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News Item

Opinion: Facebook says misinformation studies miss the full story. So does Facebook. | The Washington Post

By Editorial Board
September 8, 2021

> A forthcoming study about misinformation on Facebook will say that false stories earned more clicks than facts six times over during the 2020 election, The Post reports. Facebook will say the study itself misinforms.
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> This story is familiar: Researchers repeatedly publish findings on the far and fast spread of sensational material on social media sites, and the sites reply that the data the researchers are using is flawed — all the while withholding access to numbers they claim are more elucidating. Indeed, Facebook in August cut off access for the New York University team responsible for the study in question, purportedly to protect users' privacy. The White House has also clashed with Facebook over its unwillingness to provide certain data on covid-19-related misinformation, and this week, Facebook replied to a lengthy letter from two congresswomen requesting similar data, including about advertisers, with a 79-word note that it had "nothing to share."
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> Facebook has a point when it argues that misinformation is a society-wide scourge that doesn't start or end on its products. It also has a point that the workarounds researchers routinely employ provide an incomplete picture.
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