

The thousands of vulnerable people harmed by Facebook and Instagram are lost in Meta's 'average user' data | The Conversation

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Fall 2021 has been filled with a steady stream of media coverage arguing that Meta's Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram social media platforms pose a threat to users' mental health and well-being, radicalize, polarize users and spread misinformation.

Are these technologies – embraced by billions – killing people and eroding democracy? Or is this just another moral panic?

According to Meta's PR team and a handful of contrarian academics and journalists, there is evidence that social media does not cause harm and the overall picture is unclear. They cite apparently conflicting studies, imperfect access to data and the difficulty of establishing causality to support this position.

Some of these researchers have surveyed social media users and found that social media use appears to have at most minor negative consequences on individuals. These results seem inconsistent with years of journalistic reporting, Meta's leaked internal data, common sense intuition and people's lived experience.

[...]

Source: [The thousands of vulnerable people harmed by Facebook and Instagram are lost in Meta's 'average user' data | The Conversation](#)