



Questions emerge about role of federal government in combatting disinformation

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November 1, 2022

New Twitter owner Elon Musk has vowed a platform with less content moderation and more free speech with critics arguing it's already devolved into a platform where hate speech and conspiracy theories roam wild.

But The Intercept is reporting on what it calls "Truth Cops" detailing communications and meeting notes that show how "tech platforms would be called upon to 'process reports and provide timely responses, to include the removal of reported misinformation from the platform where possible.'"

It's a sign some say that the Department of Homeland Security's mission to combat foreign disinformation has "crept and come home."

"Even if some false speech about these issues reduces trust in government and can therefore be seen to give aid and comfort to terrorists, quashing domestic information about these issues violates American's First Amendment rights," Will Duffield, a policy analyst at the Cato Institute, said in an interview with Sinclair.

There is also news of a special government reporting system for Facebook employees to use. It's a system lawmakers have criticized along with the Biden administration's Disinformation Governance Board, which dissolved amid criticisms it was akin to a "big brother" or a "ministry of truth."

During a May hearing of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., laid out examples of the government spreading its own disinformation.

"How do you propose that you have an office of disinformation governance if you see the problem in even determining what is disinformation?" he asked.

But supporters of such systems say it is the role of the government to get involved, to protect U.S. national security since threats can begin online but evolve into violence that threatens people's lives. They cite last year's attack at the U.S. Capitol, the attack on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband as well as threats against people and U.S. democracy as a whole.

In an interview on NBC's Meet the Press Sunday, Mary McCord, a visiting professor at George Washington University, detailed some of the threats.

“We’re seeing increases in voter intimidation efforts across the country. We’ve had threats to election officials and election officers consistently since the election in 2020,” she said.