



Written by [James Murphy](#) on August 2, 2021

YouTube Suspends Australia's Sky News Over COVID-19 Reporting

The Silicon Valley Thought Police have nabbed yet another wayward content creator and this time, it's a pretty big one. On Sunday, Sky News Australia announced that it has been suspended from uploading any new content for one week on Google-owned YouTube for the crime of sharing information and opinions that did not align with the approved party line on COVID-19.

The 24-hour cable news network has a similar editorial bent to Fox News in the United States. YouTube has issued one of its "strikes" to Sky News Australia — a baseball metaphor under which three strikes could get the network banned from YouTube permanently.

According to the censors at YouTube, they found evidence that Sky News had posted "clear and established Covid-19 medical misinformation policies based on local and global health authority guidance." YouTube did not specify what medical misinformation was posted, although a spokesperson for the video sharing service told *The Guardian* that it "did not allow content that denies the existence of Covid-19" or that urged people "to use hydroxychloroquine or ivermectin to treat or prevent the virus."

The network first noted that its YouTube account wouldn't accept any new content on Thursday night. In a statement, Sky News said, "Sky News Australia acknowledges YouTube's right to enforce its policies and looks forward to continuing to publish its popular news and analysis content to its subscribers shortly."

That may be the corporate line from News Corp Australia, the owner of Sky News, but some of the network's employees have found YouTube's actions a little more difficult to forgive. Digital Editor Jack Houghton [penned a piece](#) on the network's web page both defending the network's videos as well as pointing out the stinging hypocrisy of YouTube's tone-deaf standards for medical misinformation.

"Among the videos deemed unpalatable for societal consumption were debates around whether masks were effective and whether lockdowns were justified when considering their adverse health outcomes," Houghton wrote.

He continued: "The stance taken by some commentators at this network was that masks are not effective in containing outbreaks, particularly when mandated outside in the fresh air. Some also took issue with the frequency and mechanisms of locking down Australians."

"Other commentators vehemently disagreed, and their views were also published," Houghton stressed. Houghton noted that, according to YouTube's own policies, some of the biggest medical misinformers of



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the pandemic include Dr. Anthony Fauci, who has double-talked on the issue of masks several times. Last October, Fauci said, “there’s no reason to be walking around with a mask” while outdoors. Later, Fauci not only advocated for masks at all times but urged citizens to follow his lead and wear two masks at the same time.

Houghton also noted that if YouTube’s guidelines against the sharing of so-called medical misinformation are to be applied equally, the World Health Organization and President Joe Biden, who recently said, “You’re not going to get COVID if you have these vaccinations,” should also have “strikes” issued against them.

“It is hard not to look at some of these tech giant censorship decisions as being based on one factor, the political persuasion of the person making the comments,” Houghton concluded.

Yet, a YouTube spokesperson had the gall to claim: “We apply our policies equally for everyone and in accordance with these policies and our long-standing strikes system, removed videos from and issued a strike to Sky News Australia’s channel.”

But as this “strike” against Sky News shows, that statement by YouTube is just a lie.

Australia is currently in the midst of major lockdowns due to fresh outbreaks of COVID-19 around the nation. Government officials are blaming the outbreak on the large number of unvaccinated people in the country. In Sydney, the most populous city in the country, the military has been called in to assist in enforcing a lockdown, which officials fear may extend into September. As of today, nearly half of Australia’s population is living under some sort of lockdown.

Big Tech’s censorship tentacles have now reached all the way Down Under and there appears to be no stopping their attacks on free speech globally. As Houghton notes, it’s a bad precedent to allow this sort of censorship to go unchallenged. Citizens (and networks) must be free to debate both the science and the politics of all issues — especially the COVID-19 issues.

“If that conversation is stifled our political leaders will be free to act with immunity, without justification and lacking any sufficient scrutiny from the public,” Houghton wrote.

“Your freedom to think will be extinguished.”



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