

February 21, 2020

Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member Greg Walden
U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Attn: Chloe Rodriguez
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member Walden, Subcommittee Chairwoman Schakowsky,
Subcommittee Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for your questions for the record from the January 8, 2020 hearing entitled
Americans at Risk: Manipulation and Deception in the Digital Age. Per your request, attached
are the answers for the record to your questions.

Sincerely,

Facebook, Inc.

Questions from Chairwoman Schakowsky

- 1. According to The Antiquities Trafficking and Heritage Anthropology Research (ATHAR) Project, there are at least three different extremist groups recorded in a new report that details traffickers and terrorists selling illicit antiquities on Facebook – the terrorist activity was recorded as occurring primarily over the past three years, a time period when Facebook was allegedly increasing their counter terrorism enforcement.**

Isn't it true that Facebook's features (Groups, Pages, marketplace, "buy and sell," etc.) allow for and make it easier for terrorist groups to sell material on Facebook to finance their terror activities?

Organizations or individuals that proclaim a violent mission or are engaged in violence, including organizations or individuals involved in terrorist activity, are not allowed on Facebook. This policy is based on the actor, which means that we don't allow terrorist organizations or terrorists to have a presence on our platform for any purpose—including by having an account, Page, Group, etc. We also have a policy prohibiting people from facilitating, organizing, promoting, or admitting to certain criminal or harmful activities targeted at people, businesses, or property.

If we find content that praises or supports terrorists or terrorist organizations, we remove it. Indeed, we remove the vast majority of such content before anyone reports it. In the second and third quarters of 2019, we removed over 98% of such content before users reported it. And in the first three quarters of 2019, we took action on over 12 million pieces of such content.

Products sold on Facebook must comply with our Community Standards and Commerce Policies. As mentioned previously, our Community Standards prohibit terrorists or terrorist organizations from using Facebook, including Marketplace. When someone creates a listing on Marketplace, before it goes live, it is reviewed against our Commerce Policies using automated tools. Based on that review, the listing may be approved, rejected, or, in some cases, sent for further manual review. When we detect that a listing violates our policies, we reject it.

- 2. Does Facebook archive terrorism data or posts related to sale of illicit goods and share the information with relevant authorities? Are there instances when Facebook has deleted the data without archiving it thus making it unavailable for law enforcement investigations?**

We will take steps to preserve account records in connection with official criminal investigations for 90 days pending our receipt of formal legal process. Law enforcement may submit formal preservation requests through Facebook's Law Enforcement Online Request System (<https://www.facebook.com/records>) or by mail.

- 3. Why are Al Qaeda and ISIS the only two terrorist organizations addressed in Facebook's counterterrorism policies?**

Facebook's Dangerous Organizations and Individuals policy applies to organizations outside of Al Qaeda and ISIS, and always has. We do not allow organizations or individuals that

proclaim a violent mission or are engaged in violence from having a presence on Facebook. Our definition of terrorism is behavioral; terrorist organizations and terrorists include any non-state actor that:

- Engages in, advocates, or lends substantial support to purposive and planned acts of violence,
- Which causes or attempts to cause death, injury, or serious harm to civilians, or any other person not taking direct part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, and/or significant damage to property linked to death, serious injury, or serious harm to civilians
- With the intent to coerce, intimidate and/or influence a civilian population, government, or international organization
- In order to achieve a political, religious, or ideological aim.

We also remove content that expresses support or praise for groups, leaders, or individuals involved in these activities. Additionally, we have a robust program to abide by legal restrictions, including those related to US-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations (“FTO”) and entities sanctioned by the US Treasury Department.

4. Does Facebook track other terrorist groups? If yes, which ones?

As discussed in the responses to your previous questions, we remove terrorists, terrorist organizations, and posts that support terrorism whenever we become aware of them. When we receive reports of accounts or posts that may support terrorism, we review them urgently and carefully. We use a range of tools to combat such content, including artificial intelligence, content matching, specialized human review, industry cooperation, and counterspeech training.

Because we proactively screen for terrorist content, we remove much of it before it is reported. In the third quarter of 2019, we removed 5.2 million pieces of content for violating our rules on terrorist material, 98.5% of which we identified proactively before it was reported by users. While it is difficult to accurately measure the content posted on behalf of terrorist organizations because the total is so small, our estimates indicate that, during that time period, fewer than 0.04% of views on Facebook were of content that violated our standards for terrorist propaganda. In other words, fewer than 4 of every 10,000 views on Facebook contained violating terrorist content. For more information on our efforts to remove terrorist propaganda, please visit <https://transparency.facebook.com/community-standards-enforcement#terrorist-propaganda>.

Questions from Representative Blunt Rochester

- 1. At the January 8, 2020 hearing, you indicated that you were familiar with the concept of universal design. Do you think online service providers, like Facebook, should follow universal design concepts as a best practice on all of their platforms?**

Facebook's mission is to bring the world closer together—and that means everyone. Our goal is to make it possible for anyone, regardless of ability, to access the information and connections that happen on Facebook. Access is opportunity, and when everyone is connected, we all benefit. That's why we're investing in accessibility, sharing our work publicly so others can learn from it, advancing accessibility training in higher education, and contributing to web standards that help make the internet accessible.

We have made significant investments in AI and video captioning. Our automatic photo captioning tool describes objects in photos to people with vision loss. New facial recognition features help people with vision loss to know more about who is in their photos. We also have several closed captioning features to help people who are hearing impaired: closed captions for videos on Facebook via text file upload, automatic video captioning for ads and Pages in the US, and real-time captioning in Facebook Live broadcasts.

We want to drive innovation in accessibility that extends beyond Facebook, which is why we're proud to support the Teach Access initiative. Announced on the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in July 2015, Teach Access brings industry, academia, and advocacy together to create models for teaching and training students about technology to create accessible experiences. Teach Access has launched an online tutorial covering best practices for accessible software design in order to advance accessibility training in higher education.

For more information on the features and technologies that help people with disabilities, such as vision loss and deafness, get the most out of Facebook, please visit our accessibility Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/accessibility> and our Help Page at <https://www.facebook.com/help/accessibility>.

- 2. What is Facebook's strategy for screening ads that subtly exclude protected classes by focusing on certain geographies or language? And who, if anyone, does Facebook notify when it discovers such activity?**

Facebook prohibits advertisers from discriminating against people based on personal attributes such as race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, disability, and medical or genetic conditions. Our Advertising Policies prohibit advertisers from using targeting options to discriminate against, harass, provoke, or disparage users or to engage in predatory advertising practices. Discrimination and discriminatory advertising have no place on Facebook's platform, and we remove such content as soon as we become aware of it.

Our policies have long prohibited discrimination, and we have made significant changes to prevent advertisers from misusing our tools to discriminate in their ad targeting. As part of settlement agreements with civil rights organizations like National Fair Housing Alliance, and based on ongoing input from civil rights experts, we have taken the industry lead by changing

the way advertisers may select the audience for housing, employment, and credit (“HEC”) ads. Specifically, we have eliminated the ability to target HEC ads based on age, gender, or zip code, and we have severely restricted the number of interest category targeting options available. These restrictions apply across all the tools businesses use to buy ads. Even before we made these changes last year, advertisers were prohibited from using any multicultural affinity interest segments, either for inclusion or exclusion, when running HEC ads. We’ve also added a housing ad section in the Ad Library, so it will be easy to search for and view US ads about housing opportunities. People can search for and view all active housing opportunity ads targeted at the US that started running—or were edited—on or after December 4, 2019, regardless of the advertiser’s intended audience. People will be able to search the housing ad section by the name of the Page running an ad or the city or state to which the ad is targeted. This year, we’ll also include ads that offer employment or credit opportunities in the Ad Library. We’re actively working with civil rights groups to inform our approach as we prepare to roll this out. We’ve also committed to studying the potential for algorithmic bias, including in our ad algorithms, with input from the civil rights community, industry experts, and academics.

3. Does Facebook acknowledge a responsibility for the ads they host and, potentially, the connection to disreputable third-party websites that may lead to even more egregious privacy violations?

All ads must comply with our Community Standards and our Advertising Policies. Ads must not contain spyware, malware, or any software that results in an unexpected or deceptive experience. This includes links to sites containing these products. Similarly, ads must not direct people to non-functional landing pages, including landing pages that automatically download files to a person’s computer.

Ads are subject to Facebook’s ad review system, which relies primarily on automated tools to check ads against these policies. We use human reviewers to improve and train our automated systems and, in some cases, to review specific ads. This review happens before ads begin delivering, but may also happen after, if people hide, block, or provide negative feedback about an ad. When we detect an ad that violates our Advertising Policies, we disapprove it.

Facebook has also been certified by the Trustworthy Accountability Group’s (“TAG”) “Certified Against Fraud” program for Direct and Intermediary ad sales: <https://www.tagtoday.net/certified-against-fraud-programcompliantcompanies/>. TAG is an industry organization focused on eliminating fraudulent digital advertising traffic, combating malware, fighting ad-supported internet piracy to promote brand integrity, and promoting brand safety through greater transparency. Our certification has been determined by independent validation, not just self-attestation (like most companies that are TAG-certified).

We will continue our work to detect malicious behavior directed towards our platform and to enforce against violations of our Terms and Advertising Policies. As part of our ongoing efforts to keep people safe and combat abuse of our ad platform, Facebook recently filed suit in California against one entity and two individuals for violating our Terms and Advertising Policies. Creating real-world consequences for those who deceive users and engage in malicious practices is important for maintaining the integrity of our platform.

4. I acknowledge that Facebook prohibits ads for guns and drugs. Does Facebook screen for manipulative ads, like those that portray false testimonials or false claims to the limited availability of products?

All ads must comply with our Community Standards and our Advertising Policies, which prohibit ads promoting products or services using misleading or deceptive claims. We also prohibit ads promoting products, services, or schemes using deceptive or misleading practices, including those meant to scam people out of money or personal information.

As discussed in the response to your previous question, ads are subject to Facebook's ad review system, which relies primarily on automated tools to check ads against these policies. We use human reviewers to improve and train our automated systems and, in some cases, to review specific ads. This review happens before ads begin delivering, but may also happen after, if people hide, block, or provide negative feedback about an ad. When we detect an ad that violates our Advertising Policies, we disapprove it.

If we're made aware of an advertiser in violation of a specific law or regulation by an authorized government entity, we will investigate and take appropriate enforcement action.

Questions from Representative Castor

1. What techniques do internet platforms employ to keep their users engaged? What types of techniques are harmful? What types of techniques are harmless? Are there industry standards? If so, what are they? If not, what should they be?

Facebook was built to bring people closer together and build relationships. What we've found is that what's more important than *whether* people are engaged is *how* people interact online—that is, ensuring that people are able to have quality interactions with people and organizations they care about. For example, we've heard that people value active engagement with others (sending messages, posting, commenting, reminiscing about past interactions) over passive consumption like scrolling or clicking links, so we've worked to build experiences that enable that type of active interaction.

We have made many changes to facilitate people using Facebook in ways that support the goal of enabling healthy interactions. For example, we've made significant changes to News Feed to prioritize meaningful interactions, and we've redesigned our comments feature to encourage more discussion and better conversations. People can also “snooze” or mute content from a person, Page, or Group for 30 days if they need a break from certain content. And we've added “time spent” tools that help people manage their experience on Facebook and Instagram.

We are devoting substantial resources to understanding more about well-being online and we welcome the opportunity to work together with Congress and others in the industry to develop industry-wide standards.

Facebook is a supporter of the bipartisan, bicameral Children and Media Research Advancement (“CAMRA”) Act, which would provide funding for the National Institutes of Health to study the impact of technology and media on the cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development of children and adolescents. We also participated in the bipartisan roundtable hosted by Senators Markey and Blunt on this topic in February 2019.

2. What techniques do internet platforms employ to manipulate their users? What types of techniques are harmful? What types of techniques are harmless? Are there industry standards? If so, what are they? If not, what should they be?

Please see the response to your previous question. To be clear, we have no intention of manipulating our users.

A user's News Feed is informed by the user's own Facebook activity, such as their likes, comments, and other content. We work to offer a variety of tools to help people understand what they're seeing on Facebook and why, like the “Why Am I Seeing This?” feature, which gives users information about why they're seeing a post or ad. We also have built new and improved tools to help people access information associated with their Facebook account and to provide transparency and control around how we use data. For example, the Access Your Information and Download Your Information tools are available to Facebook users in their account settings. And we have been rolling out new ways to allow users to view and control data we receive when they use apps and websites off Facebook via our new Off-Facebook Activity tool, which allows users to see which apps and websites send us information about users' activity and allows users

to disconnect this information from their accounts. We also have detailed notifications settings that allow people to customize their experiences on Facebook.

As discussed above, Facebook is a supporter of the bipartisan, bicameral Children and Media Research Advancement (“CAMRA”) Act, and we welcome the opportunity to work together with Congress and others in the industry to develop industry-wide standards.

3. The word algorithm is used frequently in discussions over internet engagement. What is an algorithm? Who designs the algorithms? What are the benefits/harms to internet platforms using algorithms? How do algorithms use artificial intelligence? Can internet platforms fully explain why an algorithm produces certain results? Do internet platforms have knowledge of all the information fed into the algorithms they use?

An algorithm is a formula or set of steps for solving a particular problem. At Facebook, we use algorithms to offer customized user experiences and to help us achieve our mission of building a global and informed community. For example, we use algorithms to help generate and display search results (see <https://about.fb.com/news/2018/11/inside-feed-how-search-works/>), to prioritize the content people follow with their personalized News Feed (see <https://about.fb.com/news/2018/05/inside-feed-news-feed-ranking/>), and to serve ads that may be relevant to them.

As a company, we are committed to helping our users understand how we use algorithms. We publish a series of blog posts called News Feed FYI (see <https://about.fb.com/news/category/news-feed-fyi/>) that highlight major updates to News Feed and explains the thinking behind them. We also recently launched a new feature called “Why am I seeing this post?” (see <https://about.fb.com/news/2019/03/why-am-i-seeing-this/>) to help people on Facebook better understand and more easily control what they see from friends, Pages, and Groups in News Feed. This feature (which is similar to another tool we recently improved called “Why am I seeing this ad?”) is based on user feedback asking for more transparency around what appears in News Feed and easier access to News Feed controls.

We are also working with external stakeholders on ethics and artificial intelligence (“AI”). We are part of various multi-stakeholder consortia working on issues of algorithmic fairness, transparency, and accountability. For example, we co-founded the Partnership on AI, a collaborative and multi-stakeholder organization that was established to study and formulate best practices on AI technologies, to advance the public’s understanding of AI, and to serve as an open platform for discussion and engagement about AI and its influence on people and society. We are constantly seeking ways to collaborate with external stakeholders on these issues. For example, we partnered with the Technical University of Munich (“TUM”) to support the creation of an independent Institute for Ethics in Artificial Intelligence. We have also collaborated with the Digital Ethics Lab of the University of Oxford to assess, map, and explore how AI can help meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We seek to harness the power of AI to promote human understanding and well-being and work to ensure AI is developed and used in a responsible and ethical manner.

4. What should be considered healthy engagement with an internet platform? Is healthy engagement defined differently for children? If so, what should be considered healthy engagement with an internet platform for children?

Regarding healthy engagement, please see the response to your Question 1.

Regarding engagement by children, Facebook requires everyone to be at least 13 years old before they can create an account. The safety and well-being of 13- to 17-year-olds on our platform is very important to us. That is why teams from across the company, including our Policy, Product, and Legal teams, work to ensure we have the right precautions and procedures in place. We work with parents and families; experts in child development, online safety, and children's health and media; and lawmakers to ensure that we are building better products for families. The safeguards we put in place include everything from extra in-app education regarding friending and posting publicly to age-gating and warnings to prevent exposure to certain content.

For example, the team that works on the development of our product policies consults with experts to ensure that our policies properly account for the presence of 13- to 17-year-olds on our platform and this work has resulted in the age-gating of certain content. Our team that works on privacy policies, in consultation with experts, has helped develop unique education moments regarding friending and posting publicly for our 13- to 17-year-old users. They also have worked with our product teams to ensure we remove certain information, like a user's school, from search for minors. Our safety policy team works across all internal teams at Facebook to ensure we are taking a 360-degree approach to minors' safety and building the best policies, tools, programs, and resources to ensure the safety of minors on our platform.

Our efforts also include giving parents the information, resources, and tools they need to set parameters for their children's use of online technologies and to help them develop healthy and safe online habits. For example, as part of our Safety Center, we have a Parent Portal (<https://www.facebook.com/safety/parents>) and a Youth Portal (<https://www.facebook.com/safety/youth>), which are both focused on fostering conversations around online safety, security, and well-being. Those portals give parents and young people access to the information and resources they need to make informed decisions about their use of online technologies. We remain dedicated to examining our own practices and the resources we make available for the safety and security of people who use our services.

In 2018, Facebook announced a partnership with the National Parent Teacher Association ("National PTA") to launch Digital Families Community events across the country. In 2019, 200 community safety events took place in all 50 states to help families address tech-related challenges, from online safety and bullying prevention to digital and news literacy. The toolkits for these events were developed with experts including the Youth and Media Team at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard. The events included interactive workshops for families on healthy online habits and a family tech talk around family social media values and social media and phone "off times."

Facebook also has a product for children called Messenger Kids. Messenger Kids is a messaging and video chat app that is designed for children under 13 to connect with friends and

family. We designed Messenger Kids with the guidance and input of thousands of parents and experts, and with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (“COPPA”) in mind. Parental controls are core to the Messenger Kids experience. For example, parents or guardians have control over who can communicate with their child through Messenger Kids. And we’ve recently launched additional tools and features for parents or guardians to manage their child’s experience in Messenger Kids. Parents or guardians can also set predetermined “off times” for the app on a child’s device.

We are committed to continuing our work to foster safe, kind, and supportive communities for everyone.

5. When does engagement with an internet platform turn into addiction? How are classic signs of addiction measured in the digital context? Is the addiction connected to internet platforms similar to manifestations of addiction in other situations? How is it similar? How is it different?

Facebook is designed to bring people together. We want Facebook to be a place for meaningful interactions with your friends and family—enhancing your relationships offline, not detracting from them. After all, that’s what Facebook has always been about.

To better understand this issue, we employ social psychologists, social scientists, and sociologists, and we collaborate with top scholars to better understand well-being. And because this isn’t just a Facebook issue, but an internet issue, we collaborate with leading experts and publish in the top peer-reviewed journals. We work with leading academics at Carnegie Mellon, UC Riverside, and the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley, and we have partnered closely with mental health clinicians and organizations like Save.org and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Facebook is a supporter of the bipartisan, bicameral Children and Media Research Advancement (“CAMRA”) Act, which would provide funding for the National Institutes of Health to study the impact of technology and media on the cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development of children and adolescents. We also participated in the bipartisan roundtable hosted by Senators Markey and Blunt on this topic in February 2019.

We have also pledged \$1 million towards research to better understand the relationship between media technologies, youth development, and well-being. Facebook is teaming up with experts in the field to look at the impact of mobile technology and social media on children and teens, as well as how to better support them as they transition through different stages of life. Facebook is committed to bringing people together and supporting well-being through meaningful interactions on Facebook.

We’ve also developed and implemented tools to help people manage their time on Facebook and Instagram: an activity dashboard, a daily reminder, and ways to limit notifications. We developed these tools based on collaboration and inspiration from leading mental health experts and organizations, academics, our own extensive research, and feedback from our community. We want the time people spend on Facebook and Instagram to be intentional,

positive, and inspiring. Our hope is that these tools give people more control over the time they spend on our platforms.

6. Why are repeat engagement with or addiction to an internet platform harmful to the individual or society as a whole? What are the costs? For example, what are the economic costs?

Facebook was built to bring people closer together and build relationships. What we've found with well-being is that it's not about time spent, but about how people interact online.

In general, when people spend a lot of time passively consuming information—reading but not interacting with people—they report feeling worse afterward. Though the causes aren't clear, researchers hypothesize that reading about others online might lead to negative social comparison—perhaps even more so than offline, since people's online posts are often more curated and flattering. Another theory is that the internet takes people away from social engagement in person.

On the other hand, actively interacting with people—especially sharing messages, posts, and comments with close friends and reminiscing about past interactions—is linked to improvements in well-being. This ability to connect with relatives, classmates, and colleagues is what drew many of us to Facebook in the first place, and it's no surprise that staying in touch with these friends and loved ones brings us joy and strengthens our sense of community.

As discussed in the responses to your previous questions, we have made many changes to facilitate people using Facebook in ways that are healthy. And we are partnering with leading experts and dedicating significant resources to better understand these challenging issues. At the end of the day, we're committed to bringing people together and supporting well-being through meaningful interactions on Facebook.

7. Why are manipulative techniques employed by internet platforms harmful to the individual or society as a whole? What are the costs? For example, what are the economic costs?

Please see the responses to your previous questions.

8. How do internet platforms monetize repeat engagement or addiction? Why does this model benefit internet platforms? What are the benefits?

Facebook's mission is to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. Facebook is not designed to be addictive. We want Facebook to be a place for meaningful interactions with your friends and family—enhancing your offline relationships, not detracting from them.

Like many other free online services, we sell advertising space to third parties. Doing so enables us to offer our services to consumers for free. This in turn allows us to fulfill one of our principles, which is to serve everyone—because everyone deserves access to these tools.

At the same time, we want ads to be as relevant and useful to our users as the other posts they see. This is important for businesses too, because users are less likely to respond to ads that are irrelevant or annoying. If we do this effectively, people will see ads about products and services they care about, and advertising on Facebook can help businesses large and small increase their sales and hire more people.

9. How do internet platforms monetize manipulation? Why does this model benefit internet platforms? What are the benefits?

Please see the response to your previous question.

10. What tools are at internet platform users' disposal to stop repeat engagement or addiction? Should companies provide or fund those tools?

We've developed and implemented tools to help people manage their time on Facebook and Instagram: an activity dashboard, a daily reminder, and a way to limit notifications. We developed these tools based on collaboration with and inspiration from leading mental health experts and organizations, academics, our own extensive research, and feedback from our community. We want the time people spend on Facebook and Instagram to be intentional, positive, and inspiring. Our hope is that these tools give people more control over the time they spend on our platforms.

Over the past few years, we've also introduced a number of tools to help people better control their experience on Facebook and Instagram. On Facebook, we improved News Feed quality to show people the most relevant posts with features like See First, Hide, and Unfollow. On Instagram, we launched powerful tools to proactively care for the community—like the “You're All Caught Up” message in Feed, keyword filtering, sensitivity screens, and offensive comment and bullying filters.

We want to help people understand how much time they spend on our platforms so they can better manage their experience. At the end of the day, we're committed to bringing people together and supporting well-being through meaningful interactions on our platforms.

Facebook's 2019 Global Safety and Well-Being Summit focused on some of the tools Facebook provides to help people better control their experience, as well as the perspectives of outside experts on other tools and resources to help us innovate responsibly and intentionally. For more information, please visit <https://about.fb.com/news/2019/05/2019-global-safety-well-being-summit>.

11. What tools are at internet platform users' disposal to stop manipulation? Should companies provide or fund those tools?

Please see the response to your previous question.

12. What role should Congress play in combating repeat engagement with or addiction to internet platforms?

We are committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure that we're bringing people together and supporting well-being through meaningful interactions on Facebook. We've dedicated significant resources to studying these issues, and we've had many conversations with academics, experts, and industry leaders to make sure that we are hearing from a broad range of perspectives. Of course, this isn't just a Facebook issue; it's an internet issue, and we would welcome Congress's involvement in facilitating research that can benefit users across internet platforms.

As discussed in the responses to your previous questions, Facebook is a supporter of the bipartisan, bicameral Children and Media Research Advancement ("CAMRA") Act, which would provide funding for the National Institutes of Health to study the impact of technology and media on the cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development of children and adolescents. We also participated in the bipartisan roundtable hosted by Senators Markey and Blunt on this topic in February 2019.

13. Should Congress fund more research studying the techniques utilized by internet platforms to increase engagement and manipulate users and their effects? Should some of that research focus on the effect techniques utilized by internet platforms to increase engagement and manipulate users have on children?

Please see the response to your previous question.

14. Section 5 of the FTC Act prohibits "unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce." What types of manipulation should be considered unfair or deceptive? What types should not be considered unfair or deceptive? Should a different standard be developed for manipulative techniques used by internet platforms? If so, what should that standard be? What manipulative techniques should be allowed for adults but not for children?

The Federal Trade Commission ("FTC") has guidance interpreting its authority under Section 5 of the FTC Act, as well as longstanding policies and principles for what it considers to be an unfair or deceptive practice. Facebook is regulated under the FTC Act and therefore follows the FTC's guidance.

We would welcome the opportunity to work together with regulators, Congress, and others in the industry to develop industry-wide standards.

15. Does the application of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (section 230) enable increased manipulation and repeat engagement/addiction? If so, how does section 230 enable increased manipulation and repeat engagement/addiction and what are the potential fixes?

Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act has been essential to protecting free expression and innovation on the internet, and we believe its provisions are consistent with operating safe products that give consumers choice. In fact, it is the legal protections afforded by

Section 230 that allow us to proactively restrict certain types of harmful content on our platforms, regardless of whether that content is otherwise protected.

Questions from Representative Guthrie

1. Ms. Bickert, can you explain how the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism works, and how you and other companies are working together to remove terrorist content and disrupt violent extremists' ability to promote themselves and their propaganda online?

In the summer of 2017, Facebook, YouTube, Microsoft, and Twitter came together to form the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (“GIFCT”). The objective of the GIFCT has always been to substantially disrupt terrorists’ ability to promote terrorism, disseminate violent extremist propaganda, and exploit or glorify real-world acts of violence on our services. We do this by joining forces with counterterrorism experts in government, civil society, and the wider industry around the world. Our work has been centered around three interrelated strategies:

- Joint Tech Innovation;
- Knowledge Sharing; and
- Conducting and Funding Research.

For example, through the GIFCT, we have expanded a database in which thirteen companies share “hashes,” or digital fingerprints, to better enable companies to identify terrorist content. The database now contains hashes for more than 200,000 visually distinct images, and more than 10,000 visually distinct videos. Facebook was the 2019 chair for the GIFCT, and we worked to expand its capabilities, including increased sharing of hashes and hashing technology.

In the summer of 2019, and building on the commitments we made as part of the Christchurch Call to Action, we added a fourth pillar to our work that focuses on crisis response. Specifically, we developed a joint content incident protocol for responding to emerging or active events like the horrific terrorist attack in Christchurch, so that relevant information can be quickly and efficiently shared, processed, and acted upon by all member companies. GIFCT member companies have developed, refined, and tested the protocol through workshops with Europol and the New Zealand Government. Our teams are in regular contact to share information about violent events.

Conducting and funding research to study counterterrorism and terrorism is another critical part of our work and was a key focus last year. In 2019, we supported the first phase of the GIFCT Academic Research Network, the Global Research Network on Terrorism and Technology. This phase was led by the Royal United Services Institute and produced thirteen original independent research papers looking at different aspects of terrorism. Phase 2 of the GIFCT Academic Research Network, the Global Network on Extremism and Technology, began recently and is being led by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation. For more information, please visit <https://gnet-research.org/>.

The GIFCT also announced last year that it will become an independent organization led by an Executive Director and supported by dedicated technology, counterterrorism, and operations teams. Evolving and institutionalizing the GIFCT’s structure from a consortium of member companies will build on our early achievements and deepen industry collaboration with

experts, partners, and government stakeholders—all in an effort to thwart increasingly sophisticated efforts by terrorists and violent extremists to abuse digital platforms.