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News Item

We need independent platform oversight in 2021 | First Draft

By Madelyn Webb
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> Thanks to urging from stakeholders, social media platforms took visible steps to curb mis- and disinformation in 2020. Despite an array of alerts, banners, labels and information hubs, misinformation continued to poison online communities. Voter fraud myths proliferated across the globe, medical professionals reported the deaths of Covid-19 patients who believed the virus was not real, and now misinformation may hinder the ability to administer a vaccine to mitigate the pandemic.
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> Google, Facebook and Twitter now all have their own transparency websites, and publish reports on the state of misinformation on their platforms. We know more about the decisions being made around content moderation than ever before. However, because these reports are published by the platforms with no independent oversight, we're left having to trust their conclusions. The reports from Twitter, Facebook and YouTube after the US election were full of figures, but if those reports had been published by an independent agency, they would have felt more like actual transparency reports than opportunities for PR.
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