

New Facebook project aims to fight the spread of 'fake news'

January 11 2017



While Facebook has dismissed claims that it is a "media company," the social network announced a new project to boost the credibility of information it circulates

Facebook announced Wednesday the creation of a Journalism Project aimed at fostering "a healthy news ecosystem" and curbing the spread of fake news.

The move comes with the world's leading social network under intense pressure for allowing misinformation to flourish and sometimes go viral, with some critics claiming fake news affected the US presidential election.

While Facebook has dismissed claims that it is a "media company," the social network said its new effort aims to boost credibility of information it circulates.

"We know that our community values sharing and discussing ideas and news, and as a part of our service, we care a great deal about making sure that a healthy news ecosystem and journalism can thrive," project director Fidji Simo said in a blog post.

"That's why today we're announcing a new program to establish stronger ties between Facebook and the news industry."

Simo said the project will mean "collaborating with news organizations to develop products, learning from journalists about ways we can be a better partner, and working with publishers and educators on how we can equip people with the knowledge they need to be informed readers in the digital age."

One of the elements will involve development of "new storytelling formats" and other ways to help news partners.

Part of this will include "hackathons" often used by Facebook, with developers from [news organizations](#) "to collaborate to identify opportunities and hack solutions."

A second element will include "training and tools for journalists" that will help them use live video and other ways to connect with audiences.

The third element will be public education on "news literacy" and other efforts to help people determine news credibility.

Promoting news literacy

"We will work with third-party organizations on how to better understand and to promote news literacy both on and off our platform to help people in our community have the information they need to make decisions about which sources to trust," Simo said.

As part of this, Facebook will run public service ads in collaboration with the nonprofit News Literacy Project that will help people determine the veracity of [news](#) stories, and will work on research with Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism.

Simo said Facebook would continue efforts announced last month to "disrupt the financial incentives" for websites that create [fake news](#).

"This problem is much bigger than any one platform, and it's important for all of us to work together to minimize its reach," she said.

"This is just the beginning of our effort on that front—we have much more to do. The Facebook Journalism Project Page will serve as a hub for our efforts to promote and support journalism on Facebook."

© 2017 AFP

Citation: New Facebook project aims to fight the spread of 'fake news' (2017, January 11) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-01-facebook-aims-fake-news.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.