# Who wants Democrats Facebook to decide what's true and whats false on their behalf?

If you live in a city you may have seen Facebook's offline ad campaign reassuring the public they are clamping down on "fake news". This is part of a wider effort to try to repair the company's battered reputation due to recent privacy scandals and the misuse of user's data. But who actually wants Facebook to start deciding what's "true" and what's "false" on their behalf? Are users not confident to decide this on their own?

What you see on Facebook is your choice. The content is user-generated and your feed is based on of who are you friends with and which pages you follow. My Facebook feed for example contains almost no news articles or political content, it's just personal posts from friends and acquaintances. This is because I use Facebook to communicate with distant friends, and that's pretty much it. If someone else's feed is filled with conspiracy theories and sensationalist news articles, then in all likelihood that's the kind of content they *want*. Your feed on any social media platform contains whatever you want it to. But Facebook has decided they will take it upon themselves to filter out the "wrong" content *for* you. They won't give you what you want if it's "incorrect", because they're the Silicon Valley elites and they know better than you do.

It's worth mentioning that Facebook already has options to "unfollow" someone, so you'll remain friends but won't see their posts, and to "hide" a post, which means Facebook will show you fewer posts of that sort in the future. So if you're friends with someone who constantly posts low quality fake news there is already a way to filter those posts out of your feed. But that's not enough. Whatever Facebook considers to be "fake news" needs to be removed whether users want it or not.

That last sentence is not actually true. What Facebook considers to be "fake news" is for the most part not removed. It's actually worse than that. The algorithms reduce the reach of this content instead, which means you can still post it... but not many people will be able to see it. This is shadowbanning, and the reason it's worse is because you have no way of knowing whether content you post has been penalised, and to what degree. Did that post you made not get many likes because your friends/followers didn't find it interesting? Or did 80% of them not see it because it was penalised by an algorithm? You don't know. You can't trust Facebook to deliver your content to your followers. Therefore the only options you have are to self-censor and avoid controversial topics, or leave for another social network which does not engage in these practises.

As a business if you don't give customers what they want you'll lose them. They'll go to other platforms. Without government intervention no business is too big to fail, and Facebook is no exception. Since 2016 their traffic has halved as Gen-Z are preferring mobile-only platforms such as Snapchat where they have some privacy and won't be on the same network as their parents. Facebook is no longer the popular choice for young people to socialize. Nor is it a place for free and open discussion,

with "fact-checkers" deciding what's true and false for you. So what *is* it good for these days? Not much.

It can be hard to tell whether the policies of big businesses are ideological or driven by pressure from the state. Social networks have largely avoided government regulation thus far, and Facebook's own video on fake news included a clip from some politician saying that if they don't do something about fake news "we'll do it for you". There is always a case to be made that big businesses pursue these kind of policies not because they believe in them but because they are afraid of the political and regulatory repercussions. However in Facebook's case it's likely their war on fake news is ideologically driven, given their workplace culture which attacks and surpasses anyone who doesn't conform to hard-leftist ideology. And regulation of social media would likely help Facebook more than hurt them, as the regulations would apply to all social networks therefore putting Facebook on a more even playing field with its competitors. At present only the big social media companies are engaged in censorship, thus they can lose to smaller competitors who utilise free speech to attract users. This has already started happening, and unless they change their policies it will be sure to continue.