



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 8, 2019

Facebook's "Click-Gap" System Favors Establishment Media Over Alternative Media

Facebook has introduced a new system that will further suppress independent media outlets in yet another effort to censor information deemed "unreliable" by the platform.



The Click-Gap system will penalize websites that have not established enough "authority" outside of Facebook. This system measures authority by the number of clicks received from sources outside the platform, such as mainstream media sources.

Facebook's news room [elaborates](#),

[Ranking](#) uses many signals to ensure people see less low-quality content in their News Feed. This new signal, Click-Gap, relies on the web graph, a conceptual "map" of the internet in which domains with a lot of inbound and outbound links are at the center of the graph and domains with fewer inbound and outbound links are at the edges. Click-Gap looks for domains with a disproportionate number of outbound Facebook clicks compared to their place in the web graph. This can be a sign that the domain is succeeding on News Feed in a way that doesn't reflect the authority they've built outside it and is producing low-quality content. ***Starting today, globally.***

Click-Gap is part of Facebook's "remove, reduce, and inform" strategy, the site explains.

"Since 2016, we have used a strategy called "[remove, reduce, and inform](#)" to manage problematic content across the Facebook family of apps. This involves **removing** content that violates our policies, **reducing** the spread of problematic content that does not violate our policies and **informing** people with additional information so they can choose what to click, read or share," the blog reads. "This strategy applies not only during critical times like [elections](#), but year-round."

Click-Gap has been incorporated into Facebook's News Feed "to ensure people see less low-quality content in their News Feed," the blog contends.

What this ultimately amounts to is a system in which mainstream media outlets are given preferential access to consumers. It is Facebook's defense against so-called Fake News.

CNBC notes that Click-Gap is similar to Google's PageRank algorithm that was used to rank results when it was first launched in 1998. PageRank relied on the number and quality of websites that linked to a webpage to determine how that page would be ranked in search results.

Click-Gap will make it harder for Facebook users to get information from alternative media sites in their News Feed, making it very difficult, if not impossible, for alternative sites to get viewership on the platform. Breitbart News opines,

Given how important Facebook has become to the growth of new websites, the system seems designed to promote sites that build up their followings before the rise of the social network. It favors older, established outlets and punishes upstarts. Which, of course, is exactly what the establishment media wants.

It also favors establishment media in another way. One of the largest sources for links and citations



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of news sources is Wikipedia, the leftist-dominated “online encyclopedia.” But conservative sources including Breitbart News are frequently [blacklisted](#) as “unreliable” on the site. In practice, there are essentially no links to Breitbart News throughout the entirety of Wikipedia, based on the actions of its zealous administrators and editors — actions Facebook’s new policy is designed to exploit.

This is not the first time that Facebook has been accused of creating systems to promote its own bias. Allegations of Facebook’s bias toward conservatives were levied in 2016 when Gizmodo revealed that former employees admitted that they regularly censored news considered “conservative,” which included denying placement of such news in the site’s “Trending Topics” section. Those employees also claimed they were instructed to list unpopular stories deemed significant by management in the “Trending Topics” section. Those accusations prompted an inquiry by the Senate Commerce Committee and ultimately compelled Facebook to admit that its employees may have played a bigger role than previously acknowledged in determining what news is highlighted in the trending topics section. The social-media giant announced that it would be sending employees for retraining and would discontinue practices charged as politically biased.

This time, Facebook’s bias is not focused against strictly conservative outlets, but any of those that offer alternatives to the mainstream. Think anti-vax sites, holistic and natural health sites, etc. Facebook has made no qualms about its agenda to [target](#) and downrank anti-vaccination content. It announced last month it would even reject ads promoting anti-vaccination information and may even disable accounts of individuals or groups who repeatedly attempt to promote that content.

Entrusting a company such as Facebook to control the information available on its site in an unbiased fashion is a dangerous and slippery slope. Freedom in all its forms continues to be under threat, and Click-Gap is just the latest tool in the fight against liberty. While conservative and other alternative media outlets generally recognize that Facebook is a private company and can regulate content how it sees fit, the news sites are merely asking for an even playing field, i.e., don’t regulate content, and let users decide what’s important or not important.

At this point, a mass exodus from Facebook and to other platforms is likely the only remedy for such blatant bias and attempted censorship. Government regulation would likely only make things worse for conservatives and alternative outlets.



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