

'Moral bankruptcy': Facebook whistleblower's key points

October 5 2021



Former Facebook employee and whistleblower Frances Haugen testifies before lawmakers.

Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen offered deep insight Tuesday into how the social media giant works and how it could be fixed.

From an insular culture to harm to teens' [body image](#), Haugen told US senators what she saw inside the company.

Here are some highlights of her testimony:

Frankenstein Facebook

"If you split Facebook and Instagram apart, it's likely that most advertising dollars will go to Instagram and Facebook will continue to be this Frankenstein... that is endangering lives around the world... these systems are going to continue to exist and be dangerous even if broken up."

Release company studies

"I believe it is vitally important that we establish mechanisms where Facebook's internal research must be disclosed to the public on a regular basis."

Insular culture

"Facebook has a culture that emphasizes that insularity is the path forward, that if information is shared with the public, it will just be misunderstood."

Change won't be ruinous

"A lot of the changes I'm talking about are not going to make Facebook an unprofitable company," she said. "It just won't be a ludicrously profitable company like it is today."

Increase age limit

"I strongly encourage raising age limits to 16 or 18 years old, based on looking at the data around problematic use or addiction on the platform and children's self-regulation issues," she said.

The official limit presently is 13 years old to join Facebook.

Facebook needs help

"You can declare moral bankruptcy, you can admit you did something wrong. And we can move forward."

Eating disorder dangers

"I also want to emphasize that eating disorders are serious, there are going to be women walking around this planet in 60 years with brittle bones because of the choices that Facebook made around emphasizing profit today."

Parents don't understand

"Facebook knows that parents today, because they... have never experienced this addictive experience with a piece of technology, they give their children bad advice. They say things like 'Why don't you just stop using it?'"

Structural problems

"Facebook has set up an organization where the parts of the organization responsible for growing and expanding are separate and not regularly cross-pollinated with the parts of the company that focus on the harms the [company](#) has caused."

CEO Mark Zuckerberg decides

"In the end, the buck stops with Mark. There is no one currently holding Mark accountable but himself."

Hits of dopamine

"Facebook knows that content that elicits an extreme reaction from you is more likely to get a click, a comment or re-share," she said.

"Those clicks and comments and re-shares aren't necessarily for your benefit... They prioritize content in your feed so that you will give little hits of dopamine to your friends so they will produce more content."

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