

## **New Discovery in Missouri v. Biden – Flaherty Directing Censorship for White House**

By

[Tracy Beanz](#)

Undercoverdc.com

January 10, 2023

Some recent discovery has been [released](#) in the Missouri v. Biden case, namely from Rob Flaherty, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Digital Strategy. If you are unaware of what may be the most important civil liberties case in the modern era, you can follow our previous reporting [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Quick recap: This case is the MOST IMPORTANT civil liberties case we have seen in years and maybe the most important ever. The case is brought by Missouri and Louisiana, along with other individual plaintiffs. It asks the court to bar the government from colluding with social media companies to limit free speech.

They originally wanted to depose Flaherty, who was added to the suit in an amended complaint after expedited discovery revealed that he was ALSO involved in censorship activities. The judge granted that depo, but the 5th circuit (on mandamus) wanted the judge to reconsider because they hadn't taken written interrogatory and discovery yet. These releases are a product of that discovery.

A few highlights? Sure. At the behest of the White House, Facebook was deamplifying and demoting vaccine injured patients from sharing their experiences even though the posts didn't break terms of service. I detail this a lot more below. Additionally, Twitter refused to remove a post at the request of the office of Jill Biden, and really took a lashing. Also, did you know they were even censoring on WhatsApp?

This is really terrible and is exactly the kind of thing the government denies it did but clearly is doing. These are case winners here. Twitter responds to Flaherty, telling him they are taking action on a tweet by [@RobertKennedyJR](#), and Flaherty asks to look at others like it.

CONFIDENTIAL

---

**From:** [REDACTED]@twitter.com]  
**Sent:** 1/23/2021 1:08:36 AM  
**To:** Humphrey, Clarke EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov]  
**CC:** [REDACTED]@twitter.com]; Flaherty, Robert EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Flagging Hank Aaron misinfo

Thanks. We recently escalated this.

On Fri, Jan 22, 2021 at 8:05 PM Humphrey, Clarke EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov wrote:  
Hey folks —

Wanted to flag the below tweet and am wondering if we can get moving on the process for having it removed ASAP:

<https://twitter.com/RobertKennedyJr/status/1352748139665645569>

And then if we can keep an eye out for tweets that fall in this same ~genre that would be great.

Thanks!  
Clarke

--

-

[REDACTED]  
Twitter, Inc. | Public Policy  
[@TwitterGov](#) & [@Policy](#)

---

This is pretty damning. Here Flaherty is scolding Facebook about content from accounts he disagrees with. They clearly want the vaccine “hesitant” to *only* get positive information on the shot. Think about this in context and from what we have known the entire time. Chilling.

---

**From:** [REDACTED]@fb.com]  
**Sent:** 4/14/2021 5:23:05 PM  
**To:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov]  
**CC:** Slavitt, Andrew M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: tucker

Thanks—I saw the same thing when we hung up. Running this down now.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

**From:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 14, 2021 1:10:41 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@fb.com>  
**Cc:** Slavitt, Andrew M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Subject:** tucker

Since we've been on the phone – the top post about vaccines today is tucker Carlson saying they don't work. Yesterday was Tomi Lehren saying she won't take one. This is exactly why I want to know what "Reduction" actually looks like –if "reduction" means "pumping our most vaccine hesitant audience with tucker Carlson saying it doesn't work" then...I'm not sure it's reduction!

**Rob Flaherty**  
Director of Digital Strategy  
The White House  
Cell: [REDACTED]

There is just *no reason* for the White House and the POTUS to be involved in what social media platforms are doing to censor information that the White House doesn't want Americans to see. It's just completely unconstitutional, and the brazen manner in which this occurs is something.

getting people to get vaccinated, we'll be in the barrel together here. We've worked with a number of platform partners to track down similar information based on internal data, including partners of similar scale. I am feeling a bit like I don't have a full sense of the picture here. We speak with other platforms on a semi-regular basis. We'd love to get in this habit with you. Perhaps bi-weekly?

Looking forward to more conversation.

-Rob

**Rob Flaherty**

Director of Digital Strategy

The White House

Cell: [REDACTED]

---

**From:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 4/22/2021 12:05:16 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@google.com; [REDACTED]@google.com; [REDACTED]@google.com; [REDACTED]@google.com; [REDACTED]@google.com; [REDACTED]@google.com  
**CC:** Slavitt, Andrew M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov; Humphrey, Clarke EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov; Fitzpatrick, Kelsey V. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov  
**Subject:** Following Up on Today's Conversation

All – Thanks again for the conversation today.

We'll look out for the top trends that you've seen in terms of misinformation around the vaccine.

To recap: As we move away from a supply problem toward a demand problem, we remain concerned that Youtube is "funneling" people into hesitancy and intensifying people's hesitancy. We certainly recognize that removing content that is unfavorable to the cause of increasing vaccine adoption is not a realistic – or even good – solution. But we want to be sure that you have a handle on vaccine hesitancy generally and are working toward making the problem better. This is a concern that is shared at the highest (and I mean highest) levels of the WH, so we'd like to continue a good-faith dialogue about what is going on under the hood here. I'm the on the hook for reporting out.

Just before we were meeting, [this article from BuzzFeed popped](#), highlighting the Youtube misinformation that is spreading through the Vietnamese community. I think this brings up a question that I had in our first meeting about your capabilities around misinformation in non-english-speaking communities. Clearly, more work to be done here. Would love to get some insights from you on how you are tackling this problem across all languages – how your enforcement has differed in languages and what your road map to improvement is.

A couple of other things it would be good to have from you all:

- As mentioned up top, the top trends that you're seeing in terms of misinformation/hesitancy inducing content

A couple of other things it would be good to have from you all:

- As mentioned up top, the top trends that you're seeing in terms of misinformation/hesitance inducing content (Stanford has mentioned that it's recently Vaccine Passports and J&J pause-related stuff, but I'm not sure if that reflects what you're seeing)
- A deeper dive on reduction and its effectiveness. It's helpful that you mentioned that watch time is your key metric. I believe you said you reduced watch time by 70% on "borderline" content, which is impressive. Obviously, the term "borderline" is moveable, but taking it for what it is: How does that track with vaccine-related content specifically (removing the "UFO stuff"). What has the comparative reduction in watch time on "borderline" vaccine topics been after your interventions? And what has the increase in watch time been on authoritative information?
- I appreciated your unequivocal response that you are not recommending anti-vaccine content and you are lifting authoritative information in both search and recommendations to all audiences. Related to the second bullet: to what extent have your ranking interventions been effective there? And, perhaps more critically, to what degree is content from people who have been given a "strike" still being recommended and shown in prominent search positions?
- I feel like I am not coming away with a very clear picture of how you're measuring the effectiveness of uplifting authoritative information. I obviously buy the theory – but how did you arrive on info-panels as the best intervention? And to what extent are people clicking through after exposure to vaccine-hesitant content? What are you doing mechanically to boost the authoritative information? When you have relevant influencers speak to experts, I imagine (hope?) it's not just putting the content out there and that you're recommending it to people for whom it would be most relevant. How does that work?
- What are the general vectors by which people see the "borderline" content – or really just vaccine-skeptical content? Is it largely through recommendations? Search?

We are excited to continuing partnering with you on this work as we have via [REDACTED] but we want to make sure that the work extends to the broader problem. Needless to say, in a couple of weeks when we're having trouble

MOLA\_DEFSPROD\_00018147

These emails with YouTube are so informative I want to take them one at a time. How is YouTube handling the de-amplification of "hesitancy" themed video content for the Vietnamese community? You would think he was the CEO of YouTube reading these.

---

**From:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 4/22/2021 12:05:16 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@google.com; [REDACTED]@google.com; [REDACTED]@google.com; [REDACTED]@google.com; [REDACTED]@google.com; [REDACTED]@google.com  
**CC:** Slavitt, Andrew M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov; Humphrey, Clarke EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov; Fitzpatrick, Kelsey V. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov  
**Subject:** Following Up on Today's Conversation

All – Thanks again for the conversation today.

We'll look out for the top trends that you've seen in terms of misinformation around the vaccine.

To recap: As we move away from a supply problem toward a demand problem, we remain concerned that Youtube is "funneling" people into hesitance and intensifying people's hesitancy. We certainly recognize that removing content that is unfavorable to the cause of increasing vaccine adoption is not a realistic – or even good – solution. But we want to be sure that you have a handle on vaccine hesitancy generally and are working toward making the problem better. This is a concern that is shared at the highest (and I mean highest) levels of the WH, so we'd like to continue a good-faith dialogue about what is going on under the hood here. I'm the on the hook for reporting out.

Just before we were meeting, [this article from BuzzFeed popped](#), highlighting the Youtube misinformation that is spreading through the Vietnamese community. I think this brings up a question that I had in our first meeting about your capabilities around misinformation in non-english-speaking communities. Clearly, more work to be done here. Would love to get some insights from you on how you are tackling this problem across all languages – how your enforcement has differed in languages and what your road map to improvement is.

A couple of other things it would be good to have from you all:

- As mentioned up top, the top trends that you're seeing in terms of misinformation/hesitance inducing content

Again, Flaherty is acting like the CEO of "Trust and Safety" at YouTube here. He's asking all sorts of questions about how their algorithms work and "appreciates they are not recommending anti-vaccine content."

Beanz interpretation: "How did you arrive at your solution for this YouTube? I'd like to know."

A couple of other things it would be good to have from you all:

- As mentioned up top, the top trends that you're seeing in terms of misinformation/hesitance inducing content (Stanford has mentioned that it's recently Vaccine Passports and J&J pause-related stuff, but I'm not sure if that reflects what you're seeing)
- A deeper dive on reduction and its effectiveness. It's helpful that you mentioned that watch time is your key metric. I believe you said you reduced watch time by 70% on "borderline" content, which is impressive. Obviously, the term "borderline" is moveable, but taking it for what it is: How does that track with vaccine-related content specifically (removing the "UFO stuff"). What has the comparative reduction in watch time on "borderline" vaccine topics been after your interventions? And what has the increase in watch time been on authoritative information?
- I appreciated your unequivocal response that you are not recommending anti-vaccine content and you are lifting authoritative information in both search and recommendations to all audiences. Related to the second bullet: to what extent have your ranking interventions been effective there? And, perhaps more critically, to what degree is content from people who have been given a "strike" still being recommended and shown in prominent search positions?
- I feel like I am not coming away with a very clear picture of how you're measuring the effectiveness of uplifting authoritative information. I obviously buy the theory – but how did you arrive on info-panels as the best intervention? And to what extent are people clicking through after exposure to vaccine-hesitant content? What are you doing mechanically to boost the authoritative information? When you have relevant influencers speak to experts, I imagine (hope?) it's not just putting the content out there and that you're recommending it to people for whom it would be most relevant. How does that work?
- What are the general vectors by which people see the "borderline" content – or really just vaccine-skeptical content? Is it largely through recommendations? Search?

We are excited to continuing partnering with you on this work as we have via [REDACTED] but we want to make sure that the work extends to the broader problem. Needless to say, in a couple of weeks when we're having trouble

MOLA\_DEFSPROD\_00018147

Beanz interpretation: "Let's make sure everyone is vaccinated, and let's make sure that we meet more regularly, McKay?"

In my opinion, knowing what we know now, this is because the more people vaccinated, the less they can hide what is happening to the vaccinated...

getting people to get vaccinated, we'll be in the barrel together here. We've worked with a number of platform partners to track down similar information based on internal data, including partners of similar scale. I am feeling a bit like I don't have a full sense of the picture here. We speak with other platforms on a semi-regular basis. We'd love to get in this habit with you. Perhaps bi-weekly?

Looking forward to more conversation.

-Rob

**Rob Flaherty**  
Director of Digital Strategy  
The White House  
Cell: [REDACTED]

Here is yet another set where Flaherty is acting more like a supervisor and less like an employee of the U.S. citizen. I am taking this chain one by one. Flaherty is in RED, Facebook is in BLUE, and the original text is also Facebook in response to questions from Flaherty. None of this is ok. Off we go.

Understand first, WhatsApp is a *chat* application where people converse with one another or in small groups. This is the level of control they are looking for over your conversations. Additionally, this may

be new information on what the company is doing in terms of censorship.

---

**From:** [REDACTED]@fb.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 9, 2021 2:16 PM  
**To:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Follow up--WA responses

Hi Rob,

Wanted to follow up on your additional questions about WhatsApp -- responses to your questions embedded in line and in blue below, along with a few attachments that are discussed in-line. Happy to discuss further.

Also—happy to schedule our next session with [REDACTED] for Monday if you're interested. I know she was hoping to bring her colleague [REDACTED] to brainstorm on some ideas with you and Courtney. We can do this Monday or anytime next week.

MOLA\_DEFSPROD\_00017549

---

CONFIDENTIAL

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

-----

~~We also wanted to follow up on your questions about WhatsApp. For size you've already attuned to this~~

Who feels like this is just fine for a one-to-one chat application that is used by people because they bill it as a secure encrypted place to chat? Sure, they can't read your messages, but they can still (and do) control the conversation.

You're right that without being able to see the content of messages on WhatsApp, we're not able to measure prevalence (and, relatedly, reduction) of particular types of content. WhatsApp seeks to control the spread of misinformation and inform users through deliberate, content-agnostic product interventions -- things like labeling and limiting message forwards. The underlying idea there is that messages that did not originate from a close contact are less personal compared to typical messages sent on WhatsApp, and may be more prone to contain misinformation. The labels ("forwarded"; and "forwarded many times" if the message has been forwarded five times or more) are intended to prompt people to stop and think when they are reading a message and before they forward something, which may not be accurate. The forward limits (no more than five chats at a time; one chat a time for highly forwarded messages), are intended to reduce their spread. As mentioned in my earlier note, when WhatsApp rolled out the limitation for highly forwarded messages to one chat at a time in April 2020, this resulted in a 70% reduction of those messages globally. Of course, not all forwards are misinformation, so these are by nature somewhat blunt tools, but they are important ones -- and ones that many other messaging services don't provide.

A few additional things to note:

1. WhatsApp also employs best-in-class spam detection technology to **spot accounts engaging in mass messaging behavior, so they can't be used to spread spam or viral misinformation.** We ban over 2 million accounts per month for bulk messaging behavior, 75% of them without a recent user report, which means our automated systems stop abuse before users can report them. (This [white paper](#) describes these systems in further detail.)

**We have a thing where we can't click links from emails -- can you send me the white paper?**  
[White Paper is attached in PDF to this email.](#)

It's all in the words they use. They've attempted to co-opt the English language. Here they talk about how they are "empowering" people to seek out "reliable" sources of info. Flaherty wants to know how actions on *this* platform wrap around to other Meta properties.

A digital censorship trail.

A receipt list.

This isn't a CEO of Facebook or a product lead; this is the White House—an unelected, appointed bureaucrat.

2. Another aspect of what WhatsApp does -- again without accessing the content of messages -- is to **provide tools to empower users to seek out reliable sources of information**. One way we've done this in the product is through a "search the web" feature we rolled out last August, which allows users to easily double check highly forwarded messages they receive on WhatsApp by tapping a magnifying glass button in the chat to initiate a web search on their device browser. This helps users find news results or other sources of authoritative information about messages they have received from outside their close contacts -- and is available in English, Spanish, and other languages.

MOLA\_DEFSPROD\_00017550

CONFIDENTIAL

**Can you show me what this might look like? What kind of testing have you seen around effectiveness? Are there other tactics you've deployed? Does exposure to forwarded messages change in any way the kinds of positive information they're exposed to on Facebook or Instagram?**

Flaherty is an unelected government bureaucrat who, again, is acting like some sort of high-level product manager at whatever social media company he is engaged with. Your tax dollars are hard at work for what appear to be petty tyrants.

Ah, yes. The "fact checkers" we all know don't really check any facts and are connected to Global establishment narratives, like those perpetrated by the WHO. Chatbots can tell people what to think. Remember, this is WHATSAPP.

3. WhatsApp also has partnerships with fact checking organizations, government agencies, and international organizations, like the WHO, around the world **to make authoritative information about COVID-19 and vaccines available via WhatsApp**. WhatsApp donated \$1M to the International Fact Checking Network (IFCN) to support the CoronaVirusFacts Alliance, which brought together more than 100 fact checkers in 70+ countries in 40+ languages. These organizations have produced 9,000+ unique fact checks, all of which are accessible through a global fact-checking bot jointly created by the IFCN and WhatsApp.

#### **How do they make the information available?**

COVID-19 information is made available on WhatsApp by WHO, government health ministries, and third-party fact checkers through our WhatsApp Business API solution, which supports two-way conversational messaging and one-way notifications. These organizations access our API through approved business solutions providers (BSPs) to build chatbots on the WhatsApp Business API that are capable of returning automated responses to user queries. We support government partners by waiving WhatsApp fees associated with the API and making available Facebook ads credits to publicize these chatbots. For some fact checkers, we cover the BSP and end client costs through annual grants.

Users click on a link on the organization's website to open the chat or text "hi" to the chatbot's phone number. This brings them to a greeting message where they are presented with options to search for information on a COVID-related topic, access latest fact checks, or get tips to fight misinformation, among other things. The requested information is then provided in a variety of ways.

The WHO Health Alert on WhatsApp, for example, provides information about how vaccines work and how they are tested as a text message in response to a user query. It also provides users with links to videos of WHO's "Science in 5" series where scientists discuss commonly asked questions about the Covid-19 Vaccines. The latest edition of this discussion is also sent to the user's chat as an audio clip for ease of access.

The IFCN chatbot which leverages the CoronaVirusFacts Alliance database of COVID-19 misinformation allows users to search for fact checks based on keywords and will provide the latest fact-

Don't think this is just about COVID. Flaherty is also concerned about election-related "misinformation" floating about in user conversations on WhatsApp. Remember, WhatsApp is a chat application, where you talk to your friends, family, or group of friends. It seems to be very important to them that they are in your virtual living room.

4. We're very cognizant of WhatsApp's use among immigrant communities in the U.S. and we're **focused on ensuring these sorts of resources noted above are available in Spanish as well as English.** During the 2020 election we partnered with Univision and Telemundo to make IFCN's election-related fact checks available in Spanish. Both Univision and Telemundo are now in the process of getting approved as certified IFCN fact checkers, which will enable them to set up their own Spanish-language fact checks directly on WhatsApp with financial support from Facebook. This will add to existing Spanish-language resources available via WhatsApp, including the search the web feature and the CoronaVirusFacts Alliance bot mentioned above.

**Is this true in other languages? I'm thinking specifically about languages that have prevalence in south Asian countries. And in the electoral context, what did you do there that worked and you're taking into this body of work?**

We encourage our partners to make their resources available as widely as possible. The IFCN CoronaVirusFacts Alliance chatbot is already available in the US in 4 languages - English, Hindi, Spanish and Portuguese. The Search the Web feature is currently available in English, Spanish, German, Italian and French; we have been working to expand the feature and it's available to South Asian language markets in Android Beta (~25M users) but the quality of search results is not yet high enough for a full launch.

US 2020 was the biggest fact checking effort that WhatsApp supported and we're pleased that these efforts have helped to spur progress in the broader fact checking ecosystem. The partnerships we built with Telemundo and Univision, helped lead to both companies establishing their own specialized Spanish-language fact checking units - *EL Detector* and *T Verifica*, respectively - and hiring data analysts and translators to aid their fact checking efforts.

We are also proud of the work that we did with IFCN during the US 2020 election to help create a consortium of fact checkers, which allowed these organizations to pool resources and scale their operations. We have been building on the success of this model elsewhere in the world - including in India where we have worked with six Indian fact checking organizations to build a similar coalition that will consolidate fact checks and trends on a common website.

One other initiative we are focused on are partnerships with governments, private healthcare providers, and pharmacies to support COVID-19 ~~vaccination efforts through chatbots~~ on WhatsApp. We've

This is fine. No, it isn't fine, it's unbelievable hubris.

- 5 **I guess I have the same question here as I do on Facebook on Instagram. Do you guys think you have this under control? You're obviously going to say yes to that, so I guess the real question is, as ever: how are you measuring success? Reduction in forwarding? Measured impact across Facebook properties?**

On WhatsApp, reduction in forwards is just one of the signals that we use to measure how well we are doing in reducing viral activity on our platform. We also ban accounts that engage in mass marketing or scam behaviors - including those that seek to exploit COVID-19 misinformation. Our efforts in this space are more comprehensive than anything that our peers in private messaging or SMS do, and we are constantly innovating to stay ahead of future challenges.

MOLA\_DEFSPROD\_0001755

---

CONFIDENTIAL

We also track engagement with some of the tools available on WhatsApp that provide access to fact checks and other authoritative sources of information. For instance, 3 billion messages related to COVID-19 have been sent by governments, nonprofits and international organizations to citizens through official WhatsApp chatbots, and over 300 million messages have been sent over COVID-19 vaccine helplines on WhatsApp during the 1st quarter of 2021.

“I want some assurances, based in data, that you are not doing the same thing again here.”

A few points. Who is he to demand assurances? He's a government employee. Also, if the “insurrection” was planned in large part on Facebook, why didn't they meet the same fate as Parler?

---

**From:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Date:** Friday, April 9, 2021 at 2:56 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@fb.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Follow up--WA responses

Thanks for this, [REDACTED] Hoor should be trying to land a time.

Will say I'm really mostly interested in what effects the interventions and products you've tested have had on increasing vaccine interest within hesitant communities, and which ones have shown promise. Really couldn't care less about products unless they're having measurable impact. And while the product safari has been interesting, at the end of the day, I care mostly about what actions and changes you're making to ensure sure you're not making our country's vaccine hesitancy problem worse. I definitely have what I believe to be a non-comprehensive list of products you're building but I still don't have a good, empirical answer on how effective you've been at reducing the spread of vaccine -skeptical content and misinformation to vaccine fence sitters in the now-folded "lockdown." If [REDACTED] can speak to those things, great. [REDACTED] hasn't been able to, but I'm sure someone there can.

In the electoral context, you tested and deployed an algorithmic shift that promoted quality news and information about the election. This was reported in the New York Times and also readily apparent to anyone with cursory social listening tools. You only did this, however, after an election that you helped increase skepticism in, and an insurrection which was plotted, in large part, on your platform. And then you turned it back off. I want some assurances, based in data, that you are not doing the same thing again here.

Beanz interpretation: "Facebook here, checking in with Daddy government for my pat on the head. Here is how we are making sure vaccination rates are up, as per your request"

On May 10, 2021, at 7:53 PM, [REDACTED]@fb.com>wrote:

Rob and Courtney—I wanted to preview a newsroom post and some additional press outreach that we plan to put out tomorrow with some updates on our Covid efforts - a large part of which will be focused on what we've been doing to help meet vaccination goals.

Since January, we and our partners have been using trusted messengers and personalized messaging on our platforms to increase vaccine acceptance, and we're seeing positive impact at scale. For example:

- Over 3.3 million people have visited the vaccine finder tool since its launch on March 11, using it to get appointment information from a provider's website, get directions to a provider, or call a provider. In addition, we're showing people reliable information about whether and when they're eligible to get vaccinated through News Feed promotions and our [COVID-19 Information Center](#). West Virginia's Department of Health and Human Resources reported that their vaccine registrations increased significantly after Facebook started running these notifications.
- Since January, we've provided more than \$30 million in ad credits to help governments, NGOs and other organizations reach people with COVID-19 vaccine information and other important messages. These information campaigns resulted in an estimated 10 billion ad impressions globally.
- More than 5 million people globally have used these profile frames. And more than 50% of people in the US on Facebook have already seen someone use the COVID-19 vaccine profile frames. We spun up this effort in partnership with HHS/CDC after public health experts told us that people are more likely to get a vaccine when they see someone they trust doing it.
- As you know, since April 2020, we've been collaborating with Carnegie Mellon University and University of Maryland on a global survey of Facebook users to gather insights about COVID-19 symptoms, testing, vaccination rates and more. In the US:
  - Vaccine acceptance has been increasing steadily since January, increasing nearly 10% among all US adults.
  - We observed a particularly large increase in vaccine acceptance within certain populations in the US. Vaccine acceptance increased 26% among Black adults and 14% among Hispanic adults.

And a passive-aggressive reply from "Daddy," letting them know they've done a bad, bad job.

---

**From:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO <[REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 8:08 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@fb.com>  
**Cc:** Rowe, Courtney M. EOP/WHO <[REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] FB Newsroom post tomorrow re: our Covid work

Hard to take any of this seriously when you're actively promoting anti-vaccine pages in search

><https://twitter.com/jessreports/status/1392182161512361984?s=21><

Sent from my iPhone

---

Beanz interpretation: "We are so sorry! We are really trying for authoritative sources only, because we are authoritarian, and we can't believe those accounts were even there!"

Understand the government helped write the TOS. We are learning this every day, and will have more in that space.

—

Ok, this one is, by far, the worst one yet. Listen to how he SCOLDS Facebook that they aren't doing a good enough job censoring. Please read this, especially the highlight. This is a "boss/abused employee" relationship. Cast aside what a jerk he is; this is the White House!!!

---

**From:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 5/12/2021 2:52:18 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@fb.com]  
**CC:** Rowe, Courtney M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov]  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] FB Newsroom post tomorrow re: our Covid work

Sure. They're first connected to authoritative information, but then you, as of last night, were presenting an anti-vaccine account with less than 1000 followers alongside, at level, with those pinned accounts!

Here's the thing. You know and I know that the universe of undecided people searching Instagram for "vaccines" -- as compared to, say, Google -- is probably low. But "removing bad information from search" is one of the easy, low-bar things you guys do to make people like me think you're taking action. If you're not getting *that* right, it raises even more questions about the higher bar stuff. You say in your note that you remove accounts that discourage vaccination from appearing in recommendations (even though you're using "primarily" to give yourself wiggle room). You also said you don't promote those accounts in search. Not sure what else there is to say.

Youtube, for their warts, has done pretty well at promoting authoritative info in search results while keeping the bad stuff off of those surfaces. Pinterest doesn't even show you any results other than official information when you search for "vaccines." I don't know why you guys can't figure this out.

---

**From:** [REDACTED]@fb.com>

Facebook is reaching out to explain that they accidentally allowed content that DOES NOT BREAK THEIR TERMS to go viral. *"We should've demoted this more quickly, boss, Sorry"* This is unbelievable.

Firstly, I know [REDACTED] has sent the latest version of the Top 100 content report to Rob yesterday evening and I wanted to send you a quick note on the three pieces of vaccine content that were seen by a high number of people before we demoted them. Although they don't violate our community standards, we should have demoted them before they went viral and this has exposed gaps in our operational and technical process.

The teams have spent the last 24 hrs analysing these gaps and are making a number of changes starting next week, including setting up more dedicated monitoring for Covid vaccine content on the cusp of going viral, applying stronger demotions to a broader set of content, and setting up daily review and analysis so that we have a better real-time view of what is being seen by lots of people. I will be checking on this closely to make sure that these additional steps show results - the stronger demotions in particular should deliver real impact. Please let me know if you'd like to discuss any of this in more detail.

Facebook is reaching out to explain that they accidentally allowed content that DOES NOT BREAK THEIR TERMS to go viral. "We should've demoted this more quickly, boss, Sorry" This is unbelievable.

Flaherty thinks he is "CYA" here, but demotion and boxing content into a place no one can see it IS STILL CENSORSHIP at the hands of the government. This is included in the Temporary Injunction request.

1/3/21 10

---

**From:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 5/6/2021 6:17:28 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@fb.com]  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] FW: COVID Genomic Sequencing

So I guess I have two questions here:

1. He references the "three" widest reach posts, of which I believe this is one:

<https://www.facebook.com/DeeBlock253/posts/3528944520539112>

For one, it's still up and seems to have gotten pretty far. And it's got 365k shares with four comments. We've talked about this in a different context, but how does something like that happen? The top post, the one from the Wisconsin news station, has 2.1 million comments. Am I looking at one instance of sharing (so, one of the 365,000 shares) or is this genuinely a post that has been shared nearly 400,000 times but only four people commented on it? What is your assessment of what is going on here?

Won't come as a shock to you that we're particularly interested in your demotion efforts, which I don't think we have a good handle on (and, based on the below, it doesn't seem like you do either). Not to sound like a broken record, but how much content is being demoted, and how effective are you at mitigating reach, and how quickly? As I've said, I don't think our position is that you should remove vaccine hesitant stuff. However, slowing it down seems reasonable. I just can't describe what it means or how you know its working.

Also, health groups: sure. But it seems more likely that anti-vax stuff is moving in groups that are not about health but are...mom centric, or other spaces. Strikes me as the issue here is less from single-use anti-vaccine accounts and more about people who...do other things and are also vaccine hesitant. Seems like your "dedicated vaccine hesitancy" policy isn't stopping the disinfo dozen -- they're being deemed as not dedicated -- so it feels like that problem likely carries over to groups.

As a last thing, I'd be interested in seeing ~~this 100 ranking in terms of reach from~~ things that you aren't actively

This is the most heart-wrenching so far. As vaccine injury begins to rear its ugly head, people flock to Facebook to share their experiences. Facebook tells the government that they are taking action on that content even though it is true and doesn't violate TOS. This is evil.

updated on our progress and when we expect to be able to share the data with you.

3. **Levers for Tackling Vaccine Hesitancy Content:** You also asked us about our levers for reducing virality of vaccine hesitancy content. In addition to policies previously discussed, these include the additional changes that were approved late last week and that we'll be implementing over the coming weeks. As you know, in addition to removing vaccine misinformation, we have been focused on reducing the virality of content discouraging vaccines that does not contain actionable misinformation. This is often-true content, which we allow at the post level because experts have advised us that it is important for people to be able to discuss both their personal experiences and concerns about the vaccine, but it can be framed as sensation, alarmist, or shocking. We'll remove these Groups, Pages, and Accounts when they are disproportionately promoting this sensationalized content. More on this front as we proceed to implement.

4. **WhatsApp:** Finally— mentioned the policies that apply to WhatsApp. WhatsApp's approach to

I have a lot to say about this. Here we have Facebook admitting there is a barrage of content like this, and they are stopping anyone from seeing it. This is a crime against humanity. Many needed community and a place to find help after being injured. Your government and Facebook wouldn't allow that.

If this isn't one of the most cruel, inhumane, terrible things I have ever seen in my entire life, I don't know what is. Speaking as Tracy, the human and not the journalist, I am not sure how these folks can sleep at night. They know. They knew. They didn't care.

Flaherty wants "honest and transparent" conversations with Facebook but would never DREAM of being "honest and transparent" with his employer; YOU.

Afa sharing data, that's great. Again, as I've said, what we are looking for is the universe and scale of the problem. You noted that there is a level below sensational stories that get down-ranked, which took the form of general skepticism. I think it is helpful to know where you think the biggest issue is. I think we are all aligned that the problem does not sit in "microchips"-land, and that it seems plausible that the things that drive the most actual hesitancy sit in "sensational" and "skeptical." If you're downranking sensational stuff—great—but I want to know how effective you've seen that be from a market research perspective. And then, what interventions are being taken on "skepticism?" I could see a range of actions, including hitting them good information, boosting information from sources they've indicated they trust, promoting content from their friends who have been vaccinated.....what are you trying here, and again, how effective have you seen it be. And *critically*, what amount of content is falling into all of these buckets? Is there wider scale of skepticism than sensationalism? I assume given the Carnegie data and the studies I've seen in the press that you have this. While I think you and I both know that access to the study's topline and a crowd-tangle account aren't going to get us the info we're looking for, it shows to me that you at least understand the ask.

As I've said: this is not to play gotcha. It is to get a sense of what you are doing to manage this. This is a really tricky problem. You and I might disagree on the plan, but I want to get a sense of the problem and a sense of what you solutions are.

On whatsapp, which I may seem like I'm playing gotcha, but I guess I'm confused about how you're measuring reduction of harm. If you can't see the message, I'm genuinely curious—how do you know what kinds of messages you've cut down on? Assuming you've got a good mousetrap here, that's the kind of info we're looking for above: what interventions you've taken, and what you've found to work and not work? And how effective are you seeing the good information on WhatsApp be? Are you doing crossplatform campaign work to try to reduce people's exposure on whatsapp? As we worry about equity and access, WhatsApp is obviously a central part of that given its reach in immigrant communities and communities of color.

You've given us a commitment to honest, transparent conversations about this. We're looking for that, and hoping we can be partners here, even if it hasn't worked so far. I know Andy is willing to get on the phone with a couple of times per week if its necessary to get all of this.

Looking forward.

This email is from Flaherty to Facebook about a Tucker video on vaccines that went viral because it was true. Just read the TONE here... This guy is really terrible.

On 4/14/21, 10:52 AM, [REDACTED]@fb.com>wrote:

Ok - sorry to hear about call today, will dig in now. [REDACTED]

On 4/14/21, 10:01 AM, "Slavitt, AndrewM. EOP/WHO" [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>wrote:

Number one on Facebook. Sigh.

Big reveal call with FB and WH today. No progress since we spoke. Sigh.

Sent from my iPhone

Facebook responds by correcting Flaherty on his hyperbole and telling him that even though no Terms Of Service were broken, they are labeling and stopping its circulation anyway. This is government-directed censorship. Flaherty is one of the KingPins. By default, that is also the POTUS.

Hi Andy - have looked into this some more.

I realize it may be of limited comfort at this moment, but this was not the most popular post about vaccines on Facebook today. Our data is slightly lagging, and we'll get back to you with more detail on this specific post tomorrow. Right now, it appears that it probably was among the top 100 most-viewed vaccine posts. I'm including a few examples of posts that were more popular today at the end of this note.

Regardless of popularity, the Tucker Carlson video does not qualify for removal under our policies. Following the government's decision yesterday, we are allowing claims that the Johnson and Johnson vaccine causes blood clots, but we still do not allow categorical claims that it or other vaccines are unsafe or ineffective.

That said, the video is being labeled with a pointer to authoritative COVID information, it's not being recommended to people, and it is being demoted.

The team is working on the follow ups from the meeting this morning, including more details on most viewed/ranked content on Facebook and [REDACTED] will be in touch shortly on that - I'm v keen that we follow up as we'd agreed, and I can assure you the teams here are on it.

Given the timeline that was provided today for further decision about the J&J vaccine, it would be great to get your guidance about what affirmative messages we should amplify right now. Consistent with the message we heard at the press conferences, we're currently emphasizing the safety and efficacy of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines in the Covid Information Center.

Popular Vaccine-Related Content on Facebook Today:

CNN: >><https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/13/health/blood-clots-johnson-johnson-vaccine-wellness/index.html><<;

ABC: >><https://www.facebook.com/10160902498218812><<;

NBC: >><https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/what-do-if-you-got-johnson-johnson-vaccine-n1263927><<;

NY Times: >><https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/13/us/politics/johnson-johnson-vaccine-blood-clots-fda-cdc.html><<;

CDC: >><https://www.facebook.com/10159031890151026><<;

CBS: >><https://www.facebook.com/10159467409732010><<;

Heather Cox Richardson: >><https://www.facebook.com/297363371758902><<;

---

Flaherty pushes back, again acting as boss. The theme is concurrent. He blames Facebook again for the "insurrection," also hinting the government at some level was involved with Trump being banned, along with others.

On Apr 14, 2021, at 11:29 PM, Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov wrote:

I guess this is a good example of your rules in practice then — and a chance to dive in on questions as they're applied.

How was this not violative? The second half of the segment is raising conspiracy theories about the government hiding that all vaccines aren't effective. It's not about just J&J. What exactly is the rule for removal vs demoting?

Moreover: you say reduced and demoted. What does that mean? There's 40,000 shares on the video. Who is seeing it now? How many? How effective is that?

And we've gone a million rounds on this in other contexts so pardon what may seem like déjà vu — but on what basis is "visit the covid-19 information center for vaccine resources" the best thing to tag to a video that says the vaccine doesn't work?

MCLA\_DEFSPROD\_00017461

---

CONFIDENTIAL

Not for nothing but last time we did this dance, it ended in an insurrection.

Sent from my iPhone

Again, whether a social platform outright removes content or *you*, or they demote and make hidden your content, that is  **censorship** . If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to see it, does it make a sound???

Facebook takes a while to respond, probably because they are like, "this dude isn't the boss of me," and Flaherty pokes them again. "Those questions weren't rhetorical" (Beanz personal note: Sheesh, he is insufferable)

1 of 3

---

**From:** [REDACTED]@fb.com]  
**Sent:** 4/16/2021 8:45:51 PM  
**To:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov]  
**CC:** Slavitt, Andrew M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov]  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] FW: Tucker Carlson anti-vax message.

Hey Rob—understood and sorry for the delay. The team has been heads-down since our conversation to produce the report we discussed on Wednesday afternoon. We are aiming to get you something tonight ahead of the weekend. We want to respond to your questions below as well but I have been hoping to get this work completed and then to schedule a call to discuss. Would that work?

---

**From:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Date:** Friday, April 16, 2021 at 4:37 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@fb.com>  
**Cc:** Slavitt, Andrew M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] FW: Tucker Carlson anti-vax message.

These questions weren't rhetorical

---

**From:** Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 14, 2021 11:35 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@fb.com>  
**Cc:** Slavitt, Andrew M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] FW: Tucker Carlson anti-vax message.

And sorry — if this was not one of the most popular posts about the vaccine on Face book today, then what good is crowdangle?

[REDACTED] said that Tomis video was the most popular yesterday based on your data, which reflected what CT was showing. Tuckers video was top on CT today. ~~What is different about this video~~, then?

On Twitter, there was a misinformation append to a government Tweet. Flaherty didn't like "Birdwatch" in action.

of 1

---

**From:** Flaherty, Rob R. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov]  
**Sent:** 8/11/2022 5:28:09 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@twitter.com]  
**CC:** [REDACTED]@twitter.com]; Lee, Jesse C. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov]  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Joe Weisenthal on Twitter: "Wow, this note that twitter added to Biden's tweet is pure gibberish. Imagine adding this, and thinking this is helpful to the public's understanding in any way. (HT: @trynafarm) https://t.co/ECQAoc2CA4" /...

Happy to talk through it but if your product is appending misinformation to our tweets that seems like a pretty fundamental issue

On Aug 11, 2022, at 1:23 PM, [REDACTED]@twitter.com> wrote:

Hi Rob,

Thanks for reaching out. I believe you're referring to our [Birdwatch product feature](#). Here's the latest [information](#) about how it works.

We'd be happy to arrange a meeting to walk you through how it works. We're also collecting feedback for our teams.

Best,

On Thu, Aug 11, 2022 at 12:31 PM Flaherty, Rob R. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov> wrote:  
Adding [REDACTED] since [REDACTED] seems to be out

It's just getting repetitive now. "How are you handling things that are dubious, but not provably false."

Erm, dude, it's sort of not in your purview. It's just not. Why is he doing this? (That WAS rhetorical)

**From:** Flaherty, Robert EOP/WHO

**Sent:** Monday, February 8, 2021 1:37 PM

**To:** [REDACTED]@fb.com>; Rowe, Courtney M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>; Humphrey, Clarke EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>

MOLA\_DEFSPROD\_00017965

CONFIDENTIAL

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@fb.com>; [REDACTED]@fb.com>; [REDACTED]@fb.com>

**Subject:** RE: COVID-19 Outreach to communities worldwide

[REDACTED] Thanks.

This line, of course, stands out:

*that repeatedly share these debunked claims may be removed altogether.*

Can you share more about your framework here? May, of course, is very different than "will." Is there a strike policy, ala Youtube? Does the severity of the claims matter?

And as far as your removal of claims, do you have data on the actual number of claims -related posts you've removed? Do you have a sense of how many are being flagged versus how many are being removed? Are there actions (downranking, etc) that sit before removal? How are you handling things that are dubious, but not provably false?

Thanks

---

This last one is a doozy. The White House is ARGUING back and forth with Twitter, refusing to remove a piece of video content that was edited. There are 5-6 emails with Jill Biden's Press Secretary going back and forth about why Twitter won't remove content. They keep saying no...

**From:** [REDACTED]@twitter.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 1, 2021 11:11 AM  
**To:** Tom, Christian L. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Cc:** LaRosa, Michael J. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Doctored video on Twitter of the First Lady

Appreciate you following up. After escalating this to our team, the Tweet and video referenced will not be labeled under our synthetic and manipulated media policy. Although it has been significantly altered, the team has not found it to cause harm or impact public safety.

The team was able to create this Twitter Moment (here) and event page for more context and details:  
>>>>><https://twitter.com/i/events/1465769009073123330><<<<<

Flaherty jumps in here after escalation because he can't believe they won't act. The only reason we have this is because he was added to the email chain. It looks like we can broaden discovery now to the FIRST LADY. Please click this. Read the entire thing.

CONFIDENTIAL

1 of 10

---

**From:** [REDACTED]@twitter.com>  
**To:** Flaherty, Rob R. EOP/WHO  
**Sent:** 12/17/2021 10:44:52 PM  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Doctored video on Twitter of the First Lady

Hi Rob -

I'm around if you'd like to dial me [REDACTED]

Best,

[REDACTED]

On Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 5:33 PM Flaherty, Rob R. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov> wrote:

New to the thread here, but this all reads to me like you all are bending over backwards to say that this isn't causing confusion on public issues. If the AP deems it confusing enough to write a fact check, and you deem it confusing enough to create an event for it, how on earth is it not confusing enough for it to at least have a label?

Total Calvinball.

In closing, the WH is directly engaged in censorship efforts across major social media platforms. This discovery is a case killer for the defendants. Coupled with everything else we have seen, it's devastating.

What's next? There is a reply due in February to the (hang with me here) reply by the Plaintiffs to the motion to dismiss. Expedited discovery remains active during this time. Then, the judge will rule on the motion. I am CERTAIN he will rule against it. He has once already, basically.