

# Google considers changing its political advertising policy

November 7 2019, by Mark Bergen and Naomi Nix

---



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Managers at Google are considering changing policies on political advertising in the midst of a raging public debate on the topic, according to a person familiar with the company's plans.

Some staff at Google were expecting a decision on the issue earlier this week, but it was delayed, said the person, who asked not to be identified discussing private information.

It's not clear if those plans would see Google rule out [campaign](#) ads altogether, as Twitter Inc. did, or limit them in some way, such as restricting the ability to target specific audiences. Alphabet Inc.'s Google gets a tiny fraction of sales from campaign ads on Search, YouTube and across the web.

A Google spokeswoman did not respond to a request for comment. The Wall Street Journal reported the news earlier on Wednesday.

Digital campaign ads are a heated political topic for [technology companies](#), already facing scrutiny over privacy, competition and allegations of conservative bias. The firestorm began with an October ad from President Donald Trump's reelection campaign that erroneously claimed Democratic front-runner Joe Biden bribed Ukrainian officials. Facebook Inc. refused to remove the ad, prompting criticism of the social network operator. The ad also ran on Twitter and Google's YouTube.

Twitter Chief Executive Officer Jack Dorsey announced last week that the site will ban political ads, saying "political message reach should be earned, not bought." The company plans to publish a new political ads policy outlining the change in a few weeks, which will be enforced globally and go into effect Nov. 22.

Twitter's announcement came about an hour before Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg delivered an impassioned defense of his company's policy of not fact-checking ads from politicians. He said the company has thought carefully about the issue and is taking a stance on principle, noting that political ads will make up less than 1% of revenue next year.

Twitter's move to ban political ads elicited both praise and harsh criticism from politicians.

Google has mostly avoided scrutiny on this issue so far. But Google, like Facebook, has pitched political campaigns on spending election money using their precise targeting tools, rather than on television. Trump's reelection campaign was the biggest spender on Google ads since May 31, 2018, when major tech companies began disclosing the figures. The campaign spent more than \$8 million during that period. A group called Donald J. Trump For President, Inc. was the fourth-largest Google spender.

©2019 Bloomberg News

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Google considers changing its political advertising policy (2019, November 7) retrieved 10 April 2024 from

<https://techxplore.com/news/2019-11-google-political-advertising-policy.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--