

Report builds framework for 'digital political ethics' in 2020

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VOTE

YES NO



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With the 2020 elections looming and amid continuing concerns over

social media's role in U.S. politics, four top universities have published a comprehensive new report recommending how candidates, tech platforms and regulators can ensure that digital political campaigns promote and protect fair elections.

The report, "Digital Political Ethics: Aligning Principles with Practice," was developed by Johns Hopkins, Georgetown and Fordham universities and the University of North Carolina. Hopkins political scientist Adam Sheingate and his co-authors conducted extensive interviews with digital political consultants and executives from platforms such as Facebook to devise best practices for ethical online campaigning.

From those discussions four broad ethical principles emerged for how campaigns, platforms, and regulators handle digital campaigns: They should encourage [voter participation](#), protect [election](#) integrity, increase transparency, and ensure fairness and consistency. The authors detail 12 recommendations—including a call for federal regulations—to achieve those goals.

For example: Digital campaigns should not use hacked or stolen materials or accept help from foreign agents. Platforms should not ban political advertising, as Twitter did last year. And campaigns making exaggerated claims should provide proof just as TV ads are required to do by federal regulations that do not exist yet for digital efforts.

The report covers a variety of issues critical to the 2020 elections: microtargeting on Facebook, government regulation of online ads, data transparency practices of Facebook and Google, security of voter data, and the role of misinformation.

Absent any current regulatory oversight power, the authors encourage journalists to use these ethical [best practices](#) when examining the digital practices of campaigns.

More information: Digital Political Ethics: Aligning Principles with Practice: citapdigitalpolitics.com/?page_id=1911

Provided by Johns Hopkins University

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