York, did research to pick a target neighborhood with a high ratio of Black residents.” [Tech Transparency Project, [8/10/22](#)]

- **TPP Found That More Than A Third Of The 225 White Supremacist Groups Deemed Hate Groups By SPLC And ADL Had A Presence On Facebook.** “For this study, TTP conducted searches on Facebook for the names of 226 white supremacist organizations that have been designated as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and Facebook itself. The Facebook-designated groups came from an internal company blacklist of “dangerous individuals and organizations” published by The Intercept in October 2021. The analysis found: More than a third (37%) of the 226 white supremacist groups had a presence on Facebook. These organizations are associated with a total of 119 Facebook Pages and 20 Facebook Groups. Facebook often monetized searches for these groups, even when their names were clearly associated with white supremacy, like “American Defense Skinheads.” Facebook also monetized searches for groups on its own “dangerous organizations” list.” [Tech Transparency Project, [8/10/22](#)]
- **TPP Found That Facebook Automatically Created 24 Facebook Pages Due To Auto-Generating Them As A Business Page When Someone Listed A Supremacist Group As An Interest Or Their Employer.** “The analysis found: More than a third (37%) of the 226 white supremacist groups had a presence on Facebook. These organizations are associated with a total of 119 Facebook Pages and 20 Facebook Groups. Facebook often monetized searches for these groups, even when their names were clearly associated with white supremacy, like “American Defense Skinheads.” Facebook also monetized searches for groups on its own “dangerous organizations” list. Searches for some white supremacist groups, including those with “Ku Klux Klan” in their names, showed advertisements for Black churches, raising concerns that Facebook is highlighting potential targets for extremists. The white supremacist Pages identified by TTP included 24 that were created by Facebook itself. Facebook auto-generated them as business Pages when someone listed a white supremacist group as an interest or employer in their profile.” [Tech Transparency Project, [8/10/22](#)]

Tech Transparency Project Shared Data With Vice News That Showed The Boogaloo Bois Had Returned To Facebook And Using The Platform To Funnel New Recruits Into Smaller Subgroups To Coordinate Offline Meet-Ups And Training. “In the last six months, the Boogaloo Bois have returned to Facebook and are using the platform to funnel new recruits (and “OG Bois”) into smaller subgroups, with the goal of coordinating offline meet-ups and training, according to data obtained by the Tech Transparency Project and shared exclusively with VICE News. They’re posting propaganda videos, guides to sniper training and guerilla warfare, and how-tos for assembling untraceable ghost guns. ‘The Bois are back in town,’ declared a member of one of the new groups. (Facebook deleted many of the groups after VICE News reached out for this story.)” [Vice, [3/8/23](#)]

- **Tech Transparency Project Found That The Boogaloo Bois Were Posting Propaganda Videos, Guides To Sniper Training And Guerilla Warfare Atop How-Tos For Assembling Untraceable Guns.** “In the last six months, the Boogaloo Bois have returned to Facebook and are using the platform to funnel new recruits (and “OG Bois”) into smaller subgroups, with the goal of coordinating offline meet-ups and training, according to data obtained by the Tech Transparency Project and shared exclusively with VICE News. They’re posting propaganda videos, guides to sniper training and guerilla warfare, and how-tos for assembling untraceable ghost guns. ‘The Bois are back in town,’ declared a member of one of the new groups. (Facebook deleted many of the groups after VICE News reached out for this story.)” [Vice, [3/8/23](#)]

TPP Found That In The Few Weeks Before March 8th, The Group Had Gained Over 2,000 Followers. “One anti-government meme group, ‘Sounds like Something the ATF Would Say,’ has recently been flooded with explicit Boogaloo content, and now has over 100,000 followers. The Tech Transparency Project found that the group had gained over 2,000 followers in the last few weeks alone. Boogaloo Bois were using that group to siphon off users into smaller groups (at times even using QR codes to redirect them). Those groups easily skirted Facebook bans by simply misspelling well-known terms associated with their movement.

TERRORISTS HARNESSSED FACEBOOK TO RECRUIT MAINSTREAM MUSLIMS, RECOGNIZING MAINSTREAM MUSLIMS FOUND FACEBOOK COOL

United Nations: The Internet And Social Media Became “Power Tools For Terrorist Groups To Radicalize, Inspire And Incite Violence.” “Technology-wise, this trend to innovate is especially pronounced with respect to the Internet and social media, which have proven to be extremely valuable for terrorists. The Internet and social media, as well as by extension other ecosystems such as the online gaming platform, have become powerful tools for terrorist groups to radicalize, inspire, and incite violence; claim responsibility for attacks; recruit; raise and move funds; buy and transfer weapons; and make tutorials or instruments available to their members.” [United Nations Office Of Counter-Terrorism, Algorithms And Terrorism Report, [2021](#)]

In December 2010, The DHS Found That Muslim Extremists Were Urging Terrorists To Open Facebook Accounts So They Could Reach, Interact And Encourage Mainstream Muslims To Become Extremists. “Terrorists have been talking about ‘invading Facebook’ for years. But early extremist activity on Facebook was tactical: cataloging ‘Crusader losses’ in Iraq and Afghanistan and providing al-Qaeda-favorable spin on the media event of the day. These days, it’s about getting a broad pool of Muslim Facebook users to Like al-Qaeda. DHS quotes a post on an extremist message board urging terrorists to open Facebook accounts so they can ‘[m]ove from an elite society ([on] jihadi forums and websites) to mainstream Muslims, [encourage] their participation, and interact with them.’” [WIRED, [12/6/10](#)]

- **The DHS Found That Al-Qaeda Used Facebook To Transmit Its Message Through An Outlet Kids Thought Was Cool.** “Basically, DHS finds, al-Qaeda uses Facebook to launder its message through an outlet that the kids think is cool. Extremists quoted in the study talk about disguising their involvement in the group for maximum appeal. Partially, that’s to keep “the idolator dogs” of U.S. intelligence off their scent -- they recommend takfiris sign up for Facebook using identity-masking tools like Tor -- but it’s primarily to come across as a credible authority, someone who just happens to be using Facebook to get a point across.” [WIRED, [12/6/10](#)]

DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC, FACEBOOK DID LITTLE BLOCK FALSE INFORMATION FROM SPREADING OR ANTI-VACCINE CONTENT, LEADING TO REDUCED INOCULATION RATES

FACEBOOK HAD TO PUT MISINFORMATION WARNINGS 50 MILLION PIECES OF CONTENT RELATED TO COVID

Facebook Had To Put Misinformation Warning Labels On Nearly 50 Million Pieces Of Content Related To COVID In April 2020. “Facebook put misinformation warning labels on about 50 million pieces of content related to COVID-19 during the month of April, the company announced Tuesday. The social networking site attaches these warnings to posts sharing articles that have been reviewed by the company’s independent fact-checking partners. The company said that the warnings greatly reduce the number of people who view the original content.” [NBC News, [5/12/20](#)]

An Internal Researcher For Facebook Said The Platforms “Internal Systems [Were] Not Yet Identifying, Demoting And/Or Removing Anti-Vaccine Comments Often Enough. “But internal Facebook (FB) documents suggest a disconnect between what the company has said publicly about its overall response to Covid-19 misinformation and some of its employees’ findings concerning the issue. ‘We have no idea about the scale of the [Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy] problem when it comes to comments,’ an internal research report posted to Facebook’s internal site in February 2021, a year into the pandemic, noted. ‘Our internal systems are not yet identifying, demoting and/or removing anti-vaccine comments often enough,’ the report pointed out. Additional reports a month later raised concerns about the prevalence of vaccine hesitancy — which in some cases may amount to misinformation — in comments, which employees said Facebook’s systems were less equipped to moderate than posts.” [CNN, [10/26/21](#)]

The Department Of Homeland Security Believed China Was Waging A Disinformation War During COVID To Shift Responsibility For The Pandemic To Other Countries, Including The United States. “Chinese operatives probably are waging disinformation campaigns using overt and covert tactics—including social media trolls—to shift responsibility for the pandemic to other countries, including the United States. China might increase its influence activities in response to what it views as anti-China statements from the U.S. Government over China’s role in the pandemic.” [DHS.Gov, Homeland Threat Assessment, [October 2020](#)]

ANTI-VACCINE CONTENT WAS THE MOST ENGAGED WITH AND POPULAR CONTENT ON FACEBOOK’S PLATFORMS...

NPR Found That Articles Connecting Vaccines And Death Had Been Among The Most Highly Engaged With Content Online In 2021. “The odds of dying after getting a COVID-19 vaccine are virtually nonexistent. According to recent data from the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, you’re three times more likely to get struck by lightning.

But you might not know that from looking at your social media feed. A new NPR analysis finds that articles connecting vaccines and death have been among the most highly engaged with content online this year, going viral in a way that could hinder people's ability to judge the true risk in getting a shot." [NPR, [3/25/21](#)]

Huffington Post, June 2021: For More Than A Week, The Top Featured Results For The Hashtag #Vaccine Included Anti-Vax Posts, Including One That Said "The Only Thing Vaccines Eradicated Were Healthy Children." "Searching through Instagram's algorithmically curated hashtag page for #vaccines is equally troubling. For more than a week, the top featured results have included anti-vax posts, including one that claims, 'The only thing vaccines eradicated were healthy children.' Alongside #vaccines, its caption includes the hashtags #antivaccine, #antivaxx and #bewaretheneedle. By promoting anti-vaccine untruths, Instagram is legitimizing and even encouraging distrust in vaccines." [Huffington Post, [6/16/21](#)]

As Of Late March 2021, 8 Of The First 10 Results Returned In An Instagram Search For "Vaccine" Were Anti-Vaccine Or Vaccine Conspiracy Accounts. "The problem persists on Instagram today. Simply typing "vaccine" into the Instagram search box brings up a number of anti-vaccine accounts. In fact, at the time of this writing, 8 of the first 10 accounts returned by the search are anti-vaccine or vaccine conspiracy theory accounts. With some, you can tell just by the name. Others have more innocuous handles, and I had to go into the actual posts to find the vaccine scare content, misinformation, and conspiracy theories." [Fast Company, [3/25/21](#)]

July 2021: Media Matters For America Found 284 Public And Private Anti-Vaccine Facebook Groups, With 520,000 Followers Combined. "In a separate study published Tuesday, researchers at the left-leaning group Media Matters for America identified 284 public and private anti-vaccine Facebook groups, with more than 520,000 followers combined. 'It really speaks to the scale of the problem,' said Jevin West, director of the Center for an Informed Public at the University of Washington. 'If it was a minor problem, then all the interventions, fact-checkers, would appear to have a larger relative effect.'" [Washington Post, [7/22/21](#)]

A Social Media Watchdog Group, Accountable Tech, Found That During One Week In July 2021, 11 Out Of The Top 15 Vaccine Related Posts On Facebook Contained Disinformation Or Were Anti-Vaccine. "She added it is difficult to gauge the scope of the issue when Facebook does not share figures. According to the social media watchdog Accountable Tech, 11 out of the top 15 vaccine related-posts on Facebook last week contained disinformation or were anti-vaccine. Another leading post on Facebook about the Covid-19 vaccines last week was a deeply inaccurate anti-vaccine rant from the rightwing Candace Owens, according to FWIW, a newsletter which tracks digital ad spends." [The Guardian, [7/21/21](#)]

CCDH Research Revealed That Anti-Vax Social Media Accounts Gained Nearly 1 Million More Followers In The Last Six Months Of 2020 Alone. "Tracking of 425 anti-vaccine accounts by CCDH shows that their total following across platforms now stood at 59.2 million in December, an increase of 877,000 more than they had in June." [The Disinformation Dozen Report, Center for Countering Digital Hate, Accessed [4/21/21](#)]

2020: The Anti-Vaxx Movement Was Most Popular On Facebook, Where It Had 31 Million Followers. "It is also clear that the anti-vaxx movement is most popular on Facebook, but has a significant following on every mainstream social media platform. In our sample, anti-vaxx Facebook groups and pages command over 31 million followers, well over half of the combined following of all the accounts we studied. Anti-vaxx accounts have nearly 17 million subscribers on YouTube and 7 million on Instagram, but appear to be weakest on Twitter where they have 2 million followers." [The Anti-Vaxx Industry, Center For Countering Digital Hate, [2020](#)]

A NewsGuard Review Found Dozens Of Facebook Pages And Instagram Accounts With Millions Of Followers Collectively Making Anti-Vax Statements. "The Associated Press identified more than a dozen Facebook pages and Instagram accounts, collectively boasting millions of followers, that have made false claims about the COVID-19 vaccine or discouraged people from taking it. Some of these pages have existed for years." [Associated Press, [3/12/21](#)]

...PERHAPS BECAUSE FACEBOOK'S ALGORITHM WAS RECOMMENDING IT

Researchers At AVAAZ Found That While Facebook Had Worked To Tamp Down Anti-Vaccine Posted, Its Algorithm Still Pushed Users To Anti-Vaccine Content Through Its "Related Pages" Feature. "Overall, this research reveals the power of the Facebook "related pages" algorithm to push users toward anti-vaccine content. It also reinforces that, despite years of pressure from lawmakers, researchers, and civil society, very little is known about Facebook's algorithmic 'black box', including how exactly users are targeted with recommendations, how pages are associated with each other, and what harms recommendation algorithms could create or worsen in users' lives and society at large." [AVAAZ, [7/21/21](#)]

When A Researcher From AVAAZ Created Two New Facebook Accounts To Conduct An Experiment Vaccine Disinformation, In Just Two Days The Accounts Were Recommended 109 Pages Containing Anti-Vaccine Information. “On Facebook, researchers at the left-leaning advocacy group Avaaz ran an experiment in June in an effort to show how anti-vaccine material gets pushed to people. Two new accounts it set up were recommended 109 pages containing anti-vaccine information in just two days. Vaccine rates in the United States have stalled and some cities are reinstating mask recommendations as coronavirus cases rise again.” [Washington Post, [7/22/21](#)]

- **The Researcher Found That When His Accounts Started Searching “Vaccine” Or Liked An Anti-Vaccine Page, More Anti-Vaccine Pages Showed Up In His Results.** “Today, anti-vaccine content is still common on social platforms. The Avaaz research, which hasn’t been made public until now, tested how Facebook’s algorithm reacted to accounts that began interacting with vaccine information. One account started by liking a page with known vaccine misinformation. The other started by searching ‘vaccine,’ which turned up results including pages with anti-vaccine content. One page about side effects encouraged people to discuss injury after receiving vaccines. Another said ‘vaccines harm.’” [Washington Post, [7/22/21](#)]
- **The Researcher Found “Opening And Liking Several Of These Pages, In Turn, Led Our Account Further Into A Network Of Harmful Pages.”** “One account started by liking a page with known vaccine misinformation. The other started by searching ‘vaccine,’ which turned up results including pages with anti-vaccine content. One page about side effects encouraged people to discuss injury after receiving vaccines. Another said ‘vaccines harm.’ Still another urged people to consider ‘medical freedom,’ which has been a rallying cry for anti-vaccine communities. One was called ‘Autistic by Injection,’ a correlation that has been debunked. ‘Opening and liking several of these pages, in turn, led our account further into a network of harmful pages seemingly linked together and boosted by Facebook’s recommendation algorithm,’ Avaaz researchers wrote in their report.” [Washington Post, [7/22/21](#)]

The Researcher Said The Pages Were “Seemingly Linked Together And Boosted By Facebook’s Recommendation Algorithm.” “One account started by liking a page with known vaccine misinformation. The other started by searching ‘vaccine,’ which turned up results including pages with anti-vaccine content. One page about side effects encouraged people to discuss injury after receiving vaccines. Another said ‘vaccines harm.’ Still another urged people to consider ‘medical freedom,’ which has been a rallying cry for anti-vaccine communities. One was called ‘Autistic by Injection,’ a correlation that has been debunked. ‘Opening and liking several of these pages, in turn, led our account further into a network of harmful pages seemingly linked together and boosted by Facebook’s recommendation algorithm,’ Avaaz researchers wrote in their report.” [Washington Post, [7/22/21](#)]

CCDH: Instagram Algorithms Pushed Followers Of Wellness Influencers With Links To The Anti-Vaccine Movement Towards “Verified” Instagram Anti-Vaxx Accounts. “Followers of wellness influencers with links to the anti-vaccine movement receive recommendations for harder anti-vaccine content from leading anti-vaxxers who had been granted “verified” status by Instagram despite being flagged by experts. They also receive recommendations for Covid misinformation and conspiracies.” [Malgorithm, Center for Countering Digital Hate, Accessed [4/21/21](#)]

A News Story Suggesting The COVID Vaccine Could Have Been Involved In A Doctor’s Death Was The Most Viewed Link On Facebook In The U.S. In The First Three Months Of 2021. “A news story suggesting the COVID-19 vaccine may have been involved in a doctor’s death was the most viewed link on Facebook in the U.S. in the first three months of the year. But Facebook held back from publishing a report with that information, the company acknowledged on Saturday. The social media giant prepared the report about the most widely viewed posts on its platform from January through March of 2021, but decided not to publish it ‘because there were key fixes to the system we wanted to make,’ spokesperson Andy Stone tweeted on Saturday.” [NPR, [8/21/21](#)]

ANTIVAX CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA WAS CAUSING HAVOC

A Senior Researcher At Columbia University Said The Internet And Social Media Was “Creating Havoc” And Was A Major Factoring In Those Holding Out On The Vaccine. “In an interview about the growing number of coronavirus cases in many parts of the U.S., the New York doctor placed blame on vaccine ‘holdouts’ for ‘really creating problems’ in the nation’s fight against the deadly disease. ‘We have the internet and social media creating havoc, people not knowing what’s true,’ said Redlener, an NBC News and MSNBC contributor, and a senior researcher at Columbia University. ‘I’ve had people who are adamant vaccine resisters saying things like, ‘Oh, I read that if I get vaccinated somebody’s injecting a microchip into my body, or that I’ll become magnetic.’ It’s absolutely crazy,’ he added.” [NBC Chicago, [8/4/21](#)]

Dr. Fauci Said The U.S.’s Campaigns To Eradicate Smallpox And Polio Wouldn’t Have Succeeded If Those Vaccines Were Subject To The Same Level Of Misinformation Surrounding The COVID Vaccine. “Amid sagging

Covid-19 vaccination rates and stubborn levels of vaccine hesitancy, Dr. Anthony Fauci told CNN on Saturday the United States' successful campaigns to eradicate smallpox and polio in the last century wouldn't have succeeded if those vaccines were subject to the same level of misinformation that currently surrounds coronavirus vaccines." [Forbes, [7/17/21](#)]

FACEBOOK USERS WERE AMONG THE MOST LIKELY TO BELIEVE FALSE CLAIMS ABOUT COVID VACCINES

The Washington Post Found That Facebook Users Were Among The Most Likely To Believe False Claims About COVID Vaccines. "Strikingly, those who relied exclusively on Facebook reported lower vaccination rates and higher vaccine resistance than those who rely exclusively on the often vaccine-critical Fox News. Newsmax was the only information source we examined that had lower levels of vaccination and higher vaccine resistance than Facebook, among people who rely on it for information. According to our data, Facebook users were also among the most likely to believe false claims about coronavirus vaccines." [Washington Post, [7/27/21](#)]

- **The Washington Post Tested Whether Demographic And Other Differences Between Facebook Users Related To Lower Vaccination Rates Among Users, But Found No Difference.** "We further tested whether these patterns were a misleading byproduct of demographic factors. For example, people who largely get their news from Facebook might be younger and hence less likely to be vaccinated, independent of their news consumption. We used standard statistical techniques to evaluate this possibility, as you can see here. Even after accounting for demographic and other differences, we still find that getting coronavirus-related news from Facebook — especially when it's exclusively from Facebook — is associated with lower vaccination levels and higher levels of vaccine resistance. That relationship is stronger only with Newsmax, which is a much less commonly used source." [Washington Post, [7/27/21](#)]

People Who Got Their News About COVID On Facebook Were Less Likely To Be Vaccinated And More Strident In Their Opposition Than Even Those Who Got Their News From Fox News. "This week, Ognyanova and the Covid States Project released a paper analyzing the link between people's vaccine attitudes and where they get their news. People who said they had gotten their news about Covid in the previous 24 hours from Facebook, the team found, were less likely even than people who get their news from Fox News to be vaccinated and more likely to say they would not in the future. (Of the news sources they asked about, only Newsmax predicted more hesitancy than Facebook.)" [WIRED, [7/28/21](#)]

FACEBOOK'S PERMISSIVE APPROACH TO VACCINE LIES WAS DIRECTLY LINKED TO LOWER VACCINATION RATES, THREATENING GLOBAL HEALTH WHILE SPREADING COVID

FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN VACCINE HESITANCY

Research Done By The Conversation Revealed That Social Media Played A Major Role In Vaccine Hesitancy. Social media has spread a lot of anti-vaccination misinformation over the last 20 years. We recently evaluated the effect of social media on vaccine hesitancy globally. We saw that in countries where social media is used to organise offline action, more people tend to believe that vaccinations are unsafe. We also found that foreign disinformation campaigns online are associated with both a drop in vaccination coverage over time and an increase in negative discussion of vaccines on social media. [The Conversation, [12/3/20](#)]

Those Who Were Most Reliant On Facebook For Information Had Substantially Lower Vaccination Rates Than Those Who Relied On Other Sources. "Our data suggests that Facebook is a major source of information regarding COVID-19, comparable with CNN or Fox News. Further, we find that those who are most reliant on Facebook for information have substantially lower vaccination rates than those who rely on other sources. In fact, Facebook news consumers are less likely to be vaccinated than people who get their COVID-19 information from the often vaccine-skeptical Fox News. The June/July 2021 survey conducted by the COVID States Project included a partial battery of questions regarding the sources respondents consulted for news or information on COVID-19." [Northeastern / Rutgers / Northwestern / Harvard Study, [7/27/21](#)]

- **Those Who Received Their News From Newsmax Were The Only Group With Lower Vaccination Rates Than Facebook.** "Strikingly, those who relied exclusively on Facebook reported lower vaccination rates and higher vaccine resistance than those who rely exclusively on the often vaccine-critical Fox News. Newsmax was the only information source we examined that had lower levels of vaccination and higher vaccine resistance than

Facebook, among people who rely on it for information. According to our data, Facebook users were also among the most likely to believe false claims about coronavirus vaccines.” [Washington Post, [7/27/21](#)]

FACEBOOK USE WAS DIRECTLY LINKED WITH VACCINATION RATES

The World Health Organization Ranked Vaccine Hesitancy As One Of The Top 10 Threats To Global Health. “Even before COVID-19, anti-vaccine disinformation has had real consequences for our health. Measles, which was controlled in the 20th century, is back in the 21st. One of the key reasons, according to Seth Berkley, CEO of the nonprofit Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance: ‘the spread of falsehoods about the vaccine.’ The World Health Organization now ranks vaccine hesitancy as one of the top 10 threats to global health. In the US, polling from March found that 42 percent of respondents believed at least one COVID-19 conspiracy theory.” [The Verge, [6/5/21](#)]

Associated Press: “COVID-19 Cases Nearly Tripled In The U.S. Over Two Weeks Amid An Onslaught Of Vaccine Misinformation.” “COVID-19 cases nearly tripled in the U.S. over two weeks amid an onslaught of vaccine misinformation that is straining hospitals, exhausting doctors and pushing clergy into the fray. ‘Our staff, they are frustrated,’ said Chad Neilsen, director of infection prevention at UF Health Jacksonville, a Florida hospital that is canceling elective surgeries and procedures after the number of mostly unvaccinated COVID-19 inpatients at its two campuses jumped to 134, up from a low of 16 in mid-May.” [Associated Press, [7/21/21](#)]

July 2021: In Mississippi, The State With The Lowest Vaccination Rate, The State’s Department Of Health Had To Shut Down Their Facebook Comments Because They Had Become Dominated By Misinformation. “Back in December, Facebook said it would remove claims about vaccines that were debunked by public health experts; in February, the company further widened its ban. Unfortunately, the bans aren’t enough, and the Mississippi State Department of Health has now shut its comments down. Liz Sharlot, a spokesperson for the state health department, told the Associated Press in a statement that ‘the comments section of our Facebook page has increasingly come to be dominated by misinformation about COVID-19.’ [...] according to CBS News, this puts Mississippi at the very bottom of all U.S. states.” [Mic.com, [7/14/21](#)]

FACEBOOK ACTIVELY RESISTED REDUCING ANTI-VACCINE CONTENT ON THE PLATFORM, STONEWALLING BOTH THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION AND ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS

Zuckerberg Admitted In A Congressional Hearing That Facebook “Won’t Stop Its Users From Posting Information That’s Wrong” On Vaccines. “Zuckerberg, who told Congressman [Posey] that his “understanding of the scientific consensus” is that people should get their vaccines, said Facebook won’t stop its users from posting information that’s wrong. ‘If someone wants to post anti-vaccination content, or if they want to join a group where people are discussing that content, we don’t prevent them from doing that. But we don’t go out of our way to make sure our group recommendation systems try to encourage people to join those groups.” [Michael Nuñez OpEd, Forbes, [10/23/19](#)]

After Anti-Vaxxer Congressman Bill Posey Questioned Zuckerberg On Its Approach To The Anti-Vaccination Movement, Zuckerberg Said Facebook Cared About “Freedom Of Expression” And Support Users “Fair And Open Discussions.” “Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg returned to Capitol Hill on Wednesday for the first time since April 2018, answering a litany of questions about Facebook’s digital currency project and how it balances freedom of expression with demands it prevent the spread of false information. One exchange, on its approach to the controversial anti-vaccination movement, underlined the many ways its strategy can get muddled.[...]One revealing moment came from an outspoken anti-vaccination supporter, Congressman Bill Posey (R-FL), who wanted assurance Facebook would ‘support users’ fair and open discussions and communications related to the risk as well as the benefits of vaccinations.’ ‘We do care deeply about giving people a voice and freedom of expression,’ Zuckerberg said. ‘At the same time, we also hear consistently from our community that people want us to stop the spread of misinformation. So we try to focus on misinformation that has the potential to lead to physical or imminent harm, and that can include misleading health advice.’ [Michael Nuñez OpEd, Forbes, [10/23/19](#)]

Facebook’s Head Of Health Kang-Xing Jin Said Vaccine Conversations Were “Nuanced, So Content [Couldn’t] Always Be Clearly Divided Into Helpful And Harmful.” “Facebook has previously raised a similar defense to Pichai, with Facebook’s head of health Kang-Xing Jin writing in an editorial last month in the San Francisco Chronicle that ‘Vaccine conversations are nuanced, so content can’t always be clearly divided into helpful and harmful. It’s hard to draw the line on posts that contain people’s personal experiences with vaccines... We are working with experts to identify and remove widely debunked hoaxes that could put people at risk for harm, while also providing the facts from trusted sources that can help us combat vaccine misinformation during this critical time.’ [Gizmodo, [3/25/21](#)]

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION HAD “COMBATIVE” MEETINGS WITH FACEBOOK EXECUTIVES OVER ANTIVAX CONTENT SPREAD ON THE PLATFORM

New York Times: The Biden Administration And Facebook Had “Combative” Meetings Over The Spread Of Vaccine Misinformation On Facebook. “Mr. Biden said Facebook was ‘killing people’ — a comment that put the social network in the center of the public discussion about the virus. Mr. Biden’s comment, which he later walked back slightly, was the culmination of increasingly combative meetings with the company about the spread of misinformation. Interviews with administration officials, Facebook employees and other people with knowledge of the internal discussions revealed new details about who took part in the talks and the issues that fed the frustrations between the White House and the Silicon Valley titan.” [New York Times, [8/10/21](#)]

- **The White House Reportedly Grew So Frustrated To Facebook’s Answers During Their Meetings That At One Point It Demanded To Hear From The Data Scientists At The Company Instead Of Lobbyists.** “In March, Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook’s chief executive, called Ron Klain, the White House chief of staff, and discussed health misinformation. The White House grew so frustrated by Facebook’s answers in the internal meetings that at one point it demanded to hear from the data scientists at the company instead of lobbyists. And the nation’s top doctor presented the social media representatives with anecdotes from doctors and nurses who had interacted with Covid-19 patients who believed incorrect information.” [New York Times, [8/10/21](#)]

White House Officials Felt That Facebook Was Making It Difficult For The Administration To Understand Their Data Sets And How Vaccine Misinformation Proliferated On Their Site. “Facebook responded to some requests for information by talking about vaccine promotion strategies, said administration officials and people familiar with the meetings. The company noted that it was conducting surveys on how many Facebook users in the United States got vaccinated, and that the company was using its software to amplify pro-vaccine messages and to direct people to vaccination clinics. To the government officials, Facebook was purposely making things difficult. No one understood the data about the social network better than Facebook, the officials said, and they wanted the company to help guide them toward the right questions.” [New York Times, [8/10/21](#)]

Despite Meeting Repeatedly With The Biden Administration, Facebook Did Not Come Up With Concrete Solutions To Curbing Vaccine Misinformation On Their Site. “The administration and Facebook did restart talks, and both sides agreed on the need to tone down their language. At one recent meeting, the Biden team, including Dr. Murthy and Mr. Patil, emphasized that vaccination efforts had stalled, medical officials were at risk and deaths could rise without more enforcement from the company, people familiar with the matter said. At the end of the meeting, the two sides thanked each other for the candor and agreed to continue meeting. They left without any concrete solutions.” [New York Times, [8/10/21](#)]

FACEBOOK REFUSED TO HAND OVER THE DATA RESEARCHERS NEEDED TO IDENTIFY THE RATE AND SPREAD OF COVID AND VACCINE MISINFORMATION

Facebook Refused To Give Researchers Enough Real-Time Data They Needed To Figure Out Exactly How Much COVID-19 Misinformation Was On The Platform. “Biden partially walked back his comments, but the reality is we simply don’t know the true size or effect of Covid-19 misinformation on Facebook and Facebook-owned Instagram. That’s in large part because Facebook isn’t giving researchers enough of the real-time data they need to figure out exactly how much Covid-19 misinformation is on the platform, who’s seeing it, and how it’s impacting their willingness to get vaccinated. Researchers say they need this kind of data to understand the scope of the misinformation problem, which misleading messages are resonating with people, and how public health officials can counter them.” [Vox, [8/16/21](#)]

Over A Dozen Independent Researchers Who Studied Facebook, Six Of Which Were Studying The Spread Of Information About COVID, Said Facebook Made It Difficult For Them To Access Vital Information. “Over a dozen independent researchers who regularly study Facebook, including six who are specifically researching the spread of information about Covid-19, told Recode that the company makes it difficult for people studying the platform to access vital information, including how many times people viewed Covid-related articles, what health misinformation Facebook takes down, and what’s being shared on private pages and groups. Facebook does have some programs, like the Social Science One data-sharing initiative, to give researchers more detailed information than is publicly available.” [Vox, [8/16/21](#)]

- **The Information Researchers Were Seeking Was How Many Times People Viewed COVID Related Articles, What Health Information Facebook Took Down And What Was Being Shared On Private Pages And Groups.** “Over a dozen independent researchers who regularly study Facebook, including six who are specifically researching the spread of information about Covid-19, told Recode that the company makes it difficult for people

studying the platform to access vital information, including how many times people viewed Covid-related articles, what health misinformation Facebook takes down, and what's being shared on private pages and groups. Facebook does have some programs, like the Social Science One data-sharing initiative, to give researchers more detailed information than is publicly available." [Vox, [8/16/21](#)]

Academics Said A Lack Of Access To Facebook Data Was Limiting In Their Ability To Understand How Many People Were Seeing COVID Misinformation That Could Be Causing Vaccine Hesitancy. "Meanwhile, several academics Recode spoke with say that a lack of access to Facebook data is limiting their ability to understand how many people are seeing Covid-19 misinformation that could be causing vaccine hesitancy in the US. It's an increasingly urgent issue as the delta variant of the virus spreads across the country, infecting tens of thousands of new people daily. Only about half the population is fully vaccinated, and an estimated 20 percent of Americans remain unwilling to get the shot." [Vox, [8/16/21](#)]

...INCLUDING THEIR OWN RESEARCHERS

Facebook's Own Internal Data Scientists Reported Difficulty Studying COVID Misinformation On The Platform. "But Facebook has historically refused to release even high-level, aggregate data like this. 'It's baffling,' Rothschild said. 'Just baffling.' Even some of Facebook's own in-house data scientists — who are considered to have more access to the company's user data than outside academics — have reportedly had difficulty studying misinformation on the platform. A group of data scientists at the company were denied a request to measure the prevalence of Covid-19 misinformation on the platform last year, according to sources cited by The New York Times." [Vox, [8/16/21](#)]

FACEBOOK MADE MONEY OF ANTI-VACCINE CONTENT, MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN FACT

Facebook Earned Money From Advertisements Placed By Anti-Vaxxers. "It is clear that Facebook also earns revenue from adverts placed directly by anti-vaxxers. The platform's Ad Library shows that 28 anti-vaxx accounts have placed ads on the platform. These include adverts featuring Judy Mikovits' anti-vaxx conspiracy theories and adverts placed by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Children's Health Defense campaign that promote health misinformation about both vaccines and 5G mobile phone signals.⁹² Many of these adverts contravene Facebook's promise in March 2019 that "when we find ads that include misinformation about vaccinations, we will reject them." [The Anti-Vaxx Industry, Center For Countering Digital Hate, [2020](#)]

CCDH Research: The Anti-Vaxx Movement's Following Of Over 58 Million Could Be Worth Up To \$1 Billion In Annual Revenue For Social Media Giants Through Ad Placements. "The anti-vaxx movement's following of over 58 million people could be worth up to \$1 billion in annual revenue for social media giants. This income is primarily generated by advertisers seeking to reach users with an interest in anti-vaxx misinformation, but also includes that the anti-vaxx movement spends on ads to reach a wider audience. This estimate is derived from publicly available figures for the amount of revenue social media platforms make per impression, or per user where that information is not available. It represents the best possible estimate of the antivaxx movement's value to social networks in terms of engaging users and generating ad impressions." [The Anti-Vaxx Industry, Center For Countering Digital Hate, [2020](#)]

- **CCDH Predicted Facebook Could Earn Up To \$23.2 Million In Revenue From Ads Directed At Existing Anti-Vaxxer Audiences.** "Anti-vaxxers' audience of 38.7m followers on Facebook and Instagram could be earning Facebook up to \$23.2 million in revenue. This figure is based on Facebook's own key metric of Average Revenue Per Person (ARPP), which stood at \$25.57 in 2019 according to the company's last annual report.⁹¹ Anti-vaxxers' primary value to Facebook is in engaging users who are subsequently served adverts." [The Anti-Vaxx Industry, Center For Countering Digital Hate, [2020](#)]

FACEBOOK LET MISINFORMATION ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE HEAT UP THEIR PLATFORM

MISINFORMATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE WAS "INCREASING SUBSTANTIALLY" ON FACEBOOK AND THE SCALE WAS "STAGGERING"

HEADLINE: "Climate Misinformation On Facebook 'Increasing Substantially', Study Says" [Guardian, 11/4/21]

Study Found That From 2020-2021, Climate Misinformation On Facebook Had Grown By 76.7 Percent. "This 'rampant' spread of climate misinformation is getting substantially worse, said Sean Buchan, the research and partnerships manager for Stop Funding Heat. Interactions per post in its dataset have increased 76.7% in the past year,

the report found. 'If it continues to increase at this rate, this can cause significant harm in the real world,' he said." [Guardian, [11/4/21](#)]

The Guardian: "The Scale Of Climate Misinformation On Facebook Is 'Staggering' And 'Increasing Quite Substantially', A New Analysis Of Thousands Of Posts Has Found." "The scale of climate misinformation on Facebook is 'staggering' and 'increasing quite substantially', a new analysis of thousands of posts has found. A report released on Thursday by the Real Facebook Oversight Board, an independent watchdog group, and the environmental non-profit Stop Funding Heat, analyzed a dataset of more than 195 Facebook pages and groups. Researchers found an estimated 45,000 posts downplaying Throughout 2021, Facebook Has Been A Major Purveyor Of Climate Disinformation – With 10 Far-Right Publishers Accounting For Nearly 70 Percent Of Climate Denial Content or denying the climate crisis, which have received a combined total of between 818,000 and 1.36m views." [Guardian, 11/4/21]

Study Found That From 2020-2021, Climate Misinformation On Facebook Had Grown By 76.7 Percent. "This 'rampant' spread of climate misinformation is getting substantially worse, said Sean Buchan, the research and partnerships manager for Stop Funding Heat. Interactions per post in its dataset have increased 76.7% in the past year, the report found. 'If it continues to increase at this rate, this can cause significant harm in the real world,' he said." [Guardian, [11/4/21](#)]

As Of January 2021, Facebook Displayed Climate Disinformation When Users Searched For Climate Change Information. "More than a year later, in January 2021, a Facebook employee noted a similar concern when searching for 'climate change' on the social network's video-on-demand service, Facebook Watch. The second result, according to the employee, was a video titled 'Climate Change Panic is not based on facts.' The video had been posted nine days earlier and already had 6.6 million views, according to another internal post. These examples were flagged by Facebook (FB) employees on the company's internal site, according to documents reviewed by CNN Business." [CNN, [11/7/21](#)]

HEADLINE: "Breitbart Has Outsize Influence Over Climate Change Denial On Facebook, Report Says." [Washington Post, [11/2/21](#)]

Facebook Whistleblower Alleged Facebook Executive Joel Kaplan Proposed Exempting Breitbart From Misinformation Rules. "A Facebook whistleblower in October told The Post on the condition of anonymity that Facebook executive Joel Kaplan, a former George W. Bush administration official, once defended a 'white list' that exempted Breitbart and other select publishers from Facebook's ordinary rules against falsehoods. Kaplan told The Post there has 'never been' a white list that exempts publishers, including Breitbart, from the company's misinformation rules." [Washington Post, [11/2/21](#)]

HEADLINE: "Climate Denial Newspaper Flourishes On Facebook" [E&E News, [8/27/21](#)]

FACEBOOK DID LITTLE TO POLICE CLIMATE CHANGE FALSEHOODS ON THE SITE

Facebook Reportedly Suppressed Information From A Climate Scientist Aiming To Correct Misinformation. "Evan Greer, deputy director at the digital rights organization Fight for the Future, said that Facebook's Algorithm Promoted Climate Disinformation, And The Company Refused To Remove Misinformation faced other critiques when it comes to combating climate misinformation, noting that the platform had been accused of suppressing posts and information from reliable organizations in the field. In 2020 July, a prominent climate scientist said the platform was restricting her ability to research and factcheck posts containing climate misinformation. The company reportedly flagged the posts the scientist's posts as 'political.' Facebook declined to comment further." [Mother Jones, 9/20/21]

Facebook Reportedly Allowed Staff To Make Climate Misinformation Ineligible For Fact-Checking By Deeming The Misinformation To Be The "Opinion" Of The Poster Or Publisher. "But now Facebook has reportedly decided to allow its staffers to overrule the climate scientists and make any climate disinformation ineligible for fact-checking by deeming it 'opinion.' The organization that requested the change, the CO2 Coalition, is celebrating, E&E news reported on Monday. The group, which has close ties to the fossil fuel industry, says its views on climate change are increasingly ignored by the mainstream media. Now it plans to use Facebook to aggressively push climate misinformation on the public—without having to worry about fact checks from climate scientists. [...] The Wall Street Journal reported that, after receiving the complaint from the CO2 coalition, Facebook planned to create a new rule exempting 'opinion pieces' from fact-checking. But Facebook did not 'respond to requests for comment' on the new rule. No such rule has been publicly acknowledged by Facebook in the months that followed." [Heated, 6/24/20]

NOW – PUTTING CHILDREN AT RISK BY LETTING SEXUAL PREDATORS RUN RAMPANT ON THEIR PLATFORMS

FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM WERE HUNGRY FOR YOUNG USERS, MAKING TWEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS THEIR NEW “NORTH STAR”

ZUCKERBERG WANTED FACEBOOK TO MAKE YOUNG ADULTS THEIR NORTH STAR

Zuckerberg Said He Was Redirecting Teams Within His Company To “Make Serving Young Adults Their North Star.” “Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg says he’s redirected teams within his company to “make serving young adults their north star.” The comment, made on a call with investors this afternoon, speaks to Facebook’s concerns about declining usage among teens and young adults. ‘So much of our services have gotten dialed to be the best for the most people who use them, rather than specifically for young adults,’ Zuckerberg said.” [The Verge, [10/25/21](#)]

- **One Of The More Immediate Shifts Meta Planned On Was “Significant Changes” To Instagram Like A Focus On Video.** “Facebook usage among older users will grow slower than it otherwise would have because of the changes, Zuckerberg said. Even with those tradeoffs, he said, “I think it’s the right approach.” Zuckerberg expects the changes to take years. One of the more immediate shifts could be to Instagram, which he says will see “significant changes” to lean further into video and make Reels ‘a more central part of the experience.’ The shift toward video is very clearly a response to TikTok, which Zuckerberg called ‘one of the most effective competitors we’ve ever faced.’” [The Verge, [10/25/21](#)]

The Verge HEADLINE, Oct 2021: “Facebook Says It’s Refocusing Company On ‘Serving Young Adults.’” The Verge, [10/25/21](#)

An Internal Facebook Document Called “Tweens” A “Valuable But Untapped Audience.” “In one presentation, it contemplated whether there might be a way to engage children during play dates. ‘Why do we care about tweens?’ said one document from 2020. ‘They are a valuable but untapped audience.’ Facebook isn’t the only technology company to court children and face scrutiny for doing so. Virtually every major social-media platform, including ByteDance Ltd.’s TikTok and YouTube, has confronted legal or regulatory problems related to how children use its products.” [WSJ, [9/28/21](#)]

FACEBOOK HAD SPENT YEARS SECRETLY PLOTTING WAYS TO ATTRACT PRETEEN AND TWEEN USERS

Wall Street Journal: Facebook Teams “Have For Years Been Laying Plans To Attract Preteens That Go Beyond What Is Publicly Known.” “Facebook Inc. has come under increasing fire in recent days for its effect on young users and its efforts to create products for them. Inside the company, teams of employees have for years been laying plans to attract preteens that go beyond what is publicly known, spurred by fear that Facebook could lose a new generation of users critical to its future. Internal Facebook documents reviewed by The Wall Street Journal show the company formed a team to study preteens, set a three-year goal to create more products for them and commissioned strategy papers about the long-term business opportunities presented by these potential users. In one presentation, it contemplated whether there might be a way to engage children during play dates. ‘Why do we care about tweens?’ said one document from 2020. ‘They are a valuable but untapped audience.’” [Wall Street Journal, [9/28/21](#)]

June 2012: Facebook Explored Allowing Children Younger Than 13 Years Old To Use Their Platform. “Facebook is developing technology that would allow children younger than 13 years old to use the social-networking site under parental supervision, a step that could help the company tap a new pool of users for revenue but also inflame privacy concerns. Mechanisms being tested include connecting children’s accounts to their parents’ and controls that would allow parents to decide whom their kids can ‘friend’ and what applications they can use, people who have spoken with Facebook executives about the technology said.” [WSJ, [6/4/12](#)]

Facebook Formed A Team To Study Preteens, Set A Three-Year Goal To Create More Products For Them And Commissioned Strategy Papers About The Long-Term Business Opportunities Young Users Presented. “Inside the company, teams of employees have for years been laying plans to attract preteens that go beyond what is publicly known, spurred by fear that Facebook could lose a new generation of users critical to its future. Internal Facebook documents reviewed by The Wall Street Journal show the company formed a team to study preteens, set a three-year goal to create more products for them and commissioned strategy papers about the long-term business opportunities presented by these potential users. In one presentation, it contemplated whether there might be a way to engage children during play dates.” [WSJ, [9/28/21](#)]

In December 2017, Facebook Introduced An App For Children 13 And Under, Messenger Kids, So Kids Could Message, Add Filters And Doodle On Photos They Sent One Another. “Few big technology companies have dared to create online products for boys and girls ages 13 and under. But on Monday, Facebook introduced an app, called Messenger Kids, that is targeted at that age group and asks parents to give their approval so children can message, add filters and doodle on photos they send to one another. It is a bet that the app can introduce a new generation of users to the Silicon Valley giant’s ever-expanding social media universe.” [NY Times, [12/4/17](#)]

- **Facebook Said The Point Of Messenger Kids Was To Provide A More Controlled Environment For The Types Of Activity That Were Already Occurring Across Smartphones And Tablets Among Family Members.** “Until this year, even big tech companies had been loath to set up children’s sites with a parental consent system lest they violate the law. [...] Facebook said the point of Messenger Kids was to provide a more controlled environment for the types of activity that were already occurring across smartphones and tablets among family members. The company said it had spent months talking to parenting groups, child behavioral experts and safety organizations to aid in developing the app, as well as thousands of hours interviewing families on the ways that members communicate with one another.” [NY Times, [12/4/17](#)]

YOUNG USERS WERE ALREADY ON FACEBOOK IN DROVES AND HAD BEEN FOR A LONG TIME DESPITE A POLICY AND LAWS AGAINST IT

The Atlantic, 2016: Facebook And Instagram’s Policy Only Allowing People Over 13 Years Old Did Not “Appear To Be Strictly Enforced.” “Setting the minimum age for Facebook and Instagram at 13 years is a data-protection requirement by law in the United States, but this doesn’t appear to be strictly enforced. Why? In terms of scale, Facebook has 1.65 billion active members (as of May 2016) who make one post a day on average, including the uploading of 300 million images. Could these companies monitor and police illegal use of the site?” [The Atlantic, [8/30/16](#)]

In May 2011, ABC News Reported There Were About 7.5 Million Children Under The Age Of 13, With About 5 Million Being Under The Age Of 10. “In 2010, 20 Million U.S. Minors Used Facebook. “Sasha and Malia Obama may not be on Facebook, but millions of other kids under the age of 13 may be lying their way on to the social network. In violation of Facebook’s requirement that members be at least 13 years old to open an account, about 7.5 million users in the U.S. are under the age of 13, and about 5 million are under the age of 10, Consumer Reports said in a report released today. That’s out of 20 million U.S. minors in total who actively used Facebook last year, Consumer Reports said. The annual survey, which looks at the “State of the Net,” asked more than 2,000 U.S. households with an Internet connection about their experiences with online security threats, social networks and identity theft.” [ABC News, [5/10/11](#)]

- **Facebook Responded To Reports Of Millions Of Children Being On Facebook By Saying It Was Not Easy For An Online Company To Enforce An Age Limit.** “In violation of Facebook’s requirement that members be at least 13 years old to open an account, about 7.5 million users in the U.S. are under the age of 13, and about 5 million are under the age of 10, Consumer Reports said in a report released today. That’s out of 20 million U.S. minors in total who actively used Facebook last year, Consumer Reports said. [...] Reacting to the report, Facebook said it is not easy for an online company to enforce an age limit. “Recent reports have highlighted just how difficult it is to implement age restrictions on the Internet and that there is no single solution to ensuring younger children don’t circumvent a system or lie about their age,” the social network said in a written statement.” [ABC News, [5/10/11](#)]
- **Facebook Had A Policy Against Children Under 13 Being On Their Site.** “In violation of Facebook’s requirement that members be at least 13 years old to open an account, about 7.5 million users in the U.S. are under the age of 13, and about 5 million are under the age of 10, Consumer Reports said in a report released today. That’s out of 20 million U.S. minors in total who actively used Facebook last year, Consumer Reports said. [...] Reacting to the report, Facebook said it is not easy for an online company to enforce an age limit. “Recent reports have highlighted just how difficult it is to implement age restrictions on the Internet and that there is no single solution to ensuring younger children don’t circumvent a system or lie about their age,” the social network said in a written statement.” [ABC News, [5/10/11](#)]
- **Facebook Said Reports Of Children Under 13 On Their Platform “Highlighted Just How Difficult It [Was] To Implement Age Restrictions On The Internet.”** “Reacting to the report, Facebook said it is not easy for an online company to enforce an age limit. ‘Recent reports have highlighted just how difficult it is to implement age restrictions on the Internet and that there is no single solution to ensuring younger children don’t circumvent a system or lie about their age,’ the social network said in a written statement. ‘We appreciate the attention that these reports and other experts are giving this matter and believe this will provide an opportunity for parents,

teachers, safety advocates and Internet services to focus on this area, with the ultimate goal of keeping young people of all ages safe online.” [ABC News, [5/10/11](#)]

- **Facebook Claimed There Was “No Single Solution To Ensuring Younger Children Don’t Circumvent A System Or Lie About Their Age.”** “Reacting to the report, Facebook said it is not easy for an online company to enforce an age limit. ‘Recent reports have highlighted just how difficult it is to implement age restrictions on the Internet and that there is no single solution to ensuring younger children don’t circumvent a system or lie about their age,’ the social network said in a written statement. ‘We appreciate the attention that these reports and other experts are giving this matter and believe this will provide an opportunity for parents, teachers, safety advocates and Internet services to focus on this area, with the ultimate goal of keeping young people of all ages safe online.’” [ABC News, [5/10/11](#)]

A 2014 Study Of Children Between The Ages Of 8-12 Found That One-Quarter Of Them Reported Using Facebook Even Though They Were Underage. “A similarly comprehensive study was done in the United States in 2014 by four researchers from the fields of education and psychology. A national sample of 442 children between the ages of 8 and 12, or what is called “middle childhood,” were asked how they spent their time online. Younger children (8 to 10 years) spent an average of 46 minutes per day on a computer, compared with older ones (11 to 12 years), who spent one hour and 46 minutes per day on a computer. [...] But wait a second. What about Facebook? Don’t you have to be 13 years old to activate an account? Yes, but guess what? One-quarter of the children in the U.S. study reported using Facebook even though it is a social network meant for teenagers and adults. These are the hidden users of social networks, the ones who aren’t supposed to be there—but are.” [The Atlantic, [8/30/16](#)]

In 2021, 45% Of Children Aged 9-12 Said They Used Facebook Daily. “Officially, children are not supposed to use most apps before they turn 13 without adult supervision. In practice, though, the majority of American children are using apps anyway. And even when they block and report bullies and predators, the majority of children say that they are quickly re-contacted by the same bad actors — either via new accounts or separate social platforms. Children are using major platforms in large numbers long before they turn 13: 45 percent of children ages 9-12 say they use Facebook daily; 40 percent use Instagram; 40 percent use Snapchat; 41 percent use TikTok; and 78 percent use YouTube.” [The Verge, [5/12/21](#)]

BECAUSE THEY WANTED CHILDREN’S DATA

Mercury News: Big Tech Was “Fiercely Opposed” To Limiting What Data Could Be Collected On Users Under 13. “Citing concerns that children are being increasingly tracked and targeted by online services and advertisers, the Federal Trade Commission on Wednesday announced a major update of rules that limit what information can be collected when kids under 13 visit websites or use mobile apps. But the agency stopped short of enacting some changes that were fiercely opposed by Silicon Valley companies like Apple (AAPL), Facebook and Google (GOOG), which argued it would be unfair and impractical to make them responsible for other companies’ apps and websites that primarily serve young kids.” [Mercury News, [12/19/12](#)]

- **The Internet Association Said Big Tech Was Concerned That The Rules Would “Not Be Workable Because They Fail[ed] To Account For The Technical Realities Of The Internet.”** “And big Internet companies cautiously welcomed some of the changes but said they are still trying to determine how the rules will affect their business. ‘We’re initially concerned’ that the rules ‘will not be workable because they fail to account for the technical realities of the Internet,’ said a statement by the Internet Association, a Washington trade group that represents Google, Facebook and other major online companies. The new rules expand a 1998 federal law known as the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, or COPPA, which required website operators to obtain parental consent before collecting identifying information such as names, phone numbers or addresses of children under 13.” [Mercury News, [12/19/12](#)]

KIDS WERE ENCOURAGED BY FACEBOOK TO SPEND MONEY ON GAMES WITHOUT PARENTS PERMISSION

Facebook Engaged In A Practice They Called “Friendly Fraud” To Dupe Children Out Of Money By Encouraging Game Developers To Let Children Spend Money Without Their Parents’ Permission. “Facebook orchestrated a multiyear effort that duped children and their parents out of money, in some cases hundreds or even thousands of dollars, and then often refused to give the money back, according to court documents unsealed tonight in response to a Reveal legal action. The records are part of a class-action lawsuit focused on how Facebook targeted children in an effort to expand revenue for online games, such as Angry Birds, PetVille and Ninja Saga. Facebook encouraged game developers

to let children spend money without their parents' permission – something the social media giant called 'friendly fraud' – in an effort to maximize revenues, according to a document detailing the company's game strategy." [Reveal, [1/24/19](#)]

- **Underage Users Often Did Not Realize They Were Spending Money On Facebook.** "Sometimes the children did not even know they were spending money, according to another internal Facebook report. Facebook employees knew this. Their own reports showed underage users did not realize their parents' credit cards were connected to their Facebook accounts and they were spending real money in the games, according to the unsealed documents." [Reveal, [1/24/19](#)]

The Average Age Of The Children Playing And Spending Money On The Game "Angry Birds" On Facebook Was 5 Years Old. "A few months before she launched her project in mid-2011, Facebook had uncovered some troubling data about the children playing its games. They were requesting refunds and demanding chargebacks at extraordinarily high rates. The company had analyzed data on game revenue from children for the time period Oct. 12, 2010, through Jan. 12, 2011. The children had 'spent a whopping \$3.6 million' during the three-month period, according to the report. But the company had discovered that more than 9 percent of the money it made from children was being clawed back by the credit card companies. The average age of those playing Angry Birds was 5 years old, according to Facebook's analysis." [Reveal, [1/24/19](#)]

Only 50% Of Facebook Customers Received Receipts For Their Transactions. "And that wasn't the only problem. Only about 50 percent of Facebook's customers were receiving receipts for their transactions, according to another unsealed document." [Reveal, [1/24/19](#)]

Facebook Ignored Warnings From Their Employees That They Were Defrauding Children, Passing Over A Proposal To Fix The Problem In Favor Of Maximizing Revenues. "For years, the company ignored warnings from its own employees that it was bamboozling children. A team of Facebook employees even developed a method that would have reduced the problem of children being hoodwinked into spending money, but the company did not implement it, and instead told game developers that the social media giant was focused on maximizing revenues." [Reveal, [1/24/19](#)]

A Facebook Employee Wrote That Ending The "Friendly Fraud" On Children Would Result In Lower Revenue. "Then the employee wrote what is a common theme throughout the unsealed documents: 'if we were to build risk models to reduce it, we would most likely block good TPV.' 'TPV' is total purchase value, also called revenue. If Facebook tried to stop children and their parents from unwittingly spending money, it would hurt the company's revenue." [Reveal, [1/24/19](#)]

SEXUAL PREDATORS WERE SHARING MASS AMOUNT OF CHILD PORN AND CONNECTING WITH REAL KIDS ON FACEBOOK'S PLATFORMS

DESPITE ZUCKERBERG CLAIMING FACEBOOK WAS "REALLY FOCUSED" ON CHILDREN'S SAFETY, THE SITE DID LITTLE TO PROTECT THEM

Zuckerberg Asserted Facebook Was "Really Focused On Safety, Especially Children's Safety." "Another criticism of Facebook Zuckerberg did address, however, is the common concern regarding privacy and oversharing of personal information in a public forum. "If you go back 10 years, a lot of people were afraid of sharing things on the Internet," he said. 'One of the things that initially got people comfortable is that we offer extremely robust privacy controls. A lot of folks now understand they know where their information is going. ...We're really focused on safety, especially children's safety ... We really try to build a safe environment.' Facebook is trying to maintain that sense of privacy by simplifying its privacy controls and continually creating new innovations that protect users' information, Zuckerberg said." [Desert News, [3/25/11](#)]

- **Zuckerberg: "We Really Try To Build A Safe Environment."** "Another criticism of Facebook Zuckerberg did address, however, is the common concern regarding privacy and oversharing of personal information in a public forum. "If you go back 10 years, a lot of people were afraid of sharing things on the Internet," he said. 'One of the things that initially got people comfortable is that we offer extremely robust privacy controls. A lot of folks now understand they know where their information is going. ...We're really focused on safety, especially children's safety ... We really try to build a safe environment.' Facebook is trying to maintain that sense of privacy by simplifying its privacy controls and continually creating new innovations that protect users' information, Zuckerberg said." [Desert News, [3/25/11](#)]

An Internal Facebook Presentation From 2020 Titled "Child Safety: State Of Play" Acknowledged That Instagram Employed "Minimal Safety Protections" For Children. "The Meta employee, tasked with addressing the issue, noted that "this is the kind of thing that pisses Apple off to the extent of threatening [sic] to remove us from the App Store," and

asked whether there was a timeline for when the company would prevent adults from messaging minors on the platform. A November 2020 presentation titled 'Child Safety: State of Play' said that Instagram employed "minimal child safety protections" and described policies regarding 'minor sexualization' as 'immature.' It further noted the platform's 'minimal focus' on trafficking." [WSJ, [1/17/24](#)]

An Internal Meta Document Noted That One Of Its "People You May Know" Algorithm Was Known Among Employees To Connect Child Users With Potential Predators. "That finding is among newly unredacted material about the company's child-safety policies in a lawsuit filed last month by New Mexico that alleges Meta's platforms recommend sexual content to underage users and promote underage accounts to predatory adult users. In one 2021 internal document described in the now unredacted material, Meta employees noted that one of its recommendation algorithms, called "People You May Know," was known among employees to connect child users with potential predators. The New Mexico lawsuit says the finding had been flagged to executives several years earlier, and that they had rejected a staff recommendation that the company adjust the design of the algorithm, known internally as PYMK, to stop it from recommending minors to adults." [WSJ, [1/17/24](#)]

FACEBOOK REPORTED TENS OF MILLIONS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES ON ITS PLATFORM EVERY YEAR

In 2020, Meta Reported 20 Million Child Sexual Abuse Images Between Facebook And Instagram. "Facebook reported more than 20 million child sexual abuse images on its platform in 2020, according to a new report by the National Council for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). According to the report released Wednesday, Facebook recorded 20,307,216 instances for child sexual exploitation on its platforms in 2020. The figures cover Instagram as well as the main Facebook site." [Insider, [2/26/21](#)]

- **Facebook Made 35 Times More Reports Than The Next Highest Reporter Google.** "According to the report released Wednesday, Facebook recorded 20,307,216 instances for child sexual exploitation on its platforms in 2020. The figures cover Instagram as well as the main Facebook site. Insider first reported the figures in January, when Facebook confirmed the number. The full report has figures for other companies, and shows that Facebook made more than 35 times as many reports as the next company on the list, Google. Facebook's platforms contain the vast majority of all child sexual content flagged to the NCMEC, which represent a 31% increase on the 16 million images reported to them by the platform in 2019." [Insider, [2/26/21](#)]

February 2021: The National Center For Missing And Exploited Children Identified Over 20.3 Million Reported Incidents Of Child Pornography Or Trafficking On Facebook, Compared To 546,704 Incidents On Google. "Last year, the vast majority of online child exploitation reports were found on Facebook, according to new data from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) CyberTipline. The study identified over 20.3 million reported incidents related to child pornography or trafficking (classified as 'child sexual abuse material') on the social media site. By contrast, Google cited 546,704 incidents, Twitter had 65,062, Snapchat reported 144,095, and TikTok found 22,692. Facebook accounted for nearly 95 percent of the 21.7 million reports across all platforms." [Daily Beast, [2/24/21](#)]

A Whistleblower Told The SEC That Facebook Didn't Know The Full Scale Of The Problem Of Child Abuse Material Because It Didn't Track It. "Facebook says it uses technology known as PhotoDNA and VideoDNA, which automatically scan for known child abuse images - each image recovered by law enforcement worldwide and referred to the American National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, is given a unique identifying code. Other accusations from the whistleblower include: Facebook doesn't know the full scale of the problem of child abuse material because it 'doesn't track it' A constant question allegedly asked by senior managers was 'what's the return on investment?'" [BBC, [10/28/21](#)]

- **At Facebook, Senior Managers Would Ask "What's The Return On Investment."** "Facebook says it uses technology known as PhotoDNA and VideoDNA, which automatically scan for known child abuse images - each image recovered by law enforcement worldwide and referred to the American National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, is given a unique identifying code. Other accusations from the whistleblower include: Facebook doesn't know the full scale of the problem of child abuse material because it 'doesn't track it' A constant question allegedly asked by senior managers was 'what's the return on investment?' The whistleblower told the SEC that this was a legitimate business question, "but not when it comes to public safety issues as critical as child sex abuse." [BBC, [10/28/21](#)]

FACEBOOK DID LITTLE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF CHILD PORN ON THEIR PLATFORM AND RARELY TOOK DOWN FLAGGED CONTENT, INCLUDING REPORTER'S FLAGS

A Whistleblower Said Meta Broke Up A Team It Set Up To Develop Software For Detecting Indecent Videos Of Children Because It Was Seen As “Too Complex.” “In a sworn statement to the SEC, which regulates securities markets and protects investors, the individual said there was no solution to illegal material at Facebook because there had not been ‘adequate assets devoted to the problem’. They claim that a small team set up to develop software which could detect indecent videos of children was broken up and redeployed, because it was seen as ‘too complex’. Facebook says it uses technology known as PhotoDNA and VideoDNA, which automatically scan for known child abuse images - each image recovered by law enforcement worldwide and referred to the American National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, is given a unique identifying code.” BBC, [10/28/21](#)

A Whistleblower Said Meta’s Efforts To Remove Child Abuse Material Were “Inadequate” And “Under-Resourced.” “A former Facebook employee has told US authorities the company’s efforts to remove child abuse material from the platform were ‘inadequate’ and ‘under-resourced’. The allegations are contained in documents seen by BBC News and submitted to the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) two weeks ago. The anonymous whistleblower says moderators are “not sufficiently trained and are ill prepared”. Facebook said in a statement: ‘We have no tolerance for this abhorrent abuse of children and use sophisticated technologies to combat it.’” [BBC, [10/28/21](#)]

Instagram Failed To Remove Accounts That Posted Pictures Of Children In Swimwear Or Partial Clothing Even After The Accounts Were Flagged To Instagram Through An In-App Reporting Tool. “Instagram is failing to remove accounts that attract hundreds of sexualised comments for posting pictures of children in swimwear or partial clothing, even after they are flagged to it through the in-app reporting tool. Instagram’s parent company, Meta, claims it takes a zero-tolerance approach to child exploitation. But accounts that have been flagged as suspicious through the in-app reporting tool have been ruled acceptable by its automated moderation technology and remain live.” [The Guardian, [4/17/22](#)]

An Account Posting Photos Of Children In Sexualized Poses Was Reported Using The In-App Reporting Tool, But Instagram Responded That Same Day Saying “Due To High Volume” It Was Unable To View The Report.

“Instagram’s parent company, Meta, claims it takes a zero-tolerance approach to child exploitation. But accounts that have been flagged as suspicious through the in-app reporting tool have been ruled acceptable by its automated moderation technology and remain live. In one case, an account posting photos of children in sexualised poses was reported, using the in-app reporting tool, by a researcher. Instagram provided a same-day response saying that “due to high volume”, it had not been able to view the report, but that its “technology has found that this account probably doesn’t go against our community guidelines”. The user was advised to block or unfollow the account, or report it again. It remained live on Saturday, with more than 33,000 followers. Similar accounts – known as “tribute pages” – were also found to be running on Twitter.” [The Guardian, [4/17/22](#)]

- **Instagram Said Its “Technology Ha[d] Found That This Account Probably Doesn’t Go Against Our Community Guidelines.** “Instagram’s parent company, Meta, claims it takes a zero-tolerance approach to child exploitation. But accounts that have been flagged as suspicious through the in-app reporting tool have been ruled acceptable by its automated moderation technology and remain live. In one case, an account posting photos of children in sexualised poses was reported, using the in-app reporting tool, by a researcher. Instagram provided a same-day response saying that “due to high volume”, it had not been able to view the report, but that its “technology has found that this account probably doesn’t go against our community guidelines”. The user was advised to block or unfollow the account, or report it again. It remained live on Saturday, with more than 33,000 followers. Similar accounts – known as “tribute pages” – were also found to be running on Twitter.” [The Guardian, [4/17/22](#)]
- **The Account Remained Live Days Later With More Than 33,000 Followers.** “Instagram’s parent company, Meta, claims it takes a zero-tolerance approach to child exploitation. But accounts that have been flagged as suspicious through the in-app reporting tool have been ruled acceptable by its automated moderation technology and remain live. In one case, an account posting photos of children in sexualised poses was reported, using the in-app reporting tool, by a researcher. Instagram provided a same-day response saying that “due to high volume”, it had not been able to view the report, but that its “technology has found that this account probably doesn’t go against our community guidelines”. The user was advised to block or unfollow the account, or report it again. It remained live on Saturday, with more than 33,000 followers. Similar accounts – known as “tribute pages” – were also found to be running on Twitter.” [The Guardian, [4/17/22](#)]

In April 2017, The Time UK Found That Facebook Was Publishing Child Pornography After One Of Its Reporters Created A Fake Profile And Was Quickly Able To Find Offensive And Potentially Illegal Content. “An investigation

by a British newspaper into child sexual abuse content and terrorist propaganda being shared on Facebook has once again drawn critical attention to how the company handles complaints about offensive and extremist content being shared on its platform [...] In a report published today, The Times newspaper accuses Facebook of publishing child pornography after one of its reporters created a fake profile and was quickly able to find offensive and potentially illegal content on the site — including pedophilic cartoons; a video that apparently shows a child being violently abused; and various types of terrorist propaganda including a beheading video made by an ISIS supporter, and comments celebrating a recent attack against Christians in Egypt.” [Tech Crunch, [4/13/17](#)]

- **The Times UK Reported The Content To Facebook, But In Most Instances Was Told The Imagery And Videos Did Not Violate The Site’s Community Standards.** “In a report published today, The Times newspaper accuses Facebook of publishing child pornography after one of its reporters created a fake profile and was quickly able to find offensive and potentially illegal content on the site — including pedophilic cartoons; a video that apparently shows a child being violently abused; and various types of terrorist propaganda including a beheading video made by an ISIS supporter, and comments celebrating a recent attack against Christians in Egypt. The Times says it reported the content to Facebook but in most instances was apparently told the imagery and videos did not violate the site’s community standards. (Although, when it subsequently contacted the platform identifying itself as The Times newspaper it says some of pedophilic cartoons that had been kept up by moderators were subsequently removed.)” [Tech Crunch, [4/13/17](#)]

When BBC Approached Facebook About Sexualized Photos Of Children – Like A 10 Year Old In A Vest Accompanied By The Words “Yum Yum” – Facebook Said It Did Not Breach Community Standards And The Image Stayed Up.

“We set up our own fake profile and managed to gain access to some of these groups. Using Facebook’s own reporting facility, we told the company about images and comments we thought were unacceptable. In one secret group called “cute teen schoolies”, we found a picture of a girl in a vest, aged 10 or 11, accompanied by the words “yum yum”. Facebook responded that it did not breach “community standards” and the image stayed up.” [BBC, [2/12/16](#)]

- **BBC Reported A Whole Group, Called “We Love Schoolgirlz” That Featured Obscene Content Of Children, And It Did Not Get Taken Down.** “In other secret groups we found pictures of children in highly sexualised poses. There were also innocent pictures stolen from other Facebook sites, school homepages and newspapers and most were accompanied with obscene posts. They also did not breach Facebook’s community standards. We reported a whole group too - called “we love schoolgirlz” - with obscene content - and that did not get taken down either. In total we reported 20 images. Users took some down themselves - Facebook removed four - leaving half still up.” [BBC, [2/12/16](#)]

FACEBOOK EVEN STARTED RECOMMENDING CHILD SEXUALIZATION GROUPS AFTER A REPORT BEGAN FLAGGING INAPPROPRIATE PROFILES

When A WIRED Reported Attempted To Report The Profiles To Facebook, An Automated Message Came Back A Few Days Later Saying The Group Had Been Reviewed And Did Not Violate Any “Specific Community Standards.”

“OF COURSE I reported the group I had accidentally uncovered. I used Facebook’s on-platform system, tagging it as containing ‘nudity or sexual activity’ which (next menu) ‘involves a child.’ An automated response came back days later. The group had been reviewed and did not violate any ‘specific community standards.’ If I continued to encounter content ‘offensive or distasteful to you’—was my taste the problem here?—I should report that specific content, not the group as a whole.” [WIRED, [3/13/22](#)]

- **The Reporter Was Recommended More Child Sexualization Groups After He Reported The Profiles.** “What became ever clearer as I struggled to get action is that technology’s limits were not the problem. The full power of AI-driven algorithms was on display, but it was working to expand, not reduce, child endangerment. Because even as reply after reply hit my inbox denying grounds for action, new child sexualization groups began getting recommended to me as ‘Groups You May Like.’ Each new group recommended to me had the same mix of cartoon-filled come-ons, emotional grooming, and gamified invites to share sexual materials as the groups I had reported.” [WIRED, [3/13/22](#)]
- **Wired Reporter: “As Reply After Reply Hit My Inbox Denying Grounds For Action, New Child Sexualization Groups Began Getting Recommended To Me.”** “What became ever clearer as I struggled to get action is that technology’s limits were not the problem. The full power of AI-driven algorithms was on display, but it was working to expand, not reduce, child endangerment. Because even as reply after reply hit my inbox denying grounds for action, new child sexualization groups began getting recommended to me as ‘Groups You May Like.’

Each new group recommended to me had the same mix of cartoon-filled come-ons, emotional grooming, and gamified invites to share sexual materials as the groups I had reported.” [WIRED, [3/13/22](#)]

FACEBOOK ALLOWED REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS TO CONTINUE POSTED LEWD AND SEXUAL IMAGES OF CHILDREN

In 2016, BBC Reported That Pedophiles Were Using Secret Groups On Facebook To Post And Swap Obscene Images Of Children. “Pedophiles are using secret groups on Facebook to post and swap obscene images of children, the BBC has found. Settings on the social network mean the groups are invisible to most users and only members can see the content. Children's Commissioner for England Anne Longfield said Facebook was not doing enough to police the groups and protect children. Facebook's head of public policy told the BBC he was committed to removing "content that shouldn't be there". A BBC investigation found a number of secret groups, created by and run for men with a sexual interest in children, including one being administered by a convicted pedophile who was still on the sex offenders' register.” [BBC, [2/12/16](#)]

- **The Pedophile Groups On Facebook Had Names That Gave A Clear Indication Of Their Content.** “A BBC investigation found a number of secret groups, created by and run for men with a sexual interest in children, including one being administered by a convicted paedophile who was still on the sex offenders' register. The groups have names that give a clear indication of their content and contain pornographic and highly suggestive images, many purporting to be of children. They also have sexually explicit comments posted by users. We found pages specialising in pictures of girls in school uniform - accompanied by obscene posts.” [BBC, [2/12/16](#)]
- **BBC Fund A Number Of Secret Groups, Created By And Run For Pedophiles – Including One That Was Administered By A Convicted Pedophile Who Was Still On The Sex Offenders Register.** “Pedophiles are using secret groups on Facebook to post and swap obscene images of children, the BBC has found. Settings on the social network mean the groups are invisible to most users and only members can see the content. Children's Commissioner for England Anne Longfield said Facebook was not doing enough to police the groups and protect children. Facebook's head of public policy told the BBC he was committed to removing "content that shouldn't be there". A BBC investigation found a number of secret groups, created by and run for men with a sexual interest in children, including one being administered by a convicted pedophile who was still on the sex offenders' register.” [BBC, [2/12/16](#)]

A Man Arrested For Sexual Exploitation Of Children Online Was Able To Continue To Use Two Instagram Accounts To Share Images Of Minors For Months After He Was Arrested. “Durtschi was arrested in March and indicted in April. He pleaded not guilty to charges of sexual exploitation of children. His attorney didn't respond to requests for comment. Durtschi's arrest, however, didn't have much of an effect on his Instagram presence. Using two other accounts, he appeared to have continued to use the site to share images of minors for months after he was charged and arrested. Forbes did a simple Google search for Durtschi's two deleted Instagram accounts. The first result — one that referenced his business name, as did his already-banned profiles — showed an active account that had nearly 90,000 followers and was regularly posting images of teenagers and possibly younger children wearing swimming attire.” [Forbes, [6/25/22](#)]

- **The Predator Continued To Have An Active Account With Nearly 90,000 Followers, On Which He Was Regularly Posted Images Of Teenagers And Younger Children In Swimming Attire.** “Durtschi was arrested in March and indicted in April. He pleaded not guilty to charges of sexual exploitation of children. His attorney didn't respond to requests for comment. Durtschi's arrest, however, didn't have much of an effect on his Instagram presence. Using two other accounts, he appeared to have continued to use the site to share images of minors for months after he was charged and arrested. Forbes did a simple Google search for Durtschi's two deleted Instagram accounts. The first result — one that referenced his business name, as did his already-banned profiles — showed an active account that had nearly 90,000 followers and was regularly posting images of teenagers and possibly younger children wearing swimming attire.” [Forbes, [6/25/22](#)]

FACEBOOK'S PLATFORMS EASILY CONNECTED CHILDREN WITH PREDATORS, RESULTING IN UNWANTED SEXUAL INTERACTIONS

An Internal 2021 Meta Platforms Presentation Estimated That 100,000 Minors Each Day Received Photos Of Adult Genitalia Or Other Sexually Abusive Content. “Children using Instagram and Facebook have been frequent targets of sexual harassment, according to a 2021 internal Meta Platforms presentation that estimated that 100,000 minors each day received photos of adult genitalia or other sexually abusive content. That finding is among newly unredacted material

about the company's child-safety policies in a lawsuit filed last month by New Mexico that alleges Meta's platforms recommend sexual content to underage users and promote underage accounts to predatory adult users." [WSJ, [1/17/24](#)]

22% Of Minors That Used Instagram Reported Experiencing A Sexually Explicit Interaction On The Platform.

"Instagram tied with Snapchat again as most popular platforms where the most survey participants said they have had an online sexual interaction (16% of all respondents). Sexually explicit interaction could include being asked to send a nude photo or video, go 'on cam' with a sexually explicit stream, being sent a sexually explicit photo (of themselves or another child), or sexually explicit messages, etc. Of those who use Instagram at least once a day, 22% reported experiencing a sexually explicit interaction on the platform (second only to Snapchat at 23%). Most disturbing, Thorn notes that among the most used platforms, Instagram (together with Snapchat) appears to host the highest concentration of sexually explicit interactions between minors and adults (13% of users)." [National Center On Sexual Exploitation, Accessed [4/24/23](#)]

In 2020, Employees Reported That The Prevalence Of "Sex Talk" To Minors Was 38 Times Greater On Instagram Than On Facebook Messenger In The U.S. "Much of the internal discussion described in the newly unredacted material focused on Instagram. In an internal email in 2020, employees reported that the prevalence of "sex talk" to minors was 38 times greater on Instagram than on Facebook Messenger in the U.S. and urged the company to enact more safeguards on the platform, according to documents cited in the lawsuit. One employee that year reported that an Apple executive had complained that the executive's 12-year-old child was solicited on Instagram." [WSJ, [1/17/24](#)]

When A Wired Reporter Searched The Only Numbers 11, 12, 13 On Facebook, "23 Of The First 30 Results Were Groups Targeting Children Of Those Ages" For Sexual Interactions Or Pictures. "While Trying To map the extent and impact of place-based Facebook groups where QAnon and allied disinformation spread, I went looking for Facebook groups with names including 10, 11, or 12. This was part of my work with the Pitt Disinformation Lab, and I was thinking of the 10th, 11th, or 12th wards of the city of Pittsburgh. What appeared instead was a group named "Buscando novi@ de 9,10,11,12,13 años." Looking for a 9-year-old girlfriend? What? [...] This was not some outlaw 8Chan message board. It was cheerfully findable on Facebook. And, I began discovering in alarm, it was not the only one. Indeed, as late as January 2022—three months into my efforts to get action taken against them—if I searched 11, 12, 13 on the platform, 23 of the first 30 results were groups targeting children of those ages, with group names that included the words boyfriend/girlfriend, novio/a, or niños/niñas, sometimes along with 'pervertidos,' 'hot,' etc. They totaled over 81,000 members." [WIRED, [3/13/22](#)]

A BUG IN FACEBOOK'S MESSENGER KIDS APP ALLOWED MINORS TO CHAT WITH UNAPPROVED ADULTS

A Flaw In The Facebook Messenger Kids App Allowed Minors To Chat With Unapproved Adults. "Democratic senators wrote to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg Tuesday, probing the company on whether it has done enough to protect children's privacy after The Verge reported last month on a flaw in the Messenger Kids app that allowed minors to chat with unapproved adults. Late last month, Facebook alerted parents of the flaw and notified them that the group chats created by way of it were being shut down by the company. Messenger Kids allows parents to approve of users that their children can speak with in the app." [The Verge, [8/6/19](#)]

- **A Loophole In The App Allowed Users To Invite Kids To Group Chats Even If Unauthorized Users Were There Too.** "Senators are questioning Facebook again. This time their concerns are related to a technical error that let thousands of kids join group chats with unauthorized users, The Verge reports. Senators Edward Markey (D-Mass.) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) wrote a letter to Mark Zuckerberg today, asking whether Facebook has done enough to protect children's online safety. Last month, a report by The Verge revealed the technical error in Messenger Kids. The app is supposed to require parental permission before kids chat with other users. But a loophole allowed approved users to invite kids to group chats, even if unauthorized users were there too. In response, Facebook reportedly alerted parents to the flaw and shut down group chats created through the loophole." [Engadget, [8/6/19](#)]

The Verge: Due To The Bug, "Thousands Of Children Were Left In Chats With Unauthorized Users, A Violation Of The Core Promise Of Messenger Kids." "The bug arose from the way Messenger Kids' unique permissions were applied in group chats. In a standard one-on-one chat, children can only initiate conversations with users who have been approved by the child's parents. But those permissions became more complex when applied to a group chat because of the multiple users involved. Whoever launched the group could invite any user who was authorized to chat with them, even if that user wasn't authorized to chat with the other children in the group. As a result, thousands of children were left in chats with unauthorized users, a violation of the core promise of Messenger Kids." [The Verge, [7/22/19](#)]

A Group Of 100 Experts, Advocates, And Parenting Organizations Criticized Facebook’s Messenger Kids App, Claiming That Facebook Was “Creating” The Need In The Market To Target Younger And Younger Children. “A group of 100 experts, advocates and parenting organizations is contesting Facebook’s claims of filling a need. Led by the Boston-based Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, the group includes psychiatrists, pediatricians, educators and the children’s music singer Raffi Cavoukian. “Messenger Kids is not responding to a need — it is creating one,’ the letter states. ‘It appeals primarily to children who otherwise would not have their own social media accounts.’ Another passage criticized Facebook for ‘targeting younger children with a new product.’” [Associated Press, [1/30/18](#)]

Facebook Failed To Reach Out To Children Safety Advocates Including Common Sense Media And Campaign For A Commercial Free Childhood Before Launching The Messenger Kids App. “Equally notable are the experts Facebook did not consult. Although Facebook says it spent 18 months developing the app, Common Sense Media and Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood, two large nonprofits in the field, say they weren’t informed about it until weeks or days before the app’s debut. ‘They had reached out to me personally Friday before it launched, when obviously it was a fait accompli,’ says Josh Golin, executive director of Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood. Facebook, he says, is ‘trying to represent that they have so much more support for this than they actually do.’ Academics Sherry Turkle and Jean Twenge, well-known researchers whose work on children and technology is often cited, didn’t know about the app until after it launched.” [Wired, [2/14/18](#)]

FACEBOOK’S PLATFORMS WERE HIGHLY USED BY CRIMINALS AND PREDATORS TO FACILITATE CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

The 2020 Federal Human Trafficking Report Found That 65% Of Child Sex Trafficking Victims Recruited On Social Media Were Recruited On Facebook, With 14% Being Recruited On Instagram. “Instagram is consistently noted as a top platform used for grooming and child sex trafficking. The 2020 Federal Human Trafficking Report released by the Human Trafficking Institute found that 65% of child sex trafficking victims recruited on social media were recruited on Facebook, with Instagram cited as the second most frequently used platform (14%). The latest data from UK’s National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children noted Instagram as the most commonly used site for grooming, as flagged by police in 32% of instances in 2020 where the platform was known.” [National Center On Sexual Exploitation, Accessed [4/24/23](#)]

In 2020, Facebook Alone Was Used To Facilitate Over 366 Cases Of Child Exploitation Between Jan. 2013 – December 2019. “Meta has faced accusations of facilitating child exploitation before, by victims, survivors and their relatives as well as by civil sector organisations. A 2020 study from the nonprofit investigative group Tech Transparency Project (TPP), which analysed the Department of Justice’s criminal cases mentioning Facebook between January 2013 and December 2019, found that Facebook alone was used to facilitate over 366 cases of child exploitation in the US during this period. The group suspected the alleged predators ‘used the social network for child exploitation, including distributing sexual abuse images, recruiting children and sex trafficking.’ Around 91% of the cases the group found and analysed were not reported to the authorities by Facebook.” [Impakter.com, [3/28/23](#)]

NOW – TEENAGERS WHO USED FACEBOOK’S PLATFORMS WERE REPORTING MAJOR DECLINES IN THEIR MENTAL HEALTH, SELF-IMAGE AND SELF CONTROL

TEENS REPORTED COMPULSIVELY USING FACEBOOK’S NUMEROUS PLATFORMS EVERY DAY, SOME OF WHOM REPORTED BEING UNABLE TO CONTROL THEIR USE

22 Million Teens Logged Onto Instagram In The U.S. Every Day. “Expanding its base of young users is vital to the company’s more than \$100 billion in annual revenue, and it doesn’t want to jeopardize their engagement with the platform. More than 40% of Instagram’s users are 22 years old and younger, and about 22 million teens log onto Instagram in the U.S. each day, compared with five million teens logging onto Facebook, where young users have been shrinking for a decade, the materials show.” [WSJ, [9/14/21](#)]

Roughly Half Of Facebook Users Between The Age Of 18 And 24 Checked Facebook Upon Waking Up. “Social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook offer the obvious advantage of frequent and convenient interpersonal communication. More than a billion people are reported to log in daily to Facebook, the most popular SNS in the world and the one that has been most studied. Roughly half of those aged 18 to 24 years check the site upon awakening. While many people use Facebook without issue, a growing body of research suggests that some users can develop addictive behavior involving this SNS.” [Psychiatry Adviser, [1/17/17](#)]

Instagram Was Seen As An Addictive Product That Could Send Teens Spiraling Toward Eating Disorders, An Unhealthy Sense Of Their Own Bodies And Depression. “In contrast, Instagram focuses heavily on the body and lifestyle. The features that Instagram identifies as most harmful to teens appear to be at the platform’s core. The tendency to share only the best moments, a pressure to look perfect and an addictive product can send teens spiraling toward eating disorders, an unhealthy sense of their own bodies and depression, March 2020 internal research states.” [WSJ, [9/14/21](#)]

Accountable Tech Found That 74% Of Teens Found Themselves “Scrolling For Too Long” While 50% Said They Lost Sleep Because They Felt “Stuck” On Social Media. “The survey, which was conducted by YouGov and polled 912 American teenagers in March 2023, found that: 74% find themselves scrolling for too long. 59% get pulled back into apps after they log off by push notifications every day. 66% feel they are losing track of time on social media, with Black and Hispanic teenagers being disproportionately affected. Almost 50% lose sleep because they feel ‘stuck’ on social media. Only 8% were never recommended to follow a stranger.” [Accountable Tech, [3/29/23](#)]

TEENAGERS WERE BLAMING INSTAGRAM FOR INCREASED RATES OF ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND NEGATIVE VIEWS OF THEIR SELF IMAGE

A CONCERNING AMOUNT OF TEENS REPORTED THAT AFTER USING INSTAGRAM, THEY BEGAN FEELING UNATTRACTIVE AND SUICIDAL

The Features That Were Core To Instagram Were The Most Harmful To Teens. “In contrast, Instagram focuses heavily on the body and lifestyle. The features that Instagram identifies as most harmful to teens appear to be at the platform’s core. The tendency to share only the best moments, a pressure to look perfect and an addictive product can send teens spiraling toward eating disorders, an unhealthy sense of their own bodies and depression, March 2020 internal research states.” [WSJ, [9/14/21](#)]

An Internal Meta Research Slide Said Teens Were Blaming Instagram For “Increases In The Rate Of Anxiety And Depression.” “For the past three years, Facebook has been conducting studies into how its photo-sharing app affects its millions of young users. Repeatedly, the company’s researchers found that Instagram is harmful for a sizable percentage of them, most notably teenage girls. “We make body image issues worse for one in three teen girls,” said one slide from 2019, summarizing research about teen girls who experience the issues. “Teens blame Instagram for increases in the rate of anxiety and depression,” said another slide. “This reaction was unprompted and consistent across all groups.” [WSJ, [9/14/21](#)]

13% Of British Teens And 6% Of American Teens Who Reported Suicidal Thoughts Traced The Desire To Kill Themselves To Instagram. “Teens blame Instagram for increases in the rate of anxiety and depression,’ said another slide. ‘This reaction was unprompted and consistent across all groups.’ Among teens who reported suicidal thoughts, 13% of British users and 6% of American users traced the desire to kill themselves to Instagram, one presentation showed. Expanding its base of young users is vital to the company’s more than \$100 billion in annual revenue, and it doesn’t want to jeopardize their engagement with the platform.” [WSJ, [9/14/21](#)]

INSTAGRAM RUINED TEENAGE GIRLS’ BODY IMAGE AND DROVE THEM TOWARDS EATING DISORDERS

FACEBOOK WAS AWARE ITS PLATFORMS WERE EXCLUSIVELY MAKING TEENS SAD

An Internal Facebook Research Deck Said Instagram Made “Body Image Worse For One In Three Teen Girls.” “For the past three years, Facebook has been conducting studies into how its photo-sharing app affects its millions of young users. Repeatedly, the company’s researchers found that Instagram is harmful for a sizable percentage of them, most notably teenage girls. ‘We make body image issues worse for one in three teen girls,’ said one slide from 2019, summarizing research about teen girls who experience the issues. ‘Teens blame Instagram for increases in the rate of anxiety and depression,’ said another slide.” [WSJ, [9/14/21](#)]

Meta’s Internal Research Found Instagram Risked Pushing Teens To Eating Disorders, Depression, And An Unhealthy Sense Of Their Own Bodies. “The features that Instagram identifies as most harmful to teens appear to be at the platform’s core. The tendency to share only the best moments, a pressure to look perfect and an addictive product can send teens spiraling toward eating disorders, an unhealthy sense of their own bodies and depression, March 2020 internal research states. It warns that the Explore page, which serves users photos and videos curated by an algorithm, can send users deep into content that can be harmful. ‘Aspects of Instagram exacerbate each other to create a perfect storm,’ the

research states. The research has been reviewed by top Facebook executives, and was cited in a 2020 presentation given to Mr. Zuckerberg, according to the documents.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/14/21](#)]

Meta Researchers Concluded That Some Of The Problems Instagram Created With Teen Mental Health Were Specific To Instagram And Not Found In Social Media More Broadly. “The researchers are Facebook employees in areas including data science, marketing and product development who work on a range of issues related to how users interact with the platform. Many have backgrounds in computer science, psychology and quantitative and qualitative analysis. In five presentations over 18 months to this spring, the researchers conducted what they called a ‘teen mental health deep dive’ and follow-up studies. They came to the conclusion that some of the problems were specific to Instagram, and not social media more broadly. That is especially true concerning so-called social comparison, which is when people assess their own value in relation to the attractiveness, wealth and success of others. ‘Social comparison is worse on Instagram,’ states Facebook’s deep dive into teen girl body-image issues in 2020, noting that TikTok, a short-video app, is grounded in performance, while users on Snapchat, a rival photo and video-sharing app, are sheltered by jokey filters that ‘keep the focus on the face.’ In contrast, Instagram focuses heavily on the body and lifestyle. The features that Instagram identifies as most harmful to teens appear to be at the platform’s core.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/14/21](#)]

Facebook Found That More Than 40% Of Teen Instagram Users Reported Feeling “Unattractive,” A Feeling That They Feeling Began On The App. “But a mounting body of Facebook’s own evidence shows Instagram can be damaging for many. In one study of teens in the U.S. and U.K., Facebook found that more than 40% of Instagram users who reported feeling “unattractive” said the feeling began on the app. About a quarter of the teens who reported feeling “not good enough” said the feeling started on Instagram. Many also said the app undermined their confidence in the strength of their friendships.” [WSJ, [9/14/21](#)]

- **32% Of Teenage Girls Said That When They Felt Bad About Their Bodies, Instagram Made Them Feel Worse.** “Around that time, researchers inside Instagram, which is owned by Facebook Inc., were studying this kind of experience and asking whether it was part of a broader phenomenon. Their findings confirmed some serious problems. ‘Thirty-two percent of teen girls said that when they felt bad about their bodies, Instagram made them feel worse,’ the researchers said in a March 2020 slide presentation posted to Facebook’s internal message board, reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.” [WSJ, [9/14/21](#)]
- **14 Percent Of Teen Boys In The U.S. Said Instagram Made Them Feel Worse About Themselves.** “Teen boys aren’t immune. In the deep dive Facebook’s researchers conducted into mental health in 2019, they found that 14% of boys in the U.S. said Instagram made them feel worse about themselves. In their report on body image in 2020, Facebook’s researchers found that 40% of teen boys experience negative social comparison. ‘I just feel on the edge a lot of the time,’ a teen boy in the U.S. told Facebook’s researchers. ‘It’s like you can be called out for anything you do. One wrong move. One wrong step.’” [Wall Street Journal, [9/14/21](#)]
- **Teenager: “Every Time I Feel Good About Myself, I Go Over To Instagram, And Then It All Goes Away.”** “Eva Behrens, a 17-year-old student at Redwood High School in Marin County, Calif., said she estimates half the girls in her grade struggle with body-image concerns tied to Instagram. ‘Every time I feel good about myself, I go over to Instagram, and then it all goes away,’ she said. When her classmate Molly Pitts, 17, arrived at high school, she found her peers using Instagram as a tool to measure their relative popularity. Students referred to the number of followers their peers had as if the number was stamped on their foreheads, she said. Now, she said, when she looks at her number of followers on Instagram, it is most often a ‘kick in the gut.’” [Wall Street Journal, [9/14/21](#)]
- **Teenager: Looking At Her Peers’ Followers Was A “Kick In The Gut.”** “Eva Behrens, a 17-year-old student at Redwood High School in Marin County, Calif., said she estimates half the girls in her grade struggle with body-image concerns tied to Instagram. ‘Every time I feel good about myself, I go over to Instagram, and then it all goes away,’ she said. When her classmate Molly Pitts, 17, arrived at high school, she found her peers using Instagram as a tool to measure their relative popularity. Students referred to the number of followers their peers had as if the number was stamped on their foreheads, she said. Now, she said, when she looks at her number of followers on Instagram, it is most often a ‘kick in the gut.’” [Wall Street Journal, [9/14/21](#)]

Frequent Use Of Image-Based Social Media Like Instagram Was Linked To Greater Self-Objectification. “While many of these choices are played out in an online or virtual environment, the consequences of these choices translate over into the real world prompting both psychological and physical effects. More frequent use of image-based social media platforms like Instagram is linked to greater self-objectification, especially when the user engages with celebrity culture (Fardouly, Willburger, & Vartanian, 2017). However, this link to also present when the user engages with non-celebrities on social media as well.” [Davis, Objectification, Sexualization, and Misrepresentation: Social Media and the College Experience, 7/13/18]

The Tendency To Share Only The Best Moments, A Pressure To Look Perfect Was At The Core Of Instagram's Platform. "In contrast, Instagram focuses heavily on the body and lifestyle. The features that Instagram identifies as most harmful to teens appear to be at the platform's core. The tendency to share only the best moments, a pressure to look perfect and an addictive product can send teens spiraling toward eating disorders, an unhealthy sense of their own bodies and depression, March 2020 internal research states." [WSJ, [9/14/21](#)]

THE PRESSURE OF LOOKING PERFECT CAUSED TEENAGERS TO SEEK OUT EATING DISORDER CONTENT, WHICH FACEBOOK'S PLATFORMS PROMOTED

An Internal Document Revealed That Meta Knew Instagram Was Pushing Girls To Dangerous Content Like Posts About Eating Disorders. "A previously unpublished internal document reveals Facebook, now known as Meta, knew Instagram was pushing girls to dangerous content. In 2021, according to the document, an Instagram employee ran an internal investigation on eating disorders by opening a false account as a 13-year-old girl looking for diet tips. She was led to graphic content and recommendations to follow accounts titled 'skinny binge' and 'apple core anorexic.'" [CBS News, [12/11/22](#)]

In 2022, A Report By Fairplay Found That Instagram's Algorithm Promoted An Extensive Network Of Pro-Eating Disorder Content. "A report published this month by marketing watchdog Fairplay finds that Instagram's algorithm promotes an extensive network of pro-eating disorder content. According to the report, "Designing for Disorder," there are over 90,000 unique accounts promoting such content, all of which collectively reaches some 20 million users around the world. More troublingly, the report notes that one in three exposed accounts belong to someone under the age of 18. Meta, Instagram's parent company, derives an estimated \$227.9 million in revenue from followers within this toxic ecosystem." [Fast Company, [4/18/22](#)]

- **The Report Said There Were Over 90,000 Unique Accounts Promoting Eating-Disorder Content, Which Could Collectively Reach Nearly 20 Million Users Around The World.** "A report published this month by marketing watchdog Fairplay finds that Instagram's algorithm promotes an extensive network of pro-eating disorder content. According to the report, 'Designing for Disorder,' there are over 90,000 unique accounts promoting such content, all of which collectively reaches some 20 million users around the world. More troublingly, the report notes that one in three exposed accounts belong to someone under the age of 18. Meta, Instagram's parent company, derives an estimated \$227.9 million in revenue from followers within this toxic ecosystem." [Fast Company, [4/18/22](#)]

Tech Transparency Project Said Instagram Made It "Exceedingly Easy To Search For Hashtags And Terms Associated With Eating Disorders On The Platform. "Researchers found that Instagram recommended accounts full of disturbing images of underweight women to users who showed an interest in getting thin. Many of the recommended accounts explicitly promoted anorexia and bulimia, listing goal weights as low as 77 pounds. The investigation also revealed just how easy it is to get pulled into Instagram's 'thinfluencer' culture, with anorexia 'coaches' reaching out with unsolicited offers to provide weight loss advice. Meanwhile, Instagram makes it exceedingly easy to search for hashtags and terms associated with eating disorders on the platform. According to documents leaked earlier this year by Facebook whistleblower Francis Haugen, Instagram executives are acutely aware of the effects of content promoting unhealthy body ideals on young users." [Tech Transparency Project, [12/8/21](#)]

- **TPP: "Instagram Not Only Fails To Enforce Its Own Policies, But It Also Proactively Recommends Toxic Body Image Content To Its Adult And Teen Users."** "Our research reveals multiple loopholes in Instagram's product design and safety policies, which make Instagram a danger to the mental health and physical well-being of one its most vulnerable user groups: people with eating disorders. Instagram not only fails to enforce its own policies, but it also proactively recommends toxic body image content to its adult and teen users. In this way, Instagram fuels the idealization and marketization of dangerous body ideals, while fostering communities." [Tech Transparency Project, [12/8/21](#)]

An Instagram Employee Ran An Internal Investigation On Eating Disorders By Creating A Fake Profile For A 13-Year-Old Girl Looking For Diet Tips And Was Directed To Graphic Content And Profiles Pushing Eating Disorders. "In 2021, according to the document, an Instagram employee ran an internal investigation on eating disorders by opening a false account as a 13-year-old girl looking for diet tips. She was led to graphic content and recommendations to follow accounts titled "skinny binge" and "apple core anorexic." Other internal memos show Facebook employees raising concerns about company research that revealed Instagram made 1-in-3 teen girls feel worse about their bodies, and that teens who used the app felt higher rates of anxiety and depression." [CBS News, [12/11/22](#)]

When CBS Ran The Same Experiment, Their 13-Year-Old Fake Account Was Able To Sign Up With No Age Verification And Was Able To Easily Find Content Promoting Anorexia And Self-Harm. “Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, declined 60 Minutes’ request for an interview, but its global head of safety Antigone Davis said, ‘we want teens to be safe online’ and that Instagram doesn’t “allow content promoting self-harm or eating disorders.’ Davis also said Meta has improved Instagram’s ‘age verification technology.’ But when 60 Minutes ran a test two months ago, a producer was able to lie about her age and sign up for Instagram as a 13-year-old with no verifications. 60 Minutes was also able to search for skinny and harmful content. And while a prompt came up asking if the user wanted help, we instead clicked “see posts” and easily found content promoting anorexia and self-harm.” [CBS News, [12/11/22](#)]

In 2021, After The Francis Haugen Disclosures, Tech Transparency Project (TPP) And Reset Found That Instagram Continued Recommended Accounts That Explicitly Promoted Anorexia And Bulimia. “Researchers found that Instagram recommended accounts full of disturbing images of underweight women to users who showed an interest in getting thin. Many of the recommended accounts explicitly promoted anorexia and bulimia, listing goal weights as low as 77 pounds. The investigation also revealed just how easy it is to get pulled into Instagram’s ‘thinfluencer’ culture, with anorexia ‘coaches’ reaching out with unsolicited offers to provide weight loss advice. Meanwhile, Instagram makes it exceedingly easy to search for hashtags and terms associated with eating disorders on the platform. According to documents leaked earlier this year by Facebook whistleblower Francis Haugen, Instagram executives are acutely aware of the effects of content promoting unhealthy body ideals on young users.” [Tech Transparency Project, [12/8/21](#)]

FACEBOOK’S PLATFORMS FACILITATED BULLYING OF TEENS, WITH THOUSANDS OF USERS REPORTING BEING THE VICTIM OF BULLYING

In A McAfee Study Of 11,687 Parents And Children In 10 Countries, Nearly 80% Of Respondents Reported Cyberbullying On Instagram, Compared To 50% On TikTok And Snapchat. “The California-based firm said cyberbullying occurs more than twice as often on Facebook as on Twitter and four times more on WhatsApp, the most popular messaging app among children, than on rival Discord. And nearly 80% of families reported cyberbullying on Instagram, compared to 50% on TikTok and Snapchat. ‘Most social media sites require children to be age 13 and older to use these sites, yet the majority of parents are the ones who sign up their children under the age of 13 for these accounts,’ Ross Ellis, founder of the advocacy group STOMP Out Bullying, said in a comment on the study.” [Washington Times, [8/10/22](#)]

According To The McAfee Study, Cyberbullying Complaints Were Highest On Facebook, WhatsApp And Instagram Compared To Other Social Media Apps. “A pair of wide-ranging social media studies released Wednesday finds cyberbullying complaints highest on Meta’s Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram platforms as teens increasingly switch to TikTok. In a global survey of 11,687 parents and their children in 10 countries, computer security company McAfee found Facebook leading all platforms for complaints, with 65% of Americans witnessing bullying — including racism and threats of physical harm — and 67% experiencing it. The California-based firm said cyberbullying occurs more than twice as often on Facebook as on Twitter and four times more on WhatsApp, the most popular messaging app among children, than on rival Discord.” [Washington Times, [8/10/22](#)]

- **Cyberbullying Occurred At Double The Rate On Facebook Than On Twitter, And Four Times More On WhatsApp Than On Discord.** “A pair of wide-ranging social media studies released Wednesday finds cyberbullying complaints highest on Meta’s Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram platforms as teens increasingly switch to TikTok. In a global survey of 11,687 parents and their children in 10 countries, computer security company McAfee found Facebook leading all platforms for complaints, with 65% of Americans witnessing bullying — including racism and threats of physical harm — and 67% experiencing it. The California-based firm said cyberbullying occurs more than twice as often on Facebook as on Twitter and four times more on WhatsApp, the most popular messaging app among children, than on rival Discord.” [Washington Times, [8/10/22](#)]

INSTAGRAM PROVIDED “A POWERFUL SET OF TOOLS” FOR BULLYING LIKE EASILY CREATING ANONYMOUS PROFILES

The Atlantic: Instagram “Provide[d] A Uniquely Powerful Set Of Tools” For Bullying, Including Anonymous Profiles, Lack Of Adult Oversight, And Potential For Viral Posts. “Teenagers have always been cruel to one another. But Instagram provides a uniquely powerful set of tools to do so. The velocity and size of the distribution mechanism allow rude comments or harassing images to go viral within hours. Like Twitter, Instagram makes it easy to set up new, anonymous profiles, which can be used specifically for trolling. Most importantly, many interactions on the app are hidden from the watchful eyes of parents and teachers, many of whom don’t understand the platform’s intricacies.” [The Atlantic, [10/10/18](#)]

Teenagers Described How Instagram Users Used The Ease Of Making Anonymous Profiles To Create “Hate Pages” For Bully Victims. “Because bullying on your main feed is seen by many as aggressive and uncool, many teens create hate pages: separate Instagram accounts, purpose-built and solely dedicated to trashing one person, created by teens alone or in a group. They’ll post bad photos of their target, expose her secrets, post screenshots of texts from people saying mean things about her, and any other terrible stuff they can find. ‘I’ve had at least 10 hate pages made about me,’ said Annie, a 15-year-old who asked to be referred to by a pseudonym. ‘I know some were made in a row by the same person, but some were from different people. They say really nasty things about you, the most outrageous as possible.’” [The Atlantic, [10/10/18](#)]

TEENS COULD EASILY FIND DRUGS ON FACEBOOK’S PLATFORMS

ONE IN FOUR KIDS REPORTED BEING ADVERTISED DRUGS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

One In Four Kids Had Been Advertised Drugs On Social Media. “According to drug harm reduction advocacy group Volteface, one in four young people have been advertised drugs on social media. The majority of listings seen were for cannabis, but cocaine, MDMA, Xanax and nitrous oxide were also high up on the list. On Instagram, it only took VICE host Tir Dhondy five minutes to get in touch with a dealer who offered to meet her to sell drugs. One dealer told her: ‘Anyone can sell nowadays. You see little kids, 12-year-olds and everything, setting up accounts. It’s easy, isn’t it? You can sit at home, make an account and make money. Who doesn’t want to do that?’” [Vice, [2/6/20](#)]

DigitalTrends: The American Addiction Center Found A “Booming Business” Of Illicit Codeine, MDMA, Weed, Painkillers And Coke Sales On Instagram. “VentureBeat’s own investigations correlated Instagram and its inherent drugs problem twice going back 2014. The Guardian reported Instagram’s role in drug peddling in 2016. A 2019 study published in the International Journal of Drug Policy highlighted how platforms like Instagram act as a quick, convenient, and secure method for buying illicit drugs. VICE documented Instagram’s drugs problem twice back in 2019 and 2020. American Addiction Centers’ research also exposed a booming business of illicit codeine, MDMA, marijuana, painkillers, and cocaine sales on Instagram.” [Digital Trends, [1/17/22](#)]

When One Of TPP’s Fake Teen Accounts Started Typing The Phrase “buyxanax” into Instagram’s Search Bar, The Platform Started Auto-Filling Results For Buying Xanax Before The User Was Finished Typing. “In all cases, despite the fact that these were minor accounts, Instagram did nothing to prevent them from searching for drug-related content—and the platform’s automatic features even sped up the process. For example, when one of our teen users started typing the phrase “buyxanax” into Instagram’s search bar, the platform started auto-filling results for buying Xanax before the user was even finished typing. When the minor clicked on one of the suggested accounts, they instantly got a direct line to a Xanax dealer. The entire process took seconds and involved just two clicks.” [Tech Transparency Project, [1/11/22](#)]

- **TPP: “The Entire Process Took Seconds And Involved Just Two Clicks.”** “In all cases, despite the fact that these were minor accounts, Instagram did nothing to prevent them from searching for drug-related content—and the platform’s automatic features even sped up the process. For example, when one of our teen users started typing the phrase “buyxanax” into Instagram’s search bar, the platform started auto-filling results for buying Xanax before the user was even finished typing. When the minor clicked on one of the suggested accounts, they instantly got a direct line to a Xanax dealer. The entire process took seconds and involved just two clicks.” [Tech Transparency Project, [1/11/22](#)]

FACEBOOK HAD AUTOMATIC PROCESSES THAT “SPED UP” LINKING TEENS WITH DRUG DEALERS ON FACEBOOK’S PLATFORMS

TPP Said Instagram’s Algorithm Had Automatic Features That “Even Sped Up The Process” For Their Teen Accounts To Buy Drugs. “Some of the accounts used the names of fictional characters from popular television shows, like Lisa Simpson from “The Simpsons,” and Michael Scarn, a personality of character Michael Scott on “The Office.” In all cases, despite the fact that these were minor accounts, Instagram did nothing to prevent them from searching for drug-related content—and the platform’s automatic features even sped up the process. For example, when one of our teen users started typing the phrase ‘buyxanax’ into Instagram’s search bar, the platform started auto-filling results for buying Xanax before the user was even finished typing.” [Tech Transparency Project, [1/11/22](#)]

TPP Submitted 50 Posts To Instagram That Appeared To Violate The Platform’s Policies Against Selling Drugs, But After A Review, Instagram Responded That 72% Of The Flagged Posts Did Not Violate Its Guidelines Despite Them Selling Drugs. “Following that account led to more suggestions, including one for another Adderall account. It’s easy to see how a teen could be led down a rabbit hole of prescription drugs on the platform. During the course of TTP’s

investigation, our researchers submitted 50 posts to Instagram that appeared to violate the company's policies against selling drugs. After review, Instagram responded that 72% of the flagged posts (36) did not violate its Community Guidelines, despite clear signs of drug dealing activity." [Tech Transparency Project, [1/11/22](#)]

NOW – FACEBOOK FACILITATES HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND ALLOWED DRUG CARTELS TO USE THEIR PLATFORM

FACEBOOK KNEW ITS PLATFORMS WERE BEING USED TO FACILITATE HUMAN TRAFFICKING, BUT FAILED TO TAKE ACTION

Facebook Was Aware That People Were Using Their Platform For Human Trafficking, But Neglected To Take Widespread Action Until Apple Threatened To Remove Their App From The App Store Following Reporting On The Trafficking. "The practice of signing people to restrictive domestic employment contracts and then selling the contracts is widely abused and has been defined as human trafficking by the U.S. State Department. The company took down some offending pages, but took only limited action to try to shut down the activity until Apple Inc. threatened to remove Facebook's products from the App Store unless it cracked down on the practice. The threat was in response to a BBC story on maids for sale. In an internal summary about the episode, a Facebook researcher wrote: 'Was this issue known to Facebook before BBC enquiry and Apple escalation?' The next paragraph begins: 'Yes.'" [Wall Street Journal, [9/16/21](#)]

- **Wall Street Journal: "A Facebook Researcher Wrote: 'Was This Issue Known To Facebook Before BBC Enquiry And Apple Escalation?' The Next Paragraph [Began]: 'Yes.'"** "The practice of signing people to restrictive domestic employment contracts and then selling the contracts is widely abused and has been defined as human trafficking by the U.S. State Department. The company took down some offending pages, but took only limited action to try to shut down the activity until Apple Inc. threatened to remove Facebook's products from the App Store unless it cracked down on the practice. The threat was in response to a BBC story on maids for sale. In an internal summary about the episode, a Facebook researcher wrote: 'Was this issue known to Facebook before BBC enquiry and Apple escalation?' The next paragraph begins: 'Yes.'" [Wall Street Journal, [9/16/21](#)]

A Polish Trafficking Expert Wrote That 18 Months After It First Identified Human Trafficking On Facebook, There Was No Implementation Of Systems To Find And Remove Trafficking Posts. "He added that Facebook should develop a network to prevent trafficking by sharing findings with other tech companies. In another memo, the Polish trafficking expert wrote that 18 months after it first identified the problem, Facebook hadn't implemented systems to find and remove the trafficking posts. The BBC and Apple flagged concerns in 2019. With the threat posing 'potentially severe consequences to the business,' the trafficking expert wrote, Facebook began moving faster." [Wall Street Journal, [9/16/21](#)]

Facebook Began Forbidding Any Content That Provided Or Facilitate Human Smuggling Or That Asked For Human Smuggling Services After TPP Found A Surge In Facebook Groups Devoted To Human Smuggling. "The social media giant, which also owns Instagram and WhatsApp, announced Thursday in a policy memo that, going forward, users are forbidden from posting any content that 'offers to provide or facilitate human smuggling' or 'asks for human smuggling services.' The platform previously held that these types of posts were needed to protect human rights. [...] The focus on the policy came after the Tech Transparency Project in April 2021 identified a surge in Facebook groups devoted to human smuggling. Illegal crossings at the southern border have reached all-time highs since President Joe Biden entered office." [Washington Free Beacon, [12/10/22](#)]

FACEBOOK DEACTIVATED A SYSTEM THEY HAD FOR DETECTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING NETWORKS ON THE PLATFORM

At The End Of 2020, Facebook Deactivated A System That Detected Human Trafficking Networks On The Platform. "At the end of 2020, following three months in which Facebook investigated a dozen networks suspected of human trafficking, a system for detecting it was deactivated. The trafficking investigators said that hurt their efforts, according to the documents." [Wall Street Journal, [9/16/21](#)]

FACEBOOK CONTINUED TO ALLOW A DRUG CARTEL LEADER TO USE ITS PLATFORM EVEN WHEN SECURITY EXPERTS ALERTED THEM TO THEIR PRESENCE

Facebook Chose Not To Fully Remove Accounts Linked To The Drug Cartel ‘Jalisco Nueva Generacion’ After An Employee Was Able To Untangle The Cartel’s Activities Throughout The Platform. “The employee who identified the Mexican drug cartel is a former police officer and cybercrime expert hired in 2018 as part of a new investigation team focused largely on ‘at-risk countries,’ where the rule of law is fragile and violence is common [...] The ex-cop and his team untangled the Jalisco New Generation Cartel’s online network by examining posts on Facebook and Instagram, as well as private messages on those platforms [...] The former cop recommended the company improve its follow-through to ensure bans on designated groups are enforced and seek to better understand cartel activity. Facebook didn’t fully remove the cartel from its sites. The documents say it took down content tied to the cartel and disrupted the network.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/16/21](#)]

- **The Employee And His Team Were Able To Untangle CJNG’s Online Network By Examining Posts On Facebook And Instagram, As Well As Private Messages On Those Platforms.** “The employee who identified the Mexican drug cartel is a former police officer and cybercrime expert hired in 2018 as part of a new investigation team focused largely on “at-risk countries,” where the rule of law is fragile and violence is common. [...] The ex-cop and his team untangled the Jalisco New Generation Cartel’s online network by examining posts on Facebook and Instagram, as well as private messages on those platforms, according to the documents. (Messages on WhatsApp, another Facebook product, are encrypted by default.)” [Wall Street Journal, [9/16/21](#)]

Facebook Designated The Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG) A “Dangerous Individuals And Organizations”, Which Should’ve Led To Their Posts Being Automatically Removed – But They Weren’t. “The Facebook pages were posted under the name ‘CJNG,’ widely known as the shorthand for Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación, even though the company had internally labeled the cartel one of the “Dangerous Individuals and Organizations” whose pages should have been automatically removed from the platform under Facebook policy. The former cop recommended the company improve its follow-through to ensure bans on designated groups are enforced and seek to better understand cartel activity. Facebook didn’t fully remove the cartel from its sites. The documents say it took down content tied to the cartel and disrupted the network.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/16/21](#)]

- **An Investigation Team At Facebook Asked A Team To Make Sure A Ban On The Cartel Was Enforced, But The Team Didn’t Follow Up On The Job.** “Facebook didn’t fully remove the cartel from its sites. The documents say it took down content tied to the cartel and disrupted the network. The investigation team asked another Facebook unit tasked with coordinating different divisions to look at ways to make sure a ban on the cartel could be enforced. That wasn’t done effectively either, according to the documents, because the team assigned the job didn’t follow up. On Jan. 13, nine days after the report was circulated internally, the first post appeared on a new CJNG Instagram account: A video of a person with a gold pistol shooting a young man in the head while blood spurts from his neck.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/16/21](#)]

NOW – ALLOWING HATE SPEECH WITH MINIMAL PROTECTIONS OR MECHANISMS TO BLOCK OR REDUCE ITS SPREAD

FACEBOOK REFUSED TO DISCLOSE THE AMOUNT OF HATE SPEECH IT REMOVED FROM ITS PLATFORMS

FACEBOOK VALUED FREE SPEECH OVER PROTECTING USERS, EVEN WHEN THAT SPEECH VIOLATED THEIR POLICIES

Wall Street Journal- Facebook “Doesn’t Publicly Report What Percentage Of Hate-Speech Views It Removes.” “The company doesn’t publicly report what percentage of hate-speech views it removes. Internally, the company calculates this figure by applying their hate-speech classifiers to a sample of posts and then having humans review the same posts to see how much the classifiers missed, according to a person with direct knowledge of the estimates. The number is then used as an estimate for the amount of hate-speech views removed across the whole platform.” [Wall Street Journal, [10/17/21](#)]

A Facebook Civil Rights Audit Found That It Put Free Speech Ahead Of Other Values, Which Undermined Its Efforts To Curb Hate Speech And Voter Suppression. “The announcement came as Meta gave an update on its response to a civil rights audit the company commissioned following widespread accusations that its products promote discrimination. The 2020 report, which came after two years of investigation by independent auditors, slammed the company for putting free speech ahead of other values, a decision the auditors said undermined its efforts to curb hate speech and voter suppression. The auditors said the company made ‘vexing and heartbreaking decisions,’ including refusing to take down posts by then-President Donald Trump that ‘clearly violated’ the company’s policies on hate and

violent speech and voter suppression; exempting politicians from third-party fact-checking; and being 'far too reluctant to adopt strong rules to limit [voting] misinformation and voter suppression.'" [NPR, [11/18/21](#)]

The Anti-Defamation League Pointed To Whistleblower Documents That Showed Facebook Failed To Take Down Hate Speech Even Though Those Posts Violated Its Rules. "The ADL pointed to documents disclosed by whistleblower Frances Haugen showing Facebook has failed to take down hate speech, even though such posts violate its rules. And it said the company should hire more staff focused on civil rights, especially as it shifts its focus to building a new immersive virtual platform called the metaverse. 'Of Facebook's [60,000] employees, fewer than 10 are on the Civil Rights Team. Facebook must put civil rights expertise on EVERY team, including those building the Metaverse,' the ADL tweeted. 'If Facebook is trying to earn credibility, this clearly missed the mark.'" [NPR, [11/18/21](#)]

New York Times: Facebook Had Been "Roundly Criticized Over The Way Its Platform Ha[d] Been Used To Spread Hate Speech And False Information That Prompted Violence." "'We have identified that there is a type of misinformation that is shared in certain countries that can incite underlying tensions and lead to physical harm offline,' said Tessa Lyons, a Facebook product manager. 'We have a broader responsibility to not just reduce that type of content but remove it.' Facebook has been roundly criticized over the way its platform has been used to spread hate speech and false information that prompted violence. The company has struggled to balance its belief in free speech with those concerns, particularly in countries where access to the internet is relatively new and there are limited mainstream news sources to counter social media rumors." [NY Times, [7/18/18](#)]

ZUCKERBERG SAID BEING OPEN TO ALL VIEWPOINTS WAS AT THE CORE OF EVERYTHING FACEBOOK DID – BUT PROMISED TO LIMIT HARMFUL CONTENT

Zuckerberg Said Being Open To All Viewpoints Was At The "Core Of Everything Facebook Is And Everything I Want It To Be." "Mark Zuckerberg has kicked off a probe into claims Facebook suppressed pro-conservative stories and forced others to artificially appear in the social media site's influential 'trending topics' list. In a post on Thursday evening, the Facebook CEO said that being open to all viewpoints was at the 'core of everything Facebook is and everything I want it to be.' 'Every tool we build is designed to give more people a voice and bring our global community together,' he said. Zuckerberg's comments came after tech blog Gizmodo kicked off a furor on Monday over whether Facebook allowed its "trending topics" module to move organically in line with users' interests, or manipulated it by using news judgment similar to that employed by traditional media outlets." [CNBC, [5/13/16](#)]

Zuckerberg Understood That Facebook Was "More Than Just A Distributor Of News," But Also "A New Kind Of Platform For Public Discourse." "In a post on his own Facebook page announcing the changes, founder Mark Zuckerberg admitted the business has a 'greater responsibility' to the public than just being a tech company. He wrote: While we don't write the news stories you read and share, we also recognize we're more than just a distributor of news. We're a new kind of platform for public discourse – and that means we have a new kind of responsibility to enable people to have the most meaningful conversations, and to build a space where people can be informed.'" [The Guardian, [12/15/16](#)]

'A Facebook Spokesperson Assured Facebook Had "Built A Robust Integrity Team, Strengthened Our Policies And Practices To Limit Harmful Content, And Used Research To Understand Our Platform's Impact On Society So We Continue To Improve." "In a presentation at an international security conference in February, Mr. Zuckerberg said the company tries not to recommend groups that break its rules or are polarizing. 'We've learned a lot since 2016 and are not the same company today,' a Facebook spokeswoman said. 'We've built a robust integrity team, strengthened our policies and practices to limit harmful content, and used research to understand our platform's impact on society so we continue to improve.' Facebook in February announced \$2 million in funding for independent research proposals on polarization." [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

Zuckerberg Promised To Stand Up "Against Those Who [Said] That New Types Of Communities Forming On Social Media [Were] Dividing Us." "In essence, Facebook is under fire for making the world more divided. Many of its own experts appeared to agree—and to believe Facebook could mitigate many of the problems. The company chose not to [...] In a sign of how far the company has moved, Mr. Zuckerberg in January said he would stand up 'against those who say that new types of communities forming on social media are dividing us.' People who have heard him speak privately said he argues social media bears little responsibility for polarization. He argues the platform is in fact a guardian of free speech, even when the content is objectionable—a position that drove Facebook's decision not to fact-check political advertising ahead of the 2020 election." [WSJ, [5/26/20](#)]

FACEBOOK CUT THE AMOUNT OF TIME HUMAN REVIEWERS SPENT ON HATE SPEECH AND ITS AI SYSTEMS FAILED TO FLAG SENSITIVE CONTENT

Facebook Pledged To Add 3,000 More Content Reviewers And Invest In Tools To Help Remove Objectionable Content After A String Of Shootings, Murders, Rapes And Assaults Had Been Streamed On Facebook.

“Facebook’s chief executive Mark Zuckerberg has pledged to add 3,000 more content reviewers and invest in tools to help remove objectionable content more quickly, after a man broadcasted footage of himself killing his 11-month-old daughter. Over the last few months, footage of shootings, murders, rapes and assaults has been streamed on Facebook. The live broadcasts have then been viewable as recorded videos by the social network’s users, often for days before being taken down.” [The Guardian, [5/3/17](#)]

- **The Live Broadcasts Were Viewable As Recorded Videos, Often For Days Before Being Taken Down.**

“Over the last few months, footage of shootings, murders, rapes and assaults has been streamed on Facebook. The live broadcasts have then been viewable as recorded videos by the social network’s users, often for days before being taken down. But instead of scrutinizing content before it is uploaded, Facebook relies on reporting tools used by the social network’s 1.86 billion users and a team of people at Facebook to review reported posts and content and retroactively remove them from the site.” [The Guardian, [5/3/17](#)]

Facebook Cut The Time Human Reviewers Focused On Hate-Speech Complaints From Users, Making The Company More Dependent On AI.

“The employees were analyzing Facebook’s success at enforcing its own rules on content that it spells out in detail internally and in public documents like its community standards. The documents reviewed by the Journal also show that Facebook two years ago cut the time human reviewers focused on hate-speech complaints from users and made other tweaks that reduced the overall number of complaints. That made the company more dependent on AI enforcement of its rules and inflated the apparent success of the technology in its public statistics.” [WSJ, [10/17/21](#)]

NPR: Subcontractors Who Worked To Review Flagged Posts On Facebook Were “Told To Go Fast – Very Fast” And Were Evaluated On Speed, Meaning Workers Made A Decision About Flagged Content Once Every 10 Seconds.

“When a user flags a post on Facebook — whether it’s a picture, video or text post — it goes to a little-known division called the ‘community operations team.’ [...] Current and former employees of Facebook say that they’ve observed these subcontractors in action; that they are told to go fast — very fast; that they’re evaluated on speed; and that on average, a worker makes a decision about a piece of flagged content once every 10 seconds. Let’s do a back-of-the-envelope calculation. Say a worker is doing an eight-hour shift, at the rate of one post per 10 seconds. That means they’re clearing 2,880 posts a day per person. When NPR ran these numbers by current and former employees, they said that sounds reasonable.” [NPR, [11/17/16](#)]

When NPR Tested Facebook’s Flagging System In 2016, They Found That Facebook Reviewers “Were Not Consistent And Made Numerous Mistakes, Including In Instances Where A User Calls For Violence.”

“That could be the cause of frequent errors. NPR decided to stress-test the system by flagging nearly 200 posts that could be considered hate speech — specifically, attacks against blacks and against whites in the U.S. We found that Facebook subcontractors were not consistent and made numerous mistakes, including in instances where a user calls for violence. We say they were mistakes because the company changed its position in dozens of instances, removing some and restoring others — either when we flagged it a second time through the automated system or brought it to the attention of Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif.” [NPR, [11/17/16](#)]

2016: Facebook Received More Than One Million Reports Of Violations From Users Every Day, According To Facebook’s Head Of Policy Management, Monika Bickert.

“Facebook receives more than one million reports of violations from users every day. That’s according to Monika Bickert, Facebook’s head of policy management. Bickert spoke to the fine (and imperfect) line between free speech and hate speech at SXSW’s first Online Harassment Summit on Saturday. Bickert told CNNMoney she didn’t know offhand what percentage are serious and taken off the site.” [CNN, [3/12/16](#)]

FACEBOOK BEGAN RELYING ON FAULTY AI SYSTEMS TO DETECT HATE SPEECH, BUT IT WAS NO WHERE CLOSE TO BEING EFFECTIVE

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg Said He Expected Facebook’s Automated Systems Would Remove “The Vast Majority Of Problematic Content” By The End Of 2019.

“The statistics contrast starkly with the confidence in AI presented by Facebook’s top executives, including CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who previously said he expected Facebook would use AI to detect ‘the vast majority of problematic content’ by the end of 2019. The company often says that nearly all of the hate speech it takes down was discovered by AI before it was reported by users. It calls this figure its proactive detection rate, and it had reached nearly 98% as of earlier this year.” [Wall Street Journal, [10/17/21](#)]

Facebook Was Reliant On AI Enforcement For Content Moderation, But Its AI Was Unable To Distinguish Between Cockfighting And Car Crashes. “Facebook Inc. executives have long said that artificial intelligence would address the company’s chronic problems keeping what it deems hate speech and excessive violence as well as underage users off its platforms. That future is farther away than those executives suggest, according to internal documents reviewed by The Wall Street Journal. Facebook’s AI can’t consistently identify first-person shooting videos, racist rants and even, in one notable episode that puzzled internal researchers for weeks, the difference between cockfighting and car crashes. [...] The documents reviewed by the Journal also show that Facebook two years ago cut the time human reviewers focused on hate-speech complaints from users and made other tweaks that reduced the overall number of complaints. That made the company more dependent on AI enforcement of its rules and inflated the apparent success of the technology in its public statistics.” [Wall Street Journal, [10/17/21](#)]

Facebook’s AI Often Fell Short In Flagging Sensitive Or Controversial Areas. “Facebook’s algorithms can automatically remove hate speech when they reach a certain level of confidence that the post violates policies, or they can push lower on feeds more questionable posts to limit their spread. In some areas, such as with spam, Facebook’s classifiers work relatively well. But they often fall short in sensitive and controversial areas, especially when Facebook’s rules are complex and cultural context matters, according to the documents and people familiar with the matter.” [WSJ, [10/17/21](#)]

Facebook Was Criticized For Its Lack Of Expediency Over The Removing Of Objectionable Content. “Facebook has been criticized for its lack of expediency over the removing of objectionable content. Two videos of a Thai man killing his 11-month-old daughter in April were available for 24 hours before being removed, and were viewed over 370,000 times. In March, a 15-year-old girl from Chicago was sexually assaulted by five or six men or boys, which was broadcast live to Facebook with at least 40 people watching. Earlier in April, the Cleveland murder of Robert Godwin, a 74-year-old former foundry worker, was posted to Facebook and was available to view for three hours before being taken down.” [The Guardian, [5/3/17](#)]

Internal Facebook Documents Showed That Employees Estimated Facebook’s AI Only Removed A Sliver Of Posts That Violated The Platform’s Rules. “That future is farther away than those executives suggest, according to internal documents reviewed by The Wall Street Journal. Facebook’s AI can’t consistently identify first-person shooting videos, racist rants and even, in one notable episode that puzzled internal researchers for weeks, the difference between cockfighting and car crashes. On hate speech, the documents show, Facebook employees have estimated the company removes only a sliver of the posts that violate its rules—a low-single-digit percent, they say. When Facebook’s algorithms aren’t certain enough that content violates the rules to delete it, the platform shows that material to users less often—but the accounts that posted the material go unpunished.” [WSJ, [10/17/21](#)]

FACEBOOK ENGINEERS SAID FACEBOOK’S AUTOMATIC SYSTEMS REMOVED JUST 2% OF HATE SPEECH ON THE PLATFORM

Employees Responsible For Keeping Meta’s Platforms Free From Offensive And Dangerous Content Acknowledged That The Company Was Nowhere Close To Being Able To Reliably Screen It. “According to the documents, those responsible for keeping the platform free from content Facebook deems offensive or dangerous acknowledge that the company is nowhere close to being able to reliably screen it. ‘The problem is that we do not and possibly never will have a model that captures even a majority of integrity harms, particularly in sensitive areas,’ wrote a senior engineer and research scientist in a mid-2019 note.” [WSJ, [10/17/21](#)]

Facebook Engineer Estimated That Facebook’s Automated Systems Remove Just Two Percent Of The Views Of Hate Speech On The Platform. “According to the documents, those responsible for keeping the platform free from content Facebook deems offensive or dangerous acknowledge that the company is nowhere close to being able to reliably screen it. ‘The problem is that we do not and possibly never will have a model that captures even a majority of integrity harms, particularly in sensitive areas,’ wrote a senior engineer and research scientist in a mid-2019 note. He estimated the company’s automated systems removed posts that generated just 2% of the views of hate speech on the platform that violated its rules. ‘Recent estimates suggest that unless there is a major change in strategy, it will be very difficult to improve this beyond 10-20% in the short-medium term,’ he wrote.” [Wall Street Journal, [10/17/21](#)]

- **Facebook Engineer: “We Do Not And Possibly Never Will Have A Model That Captures Even A Majority Of Integrity Harms.”** “According to the documents, those responsible for keeping the platform free from content Facebook deems offensive or dangerous acknowledge that the company is nowhere close to being able to reliably screen it. ‘The problem is that we do not and possibly never will have a model that captures even a majority of integrity harms, particularly in sensitive areas,’ wrote a senior engineer and research scientist in a mid-2019 note. He estimated the company’s automated systems removed posts that generated just 2% of the views of

hate speech on the platform that violated its rules. 'Recent estimates suggest that unless there is a major change in strategy, it will be very difficult to improve this beyond 10-20% in the short-medium term,' he wrote." [Wall Street Journal, [10/17/21](#)]

NOW – FACEBOOK NEGATIVELY IMPACTS USER'S WELL-BEING ON A FREQUENT AND SEVERE BASIS

FACEBOOK USERS REPORTED HAVING DIFFICULTIES STOPPING THEIR USER OF THE PLATFORMS

Facebook Researchers Found That 1 In 8 Of Its Users Reported Engaging In Compulsive Use Of Social Media That Impacted Their Sleep, Work, Parenting Or Relationships. "Explore Audio Center Facebook researchers have found that 1 in 8 of its users report engaging in compulsive use of social media that impacts their sleep, work, parenting or relationships, according to documents reviewed by The Wall Street Journal. These patterns of what the company calls problematic use mirror what is popularly known as internet addiction. They were perceived by users to be worse on Facebook than any other major social-media platform, which all seek to keep users coming back, the documents show." [WSJ, [11/5/21](#)]

Internal Researchers Reported That Users Lacked Control Over The Time They Spent On Facebook And Had Problems In Their Lives As A Result. "The research into social-media use that may negatively affect people's day-to-day lives was launched several years ago with the goal of mitigating harmful behavior that the company was increasingly identifying on its platforms. The researchers on the well-being team said some users lack control over the time they spend on Facebook and have problems in their lives as a result. They wrote that they don't consider the behavior to be a clinical addiction because it doesn't affect the brain in the same way as gambling or substance abuse. In one document, they noted that 'activities like shopping, sex and Facebook use, when repetitive and excessive, may cause problems for some people.'" [WSJ, [11/5/21](#)]

Facebooks Researchers Estimated Compulsive User Of Their Platforms Affected About 12.6% Of Facebook Users – More Than 360 Million People. "In March 2020, several months after the well-being team was dissolved, researchers who had been on the team shared a slide deck internally with some of the findings and encouraged other teams to pick up the work. The researchers estimated these issues affect about 12.5% of the flagship app's more than 2.9 billion users, or more than 360 million people. About 10% of users in the U.S., one of Facebook's most lucrative markets, exhibit this behavior. In the Philippines and in India, which is the company's largest market, the employees put the figure higher, at around 25%." [WSJ, [11/5/21](#)]

FACEBOOK WAS BUILT TO CAPITALIZE ON USERS' BIOLOGICAL DRIVE FOR SOCIAL BELONGING

American Psychological Association Said Instagram Design "Capitalize[d] On Users' Biological Drive For Social Belonging And Nudge[d] Them To Keep On Scrolling. "Still, there is plenty of cause for concern. Studies have linked Instagram to depression, body image concerns, self-esteem issues, social anxiety, and other problems. By design, the app capitalizes on users' biological drive for social belonging—and nudges them to keep on scrolling. "There's something about the interactions occurring on social media that makes them qualitatively different from in-person interactions," some of which are intentionally part of the way apps are designed, said Mitch Prinstein, APA's chief science officer." [American Psychological Association, [12/2/21](#)]

APA Said Instagram Was Problematic Because Of "Its Addictive Nature" And Lack Of "Stopping Cues." "How use affects mental health Part of what makes Instagram problematic is its addictive nature. Unlike a magazine, television show, or video game, the platform rarely delivers "stopping cues"—or gentle nudges that prompt users to move on to a different activity, said psychologist Adam Alter, PhD, a professor of marketing at New York University's Stern School of Business. Instead, it continually serves up content, driving users back to the top of their feeds to repeat the descent." [American Psychological Association, [12/2/21](#)]

RESEARCH CONSISTENTLY FOUND THAT FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL MEDIA USERS REPORTED LOWER WELL-BEING

A Large Body Of Literature Linked Facebook Use With Detrimental Outcomes Such As Decreases In Mental Well-Being. "7.1. Discussion of the key findings A large body of literature links Facebook use with detrimental outcomes such

as decreases in mental well-being (Kross et al., 2013; Verduyn et al., 2017). However, the mechanisms underlying these associations need further investigation. In line with Wang, Wang, Gaskin, & Hawk (2017), we hypothesized to find that indicators of (intensity of) Facebook use would be linked to reduced well-being – as shown by elevated depressive-, anxiety-, and stress-related symptoms – via social comparison and self-esteem.” [Faelens, Hoorelbeke, Fried et al, Negative Influences Of Facebook Use Through The Lens Of Network Analysis, [2/4/19](#)]

A Meta Study Of Scientific Papers On Social Media’s Influence On Mental Health Found Social Media Use Was Linked To Increased Levels Of Psychological Distress, Thoughts Of Self-Harm And Suicide And Poor Sleep. “In total, 501 articles were obtained. The articles were screened in three stages. Finally, out of 501 evaluated articles, 50 cases were carefully assessed and included in the study. The findings showed that social media has negative and positive effects on mental health. Negative effects included anxiety, depression, loneliness, poor sleep quality, poor mental health indicators, thoughts of self-harm and suicide, increased levels of psychological distress, cyber bullying, body image dissatisfaction, fear of missing out and decreased life satisfaction.” [Sadagheyani, Tatri, Investigating The Role Of Social Media On Mental Health, [2/32/21](#)]

ONE IN EIGHT FACEBOOK USERS REPORTED THAT THEIR USE OF THE PLATFORM HARMED THEIR SLEEP, WORK, RELATIONSHIPS AND PARENTING

Facebook Researchers Found That 1 In 8 Of Its Users Reported Engaging In Compulsive Use Of Social Media That Impacted Their Sleep, Work, Parenting Or Relationships. “Facebook researchers have found that 1 in 8 of its users report engaging in compulsive use of social media that impacts their sleep, work, parenting or relationships, according to documents reviewed by The Wall Street Journal. These patterns of what the company calls problematic use mirror what is popularly known as internet addiction. They were perceived by users to be worse on Facebook than any other major social-media platform, which all seek to keep users coming back, the documents show.” [WSJ, [11/5/21](#)]

PASSIVE USE OF USE OF FACEBOOK – BROWSING BUT NOT ENGAGING ON THE PLATFORM – LED TO WORSE OUTCOMES ON WELL BEING...

People Who Spent A Lot Of Time Passively Using Facebook – Reading But Not Interacting With People – Reported Feeling Worse Afterward. “The bad: In general, when people spend a lot of time passively consuming information — reading but not interacting with people — they report feeling worse afterward. In one experiment, University of Michigan students randomly assigned to read Facebook for 10 minutes were in a worse mood at the end of the day than students assigned to post or talk to friends on Facebook.” [Facebook Blogs, [12/15/17](#)]

...BECAUSE BEING CONFRONTED WITH OTHERS SUCCESS COULD LEAD TO NEGATIVE THINKING ABOUT ONES IMPERFECTIONS

Selective Confrontation With Others Success On Facebook Could Trigger Repetitive Negative Thinking Regarding Ones Imperfections. “Because Facebook profiles tend to strategically emphasize people's most desirable traits, Facebook users are constantly exposed to the positive life events and successes of others (Zhao et al., 2008). In this context, selective confrontation with success experiences of others may trigger repetitive negative thinking regarding one's imperfections, which forms a well-known risk factor for the aetiology and maintenance of affective disorders. Arguably, this effect will be stronger for depressive or anxious individuals who already report a higher tendency to ruminate (Feinstein et al., 2013; McLaughlin & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2011).” [Faelens, Hoorelbeke, Fried et al, Negative Influences Of Facebook Use Through The Lens Of Network Analysis, [2/4/19](#)]

HEAVY USE AND PASSIVE USE OF FACEBOOK LED TO THE WORST OF CONSEQUENCES FROM SOCIAL MEDIA USE

THE AMOUNT SOMEONE USED FACEBOOK WAS THE NO. 1 VARIABLE THAT PREDICTED DEPRESSION AMONG A STUDY’S PARTICIPANTS...

Researchers Found That The Amount Of Social Media A Person Used Was The No. 1 Predictor Of The Variables They Measured For Who Became Depressed. “He said there isn’t a consensus on causality but that most of the evidence ‘should be concerning to people.’ His research group followed about a thousand people over six months in a nationally representative survey and found that the amount of social media that a person used was the No. 1 predictor of the variables they measured for who became depressed. ‘Everything is pointing in a certain direction,’ he said.” [WSJ, [11/5/21](#)]

Problematic Facebook Use Was Associated With Lower Well-Being. “As predicted, results demonstrated that problematic Facebook use has predicted determinants of human well-being negatively. This finding suggests that a more problematic Facebook use is associated with a lower well-being. Consistent with the results of the present study, Kuss and Griffiths (2011) claimed that problematic use of SNSs like Facebook may be a potential mental health problem and may decrease well-being. Likewise, it appears that people who use Facebook excessively, experience lower well-being (Uysal et al., 2013).” [Satici & Uysal, Well-Being And Problematic Facebook Use, [2015](#)]

...AND THOSE WITH LOWER LEVELS OF HAPPINESS WERE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO OVERUSING FACEBOOK

People With Low Subjective Happiness And Subjective Vitality Were More Susceptible To Overusing Facebook. “In this context, the present study aims to investigate the relationship among problematic Facebook use and subjective happiness, subjective vitality, life satisfaction and flourishing which have been accepted as predictors of well-being. Because people with low subjective happiness and subjective vitality are more susceptible to overuse of Facebook (Uysal, Satici, & Akin, 2013) it was anticipated that there would be a negative correlation between Facebook misuse, subjective happiness and subjective vitality that are predictors of well-being, thinking that these users spend more time in Facebook.” [Satici & Uysal, Well-Being And Problematic Facebook Use, [2015](#)]

Facebook Users With Some Level Of Mental Vulnerability Were More At Risk For Problematic Outcomes From Their Use Of The Platform. “HORWITZ: So the company's been looking at this for a number of years. And what they found is that for most users, Instagram is perfectly fine. However, for users who come to the platform with some level of mental vulnerability, which is to say a lot of teenagers, it can be really problematic. And in particular for teenage girls, it can make body image issues worse. And in fact, they found that there were - among users who they surveyed who had thought about harming themselves in the last month, that a non-trivial percentage - 6% in the U.S., 13% of British teenagers - trace the desire to kill themselves back to the app itself.” [NPR, [9/30/21](#)]

PASSIVE USE OF FACEBOOK ALSO LED TO DECREASED WELL-BEING

People Who Read Facebook For 10 Minutes A Day Were In A Worse Mood Than Those Just Posting Or Talking To Friends On The Site. “It delved into the potential damages of social media on people in the long term. One piece of academia it referred to was work from the University of Michigan, the institution found that people who read the site for 10 minutes each day were in a worse mood than those just posting or talking to friends on the site. UC San Diego and Yale discovered that people who clicked on four times more links than the average person, or who like twice as many posts, had worse mental health than average – although no solid hypothesis was drawn as to why.” [The Drum, [12/17/17](#)]

People Who Reported Higher Levels Of Facebook Use Experienced Higher Emotional And Stronger Needs To Be Connected. “More specifically, we confirmed that: (a) (Passive) Facebook use and Facebook intensity were linked to social comparison behaviour (H1), (b) Social comparison linked (intensity) of Facebook use with self-esteem (H2), and (c) Self-esteem linked rumination, anxiety-, depressive-, and stress related symptoms with social comparison and (intensity of) Facebook use (H3). People who report higher levels of Facebook use, experience a higher emotional and stronger need to be connected. This is the case for all types of Facebook use, since they all show a strong connection with Facebook intensity, which was in turn linked to the psychopathology indicators via social comparison and self-esteem.” [Faelens, Hoorelbeke, Fried et al, Negative Influences Of Facebook Use Through The Lens Of Network Analysis, [2/4/19](#)]

OVERUSE OF FACEBOOK SKEWED USER'S PERSPECTIVES OF THEMSELVES, THE WORLD AROUND THEM AND THEIR SOCIAL BONDS

THOSE WHO OVERUSED FACEBOOK FELT THAT OTHER PEOPLE WERE HAPPIER THAN THEM, EXPERIENCED HIGHER LEVELS OF LONELINESS AND WITHDREW SOCIALLY

Studies Suggested Facebook Addiction Negatively Affected Life Satisfaction. “Valkenburg & Schouten (2006) found that frequency of usage of Social Networking Sites was indirectly affected the adolescents' social self-esteem and their well-being. Studies suggested Facebook addiction negatively affected the life satisfaction (Blachnio et al., 2016; Rana et al., 2016). One possible reason for negative relationship between Facebook use and mental health is that increasing amount of time spending on Facebook consumes time for other activities. It would be difficult for one to allocate sufficient time for daily activities, social relations etc.” [Mizanur Rahman, Facebook Use, Facebook Addiction And Mental Health Of Chittagong University Students, [11/2/18](#)]

People Who Used Facebook For A Long Time Reported Feeling That Others Were Happier Than Them. “Surveys were collected during regular class period, except for two online classes where surveys were submitted online. The multivariate analysis indicated that those who have used Facebook longer agreed more that others were happier, and agreed less that life is fair, and those spending more time on Facebook each week agreed more that others were happier and had better lives. Furthermore, those that included more people whom they did not personally know as their Facebook “friends” agreed more that others had better lives.” [Chou, Edge, They Are Happier And Having Better Lives than I Am, [2/9/12](#)]

Students That Used Facebook Intensely Reported Enhanced Loneliness. “In their study, Park et al. (2014) found Facebook was positively associated with acculturative stress of 347 college students. Lou et al. (2012) found that students who use Facebook intensely reported enhanced loneliness. Social networking sites usage also enhances the psychosocial problems like adjustment& self-esteem (Kalpidou et al., 2011). Facebook usage predicted major depressive disorders, bipolar-mania, dysthymi, narcissism etc. (Rosen et al., 2013).” [Mizanur Rahman, Facebook Use, Facebook Addiction And Mental Health Of Chittagong University Students, [11/2/18](#)]

Problematic Facebook Use Led To Unsocial Behavior And The Avoidance Of Real Social Relations. “Additionally, Koc and Gulyagci (2013), found that over use of Facebook which may cause detrimental effects on people’s lives, positively related to severe depression, anxiety and insomnia which have been linked to lower well-being (Derdikman-Eiron et al., 2011; Diener & Chan, 2011). Some other studies, indicated that problematic Facebook use leads to becoming unsocial and avoiding real social relations (Cam & Isbulan, 2012) and positively correlated with loneliness (Skues et al., 2012) that has been linked to well-being (Golden et al., 2009).” [Satici & Uysal, Well-Being And Problematic Facebook Use, [2015](#)]

HEAVY FACEBOOK USE LED PEOPLE TO BELIEVE THAT LIFE WAS UNFAIR

People Who Used Facebook For A Long Time Agreed Less With The Idea That Life Was Fair. “Surveys were collected during regular class period, except for two online classes where surveys were submitted online. The multivariate analysis indicated that those who have used Facebook longer agreed more that others were happier, and agreed less that life is fair, and those spending more time on Facebook each week agreed more that others were happier and had better lives. Furthermore, those that included more people whom they did not personally know as their Facebook “friends” agreed more that others had better lives.” [Chou, Edge, They Are Happier And Having Better Lives than I Am, [2/9/12](#)]

DECREASED USE OF FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL MEDIA HAD A CLEAR BENEFIT FOR PEOPLE’S WELL-BEING

USERS WHO DEACTIVATED THEIR FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS FELT GREATER LIFE SATISFACTION AND MORE POSITIVE EMOTIONS THAN CONTINUED USERS

It Was Found That People’s Life Satisfaction Increased Significantly When They Quit Facebook. “Table 1 sums up means and standard deviations for the control group (Facebook users) and the treatment group (Facebook users not using Facebook for 1 week). On the life satisfaction item, the treatment group reported a significantly higher level than the control group, $t(888) = 4.03, p < 0.001$. This confirms H1; people’s life satisfaction increases significantly when they quit Facebook for 1 week. On the emotion items, the treatment group also reported significantly higher levels than the control group, $t(888) = 5.01, p < 0.001$.” [Tromholt, The Facebook Experiment: Quitting Facebook Leads To Higher Levels Of Well-Being, [11/11/16](#)]

- **People Who Stopped Using Facebook Had More Positive Life Satisfaction And Positive Emotions Than Facebook Users.** “Most people use Facebook on a daily basis; few are aware of the consequences. Based on a 1-week experiment with 1,095 participants in late 2015 in Denmark, this study provides causal evidence that Facebook use affects our well-being negatively. By comparing the treatment group (participants who took a break from Facebook) with the control group (participants who kept using Facebook), it was demonstrated that taking a break from Facebook has positive effects on the two dimensions of well-being: our life satisfaction increases and our emotions become more positive. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that these effects were significantly greater for heavy Facebook users, passive Facebook users, and users who tend to envy others on Facebook.” [Tromholt, The Facebook Experiment: Quitting Facebook Leads to High Levels Of Well-Being, [11/11/16](#)]

THE DEACTIVATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA INCREASED WELL-BEING, NEARLY AS MUCH AS STANDARD PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

A Study Found That Deactivation Of Social Media Led To Increased Levels Of Subjective Well-Being Among Participants. “Figure 5 presents estimates of effects on subjective well-being (SWB). These outcomes are of interest because, as discussed in the introduction, many studies show cross-sectional or time-series correlations between social media use and well-being, and on this basis researchers have speculated that social media may have serious adverse effects on mental health [...] We find that deactivation indeed significantly increases SWB. All but one of the ten point estimates are positive. The magnitudes are relatively small overall, with the largest and most significant effects on life satisfaction (0.12 SD), anxiety (0.10 SD), depression (0.09 SD), and happiness (0.08 SD).” [Allcot, Braghieri, Et al, The Welfare Effects Of Social Media, [11/8/19](#)]

A Study Found That The Deactivation Of Social Media Increased Subjective Well Being By Approximately 25-40% As Much As Standard Psychological Interventions. “As a second benchmark, a meta-analysis of 39 randomized evaluations finds that positive psychology interventions (i.e. self-help therapy, group training, and individual therapy) improve subjective well-being (excluding depression) by 0.34 standard deviations and reduce depression by 0.23 standard deviations (Bolier et al. 2013). Thus, deactivating Facebook increased our subjective well-being index by about 25-40 percent as much as standard psychological interventions. As a third benchmark, Appendix Table A17 presents a regression of our baseline SWB index on key demographics (income, college completion, gender, race, age, and political party).” [Allcot, Braghieri, Et al, The Welfare Effects Of Social Media, [11/8/19](#)]

The Less Time A User Spent On Facebook, The Higher Their Life Satisfaction Was Compared To A Heavy User. “As can be seen from Figure 1, life satisfaction declined the longer participants were on Facebook during an average week (or vice versa). This decline reached floor level around 15 to 20 h per week (for clarity’s sake, the x-scale was cropped to 40; the regression lines basically remain parallel to the x-scale until the maximum value and applied to both study samples). This was consistent across Studies 1 and 2.” [Stieger, Facebook Usage And Life Satisfaction, [11/29/19](#)]

A DECREASE IN SOCIAL MEDIA USE WAS CORRELATED WITH DECREASED LONELINESS

A Decrease In Social Media Usage Was Found To Have A Direct And Positive Impact On Subjective Well-Being Over Time, Especially With Respect To Decreasing Loneliness And Depression. “The study’s authors present this as a milestone. Their study concludes: The results from our experiment strongly suggest that limiting social media usage does have a direct and positive impact on subjective well-being over time, especially with respect to decreasing loneliness and depression. That is, ours is the first study to establish a clear causal link between decreasing social media use, and improvements in loneliness and depression.” [The Verge, [11/13/18](#)]

- **Study Participants Who Reduced Their Time On Facebook And Instagram Had A Statistically Significant Decrease In Depression And Loneliness.** “Participants were then randomly assigned to a control group, which had users maintain their typical social-media behavior, or an experimental group that limited time on Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram to 10 minutes per platform per day [...] Participants who reduced their time on social sites saw a statistically significant decrease in depression and loneliness, according to the study. The control group did not report an improvement.” [The Verge, [11/13/18](#)]

A STUDY OF PEOPLE IN AN INPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY FOUND THAT FACEBOOK USERS HAD LESS IMPROVEMENT FROM TREATMENT THAN NON-USING PEERS

Facebook Users In An Inpatient Mental Health Treatment Facility Had Higher Negative Mental Health Reporting Than Their Inpatient Peers Who Did Not Use Facebook. “In the current study, for the first time, variables of positive mental health and negative mental health were compared between Facebook users and Facebook non-users in an inpatient sample. Results indicated significant differences which emphasizes the necessity to make Facebook use a subject of discussion within the therapeutic process [...] Thus, to conclude, our results support the assumption that the recovery process of inpatients might be negatively affected by Facebook use. This can be explained by multiple reasons. Concerned individuals might try to escape into the online world from their offline problems, which, however, could enhance effectively these problems and aggravate their symptoms. Moreover, the inpatients’ clinical symptoms might negatively impact their social interactions on Facebook and lead to additional interpersonal problems online.” [Brailovskia, Margraf et al, Comparing Mental Health Of Facebook Users And Facebook Non-Users In An Inpatient Sample In Germany, [8/23/19](#)]

- **Facebook Use Negatively Affected Patients’ Recovery Time.** “Accordingly, in our inpatient sample Facebook users had not only higher level of depressiveness and somatoform complaints as well as lower level of PMH than non-users, but also duration of daily Facebook use was significantly associated with the mental health variables. Moreover, excessive Facebook use was previously found to be positively linked to late bedtimes and rising times, which lead to the assumption that it might contribute to insomnia (Koc and Gulyagci, 2013). Accordingly, we found

higher insomnia level in the group of Facebook users and a positive link between the duration of daily Facebook use and insomnia. Thus, to conclude, our results support the assumption that the recovery process of inpatients might be negatively affected by Facebook use. This can be explained by multiple reasons. Concerned individuals might try to escape into the online world from their offline problems, which, however, could enhance effectively these problems and aggravate their symptoms.” [Brailovskia, Margraf et al, Comparing Mental Health Of Facebook Users And Facebook Non-Users In An Inpatient Sample In Germany, [8/23/19](#)]

NOW – FACEBOOK’S AD SYSTEM DISCRIMINATES AGAINST USERS

FACEBOOK’S AD TARGETING SYSTEM WAS FOUND TO ALLOW ADVERTISERS TO EXCLUDE GENDER AND RACE GROUPS AS AD TARGETS

FACEBOOK WAS SUED FOR DISCRIMINATING AGAINST LEGALLY PROTECTED GROUPS

Facebook Allowed Advertisers To Exclude Certain Groups On The Base Of Race, Gender And Other Sensitive Factors That Were Prohibited By Federal Law In Housing And Employment. “The ubiquitous social network not only allows advertisers to target users by their interests or background, it also gives advertisers the ability to exclude specific groups it calls “Ethnic Affinities.” Ads that exclude people based on race, gender and other sensitive factors are prohibited by federal law in housing and employment.” [ProPublica, [10/28/16](#)]

The Department Of Housing And Urban Development Sued Facebook For Violating The Fair Housing Act By Allowing Advertisers To Limit Housing Ads Based On Race, Gender And Other Characteristics. “The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced Thursday it is suing Facebook for violating the Fair Housing Act by allowing advertisers to limit housing ads based on race, gender and other characteristics. The agency also said Facebook’s ad system discriminates against users even when advertisers did not choose to do so.” [ProPublica, [3/28/19](#)]

HUD Said Facebook’s Ad System Discriminated Against Users Even When Advertisers Did Not Choose To Do So. “The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced Thursday it is suing Facebook for violating the Fair Housing Act by allowing advertisers to limit housing ads based on race, gender and other characteristics. The agency also said Facebook’s ad system discriminates against users even when advertisers did not choose to do so. ProPublica first reported in 2016 that Facebook allowed housing advertisers to exclude users by race.” [ProPublica, [3/28/19](#)]

In March 2018, The National Fair Housing Alliance Sued Facebook, Alleging It Allowed Advertisers To Discriminate Against Legally Protected Groups. “Thursday’s charge comes after a year of litigation from housing groups. In March 2018, the National Fair Housing Alliance sued Facebook, alleging it allowed advertisers to discriminate against legally protected groups, including mothers, the disabled and Spanish speakers. A few months later, the Department of Justice filed a statement of interest in the case. Soon after, HUD filed a formal complaint, signaling that it had found enough evidence during its initial investigation to raise the possibility of further legal action.” [ProPublica, [3/28/19](#)]

In October 2019, Facebook Was Sued In A Class Action Suit That Accused Of Discriminating Against Older And Female Users By Withholding Advertising For Financial Services Like Bank Accounts, Insurance, Investments And Loans. “Facebook Inc was sued on Thursday in a proposed class action accusing it of discriminating against older and female users by withholding advertising for financial services such as bank accounts, insurance, investments and loans. According to the complaint filed in San Francisco federal court, Facebook persists in its willingness to let financial services advertisers “target” prospective customers by age and gender, despite a recent overhaul covering other kinds of ads.” [Reuters, [10/31/19](#)]

- **The Complaint Was Filed Seven Months After Facebook Agreed To Overhaul Its Targeted Ad Systems To Settle Lawsuits That It Let Advertisers Discriminate By Age, Gender And Zip Code For Housing And Credit Ads.** “Facebook said it is reviewing the complaint. “Our policies have long prohibited discrimination and we’re proud of the strides we’re making in this area,” a spokeswoman said. The complaint was filed seven months after Facebook agreed to overhaul its targeted ad system, including for Instagram and Messenger, to settle lawsuits by civil rights groups that it let employers, landlords and lenders discriminate by age, gender and zip code when placing job, housing and credit ads.” [Reuters, [10/31/19](#)]

November 2021: Meta Said It Would Look Into Whether Its Platforms Treated Users Differently Based On Race After Years Of Criticisms From Black Users About Racial Bias. “The parent company of Facebook and Instagram is looking into whether its platforms treat users differently based on race, after years of criticism particularly from Black users

and its own employees about racial bias. [...] That includes Black users who say their posts about racism have been taken down for violating the company's hate speech rules. Facebook also apologized in September after a flaw in its artificial intelligence software led to a video of Black men being labeled as 'primates.'" [NPR, [11/18/21](#)]

In 2017, ProPublica Reported That Facebook Enabled Advertisers To Direct Their Ads To News Feeds Of People Who Expressed Interest In The Topics Of "Jew Hater," "How To Burn Jews," Or "History Of 'Why Jews Ruin The World.'" "Want to market Nazi memorabilia, or recruit marchers for a far-right rally? Facebook's self-service ad-buying platform had the right audience for you. Until this week, when we asked Facebook about it, the world's largest social network enabled advertisers to direct their pitches to the news feeds of almost 2,300 people who expressed interest in the topics of "Jew hater," "How to burn jews," or, "History of 'why jews ruin the world.' To test if these ad categories were real, we paid \$30 to target those groups with three "promoted posts" — in which a ProPublica article or post was displayed in their news feeds. Facebook approved all three ads within 15 minutes." [ProPublica, [9/14/17](#)]

FACEBOOK'S HANDPICKED AUDITORS FAULTED THE PLATFORM FOR INFRINGING ON USERS' CIVIL RIGHTS – EVEN AFTER IT PROMISED TO STOP

In 2019, Facebook Stopped Allowing Advertisers In Housing, Jobs Or Credit To Show Their Messages Only To People Of A Certain Race, Gender Or Age Group. "After years of criticism, Facebook announced on Tuesday that it would stop allowing advertisers in key categories to show their messages only to people of a certain race, gender or age group. The company said that anyone advertising housing, jobs or credit — three areas where federal law prohibits discrimination in ads — would no longer have the option of explicitly aiming ads at people on the basis of those characteristics." [NY Times, [3/19/19](#)]

In 2020, Auditors Handpicked By Facebook To Examine Its Policies Said The Company Had Not Done Enough To Protect People On The Platform From Discriminatory Posts And Ads. "Auditors handpicked by Facebook to examine its policies said that the company had not done enough to protect people on the platform from discriminatory posts and ads and that its decisions to leave up President Trump's inflammatory posts were 'significant setbacks for civil rights.'" [NY Times, [7/8/20](#)]

In The Audit, Facebook Was Repeatedly Faulted For Prioritizing Free Expression On Its Platform Over Nondiscrimination, And For Not Having A Robust Infrastructure To Handle Civil Rights. "But the report was especially devastating for Facebook, because its executives had pointed to it as a sign that the company was seriously grappling with the content of its site. In the audit, Facebook was repeatedly faulted for prioritizing free expression on its platform over nondiscrimination, and for not having a robust infrastructure to handle civil rights. The report homed in on three posts by Mr. Trump in May, which the audit said contained hateful and violent speech or which harmed voters. Facebook left those posts untouched, over objections by the auditors, the report said." [NY Times, [7/8/20](#)]

HEADLINE: "Facebook's Secret Censorship Rules Protect White Men From Hate Speech But Not Black Children" [ProPublica, [6/28/17](#)]

Facebook's Content Rules Only Detected Broad Groups Of People, Like "White Men," But Would Not Flag Hate Speech If A Protected Group Contained A Characteristic That Isn't Protected, Like "Female Drivers" Or "Black Children." "The reason is that Facebook deletes curses, slurs, calls for violence and several other types of attacks only when they are directed at 'protected categories'—based on race, sex, gender identity, religious affiliation, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation and serious disability/disease. It gives users broader latitude when they write about 'subsets' of protected categories. White men are considered a group because both traits are protected, while female drivers and black children, like radicalized Muslims, are subsets, because one of their characteristics is not protected. (The exact rules are in the slide show below.)" [ProPublica, [6/28/17](#)]

NOW – DOMINATING THE ONLINE ADVERTISEMENT BUSINESS AND LYING TO ADVERTISERS

FACEBOOK HELD HALF OF THE TOTAL DIGITAL AD SUPPLY AND CAPTURED A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF ITS GROWTH

Facebook Held 50% Of The Total Digital Display Ad Supply. "Second, a significant portion of total supply belongs to Facebook, which sells that supply through a self-contained system totally separate from the ad tech stack through which Google sells its supply. The CMA concludes that Facebook, including Instagram, holds 50% of the total display supply—largely due to its vast user base.¹⁵ Third, Google also owns multiple additional properties that offer supply for display ads

through the ad tech stack, including Google News, Google Maps, and Google Play.” [Omidyar Network, Roadmap For Digital Advertising Monopolization Case Against Google, [May 2020](#)]

House Subcommittee On Antitrust: Google And Facebook Captured “Nearly All Of [Digital Ads] Growth In Recent Years.” “The rise of market power online has severely affected the monetization of news, diminishing the ability of publishers to deliver valuable reporting.³⁴⁰ The digital advertising market is highly concentrated, with Google and Facebook controlling the majority of the online advertising market in the United States, capturing nearly all of its growth in recent years. Although Amazon has grown its digital advertising business to become the third largest competitor in the market, it still accounts for a relatively small percentage.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Commercial And Administrative Law, Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, [2020](#)]

FACEBOOK WAS DEPENDENT ON ADVERTISERS FOR PROFITS, WITH TARGETED ADS REPRESENTING NEARLY ALL OF THE PLATFORM’S REVENUE

Facebook Derived Nearly All of Its Revenue From Personalized Advertisements Shown On The Site. “The social media company is the fifth U.S. company to hit the milestone, joining Apple , Microsoft , Amazon and Google-parent company Alphabet . The company’s shares closed up 4.2% at \$355.64 after a favorable legal ruling that dismissed an antitrust complaint brought by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and a coalition of state attorneys general. Facebook derives nearly all of its revenue from personalized advertisements that are shown to users of the Facebook and Instagram social networks. The company also has a burgeoning hardware business where it is building products like the Portal video-calling device, Oculus virtual-reality headsets and smart glasses, which are set to be released sometime in 2021.” [CNBC, [6/28/21](#)]

In 2020, Facebook Made \$86 Billion In Revenue. Nearly All Of That Came Selling Ads Placed On User’s News Feed. “The 2018 algorithm change affected Facebook’s central feature, the News Feed, a constantly updated, personally customized scroll of friends’ family photos and links to news stories. It accounts for the majority of time Facebook’s nearly three billion users spend on the platform. The company sells that user attention to advertisers, both on Facebook and its sister platform Instagram, accounting for nearly all of its \$86 billion in revenue last year. A proprietary algorithm controls what appears in each user’s News Feed.” [Wall Street Journal, [9/15/21](#)]

In 2020, Facebook Said It Had 8 Million Advertisers. “Facebook generated \$69.7 billion from advertising in 2019, more than 98% of its total revenue for the year. And most of those ad dollars don’t come from companies like Starbucks (SBUX) and Coca Cola so much as the sprawling list of small and medium-sized businesses who use Facebook to attract customers and build their brands. Facebook has 8 million advertisers, it said earlier this year. Of those, the highest-spending 100 brands accounted for \$4.2 billion in Facebook advertising last year, according to data from marketing research firm Pathmatics – or only about 6% of the platform’s ad revenue. The last time Facebook shared that data itself was in April 2019, when COO Sheryl Sandberg said the top 100 advertisers represented “less than 20%” of total ad revenue.” [CNN, [6/30/20](#)]

- **The Highest-Spending 100 Brands Accounted For \$4.2 Billion In Facebook Advertising Last Year – Only 6% Of The Platform’s Ad Revenue.** “Facebook generated \$69.7 billion from advertising in 2019, more than 98% of its total revenue for the year. And most of those ad dollars don’t come from companies like Starbucks (SBUX) and Coca Cola so much as the sprawling list of small and medium-sized businesses who use Facebook to attract customers and build their brands. Facebook has 8 million advertisers, it said earlier this year. Of those, the highest-spending 100 brands accounted for \$4.2 billion in Facebook advertising last year, according to data from marketing research firm Pathmatics – or only about 6% of the platform’s ad revenue. The last time Facebook shared that data itself was in April 2019, when COO Sheryl Sandberg said the top 100 advertisers represented “less than 20%” of total ad revenue.” [CNN, [6/30/20](#)]

FACEBOOK KNOWINGLY INFLATED METRICS OF ADS REPEATEDLY AND WITH MULTIPLE ADVERTISEMENT TYPES

Facebook Had Inflated Estimates For The Total Time Spent Watching A Video And The Total Number Of Viewers By Between 150% - 900% According To Court Documents. “Those communications show that Facebook was aware of a problem, according to the Tuesday complaint, well before the company claimed in 2016 that it “recently” had realized its calculations for the average time users spent watching videos were being artificially inflated dating back two years. Facebook said the error didn’t result in billing mistakes or partners being overcharged. [...] But the new documents paint a much worse picture and claim the discrepancy was actually anywhere between 150 to 900 percent. It’s easy to see how advertisers would be encouraged by such inflated data and choose to dump more money into Facebook video ads versus those on YouTube and other platforms.” [The Verge, [2/18/21](#)]

Due To The Miscalculated Data, Marketers May Have Misjudged The Performance Of Video Advertising Purchased From Facebook, Impacting How Much They Spent On Facebook Video Vs. Other Sellers. “We also renamed the metric to make it clearer what we measure. This metric is one of many our partners use to assess their video campaigns.” The news is an embarrassment for Facebook, which has been touting the rapid growth of video consumption across its platform in recent years. Due to the miscalculated data, marketers may have misjudged the performance of video advertising they have purchased from Facebook over the past two years. It also may have impacted their decisions about how much to spend on Facebook video versus other video ad sellers such as Google’s YouTube, Twitter, and even TV networks.” [WSJ, [9/22/16](#)]

Facebook Knew Of Problems In How It Measured Viewership Of Video Ads On Its Platform For More Than A Year Before It Disclosed Them In 2016. “Facebook Inc. knew of problems in how it measured viewership of video ads on its platform for more than a year before it disclosed them in 2016, according to a complaint filed Tuesday by advertisers. A group of small advertisers filed a lawsuit in California federal court in 2016, alleging the tech giant engaged in unfair business conduct by disseminating inaccurate metrics that significantly overestimated the amount of time users were spending watching video ads.” [WSJ, [10/16/18](#)]

- **Facebook Admitted That Its Metric For The Average Time Users Spent Watching Videos Was Artificially Inflated Because It Was Only Factoring In Video Views Of More Than Three Seconds.** “Big ad buyers and marketers are upset with Facebook Inc. after learning the tech giant vastly overestimated average viewing time for video ads on its platform for two years, according to people familiar with the situation. Several weeks ago, Facebook disclosed in a post on its “Advertiser Help Center” that its metric for the average time users spent watching videos was artificially inflated because it was only factoring in video views of more than three seconds. The company said it was introducing a new metric to fix the problem.” [WSJ, [9/22/16](#)]
- **Facebook Told Ad Buying Agency, Publicis, That The Earlier Counting Method Likely Overestimated Average Time Spent Watching Videos By Between 60% - 80%.** “Some ad agency executives who were also informed by Facebook about the change started digging deeper, prompting Facebook to give them a more detailed account, one of the people familiar with the situation said. Ad buying agency Publicis Media was told by Facebook that the earlier counting method likely overestimated average time spent watching videos by between 60% and 80%, according to a late August letter Publicis Media sent to clients that was reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.” [WSJ, [9/22/16](#)]
- **The Wall Street Journal Said The News Was “An Embarrassment For Facebook,” Which Had Been “Touting The Rapid Growth Of Video Consumption Across Its Platform.”** “We also renamed the metric to make it clearer what we measure. This metric is one of many our partners use to assess their video campaigns.” The news is an embarrassment for Facebook, which has been touting the rapid growth of video consumption across its platform in recent years. Due to the miscalculated data, marketers may have misjudged the performance of video advertising they have purchased from Facebook over the past two years. It also may have impacted their decisions about how much to spend on Facebook video versus other video ad sellers such as Google’s YouTube, Twitter, and even TV networks.” [WSJ, [9/22/16](#)]

Facebook Admitted That It Had Miscalculated The Total Organic Reach For Business Pages And The Amount Of Time Spent With Instant Articles. “Facebook (FB) admitted Wednesday it messed up more ad metrics than previously thought, potentially eroding its trust and relationship with marketers and publishers. The social network said in a blog post it miscalculated the number of completed video views, the total organic reach for business Pages and the amount of time spent with Instant Articles. In some cases, the metrics were significantly overstated. The average time spent on Instant Articles -- Facebook’s faster alternative for consuming news on the platform -- was “over-reported” by 7% - 8% since August, 2015. The reason: Facebook didn’t do the appropriate basic math of dividing time spent by total views.” [CNN, [11/16/16](#)]

- **CNN: “In Some Cases, The Metrics Were Significantly Overstated.”** “Facebook (FB) admitted Wednesday it messed up more ad metrics than previously thought, potentially eroding its trust and relationship with marketers and publishers. The social network said in a blog post it miscalculated the number of completed video views, the total organic reach for business Pages and the amount of time spent with Instant Articles. In some cases, the metrics were significantly overstated. The average time spent on Instant Articles -- Facebook’s faster alternative for consuming news on the platform -- was “over-reported” by 7% - 8% since August, 2015. The reason: Facebook didn’t do the appropriate basic math of dividing time spent by total views.” [CNN, [11/16/16](#)]

Facebook Acknowledged The Average Time Spent On Instant Articles Was “Over-Reported” By 7%-8%. “Facebook (FB) admitted Wednesday it messed up more ad metrics than previously thought, potentially eroding its trust

and relationship with marketers and publishers. The social network said in a blog post it miscalculated the number of completed video views, the total organic reach for business Pages and the amount of time spent with Instant Articles. In some cases, the metrics were significantly overstated. The average time spent on Instant Articles -- Facebook's faster alternative for consuming news on the platform -- was "over-reported" by 7% - 8% since August, 2015. The reason: Facebook didn't do the appropriate basic math of dividing time spent by total views." [CNN, [11/16/16](#)]

Facebook Admitted It Had Double Counted The Number Of People Businesses Reached Unpaid Posts On Their Facebook Pages. "The average time spent on Instant Articles -- Facebook's faster alternative for consuming news on the platform -- was 'over-reported' by 7% - 8% since August, 2015. The reason: Facebook didn't do the appropriate basic math of dividing time spent by total views. The company also overestimated the number of people businesses reached with unpaid posts on their Facebook Pages during the preceding week and month because it forgot to "de-duplicate repeat visitors." In other words, it double counted. In September, Facebook apologized for miscalculating the average time users spend watching videos, saying the number was 'overstated.'" [CNN, [11/16/16](#)]

FACEBOOK EMPLOYEES EXPRESSED CONCERNS THAT THEY WERE PROMOTING "DEEPLY WRONG" DATA TO ADVERTISERS

Some Facebook Believed They Were Promoting "Deeply Wrong" Data About How Many Users Advertisers Could Reach. "Some Facebook employees believed they were promoting 'deeply wrong' data about how many users advertisers could reach, and one warned that the company had counted on "revenue we should have never made" based on its inflated numbers, according to recently unsealed internal emails. The Financial Times reported the statements today based on a newly unredacted filing from a 2018 lawsuit in California. The lawsuit claims that Facebook knowingly overestimated its "potential reach" metric for advertisers, largely by failing to correct for fake and duplicate accounts." [The Verge, [2/18/21](#)]

The Verge: When A Product Manager At Facebook Proposed A Fix That Would Fix Their Ad Metric Reporting, The Company Allegedly Refused To Make The Changes, Arguing It Would Have A "Significant" Impact On Revenue. "The Financial Times reported the statements today based on a newly unredacted filing from a 2018 lawsuit in California. The lawsuit claims that Facebook knowingly overestimated its "potential reach" metric for advertisers, largely by failing to correct for fake and duplicate accounts. The filing states that Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg acknowledged problems with the metric in 2017, and product manager Yaron Fidler proposed a fix that would correct the numbers. But the company allegedly refused to make the changes, arguing that it would produce a "significant" impact on revenue. "It's revenue we should have never made given the fact it's based on wrong data," Fidler responded in an email." [The Verge, [2/18/21](#)]

- **Facebook Employee, Leaked Email: "The Status Quo In Ad Reach Estimation And Reporting Is Deeply Wrong."** "The filing states that Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg acknowledged problems with the metric in 2017, and product manager Yaron Fidler proposed a fix that would correct the numbers. But the company allegedly refused to make the changes, arguing that it would produce a "significant" impact on revenue. 'It's revenue we should have never made given the fact it's based on wrong data,' Fidler responded in an email. Another employee added that 'the status quo in ad reach estimation and reporting is deeply wrong.' Facebook has argued that the 'potential reach' metric is only a free tool that doesn't directly reflect how much a campaign will cost or who it will reach." [The Verge, [2/18/21](#)]

NOW – KILLING THE NEWS INDUSTRY BY STEALING ITS PROFITS AND READERS WITHOUT COMPENSATION

ONLINE MARKET POWER LIKE FACEBOOK'S HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE MONETIZATION OF NEWS AND LED TO NUMEROUS NEWSROOM CLOSURES

House Subcommittee: "The Rise Of Market Power Online Has Severely Affected The Monetization Of News, Diminishing The Ability Of Publishers To Deliver Valuable Reporting." "The rise of market power online has severely affected the monetization of news, diminishing the ability of publishers to deliver valuable reporting. The digital advertising market is highly concentrated, with Google and Facebook controlling the majority of the online advertising market in the United States, capturing nearly all of its growth in recent years. Although Amazon has grown its digital advertising business to become the third largest competitor in the market, it still accounts for a relatively small percentage." [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Commercial And Administrative Law, Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, [2020](#)]

Columbia Journalism Review: “Many Rightly [Saw] The Rise Of Big Tech [...] As The Root Of Journalism’s Problems.” “This is a tempting idea, and one gaining a foothold in the US, but in reality would be a serious mistake—especially when it comes to reader trust. Many rightly see the rise of big tech, and social media in particular, as the root of journalism’s problems. Not only do Google and Facebook dominate the online ad market—the two together make up nearly two-thirds of the market, but the social networks have played a huge role in the spread of online misinformation and the incentivizing of clickbait, which have been large contributors to the crisis of trust in the media. That idea has widespread academic and political support.” [Columbia Journalism Review, [1/16/19](#)]

Open Markets Institute Claimed “The Largest Single Reason” For The Decline Of Local News Was “The Loss Of Advertising Revenues To The Online Advertising Duopoly Of Google And Facebook. “The business model that has long sustained a free press in the United States is imperiled. More than one in five papers have closed over the past decade and a half, transforming more and more communities into news deserts [...] The largest single reason for this trend is the loss of advertising revenues to the online advertising duopoly of Google and Facebook. Advertising has been the backbone of the news industry for more than a century. But from 2008 to 2018, the newspaper industry saw a staggering 68% drop in advertising revenue due primarily to the two ad tech behemoths.” [Open Markets Institute, Saving The News, [September 2021](#)]

Columbia Journalism Review Noted That Media Companies Were “Addicted To Facebook’s Algorithm-Directed Traffic.” “In The Atlantic, author Franklin Foer—whose new book is called World Without Mind: The Existential Threat of Big Tech—wrote that Facebook is doing the media a favor. ‘It has forced media to face the fact that digital advertising and ever-growing web traffic will never sustain the industry,’ he wrote, ‘especially if that traffic comes from monopolies like Facebook.’ While that may be true, the fact remains that if media companies are addicted to Facebook’s algorithm-directed traffic, Facebook is the one who helped get them hooked. The company has spent years pushing media outlets to integrate themselves into its network, via video, Facebook Live, and Facebook’s Instant Articles format for mobile.” [Columbia Journalism Review, [1/12/18](#)]

FACEBOOK HAD IMMENSE POWER IN SHAPING HOW NEWS WAS DISTRIBUTED AND CONSUMED

ACCC: Facebook Was A “Vital Distribution Channel For A Number Of Media Businesses.” “Google is a critical source of internet traffic (and therefore audiences) for news media businesses. A news media business risks losing a significant source of revenue if it prevents Google from providing links to its websites in search results. While Facebook contributes a significantly lower proportion of traffic to news media businesses, it remains a vital distribution channel for a number of media businesses, particularly those seeking to target a particular demographic group.” [Australian Competition & Consumer Commission, Digital Platforms Inquiry Report - Executive Summary, [7/26/19](#)]

University Of Chicago Stigler Center Said Facebook And Google Had “Unprecedented Influence On News Production, Distribution And Consumption.” “It is now clear that the natural tendency toward concentration in modern capitalism is magnified in digital markets, where a handful of corporations enjoying network effects today exercise more power and influence globally than any other private entities have in the last century. Two of those companies—Google and Facebook—are not only giant economic players that have changed most industries, but are also the largest media companies in history. While they maintain that they are technology companies, they not only have unprecedented influence on news production, distribution and consumption, but also are rapidly changing the incentives, behavior and norms of all players in the news media ecosystem.” [University Of Chicago Stigler Center, Stigler Committee On Digital Platforms Final Report, [2019](#)]

Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC): Big Tech “Increasingly Perform[Ed] Similar Functions To Media Businesses, Such As Selecting And Curating Content, Evaluating Content, And Ranking And Arranging Content Online.” “Digitalization and the increase in online sources of news and media content highlight inconsistencies in the current sector-specific approach to media regulation in Australia that gives rise to an uneven playing field between digital platforms and some news media businesses. Digital platforms increasingly perform similar functions to media businesses, such as selecting and curating content, evaluating content, and ranking and arranging content online. Despite this, virtually no media regulation applies to digital platforms. This creates regulatory disparity between some digital platforms and some more heavily-regulated media businesses that perform comparable functions.” [Australian Competition & Consumer Commission, Digital Platforms Inquiry Report - Executive Summary, [7/26/19](#)]

ACCC Found That Facebook And Google Had “Significant And Durable Market Power Over The Distribution Of News Online.” “Several of the concerns regarding the distribution and monetization of news through platform intermediaries were raised as part of a comprehensive inquiry by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) [...] Among its findings, the ACCC concluded that Facebook and Google have significant and durable market power over the distribution of news online. As the ACCC noted, “Google and Facebook are the gateways to online news

media for many consumers,” accounting for a significant amount of referral traffic to news publishers’ websites. As a result, news publishers are reliant on these platforms for reaching people online, which affects publishers’ ability to monetize journalism, particularly on formats such as Google’s Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP).” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Commercial And Administrative Law, Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, [2020](#)]

The ACC Found That News Publishers Were Reliant On Google And Facebook For Reaching People Online.

“Several of the concerns regarding the distribution and monetization of news through platform intermediaries were raised as part of a comprehensive inquiry by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) [...] Among its findings, the ACCC concluded that Facebook and Google have significant and durable market power over the distribution of news online. As the ACCC noted, ‘Google and Facebook are the gateways to online news media for many consumers,’ accounting for a significant amount of referral traffic to news publishers’ websites. As a result, news publishers are reliant on these platforms for reaching people online, which affects publishers’ ability to monetize journalism, particularly on formats such as Google’s Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP).” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Commercial And Administrative Law, Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, [2020](#)]

Members Of WIRED’s Editorial Staff Explained That “If Facebook Wanted To, It Could Quietly Turn Any Number Of Dials That Would Harm Publishers – By Manipulating Its Traffic, Its Ad Network, Or Its Readers.”

“Nicholas Thompson, the Editor-in-Chief of Wired magazine, and Wired contributing editor Fred Vogelstein described the relationship between publishers and Facebook as being “sharecroppers on Facebook’s massive industrial farm,” writing that: Even at the best of times, meetings between Facebook and media executives can feel like unhappy family gatherings. The two sides are inextricably bound together, but they don’t like each other all that much [...] If Facebook wanted to, it could quietly turn any number of dials that would harm a publisher—by manipulating its traffic, its ad network, or its readers.” [House Subcommittee On Antitrust, Commercial And Administrative Law, Investigation Of Competition In Digital Markets, [2020](#)]

MANY USERS SAW FACEBOOK AS A NEWS SOURCE, AND BECAUSE THAT’S WHERE USERS GOT AND READ THEIR NEWS, IT WAS

In 2015, 63% Of Facebook Users Considered The Service A News Source. “With more than 222 million monthly active users in the United States and Canada, the site has become a place that people flock to to find out what is going on. Last year, a study by the Pew Research Center, in collaboration with the Knight Foundation, found that 63 percent of Facebook’s users considered the service a news source. In April, Facebook embraced this role openly, releasing a video to implore people to search Facebook to discover “the other side of the story.” [NY Times, [5/10/16](#)]

New York Times: “Facebook [Was] The World’s Most Influential Source Of News.” “Facebook is the world’s most influential source of news. That’s true according to every available measure of size — the billion-plus people who devour its News Feed every day, the cargo ships of profit it keeps raking in, and the tsunami of online traffic it sends to other news sites. But Facebook has also acquired a more subtle power to shape the wider news business.” [NY Times, [5/12/16](#)]

After Facebook Changed Their Algorithm In 2018 To Show Users More Items Shared By Friends And Family And Less From Professional Publishers, Publishers Saw Facebook Referral Drop Dramatically.

“But none of those programs have worked particularly well for publishers, and Facebook has frequently changed its mind about how it wants to work with people who produce news for a living. Its biggest pivot came in 2018, when it announced it should show its users more items shared by friends and family and less from professional publishers; publishers saw Facebook referral traffic drop dramatically after that. By contrast, the program Zuckerberg is announcing Friday appears rather straightforward: Facebook will pay publishers for work they already make and then share to the platform, which means it is pure profit.” [Vox / Recode, [10/24/19](#)]

USER’S DID NOT REGULARLY CLICK THROUGH TO NEWS ARTICLES PUBLISHED ON FACEBOOK, RATHER THEY READ HEADLINES AND OVERVIEW SNIPPETS

ACCC Claimed Facebook Benefitted From News And News Extracts Appearing On A User’s Feed Because It Allowed Them To “Retain The User’s Attention, Enabling More Advertisements To Be Displayed.” “Google benefits because the inclusion of news stories and snippets in search results increases the attractiveness of the Google search engine. This in turn increases the likelihood that consumers will use the search engine for other queries, which can be directly monetised. Facebook benefits because news stories appearing on a user’s news feed retain the user’s attention, enabling more advertisements to be displayed. However, the inability of news media businesses to individually negotiate terms over the use of their content by digital platforms is likely indicative of the imbalance in bargaining power.” [Australian Competition & Consumer Commission, Digital Platforms Inquiry Report - Executive Summary, [7/26/19](#)]

- **TechCrunch Reported That “Again And Again, Facebook Ha[d] Centralized Attention Typically Spread Across The Web.”** “Meanwhile, Facebook’s only goal remains to provide value to users, and when it comes to content, it doesn’t really care which publisher provides it as long as it’s high-quality. Siphoning resources to the center Again and again, Facebook has centralized attention typically spread across the web. A few years back I wrote about “20 New Ways Facebook Is Eating The Internet,” and its appetite has only grown. It’s trying to do the same with Watch (YouTube), Marketplace (Craigslist and eBay) and many other features. It’s a smart plan that ends up arguably improving the experience for individual users — or at least offering new options while making Facebook more essential and much richer.” [Tech Crunch, [2/3/18](#)]

News Media Alliance: With The Vast Majority Of Americans Consuming Their News Online, Readers Often Skimmed Through Headlines And Only Read Snippets Found On Search Engines Or Social Media Sites. “With the vast majority of Americans now accessing online content through a handful of dominant gateways, online news readers often skim through headlines and read only snippets found on search engines or social media sites without linking to the original sources for more information. According to one study, 47 percent of these users only ‘browse and read news extracts on these websites without clicking on links to access the whole article in the newspaper page.” [News Media Alliance, Local Journalism: America’s Most Trusted News Sources Threatened, [10/27/20](#)]

Many Facebook Users Who Viewed News On The Platform Didn’t Go To Original Articles, But Rather Got The Overview Of The News From Just The Headline And Preview Blurb. “In 2011, when Facebook first took notice of Twitter, it launched its public figure Subscribe feature and news links gained more visibility in the feed. By 2014, “Facebook the big news machine” was in full swing with Trending, hashtags and news outlets pouring resources into growing their Pages. Emphasizing the “news” in News Feed retrained users to wait for the big world-changing headlines to come to them rather than crisscrossing the home pages of various publishers. Many don’t even click-through, getting the gist of the news just from the headline and preview blurb. Advertisers followed the eyeballs, moving their spend from the publisher sites to Facebook.” [Tech Crunch, [2/3/18](#)]

Most Local Newspapers Primarily Relied On Digital Display Advertising For Online Ad Revenues. “Thus, the most popular formats of digital advertising are digital display and search, which combined accounted for 73.5%, or \$102.8 billion, of 2020 U.S. digital advertising expenditures. Market research firms and government studies indicate that Google plays a significant role in the selling of each format, both directly (especially in search)⁷⁴ and indirectly, as an intermediary in the display advertising marketplace. Most local newspapers primarily rely on “digital display advertising” for online advertising revenues.” [Congressional Research Service, [1/27/22](#)]

FACEBOOK AND ZUCKERBERG REFUSED TO COMPENSATE NEWS OUTLETS FOR THEIR CONTENT, EVEN THOUGH THE PLATFORM SAPPED A MAJORITY OF OUTLET’S REVENUE

Google And Facebook Was Able To Carry Content Created By News Organizations Without Directly Paying The Organizations For Creating It. “Mr. Sims and a like-minded regulator in France, Isabelle de Silva, are challenging a universally accepted fact of the internet: that Google and Facebook can carry content created by news organizations without directly paying the organizations for creating it. Last month, as the coronavirus put hundreds of publishers out of business around the world, the Australian government instructed Mr. Sims to force the platforms to negotiate payments with newspaper publishers — making it the first country to do so.” [New York Times, [5/10/20](#)]

News Media Alliance: Google And Facebook “Leveraged Their Market Dominance To Force Local News To Accept Little To No Compensation For Their Intellectual Property.” “The second major challenge is that local news has been hijacked by a few large news aggregation platforms, most notably Google and Facebook, which have become the dominant players in online advertising. These trillion-dollar companies scrape local news content and data for their own sites and leverage their market dominance to force local news to accept little to no compensation for their intellectual property. At the same time, the marketplace for online advertising is now dominated by programmatic ads, with digital advertising services claiming half of every ad dollar, further diverting funds away from local journalism.” [News Media Alliance, Local Journalism: America’s Most Trusted News Sources Threatened, [10/27/20](#)]

- **TechCrunch: Publishers Had “Few Major Sources Of Traffic Outside Of Facebook And Google Search.”** “Publishers wisely began pushing back, demanding more layout and monetization flexibility, and many abandoned the platform in favor of Google’s less prescriptive AMP platform for fast-loading mobile pages. In fact, 38 of 72 Instant Articles launch partner publications including the New York Times and Washington Post have ditched the Facebook controlled format according to a study by Columbia Journalism Review. Still, publishers have few major sources of traffic outside of Facebook and Google Search. With the death of Google Reader and Twitter’s move to an algorithmic feed, there’s still no at-scale, unfiltered place to share or follow news. If people do

want a more direct relationship with news, they should get on Feedly or another RSS readers, or add a few favorite sites to their browser's bookmark bar." [Tech Crunch, [2/3/18](#)]

Star Tribune Editorial: Big Tech Had “Taken The Content Generated By Newspapers, TV, Radio And Others And Used It To Reap Massive Profits While Refusing To Provide Any Compensation.” “Journalism is so fundamental to the workings of a democracy that the founders made freedom of the press first in the Bill of Rights. But this industry, so vital to an educated citizenry, is being financially undermined by two monoliths that have taken the content generated by newspapers, TV, radio and others and used it to reap massive profits while refusing to provide any compensation. Nothing about that is fair, and the repercussions go far beyond the fate of any single newspaper or TV station. Content costs money to produce.” [Star Tribune, Editorial, [2/13/22](#)]

- **Google And Facebook Did Not Offer Competitive Terms To Publishers, Refusing To Pay For Content, Traffic Or Data.** “Platforms Have an Anticompetitive Cost Advantage From a regulatory standpoint, one of the core issues around the world is the dominant platforms do not offer competitive terms to publishers. To illustrate, they flatly refuse to pay for content, traffic, or data. Because of their monopolistic market positions, digital platforms have coerced free access to publishers’ content, traffic, and user data. This is an extreme extension of ‘buying power’ (i.e., a market dominated by a single buyer, monopsony, the demand-side equivalent to the domination of supply by a monopoly).” [News Media Canada, Levelling The Digital Playing Field, [September 2020](#)]

ZUCKERBERG SAID HE HAD NO INTENTION OF PAYING FOR NEWS AND HELD HOSTAGE THOSE WHO WANTED COMPENSATION

In May 2018, Zuckerberg Said He Had No Interest In Paying Publishers For The Right To Show Their Stories.

“Thomson and his boss, News Corp founder Rupert Murdoch, have been insisting that Facebook and other tech platforms should pay them for access to their work. Now Zuckerberg is giving them what they want. It’s a remarkable turnaround for Zuckerberg, who as recently as May 2018 said he had no interest in paying publishers for the right to show their stories. ‘We should all be sending Robert Thomson and Rupert Murdoch thank you notes,’ says an executive at another publisher that’s participating in the new initiative. Facebook’s news program comes months after Apple launched a subscription news service, which shares revenue with publishers; results so far have been disappointing for both Apple and news publishers, according to industry sources.” [Vox / Recode, [10/24/19](#)]

Wall Street Journal: Zuckerberg Was “Disappointed By Regulatory Efforts Around The World Looking To Force Platforms Like Facebook [...] To Pay Publishers For Any New Content Available On Their Platforms.

“Also, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg has been disappointed by regulatory efforts around the world looking to force platforms like Facebook and Alphabet Inc.’s Google to pay publishers for any news content available on their platforms, people familiar with the matter said. Such moves have damped Mr. Zuckerberg’s enthusiasm for making news a bigger part of Facebook’s offerings, they said. Last month, Campbell Brown, the former NBC and CNN journalist who was the architect of Facebook News, announced she took on a new, broader role overseeing global media partnerships, which encompasses tie-ups with everything from sports leagues to film studios.” [WSJ, [6/9/22](#)]

- **WSJ: The Regulatory Efforts Had “Damped Mr. Zuckerberg’s Enthusiasm For Making News A Bigger Part Of Facebook’s Offerings.** “Also, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg has been disappointed by regulatory efforts around the world looking to force platforms like Facebook and Alphabet Inc.’s Google to pay publishers for any news content available on their platforms, people familiar with the matter said. Such moves have damped Mr. Zuckerberg’s enthusiasm for making news a bigger part of Facebook’s offerings, they said. Last month, Campbell Brown, the former NBC and CNN journalist who was the architect of Facebook News, announced she took on a new, broader role overseeing global media partnerships, which encompasses tie-ups with everything from sports leagues to film studios.” [WSJ, [6/9/22](#)]

News Media Canada: Google And Facebook “Exercise[d] Monopoly Power” Which Created “A Market Where News Publishers [Were] Coerced To Accept Anticompetitive And Unfair Terms” On Usage Of Their Content.

“Publishers began to see some success, including double-digit year-over-year digital advertising growth. However, with the benefit of insurmountable network effects, the digital advertising market reached a tipping point where the dominance of technology platforms,2 chiefly Google and Facebook, became entrenched. The dominant digital platforms exercise monopoly power. This creates a market where news publishers are coerced to accept anticompetitive and unfair terms regarding the use of their content. This report will describe the issues facing the Canadian news publishing industry and demand for high-quality and independent journalism. Furthermore, we will describe the risk news consumers have of losing access to the same because of the dominant platforms.” [News Media Canada, Levelling The Digital Playing Field, [September 2020](#)]

IF OUTLETS REFUSED TO PROVIDE CONTENT RIGHTS TO FACEBOOK, THEY LOST THEIR OPPORTUNITY TO REACH A WIDE AUDIENCE

News Media Alliance: If Local Papers Refused To Provide Content Rights To Google And Facebook, They Lost “The Opportunity To Be Featured By Google And Facebook And Seen By Their Users.” “The News Media Alliance estimates that these types of arrangements can result in lower advertising revenues and fewer subscription conversions, leading to significant annual revenue loss nationwide. If local journalists refuse to provide content rights to the platforms, they lose the opportunity to be featured by Google and Facebook and seen by their users. The platforms use their market position to force local news into “take it or leave it” contracts, which limit the ability for local news companies to be fairly compensated.” [News Media Alliance, Local Journalism: America’s Most Trusted News Sources Threatened, [10/27/20](#)]

FACEBOOK’S POWER ON THE NEWS INDUSTRY AND ITS PROFITS LED TO THE CLOSURE OF ONE IN EVERY FOUR NEWSPAPERS IN THE U.S. – DRIVING POLARIZATION

Between 2004-2019, One In Every Four U.S. Newspapers Shut Down. “Over the past two decades, as Big Tech has boomed, news organizations have been going bust. Between 2004 and 2019, one in every four U.S. newspapers shut down, and almost all the rest cut staff, for a total of 36,000 jobs lost between 2008 and 2019 alone. Local newspapers have been particularly devastated, making it ever more difficult for people to know what is happening in their communities.” [Washington Monthly, [6/27/21](#)]

‘The Disappearance Of Credible Local News And Information Contributed To Widening Political Polarization. “Across America, the shuttering of local newspapers is contributing to a growing crisis in trusted local news and information, and an emerging challenge for America’s democracy. Research shows that the disappearance of credible local news and information contributes to widening political polarization, increasing costs for local government and meaningfully suboptimal community outcomes as independent oversight decreases or, in the worst case, evaporates entirely.” [Harvard, Shorenstein Center, [10/12/21](#)]

Voters In Communities That Had Experienced A Newspaper Closure Were Less Likely To Split Their Vote. “But the decline in local journalism is not just a local concern, it is a national one, too. Voters in communities that have experienced a newspaper closure are less likely to split their vote between the two major political parties, contributing to national political polarization.[6] And, with local news struggling to survive and compete with national news outlets for consumers’ attention, partisan reporting and coverage of national partisan conflict has come to dominate news consumers’ diets.” [Brookings, [11/12/19](#)]

Yale: As Local News Decline “Local Politics Becomes Increasingly Nationalized” Which Contributed “To Political Polarization.” “The loss of local papers troubles Sinkinson—among other things, they serve to keep people informed about corruption and misdeeds among their elected officials, and often break stories with wider reverberations; a small paper in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, revealed the Penn State sexual abuse scandal, for instance. And as local news fades, local politics becomes increasingly nationalized—which, other researchers have found, contributes to political polarization. “High-quality journalism is very expensive, and newspapers are competing with other forms of media that are low cost to operate and free to distribute,” he says.” [Yale.edu, [9/23/21](#)]

WHEN AUSTRALIA PROPOSED A LAW THAT WOULD REQUIRE FACEBOOK TO PAY PUBLISHERS, ZUCKERBERG BLOCKED THEIR EMERGENCY SERVICES PAGES

ZUCKERBERG HAD FACEBOOK BLOCK NEWS IN AUSTRALIA AFTER THE LEGISLATION WAS PROPOSED, BUT MADE IT PURPOSEFULLY BROAD TO INCLUDE EMERGENCY SERVICE PAGES

After Australia Released The Final Bill That Required Facebook And Google To Pay Publishers For News Content, Zuckerberg Pushed To Tweak Its Algorithm To Restrict News Content For Australians. “Even Simon Milner, Facebook’s director of policy for the Asia-Pacific region, wasn’t sure if Facebook would follow through with the threat when he fronted up at a parliamentary inquiry in late January. In fact nobody was certain until the eleventh hour, when the Facebook’s most senior executives saw the final bill to be debated in parliament and decided to pull the trigger. Under the direction of Zuckerberg, the company’s founder, major shareholder and most powerful figure, the company pushed through tweaks to its algorithm to restrict news content for Australians.” [Sydney Morning Herald, [2/10/21](#)]

- **Australia’s Law Forced Google And Facebook To Enter Commercial Agreements With Media Companies Or Face An Arbitration Process And Fines Of Up To 10 Per Cent Of Revenue.** “What the code is about The proposed laws force Google and Facebook to enter commercial agreements with media companies or face an arbitration process and fines of up to 10 per cent of revenue. The bill for the code passed the House of Representatives on Wednesday night and is expected to be passed by the Senate next week. This means it could become law by the end of the month.” [Sydney Morning Herald, [2/10/21](#)]

ZUCKERBERG AND FACEBOOK CREATED AN OVERLY BROAD PROCESS AT A TIME WHEN AUSTRALIA WAS LAUNCHING COVID VACCINATIONS

WSJ: Facebook Documents And Testimony Given To U.S., And Australian Authorities Alleged Facebook Deliberately Created An Overly Broad And Sloppy Process To Take Down Pages. “Internally, the pre-emptive strike was hailed as a strategic masterstroke. Facebook documents and testimony filed to U.S. and Australian authorities by whistleblowers allege that the social-media giant deliberately created an overly broad and sloppy process to take down pages—allowing swaths of the Australian government and health services to be caught in its web just as the country was launching Covid vaccinations.” [WSJ, [5/5/22](#)]

- **Facebook’s Overly Broad And Sloppy Take Down Process Resulted In Swaths Of The Australian Government And Health Services To Be Caught In Its Web Just As The Country Was Launching Covid Vaccinations.** “Internally, the pre-emptive strike was hailed as a strategic masterstroke. Facebook documents and testimony filed to U.S. and Australian authorities by whistleblowers allege that the social-media giant deliberately created an overly broad and sloppy process to take down pages—allowing swaths of the Australian government and health services to be caught in its web just as the country was launching Covid vaccinations.” [WSJ, [5/5/22](#)]

After Being Altered To The Fact They Had Blocked Pages For Medical, Health And Emergency Services In Australia, Facebook Expanded The Use Of The Algorithm From 50% To 100% Of All Australian Users Over The Next Several Hours. “The employee listed pages that had been improperly blocked and reinstated, such as the Bureau of Meteorology and City of Perth, as well as those still affected, such as the Women’s Legal Service Tasmania and WWF-Australia. The employee proposed that Facebook should “proactively find all the affected pages and restore them.” The person added: “We should be proactive here, not reactive, given the damage this is doing to Facebook’s reputation in Australia.” Facebook didn’t halt or reverse the process. It ramped up the takedown, expanding the use of the algorithm from 50% to 100% of all Australian users over the next several hours. Mr. Stone said the reason for the quick rollout was Facebook’s fear of legal action.” [WSJ, [5/5/22](#)]

ATOP EMERGENCY SERVICES, FACEBOOK ENDED UP BLOCKING A CHILDREN’S CANCER INSTITUTE AND A SHELTER FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Facebook Blocked Pages For Australian Health Services Such As The Children’s Cancer Institute And Doctors Without Borders, As Well As Fire And Rescue Services During Fire Season Like The Western Australian Department Of Fire And Emergency Services. “It was almost immediately clear that Facebook had blocked much more than news. The Australian press and internal documents show that Facebook had also blocked pages for health services such as the Children’s Cancer Institute and Doctors Without Borders in Australia; fire and rescue services during fire season, including the Bureau of Meteorology and Western Australian Department of Fire and Emergency Services; and emergency medical and domestic-violence services such as Mission Australia and the Hobart Women’s Shelter. The health-service blackouts came just as the national Covid vaccine rollout was being announced on Feb. 18, with inoculations beginning on Feb. 22.” [WSJ, [5/5/22](#)]

Facebook Blocked Medical And Domestic Violence Services Such As Mission Australia And The Hobart Women’s Shelter. “It was almost immediately clear that Facebook had blocked much more than news. The Australian press and internal documents show that Facebook had also blocked pages for health services such as the Children’s Cancer Institute and Doctors Without Borders in Australia; fire and rescue services during fire season, including the Bureau of Meteorology and Western Australian Department of Fire and Emergency Services; and emergency medical and domestic-violence services such as Mission Australia and the Hobart Women’s Shelter. The health-service blackouts came just as the national Covid vaccine rollout was being announced on Feb. 18, with inoculations beginning on Feb. 22.” [WSJ, [5/5/22](#)]

Facebook Executives Knew Its Process For Classifying News For The Removal Of Pages Was So Broad That It Would Likely Hit Government Pages And Other Social Services. “Facebook felt it needed a broad tool because the law didn’t define news, Mr. Stone said. People familiar with Facebook’s thinking said executives knew its process for

classifying news for the removal of pages was so broad that it would likely hit government pages and other social services. They decided to take that route because Facebook was afraid a narrower definition might lead it to run afoul of the law, which contained a nondiscrimination clause barring platforms from carrying links to some news publishers but not others, the people said.” [WSJ, [5/5/22](#)]

WSJ: Facebook’s Goal With Taking Down Australian Government, Health Services And Charity Was To “Exert Maximum Negotiating Leverage Over The Australian Parliament.” “Facebook documents and testimony filed to U.S. and Australian authorities by whistleblowers allege that the social-media giant deliberately created an overly broad and sloppy process to take down pages—allowing swaths of the Australian government and health services to be caught in its web just as the country was launching Covid vaccinations. The goal, according to the whistleblowers and documents, was to exert maximum negotiating leverage over the Australian Parliament, which was voting on the first law in the world that would require platforms such as Google and Facebook to pay news outlets for content.” [WSJ, [5/5/22](#)]

FACEBOOK’S EFFORTS WORKED, WITH AUSTRALIA WATERING DOWN THE JOURNALISM BILL – RESULTING IN CELEBRATION’S AT FACEBOOK HQ

Following The Page Shutdowns, Australia’s Parliament Amended The Proposed Journalism Law To The Degree That, A Year After Its Passage, its Most Onerous Provisions Had Been Applied To Facebook Or Meta. “After five days that caused disorder throughout the country, Australia’s Parliament amended the proposed law to the degree that, a year after its passage, its most onerous provisions haven’t been applied to Facebook or its parent company, Meta Platforms Inc. ‘We landed exactly where we wanted to,’ wrote Campbell Brown, Facebook’s head of partnerships, who pressed for the company’s aggressive stance, in a congratulatory email to her team minutes after the Australian Senate voted to approve the watered-down bill at the end of February 2021. Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg and Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg chimed in with congratulations as well, with Ms. Sandberg praising the ‘thoughtfulness of the strategy’ and ‘precision of execution.’” [WSJ, [5/5/22](#)]

- **Facebook’s Head Of Partnerships, Campbell Brown, Wrote “We Landed Exactly Where We Wanted To” In A Congratulatory Email Brown Sent Minutes After The Australian Senate Voted To Approve The Watered-Down Bill.** “After five days that caused disorder throughout the country, Australia’s Parliament amended the proposed law to the degree that, a year after its passage, its most onerous provisions haven’t been applied to Facebook or its parent company, Meta Platforms Inc. ‘We landed exactly where we wanted to,’ wrote Campbell Brown, Facebook’s head of partnerships, who pressed for the company’s aggressive stance, in a congratulatory email to her team minutes after the Australian Senate voted to approve the watered-down bill at the end of February 2021. Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg and Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg chimed in with congratulations as well, with Ms. Sandberg praising the ‘thoughtfulness of the strategy’ and ‘precision of execution.’” [WSJ, [5/5/22](#)]
- **WSJ: “Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg And Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg Chimed In With Congratulations As Well, With Ms. Sandberg Praising The ‘Thoughtfulness Of The Strategy’ And ‘Precision Of Execution.’”** “After five days that caused disorder throughout the country, Australia’s Parliament amended the proposed law to the degree that, a year after its passage, its most onerous provisions haven’t been applied to Facebook or its parent company, Meta Platforms Inc. ‘We landed exactly where we wanted to,’ wrote Campbell Brown, Facebook’s head of partnerships, who pressed for the company’s aggressive stance, in a congratulatory email to her team minutes after the Australian Senate voted to approve the watered-down bill at the end of February 2021. Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg and Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg chimed in with congratulations as well, with Ms. Sandberg praising the ‘thoughtfulness of the strategy’ and ‘precision of execution.’” [WSJ, [5/5/22](#)]