Facebook adds new tools to stem online bullying

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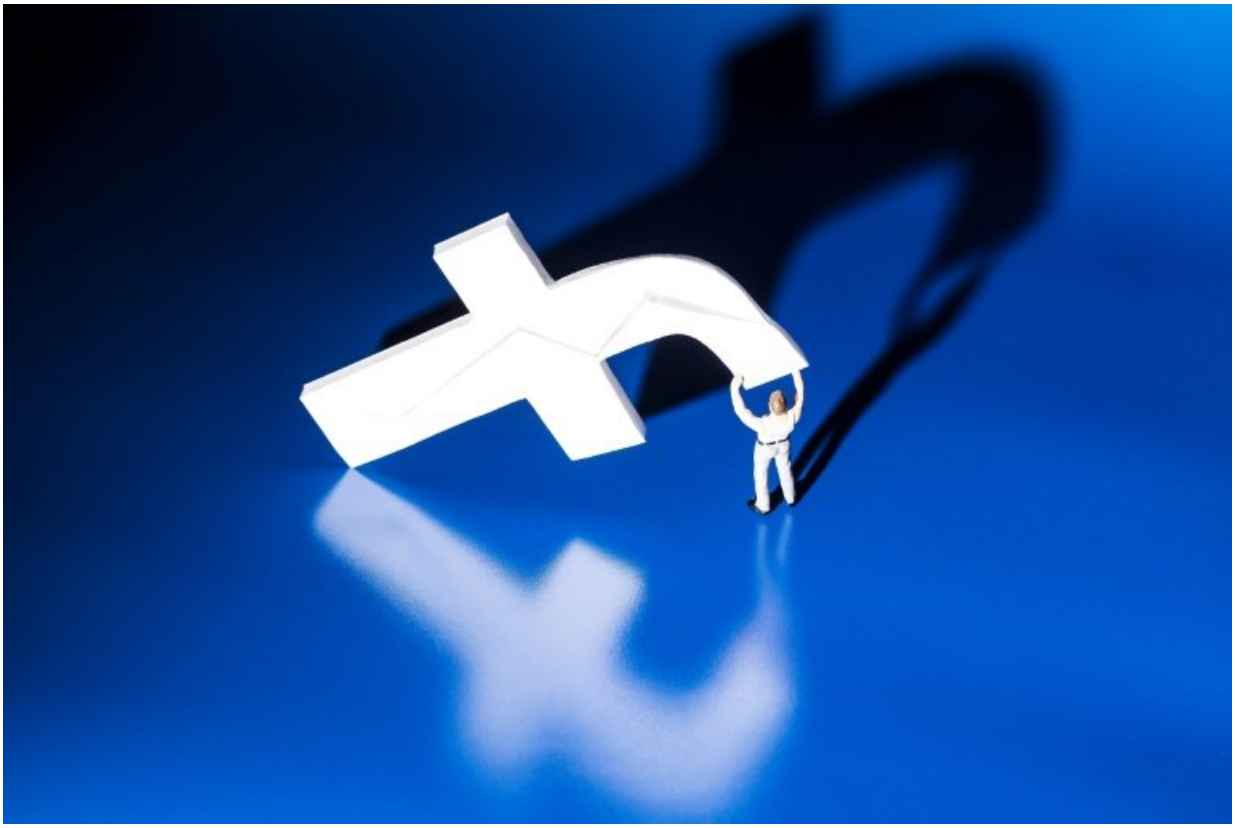

Facebook says it will add new tools to help users avoid unwanted or hurtful comments, amid growing concerns about cyberbullying on social networks

Facebook on Tuesday stepped up ways to battle bullying and harassment at the leading social network.

The initiative calls for new tools and programs to help users control "unwanted, offensive or hurtful experiences on Facebook," global head of safety Antigone Davis said in a blog post.

"Everyone deserves to feel safe on Facebook," Davis said.

Facebook users will be able to hide or delete groups of comments, including responses, instead of having to remove them one at a time, according to Davis.

The feature was rolling out on desktop computers and Android-powered mobile devices, and promised to reach versions of the application on Apple gadgets in coming months.

Facebook also began letting people report bullying or harassment on behalf of friends reluctant to complain to the social network themselves.

"Being the target of unwanted attention can be stressful and some people may not feel comfortable reporting a bully or harasser," Davis said.

"If you see a friend or family member being bullied or harassed, now you can report someone on their behalf."

A team at Facebook reviews complaints to determine whether reported posts violate policies at the social network.

An appeals process implemented earlier this year regarding photos, videos, or posts taken down due to hateful, violent, or sexually explicit content will extend to decisions regarding bullying, according to Facebook.

"You will soon be able to ask for a further review if you report a piece of content for bullying or harassment and you think we made a mistake

in determining whether it violates our policies," Davis said.

Facebook is also testing ways to let users search for or block words considered offensive in comment sections of their posts.

A majority of US teenagers say they have been victims of online harassment or bullying, and that social media companies aren't doing enough to fight the problem, a recent survey showed.

The Pew Research Center survey found that 59 percent of US teens reported being bullied or harassed online, and 63 percent said it was a major problem for people their age.

"Name-calling and rumor-spreading have long been an unpleasant and challenging aspect of adolescent life," said Monica Anderson, the lead researcher for the Pew report.

"But, the proliferation of smartphones and the rise of social media has transformed where, when and how bullying takes place,"

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