

#GE2019 Open Knowledge Foundation welcome transparency moves by Facebook

Facebook has joined Twitter in moving in on political ads placed on its platform. The social media giant has not gone quite as far as Twitter which has banned political ads all together, but it will tighten its rules making such adverts more transparent. It says that it wants people to 'see who is trying to influence their vote and what they are saying'.

Facebook also said it has 'built stronger defences to prevent things like foreign interference' and has 'invested in both people and technology to ensure these new policies are effective'.

Ella Fallows, Politics and Government Outreach Manager UK, Facebook said : "As you may be aware, every piece of content on Facebook and Instagram has a report button, and when content is reported to us which violates our Community Standards – what is and isn't allowed on Facebook – it is removed.

"Since March of this year, MPs have also had access to a dedicated reporting channel to flag any abusive and threatening content directly to our teams. Now that the General Election is underway we're extending that support to

all prospective candidates, making our team available to anyone standing to allow them to quickly report any concerns across our platforms and have them investigated.”

Catherine Stihler, chief executive of the Open Knowledge Foundation, said: “This is a welcome first step by Facebook, which is clearly listening to widespread concerns about disinformation on its site during this General Election campaign.

“Any attempts at delivering greater openness and transparency are encouraging.

“However, it remains the case that Facebook is still accepting money for political ads which can contain disinformation, which is why we have called for a moratorium on political ads for the duration of the campaign.

“Ultimately, the solution to this does not involve self-regulation. The only way to build a fair, free and open digital future in the UK is to update our analogue electoral laws for the digital age.”



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