

Facebook flags users who try to 'game' fact-checking effort

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Facebook says it has a ranking system that identifies users who "indiscriminately" flag fake news

Facebook acknowledged Tuesday it has developed tools to identify users "indiscriminately" flagging fake news as it refines its effort to combat

misinformation.

But the leading social network disputed as "just plain wrong" a Washington Post report that it has developed an overall "reputation score" for its users as part of the initiative.

Facebook said it has developed "a process to protect against people indiscriminately flagging news as fake and attempting to game the system" which relies in part on how often a user reports something as fake despite verification by fact-checkers.

"The reason we do this is to make sure that our fight against misinformation is as effective as possible," Facebook said in a statement.

Users who report what appears to be bogus news are given a standard probability score of from zero to one depending on how reliable they are when it comes to reporting posts that are untrue, according to the social network.

The rating is one of many "signals" used to prioritize flagged posts sent to be reviewed by fact-checking teams.

But Facebook said the Post report was misleading because it did not create a "unified score" to rank the overall trustworthiness of its users.

Over the past 18 months, Facebook and other online platforms have stepped up efforts to combat the spread of false [news](#) with the intent to manipulate the platforms.

Part of the challenge battling bogus content is that some people [report](#) posts as false simply because they disagree with stories, or in efforts to wrongly discredit them, according to the social network.

Repeatedly reporting accurate information to be false at Facebook would skew a users reliability rating toward zero in the ranking system.

Facebook last month shut down 32 fake pages and accounts involved in an apparent "coordinated" effort to stoke hot-button issues ahead of November midterm US elections.

The US intelligence community has concluded that Russia sought to sway the vote in Donald Trump's favor, and Facebook was a primary tool in that effort, using targeted ads to escalate political tensions and push divisive online content.

Facebook has since made a priority of preventing the social [network](#) to be used to spread misleading or outright deceitful messages aimed at influencing politics.

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