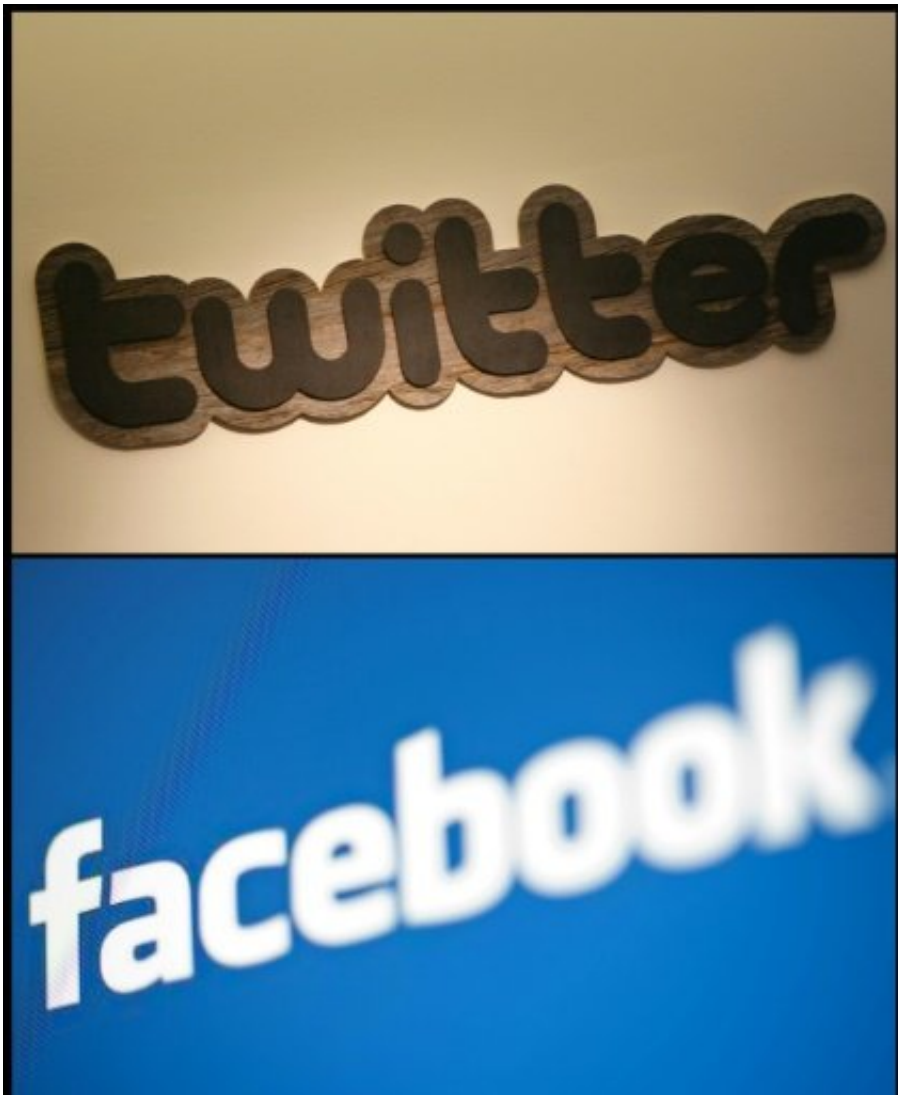


Facebook moves toward revealing political ad backers

October 28 2017



Facebook has joined Twitter in announcing new transparency steps to allow people to know the source of political ads on the social networks

Facebook said Friday it would take steps to deliver on a promise to reveal backers of political advertisements to boost transparency in the wake of criticism of the social network's role in the 2016 US election.

The leading social platform said it will begin testing and refining political ad [transparency](#) tools next month in Canada, with a goal of having them in place in the US before elections next year.

Under the plan unveiled by Facebook vice president Rob Goldman, people will be able to click "view ads" on a page to determine the source.

"Transparency helps everyone, especially political watchdog groups and reporters, keep advertisers accountable for who they say they are and what they say to different groups," Goldman said in a blog post.

"People should be able to tell who the advertiser is and see the ads they're running, especially for political ads, That level of transparency is good for democracy and it's good for the electoral process."

Facebook founder and chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said in a separate post this is more transparency than required for other media.

"We're making all ads more transparent, not just political ads," Zuckerberg said.

Additionally, he noted that political advertisers "will now have to provide more information to verify their identity."

Facebook in September announced a plan to increase "transparency" regarding political advertising and hire more than 1,000 people to thwart deceptive ads crafted to knock elections off course including "dark" messages crafted for specific demographic groups but invisible to others.

Facebook has turned over to Congress some 3,000 Russia-linked ads that appeared to use hot-button issues to turn people against one another ahead of last year's US election.

Facebook's second-ranking executive, Sheryl Sandberg, has acknowledged that "things happened on our platform in this [election](#) that should not have happened, especially foreign interference."

According to Facebook, some 10 million people may have viewed the ads placed by a Russian entity that appeared aimed at sowing division and mistrust.

Some 470 accounts spent a total of approximately \$100,000 between June 2015 to May 2017 on ads that touted fake or misleading news, according to Facebook.

Goldman said Canada is a "natural choice" to test the new system.

"Testing in one market allows us to learn the various ways an entire population uses the feature at a scale that allows us to learn and iterate," Goldman said.

Twitter this week unveiled similar steps that will disclose the sources of [political ads](#). The messaging platform separately said it would ban ads from Russia-based RT and Sputnik, accused of spreading disinformation during the 2016 campaign.

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Citation: Facebook moves toward revealing political ad backers (2017, October 28) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-10-facebook-revealing-political-ad-backers.html>

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