

Meta Keeps News Publishers Spinning with its Endless Mind Games

Big tech company Meta, which owns Facebook, has over the years changed course in its relationship with news more times than we can count, pushing news publishers away one moment and pulling them back the next to serve their interests, with little regard for the detrimental impact to publishers, journalism, and readers. This timeline illustrates how Meta has literally flipped from one side to the complete opposite, sometimes in the span of days, and how they have stated their intent to prioritize news, only to cast it off later as old news.

2015

Facebook helps drive traffic to news with Instant Articles, but then takes it away when legislation requiring them to pay publishers starts moving through Congress.



LIKE: In May 2015, Facebook began testing “instant articles” on its platform by directly hosting articles rather than linking off to the news publisher’s site, paying publishers ad revenue. [Read more.](#)



DISLIKE: In October 2022 it was announced that Facebook would be ending support of instant articles, scaling back on investments for news. [Read more.](#)

2016

Facebook shows off news Curation team, then cuts it when they come under fire for the practice.



DISLIKE: In May 2016, it was revealed that Facebook was using staff to manage the news that appeared in the “trending” section, sifting through terms that the algorithm produced giving them a value based on whether they were reported by major news outlets. [Read more.](#)



LIKE: In August 2016, Facebook cut the “curation team” after criticism of bias and took steps to ensure the section would show popular content using algorithms. [Read more.](#)

2017

Facebook contracted with news publishers to create live video for them, then abandoned it.



LIKE: In 2016, Facebook signed contracts with nearly 140 media companies and celebrities to pay them to create live video for its Facebook Live service. [Read more.](#)



DISLIKE: Less than a year later, in January 2017, it was reported that Facebook was de-emphasizing live video, instead moving toward long-form video content. [Read more.](#)

2018

Facebook deprioritizes news in its “Feed,” then says trusted news content will be prioritized.



DISLIKE: In January 2018, Facebook announced that a user’s News Feed would feature more content from family and friends at the top, rather than news content, to maximize content with “meaningful interaction.” [Read more.](#)



LIKE: Facebook announces another change just **one week later**, saying after research showed [56% of users](#) said they wanted to see more local news on Facebook, that news shown on a user’s Feed would be prioritized based on if it is considered high-quality, “[trusted news content](#)”.

2019

Facebook launched a special News tab in the U.S. to feature news publisher content, then took it away when legislation around the world requiring tech platforms to pay for news gained momentum.



LIKE: In October 2019, Facebook decides once again to befriend news publishers, launching a dedicated News tab – paying publishers to feature their content – to encourage users to consume news on its platform. [Read more.](#)



DISLIKE: In July 2022, Facebook announced it would not renew existing agreements with news publishers to feature their content on Facebook News, signaling that it intended to turn away from news yet again. [Read more.](#)

2021

In response to Australia's intent to pass a law requiring Big Tech to pay news publishers, Meta removed news from Facebook. When the move backfired with the public, it restored news and began negotiations with publishers under the new law.



DISLIKE: On February 17, 2021, Meta removed news from Facebook in Australia in response to the country's News Media Bargaining Code, which would require them to pay small, local publishers for use of their content. [Read more.](#)



LIKE: Again, just one week later, following public backlash for blocking important news and information from the platform, Meta reported that it had reached a deal with the Australian government and would restore news to Facebook in the country, as well as negotiate with publishers under the Code. [Read more.](#)

2022

Meta says it will remove news from Facebook in the U.S. if the Journalism Competition & Preservation Act (JCPA) becomes law.



DISLIKE: On December 5, 2022, Meta threatens to repeat its unsuccessful behavior from Australia, saying it would consider removing news in the U.S. if the JCPA (which at the time was included in the defense package set to pass at the end of the year), became law. The JCPA ultimately was not included in the defense bill. [Read more.](#)

2023

Meta threatens to remove news from Facebook in California if the California Journalism Preservation Act (CJPA), a bill that would require dominant tech platforms to fairly compensate news publishers for use of their content, passes.



DISLIKE: On May 31, 2023, as the CJPA was headed to a Senate vote and was poised to become law, Meta, up to its usual tricks, threatened to pull news from Facebook if the bill passed, using its dominance to manipulate public policy to the detriment of journalism and Americans. [Read more.](#)



Now, Meta is removing news from Facebook in Canada in retaliation against the Online News Act (C-18), which would require them to negotiate with news publishers for payment for use of their valuable journalism.

We've seen this before. Facebook's push and pull is harmful to publishers. Meta should not be allowed to get away with using our content for free.