

YouTube Censors Thousands of Election-Related Accounts, Citing 'Misinformation'

Following the safe harbor deadline for the 2020 election, YouTube has announced via its blog that it will continue to censor and delete any accounts that “mislead people by alleging that widespread fraud or errors changed the outcome of the 2020 U.S. Presidential election.”

Not only that, but the social media giant said it will take down any video “claiming that a Presidential candidate won the election due to widespread software glitches or counting errors.”

This effort, according to Twitter, has been in effect since September. Since that time, the company has removed more than 8,000 accounts for “violating our policies.”

1/ Our goal this election was to connect people to authoritative info, limit harmful misinfo & remove violative content. Subsequently, authoritative news was widely watched & recommended, and since Sept, we removed 8K+ channels for violating our policies.

– YouTubeInsider (@YouTubeInsider) December 9, 2020

In this vein, YouTube will also update its 2020 Election Panel information “noting that as of December 8, states have certified Presidential election results.”

The blog post concluded, “Our teams work hard to ensure we are striking a balance between allowing for a broad range of political speech and making sure our platform isn’t abused to incite real-world harm or broadly spread harmful misinformation. We welcome ongoing debate and discussion and

will keep engaging with experts, researchers and organizations to ensure that our policies and products are meeting that goal.”

Following YouTube’s announcement, Google released a statement that beginning Dec. 10 “it will lift the post-election political ad ban that went into effect after polls closed on Nov. 3,” according to an email obtained by Axios.

This move will still allow Google to “rigorously enforce” its advertising policies, “which strictly prohibit demonstrably false information that could significantly undermine trust in elections or the democratic process, among other forms of abuse.”

Twitter users are vocal about their opinions, including Republican Senator Ted Cruz:

The more power #BigTech accumulates, the more emboldened & brazen they become. @YouTube’s recent decision to remove content alleging voter fraud is just the latest example of that.

– Senator Ted Cruz (@SenTedCruz) December 10, 2020

Fox News Chief White House Correspondent John Roberts adds:

Posing this question: If @Twitter and @Facebook censor a news story that ultimately turns out to be true, what does that say about the role of big tech in our democracy?

– John Roberts (@johnrobertsFox) December 10, 2020

Senator Josh Hawley says under this latest development those with election concerns must “sit down and shut up.”

.@Google owned @YouTube officially announcing free speech no longer allowed. If you have concerns about election integrity, you must sit down and shut up. Repeal Section 230

and break these companies up

– Josh Hawley (@HawleyMO) December 9, 2020

The policy change allegedly comes after a group of Democratic senators sent a letter to YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki in November, according to CBS News.

“We urge you to immediately remove all election outcome misinformation and take aggressive steps to implement prohibitions, as other social media companies have done, regarding outcomes in future elections,” the letter states. “YouTube and its industry peers must take responsibility and immediately stop the spread of misinformation and manipulated media on their platforms.” {eoa}