

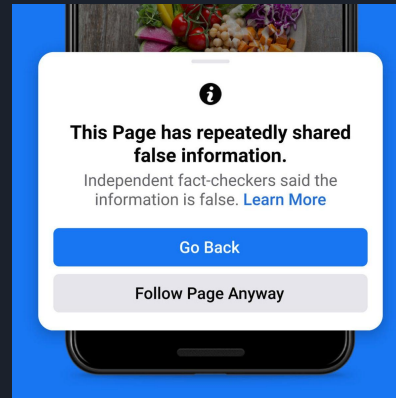
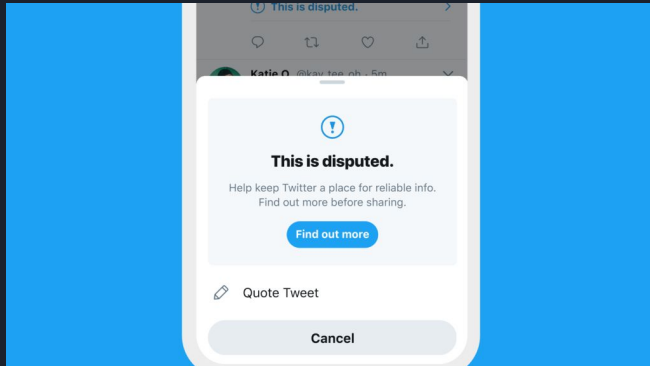
Responsibility of Social Media Platforms

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The Issue

- Social Media platforms connect a diverse set of people
- Risks are involved: users can post what they want
- Platforms have rules; posts can be taken down that they deem against their guidelines
- Yet, platforms' responsibility to moderate areas like political speech and disinformation is **unclear**





Donald J. Trump 
@realDonaldTrump

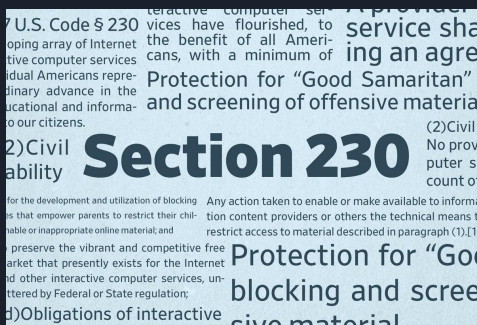


Some or all of the content shared in this Tweet is disputed and might be misleading about an election or other civic process. [Learn more](#)

We are up BIG, but they are trying to STEAL the Election. We will never let them do it. Votes cannot be cast after the Polls are closed!

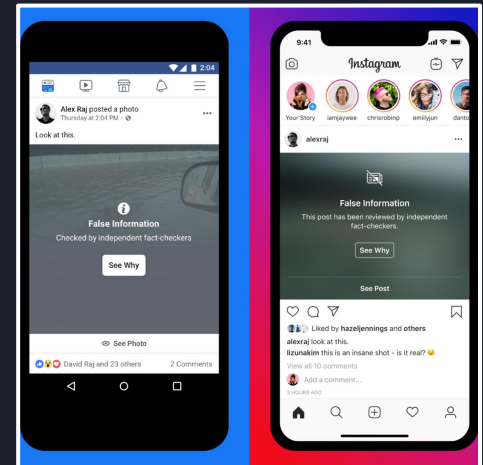
 [Learn about US 2020 election security efforts](#)

Recent Controversies



Facebook/Twitter and the 2020 election

- Disinformation about the 2020 election rampant (candidates, its security, etc...)
- Much came directly from Republican Candidate Donald Trump
- Platforms labeled tweets with respect to election security false or unverified, and attempted to remove users that continually spread disinformation
- Twitter and Facebook came under a lot of scrutiny: some said they did not do enough to stop disinformation and some said they were doing too much



Ban on Donald Trump

- In wake of the January 6th insurrection and tweets by President Donald Trump preceding the event...
- Twitter issued a permanent ban on President Trump's account
- Facebook issued a temporary ban on President Trump's account, which is still in effect today



President Biden says Facebook is “killing people”

- One of President Biden’s top priorities: distributing the coronavirus vaccine
- A giant obstacle to this is disinformation
 - Intent, vaccine side effects
- Biden lashed out at Facebook, saying it was “killing people” because of the amount of vaccine disinformation that existed on the platform



Section 230

- "No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider"
- Simplified: No company can be held liable for anything a third party posts on its internet site
- Proponents: provision needed for innovation
- Opponents: protections are too strong as they shield companies from important responsibility





How should this moderation be dealt with?

- Currently, social media companies are protected from most liability by Section 230
- Politicians in both parties believe that something needs to be done, but disagreement over what change looks like

Two Arguments:

1. If social media moderates politically related speech, their platforms should become “media” outlets and should therefore be subject to the same rules
2. Since platforms are a place for free speech, platforms should not be required to moderate content
 - Looming Question: Should moderation should be self employed or should the government get involved?



Discussion Questions

- What do you think of how social media platforms handled the 2020 election?
What was your personal experience like (if any)?
- How should Facebook handle information about COVID-19?
- Should social media companies be liable for disinformation?
- Should social media companies face harsher government regulation?
- What do you think about the banning of sitting politicians?
- How should social media companies handle hate speech?
- Do you have any thoughts on how section 230 should be reformed?