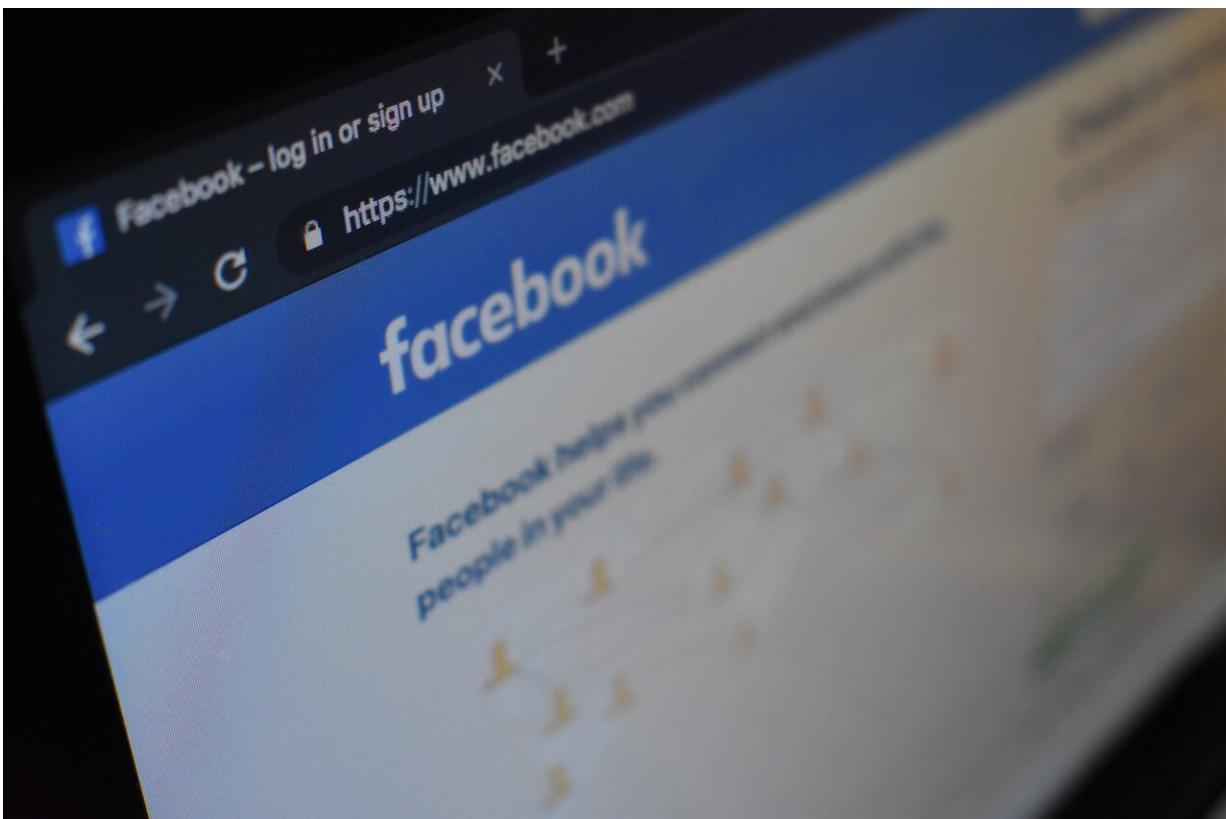


Facebook says it removed over 7 million pieces of 'harmful' COVID-19 content in quarter

August 12 2020, by Jefferson Graham, Usa Today



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Facebook says it removed over 7 million pieces misleading or "harmful" COVID-19 related posts from its social network and the company-

owned Instagram in the second quarter.

The company cited examples of posts that pushed "fake preventative measures or exaggerated cures that the CDC and other health experts tell us are dangerous."

It also applied warning labels on about 98 million pieces of COVID-19 misinformation on Facebook, the company said.

Facebook releases updates to its Community Standards Enforcement Report every quarter.

Facebook admitted that COVID-19 stymied the company's efforts on misinformation from April to June.

Sending its [content moderators](#) to work from home in March amid the pandemic led the company to remove less harmful material from Facebook and Instagram around suicide, self-injury, child nudity and sexual exploitation.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected Facebook's ability to remove harmful and forbidden material from its platforms, the company said because people at home were uncomfortable looking at disturbing images with their families around.

"Today's report shows the impact of COVID-19 on our content moderation and demonstrates that, while our technology for identifying and removing violating content is improving, there will continue to be areas where we rely on people to both review content and train our technology," Guy Rosen, Facebook's vice president of integrity, wrote in a blog post.

The company said Tuesday that it has since brought many reviewers

back to working online from home and, "where it is safe," a smaller number into offices.

"We want to ensure it's reviewed in a more controlled environment and that's why we started bringing a small number of reviewers where it's safe back into the office," said Rosen.

Rosen added that improvements to its technology enabled it to take action on more content in some areas, and increase proactive detection rate in others.

"Our proactive detection rate for hate speech on Facebook increased 6 points from 89% to 95%. In turn, the amount of content we took action on increased from 9.6 million in Q1 to 22.5 million in Q2."

Just last week, Facebook took down a post from President Trump's personal page of a Fox News interview in which he said that children are "almost immune" from COVID-19.

It was the first time Facebook has removed a post by the president for violating its policies on COVID-19 misinformation.

The [company](#) is looking at an avalanche of hate speech of all types on its networks, said it was updating policies to "more specifically account" for certain kinds of implicit [hate speech](#), "such as content depicting blackface, or stereotypes about Jewish people controlling the world. Since October 2019, we've conducted 14 strategic network disruptions to remove 23 different banned organizations, over half of which supported white supremacy."

Late June, Facebook removed a network of accounts, groups and pages on Facebook and Instagram connected to the "boogaloo" anti-government movement that encourages violence in the United States.

The social media giant also designated boogaloo as a dangerous organization, giving it the same classification as terrorist and hate groups.

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