

How Facebook and Google fund global misinformation | MIT Technology Review

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November 22, 2021

In 2015, six of the 10 websites in Myanmar getting the most engagement on Facebook were from legitimate media, according to data from CrowdTangle, a Facebook-run tool. A year later, Facebook (which recently rebranded to Meta) offered global access to Instant Articles, a program publishers could use to monetize their content.

One year after that rollout, legitimate publishers accounted for only two of the top 10 publishers on Facebook in Myanmar. By 2018, they accounted for zero. All the engagement had instead gone to fake news and clickbait websites. In a country where Facebook is synonymous with the internet, the low-grade content overwhelmed other information sources.

It was during this rapid degradation of Myanmar's digital environment that a militant group of Rohingya—a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority—attacked and killed a dozen members of the security forces, in August of 2017.

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