

Five points for anger, one for a 'like': How Facebook's formula fostered rage and misinformation | The Washington Post

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Five years ago, Facebook gave its users five new ways to react to a post in their news feed beyond the iconic “like” thumbs-up: “love,” “haha,” “wow,” “sad” and “angry.”

Behind the scenes, Facebook programmed the algorithm that decides what people see in their news feeds to use the reaction emoji as signals to push more emotional and provocative content — including content likely to make them angry. Starting in 2017, Facebook's ranking algorithm treated emoji reactions as five times more valuable than “likes,” internal documents reveal. The theory was simple: Posts that prompted lots of reaction emoji tended to keep users more engaged, and keeping users engaged was the key to Facebook's business.

[...]

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