

In India, Facebook Struggles to Combat Misinformation and Hate Speech | The New York Times

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On Feb. 4, 2019, a Facebook researcher created a new user account to see what it was like to experience the social media site as a person living in Kerala, India.

For the next three weeks, the account operated by a simple rule: Follow all the recommendations generated by Facebook's algorithms to join groups, watch videos and explore new pages on the site.

The result was an inundation of hate speech, misinformation and celebrations of violence, which were documented in an internal Facebook report published later that month.

"Following this test user's News Feed, I've seen more images of dead people in the past three weeks than I've seen in my entire life total," the Facebook researcher wrote.

The report was one of dozens of studies and memos written by Facebook employees grappling with the effects of the platform on India. They provide stark evidence of one of the most serious criticisms levied by human rights activists and politicians against the world-spanning company: It moves into a country without fully understanding its potential impact on local culture and politics, and fails to deploy the resources to act on issues once they occur.

[...]

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