

Meta replaces Nick Clegg, navigates political pressures and content moderation

Article

The news: Nick Clegg, Meta's president of global affairs, is stepping down, to be replaced by Joel Kaplan.

- The appointment of Kaplan, a prominent Republican and Meta's vice president of public policy, comes as Meta pushes to court favor with the incoming Trump administration.
- Clegg will depart the company within a few months and recently acknowledged that [Meta's content moderation policies](#) are restricting free expression.

Analyst take: “The move also comes as social media is becoming more politically polarized and attitudes toward content moderation are changing. It indicates a potential shift in Meta's position toward policing political speech on its platform, which has garnered criticism for suppressing conservative voices,” **EMARKETER** principal analyst **Jasmine Enberg** said.

Thirty-nine percent of **Facebook** users and 30% of **Instagram** users identify as right-leaning, per Pew Research Center.

Zooming out: This shift comes just three weeks before the inauguration of President-elect **Donald Trump**, who has been critical of Meta CEO **Mark Zuckerberg** and was suspended from Meta platforms after the 2021 Capitol attack.

Zuckerberg, along with **Amazon's Jeff Bezos** and **Apple's Tim Cook**, are working to [align with the new administration](#) to help push the deregulation and pro-business agenda beyond existing antitrust cases.

- “(Trump) seems to have a lot of energy around reducing regulation. If I can help do that, I'm going to help him,” Bezos said, per [Business Insider](#).
- Kaplan, who served as deputy chief of staff in the George W. Bush administration from 2006 to 2009, met with Trump in December and has voiced concerns about whether Meta's content policies could be perceived as being biased against conservative content.

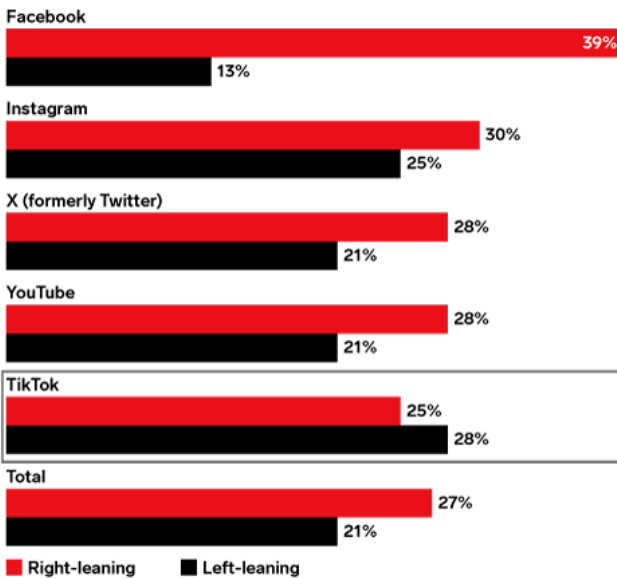
Why it's worth watching: Kaplan's appointment signals that Meta may reconsider its content moderation policies, especially those related to political speech.

- With ongoing scrutiny over online censorship, **the company may loosen its approach in response to political and internal critique.**
- “Kaplan is likely the right person for the job in this political moment,” Enberg said.

Our take: Meta will need to carefully balance its political interests with its target demographic to ensure it doesn't [lose users to other platforms](#) flooding the social media stage.

There Are More Right- Than Left-Leaning News Influencers on Major Social Apps, Except TikTok

% of US news influencers* on each social media platform, by political affiliation, Aug 2024



Note: n=500 ages 18+; respondents explicitly identified their political affiliation; "other" and "no clear orientation" responses not shown; "individuals who regularly post about current events and civic issues on social media and have at least 100,000 followers on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), or YouTube; can be independent content creators or journalists who are or were affiliated with a news organization
Source: Pew Research Center, "America's News Influencers," Nov 18, 2024

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