[FR] Facebook and Google join forces with French media to combat fake news

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Facebook and Google have simultaneously announced the deployment in France in the near future of arrangements for flagging fake news.

To achieve this, Facebook has joined forces with eight French partner organisations in the media (Le Monde, Agence France-Presse, BFM-TV, France Télévisions, France Médias Monde, L'Express, Libération, and 20 Minutes) so that users can flag information they believe to be fake. The links flagged are to be gathered together on a portal to which the partner media organisations will have access, and they will then be able to check the information. If two partner organisations determine that the reported content is fake and post a link that attests to this, the content will then be visible to users with an icon indicating that two "fact-checkers" question the truthfulness of the information. If a user wishes to share the content, a window will open with a warning. It will not be possible to use such content for advertising on Facebook. Additionally, sites circulating fake information will have reduced visibility.

A similar scheme was set up in the United States in December with the support of five media organisations, and another is to be launched soon in Germany.

At the same time Google (through its media division Google News Lab) and the media network First Draft announced on 6 February the launch of CrossCheck, a collaborative checking tool. Here again the aim is to contain the circulation of misleading and false information. Sixteen editorial teams have joined the new effort (including AFP, Les Echos, Le Monde, France Télévisions, and La Provence), as have several technology companies. Members of the public will be able to report dubious content encountered on the Internet or social networks, or ask questions on a specialist platform so that CrossCheck's partners can investigate and reply to requests directly on the platform. The platform is to be launched on 27 February, before the French presidential election. Facebook has been accused of having indirectly promoted the election of Donald Trump by helping to propagate fake content in favour of the Republican candidate.

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