

Facebook apologizes for offensive autocomplete search results

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Facebook search was not safe for work or home on Thursday night.

Typing "video of" into the Facebook [search](#) bar yielded a disturbing result. The first autocomplete was "video of girl sucking d—."

Jonah Bennett, a graduate student, researcher and journalist, says he was tipped off to the search bar snafu by a friend. He shared it on Twitter where others got the same search results.

"Go to your Facebook search bar and type: [video](#) of," Bennett wrote on Twitter, "and see what results show up."

A couple of hours later, Facebook results were back to normal. But then Bennett tried the search in Spanish: "videos de..." and the second result was live sex videos.

Facebook said it's investigating why the search predictions appeared.

"We're very sorry this happened. As soon as we became aware of these offensive predictions we removed them," the company said in a statement to USA TODAY.

"Facebook search predictions are representative of what people may be searching for on Facebook and are not necessarily reflective of actual content on the platform," the statement said. "We do not allow sexually explicit imagery, and we are committed to keeping such content off of

our site."

Last week the giant social network was criticized for asking users whether pedophiles should be able to proposition underage girls for sexually explicit photographs on the giant social network.

Facebook wants to help users find what they are looking for amid the billions of status updates, photos and videos they post each day.

For years people mostly used the search bar to find other Facebook users. In 2014, Facebook turned the search bar into a tool to find what everyone's talking about. Type "Black Panther" or "Florida shooting" into the Facebook search bar and up pops what your friends and others are sharing on Facebook.

Now Facebook is encountering the challenges that have bedeviled Google, the leader in search, which has spent years cleaning up racist, sexist and other objectionable autocomplete results. For example, when users typed in the phrase, "are Jews," Google used to automatically suggest the question, "are Jews evil?"

The autocomplete results are usually what Google algorithms have learned that people want to know when they search for something. They're based, in part, on what other users have searched for. So Google has had to adjust the algorithm to banish autocomplete results that are violent, hateful, sexually explicit or dangerous, in violation of the company's rules.

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