News Item

Facebook isn't sharing enough data about Covid-19 vaccine misinformation on its platform, experts say | Vox

By Shirin Ghaffary

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> Is Facebook "killing people" by enabling the spread of Covid-19 misinformation, as President Joe Biden said a few weeks ago? Or is the social media company efficiently purging Covid-19 misinformation from its platform and showing millions of people information about where to get vaccinated, as the company argued a day later in its response to the president?
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> Biden partially walked back his comments, but the reality is we simply don't know the true size or effect of Covid-19 misinformation on Facebook and Facebook-owned Instagram. That's in large part because Facebook isn't giving researchers enough of the real-time data they need to figure out exactly how much Covid-19 misinformation is on the platform, who's seeing it, and how it's impacting their willingness to get vaccinated. Researchers say they need this kind of data to understand the scope of the misinformation problem, which misleading messages are resonating with people, and how public health officials can counter them.
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> "Right now, we're guessing [on] a lot of stuff," said Katherine Ognyanova, an associate professor of communications at Rutgers University who co-leads the Covid States project, a research group that surveys people about their social media use and Covid-19 behaviors. "We can ask people questions. But Facebook truly has the data about what people have seen and how their attention is being devoted on the platform."
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