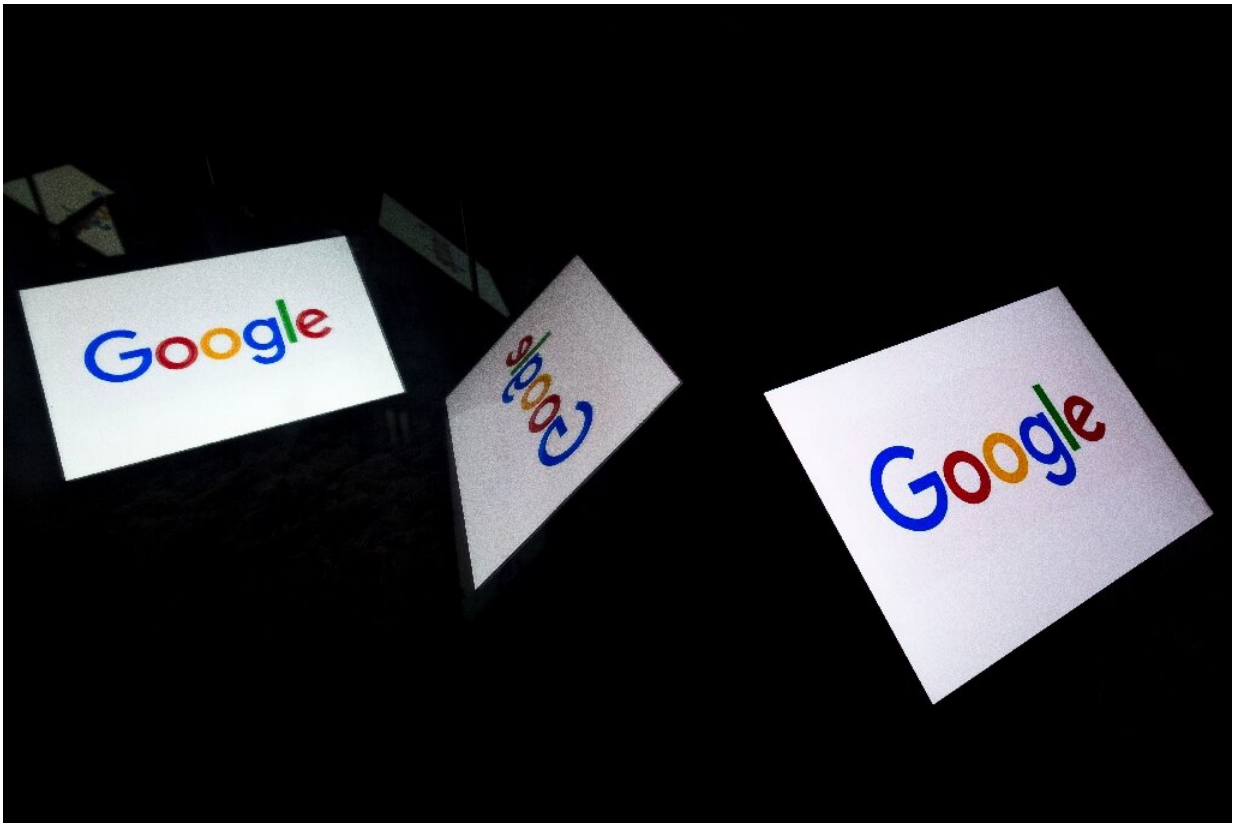


Google tells workers to avoid arguing politics in house

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Google has updated its workplace guidelines, telling employees to refrain from heated debates about politics at work

Google on Friday told employees to focus on work instead of heated debates about politics with colleagues at the internet company, which has

long been known for encouraging people to speak their minds.

Updated workplace guidelines for "Googlers" called on them to be responsible, helpful, and thoughtful during exchanges on internal message boards or other conversation forums.

"While sharing information and ideas with colleagues helps build community, disrupting the workday to have a raging debate over politics or the latest news story does not," the updated guidelines stated.

"Our primary responsibility is to do the work we've each been hired to do, not to spend working time on debates about non-work topics."

The updated guidelines pointed out that comments made internally by Google employees, no matter the intent, could go public and be wrongly attributed to the company, leading to mistaken impressions.

"We're all free to raise concerns and respectfully question and debate the company's activities—that's part of our culture," the guidelines read.

"Take care not to make false or misleading statements about Google's products or business that could undermine trust in our products and the work that we do."

Managers or those moderating forums were directed to intervene if the policy is violated, revoking comments, ending discussions, or even taking disciplinary action.

US President Donald Trump revived his criticism of Google this month, referencing a fired engineer who claimed the internet giant was working against his re-election.

The comments were the latest from the US leader alleging, without

evidence, that Silicon Valley giants distort searches and social feeds to suppress conservatives.

Trump has assailed Google on several occasions, claiming bias against him and his supporters.

Google repeated its response that these claims are baseless.

"The statements made by this disgruntled former employee are absolutely false," a Google spokesperson said in a statement, referring to the fired engineer.

"We go to great lengths to build our products and enforce our policies in ways that don't take political leanings into account."

In recent years, Google employees have challenged the company on issues including sexual harassment in the workplace; bidding on contracts with US defense or immigration agencies; and the potential for tailoring its online search engine for use on China's heavily censored internet.

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