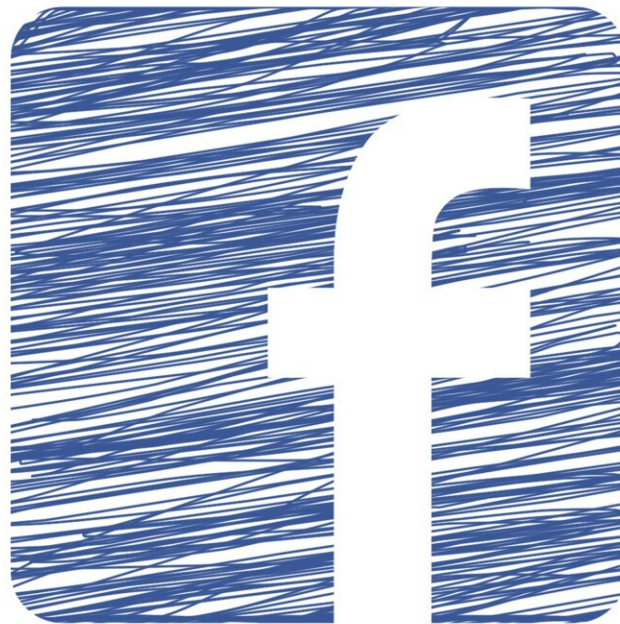


Meta has profited from more than 60 ads using homophobic slur 'groomer' since December

February 22 2023, by Muri Assunção



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Facebook and Instagram's parent company Meta has profited from more than 60 ads featuring the anti-LGBTQ slur "groomer" since December, according to a new report from Media Matters for America.

The analysis comes just months after the progressive [media](#) watchdog nonprofit identified more than 150 ads across the [company's](#) platforms that portrayed LGBTQ people as being "groomers"—a dangerous term used in some conservative circles to falsely categorize members of the LGBTQ community as sexual predators.

Following last year's report, Meta removed 47 ads for the use of the term, which fuels a false and debunked narrative portraying LGBTQ people as seeking to "convert" heterosexual and cisgender children. But according to Media Matters' latest analysis, the company has since allowed "another 63 ads with similar anti-LGBTQ language on its platforms."

The use of the incendiary term "groomer," which has exploded on [social media](#) in recent months, has been linked to a rise in anti-LGBTQ rhetoric in the U.S., according to the Human Rights Campaign.

It has also coincided with a record-breaking year of anti-LGBTQ legislation being introduced by conservative lawmakers across the country.

In July, the LGBTQ media advocacy group GLAAD found that all five major social media platforms received failing grades regarding the

safety of LGBTQ users in its second annual Social Media Safety Index (SMSI), an analysis of LGBTQ user safety across Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and TikTok.

Meta-owned platforms Instagram and Facebook received a score of 48 and 46, respectively, out of a possible 100.

Part of the organization's mission involves working with social media companies and offering tools to better combat anti-LGBTQ hate speech. Those recommendations, and even companies' own policies, are not always followed, according to the new Media Matters data.

"The fact that Meta willingly and knowingly profits from ads which falsely and maliciously slander LGBTQ people as threats to children—in violation of its own hate speech policies—should make LGBTQ and ally employees of Meta ashamed and angry," a GLAAD spokesperson told the Daily News.

"Ads and posts on Facebook and Instagram from high-follower hate accounts spewing this baseless and dangerous conspiracy theory are fomenting anti-LGBTQ violence and leading to real-world harm against our community, including attacks on drag events and Pride celebrations," the spokesperson added. "Our community needs LGBTQ employees and allies inside of Meta to make their voices heard before more violence and hate occurs."

Meta didn't immediately respond to a request for comment, but last year a company spokesperson told the Daily News that both Instagram and Facebook "prohibit violent or dehumanizing content directed against people who identify as LGBTQ+."

According to the company's advertising standards, ads that run on its platforms "must not contain claims that a person or group of people are a

threat to the physical safety, health or survival of others on the basis of ... sexual orientation, caste, sex, gender [or] gender identity."

However, despite its own rules and assessments, the company has allowed 63 ads featuring similar anti-LGBTQ language to run on its platforms since late last year.

Citing data from the Dewey Square Adwatch toolset, Media Matters found the ads garnered nearly 1 million impressions and Meta earned at least \$6,400 in revenue.

Some of them come from right-wing candidates, including Eric Deters, a former lawyer and Kentucky Republican gubernatorial candidate, who ran at least two ads saying he "believes in no grooming and sexualization;" and organizations, including Texas Scorecard, which published a video accusing drag queens of being groomers who are "trying to recruit this younger generation."

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