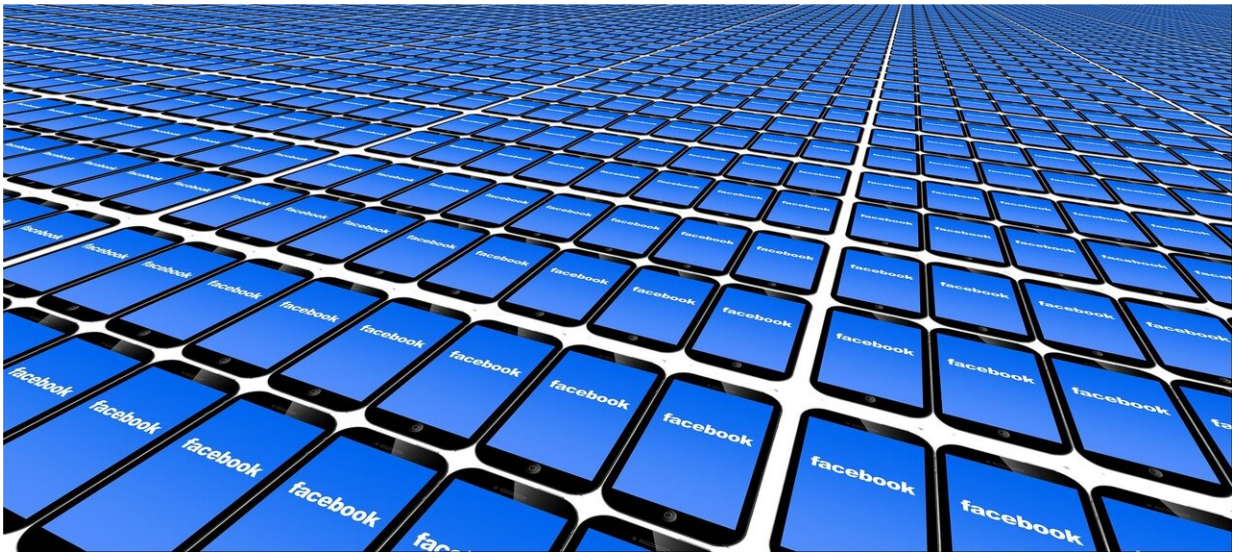# Facebook removes 2.5 million posts selling masks, COVID-19 kits

May 13 2020, by Sarah Frier

Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Facebook Inc. said it has removed 2.5 million posts since March 1 offering masks, sanitizers, cleaning wipes and COVID-19 test kits, in an attempt to prevent users from price-gouging or selling counterfeit and dangerous products.

To do it, the social media company relied on the same image-recognition technology it uses to remove sales of guns and drugs. Facebook has had to quickly train its artificial intelligence to handle an increase in

coronavirus content that violates company policies, including hundreds of thousands of posts removed for displaying information that could lead to physical harm, like encouraging users to drink bleach as a cure.

The coronavirus statistics released Tuesday are the latest addendum to the company's twice-yearly report about enforcement to combat the dark side of the way its platforms are used. With each report, Facebook becomes more reliant on computer solutions to human problems. The company has about 15,000 content moderators working around the world, some of whom can't work from the office as a protection against the spread of the virus. Between October 2019 and March 2020, about 90% of the content Facebook removed was found first by the software, not user reports, the company said.

Facebook said in the first quarter of 2020, it removed 1.7 billion fake accounts, 39.5 million instances of adult nudity and 7.9 million posts touting illegal drugs.

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