

Google vows fix for 'inappropriate' search results

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Google has a "feedback" link to flag or remove inappropriate content from its search results

Google said Monday it was working to fix a search algorithm glitch that produced "inappropriate and misleading" results from its search engine and connected speaker.

The internet giant reacted after a blog post highlighted unsubstantiated search results indicating former president Barack Obama was planning a "coup d'etat" and that four former US presidents were members of the Ku Klux Klan.

The weekend post from Search Engine Land editor Danny Sullivan found Google delivered "terribly wrong" answers to some queries in its "one true answer" box at the top of search results and in queries to its Google Home speaker.

"The problematic examples I review don't appear to have been deliberate attempts," Sullivan wrote. "Rather, they seem to be the result of Google's algorithms and machine learning making bad selections."

Sullivan said when he asked the speaker if US

Republicans were the same as Nazis, it answered in the affirmative.

Similarly, he cited an example in which Google's [search engine](#) listed four former US presidents as "active and known" KKK members, even though there has been no conclusive historical evidence supporting that.

The news comes amid a growing controversy over "fake news" circulating online via Google or Facebook, and efforts by the internet giants to weed out hoaxes and misinformation.

In a statement to AFP, Google said its boxed results at the top of a search query, known as "featured snippets," are based on an algorithmic formula.

"Unfortunately, there are instances when we feature a site with inappropriate or misleading content," Google's statement said.

"When we are alerted to a featured snippet that violates our policies, we work quickly to remove them, which we have done in this instance. We apologize for any offense this may have caused."

Google also noted it includes a "feedback" link under these snippets that can allow the search giant to flag or remove inappropriate content.

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