

Meta will ease up on content moderation in significant reversal

Article

The news: Social media platforms are loosening content rules as attitudes toward moderation in major markets begin to diverge.

- **Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg** announced this week that it would end fact-checking on its platforms, instead opting for an X (formerly Twitter)-style **Community Notes** feature.

However, the company will continue to seek and take down certain prohibited content related to terrorism or child exploitation, Zuckerberg said.

- **Meta, YouTube**, and others loosened restrictions on fact-checking and political misinformation in the lead-up to the 2024 presidential election.
- A recent transparency report revealed that **TikTok** employs 6,000 content moderators in Europe. However, the company also recently laid off hundreds of moderation employees in Malaysia following a regulatory rule change.

Changes at home: The incoming **Trump** administration in the US has caused major tech and social media companies to adjust their policies in response to the president-elect and Republican legislators, who have long criticized social platforms for perceived censorship of conservative speech.

- The president-elect threatened Zuckerberg with prison time before his November general election victory, and the Meta CEO met with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort in late November. In December, Meta donated \$1 million to Trump's inauguration fund. X CEO **Elon Musk** has similarly carved out a place at Trump's side.

Across the pond: In the EU, however, regulator scrutiny is forcing companies into stricter compliance on moderation.

- One day after Meta announced its change, the European Commission said it is trying to wrap up an investigation into X's content moderation policies, per Bloomberg.
- Meta's changes will first roll out in the US but could extend to other markets. Still, regulatory pressure in the EU has caused Meta, **Google**, and others to acquiesce—Meta recently floated the possibility of using **eBay's** ad solutions to meet EU antitrust demands—meaning the policy could be modified for stricter markets.

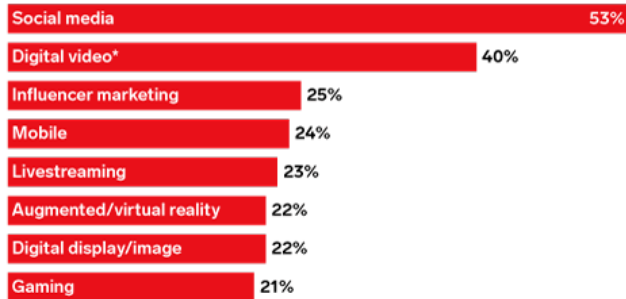
Our take: Rolling back content moderation efforts kills two birds with one stone, appeasing conservative regulators and potentially aiding Meta's business interests while allowing the company to reduce costs. But the question for advertisers is whether these changes will affect brand safety.

Meta offers a slew of brand safety tools that allow brands to prevent themselves from appearing alongside certain topics, insulating them somewhat from the change. The

company's enormous reach means that even advertisers with brand safety concerns likely won't stop spending.

Media Types That Will Present the Most Challenges for Brands Safety in the Next 12 Months According to US Marketing Professionals, Sep 2024

% of respondents



Note: top 4 responses; *Includes CTV
Source: Integral Ad Science, "The 2025 Industry Pulse Report: U.S. Edition" conducted by YouGov, Nov 18, 2024

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