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Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube collaborate to remove 'terrorist content' from their services

Posted Dec 5, 2016 by [Sarah Perez \(@sarahintampa\)](#)



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Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube today announced they would cooperate on a plan to

help limit the spread of terrorist content online. The companies said that together they will create a shared industry database that will be used to identify this content, including what they describe as the “most extreme and egregious terrorist images and videos” that have been removed from their respective services.

Facebook describes how this database will work in an [announcement](#) in its newsroom. The content will be hashed using unique digital fingerprints, which is how its identification and removal can be handled more easily and efficiently by the company’s computer systems and algorithms.

Using a database of hashed images is the same way that organizations keep child pornography off their services. Essentially, a piece of content is given a unique identifier. If any copies of that file are analyzed, they will also produce this same hash value. Similar systems are also used to identify copyright-protected files.

However, where this new project differs is that the terrorist images and videos will not be automatically removed when content is found to match something in the database. Instead, the individual companies will determine how and when content is removed based on their own policies, and how they choose to define terrorist content.

That could quell claims of censorship, but, on the flip side, if the companies aren’t quick to respond, it could mean the images and videos have a chance to circulate and be viewed before they’re pulled down.

Facebook also notes that personal information will not be shared, though it didn't say that this information is not collected. The government can still go through legal means to find out from which accounts the content originated, and other info as before. The companies will continue to make their own determinations about how they handle those government requests and when those requests are disclosed.

The new database will be continually updated as the companies uncover new terrorist images or videos which can then be hashed and added to this shared resource.

While the effort is beginning with the top social networks, the larger goal is to make this database available to other companies in the future, Facebook says.

“We hope this collaboration will lead to greater efficiency as we continue to enforce our policies to help curb the pressing global issue of terrorist content online,” states the post.

Given the recent discussions about the spread of fake news on social media, one hopes this new collaboration could potentially pave a path for the companies working together on other initiatives going forward.

The problem of false news also damages all of social media, and has raised questions about what role should the companies play in battling that content. There are some who would claim that these companies have no business being arbitrators of the news or what's right and wrong — and companies themselves would be glad to be “dumb” platforms, as well, in order to escape

their responsibility in the matter.

However, because of their outsized influence on today's web, these companies are beginning to wake up to the fact that they will be held accountable for the content shared on their platforms, given that content has the ability to influence everything from terrorist acts **to how people perceive the world** and even politics on a global scale.

FEATURED IMAGE: MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP



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OVERVIEW

Microsoft is an American multinational corporation that develops, manufactures, licenses, supports, and sells a range of software products and services. Microsoft's devices and consumer (D&C) licensing segment licenses Windows operating system and related software; Microsoft Office for consumers; and Windows Phone

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Nelson Monteiro · Brownsboro, Texas

I reposted a pic of Dick Cheney as a real dickhead, that I got from Facebook to begin with, and was blocked for posting for 30 days for sexually explicit material. I report Asian porn with a naked woman sitting with her penis in her vagina and it doesn't violate Facebook community standards. Something is very wrong with Facebook and it's getting worse not better. Clearly there is an agenda beyond the delusion they are qualified to lead the members what is truth and censor it out whatever they deem isn't true. They are attacking the first amendment. After the first amendment is destroyed, the second amendment is next.

Like · Reply ·  2 · Dec 5, 2016 7:02pm



Thomas Payne

Its called social engineering. The theory that you can control human behavior by control the information allowed to see. Explicitly saying that politically 1984 and Fahrenheit 451 are correct and responsible.

Like · Reply ·  1 · Dec 6, 2016 4:17am



Thomas Payne

Yeah 451 will meet Democrat goal of getting Arsonists and murders out jail and giving them some productive jobs burn books and the people who read them.

Like · Reply ·  1 · Dec 6, 2016 4:19am



BBSNews

Thomas Payne As you know it is the "conservatives" in this country who are the book burners produce a single progressive who supports the suppression of speech. Indeed in this country receives the highest protections of all. I think the Dick Cheney image case is actionable, it is censorship of political speech.

Your straw man is burning.

Like · Reply ·  1 · Dec 6, 2016 7:29am



Alan Carre · Works at Sportsinsurance.com

This is exactly how China describes their censorship motives and technology. I mean word for word.

Like · Reply · 1 · Dec 5, 2016 7:31pm



Nelson Monteiro · Brownsboro, Texas

They say they want to curtail terrorism but censorship is passive/aggressive terrorism and an amendment.

Like · Reply · Dec 5, 2016 9:10pm



Abanikanda Olagunju

Nice way to stop the guys from killing humanity. I think Google should also contribute.

Like · Reply · Dec 5, 2016 9:16pm



Allaiyah Weyn · Cadet at Trull's Inflammatorium

Does this include pro-BLM posts?

Like · Reply · Dec 5, 2016 11:05pm



Robert Sanders

They cant even stop people from hacking accounts. WTF

Like · Reply · 1 · Dec 6, 2016 4:01am



Thomas Payne

Info about weapons removed check. News that incites anger removed check. Conflicting opinions removed check. History that conflicts with current political wishes removed check.

Worked in Stalin's USSR right?

Point is "liberals" tend to go too far -- past what is necessary after noting it helps social engineer the o want to see.

Like · Reply · Dec 6, 2016 4:12am



Thomas Payne

want gun control? Just remove all mention of guns from Internet and its essential done right? Theory: vote yes as requested by on any topic they no longer understand.

Like · Reply · Dec 6, 2016 4:15am



Clayton Emery · Works at Cap's Hobby Shop

Have to laugh at people who claim "censorship". FB, Twitter, and Youtube are FREE services provided by corporations. They OWN the networks and can remove / delete / kill / "censor" whatever content they want.

Understand where you are posting your cat videos or jihadist rants, people. If you feel censored, get your own network. "The power of the press belongs to the guy who owns one."

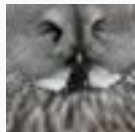
Like · Reply · Dec 6, 2016 4:36am



Duff Cleveland

Hopefully this will start the end of Facebook and Microsoft. Their products have always been used against freedom.

Like · Reply ·  1 · Dec 6, 2016 7:33am



Ilya Kutukov · Software Engineer at Mirantis

These companies are terrorists by themselves because inducing my terror and fear controlling my data and feeding me awful informational crap. Why not to set business suicide as a final goal instead of fiction?

Like · Reply · Dec 6, 2016 7:34am



Chris Dickman · Horsefly, British Columbia

It's censorship, any way you look at it. What constitutes "terrorism" could easily be extended to include protests. Think of pipelines, for example.

Like · Reply · Dec 6, 2016 9:35am



Михаил Литюга

How about russian propaganda content? Facebook still licking poor in ass?

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Posted Dec 5, 2016

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Product Marketing Manager at RocketSpace (San Francisco, CA, United States)

Chief Technology Officer at Stealth Mode Internet Start-Up (New York, NY, United States)

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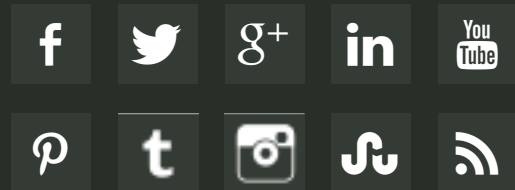
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