

EU warns X over Israel-Hamas disinformation

16th October 2023



Social media is awash with information and graphics about the ongoing events in Israel and Gaza. There are concerns about how much of the content posted online is fake. The European Union has just opened an investigation into the social media site

X, formerly known as Twitter. The EU says there is an alarming volume of posts containing false information on X. EU officials have expressed concern that X was, "being used to disseminate illegal content and disinformation". X has until the end of next week to answer a series of EU questions about this content. Failure to satisfactorily address these issues could lead the EU to impose a fine on X of up to five per cent of the company's daily global turnover.

The EU probe into X comes under the bloc's Digital Services Act. This was established to monitor how large tech companies deal with the hate speech posted on their platforms, and how they police the Internet. An EU spokesperson advised X to introduce, "proportionate and effective mitigation measures" to identify and delete disinformation. He added: "We have, from qualified sources, reports about potentially illegal content circulating on X, despite flags from relevant authorities." Hundreds of bogus accounts have been flooding the Internet with harmful and inflammatory content. The CEO of X said the site had removed hundreds of these accounts. A social media expert lamented this was, "a drop in the ocean".

Sources: [ft.com](https://www.ft.com) / [abcnews.go.com](https://www.abcnews.go.com) / [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com)

Writing

Social media companies should be heavily fined for disinformation. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

social media / information / graphics / online / fake / investigation / illegal / fine / the EU / tech companies / Internet / mitigation / hate speech / bogus accounts

True / False

- 1) Social media is full of disinformation over Israel and Gaza. T / F
- 2) The EU has just opened an investigation into events in Gaza. T / F
- 3) The EU gave X a month to answer a series of questions. T / F
- 4) The EU could fine X 5% of its annual global turnover. T / F
- 5) The Digital Services Act in the EU looks into hate speech online. T / F
- 6) The EU wants X to introduce mitigation measures. T / F
- 7) The article says a million fake accounts are uploading disinformation. T / F
- 8) A social media expert called removing sites a drop in the bucket. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. awash | a. complained about |
| 2. ongoing | b. frightening |
| 3. investigation | c. continuing |
| 4. alarming | d. revenue |
| 5. turnover | e. provocative |
| 6. bloc | f. regulate |
| 7. police | g. flooded |
| 8. circulating | h. union |
| 9. inflammatory | i. spreading |
| 10. lamented | j. inquiry |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of online disinformation?
- b) Who is posting disinformation online about Israel and Hamas?
- c) What do you know about the Israel and Hamas crisis?
- d) How can we rid the Internet of fake news?
- e) How has fake news affected our lives?
- f) What do you think of the social media platform X?
- g) What do you think leaders in the Middle East should do?
- h) What do you think will happen in the Middle East in the coming weeks?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Social media is awash | a. accounts |
| 2. much of the content posted online | b. illegal content |
| 3. an alarming volume | c. global turnover |
| 4. being used to disseminate | d. the Internet |
| 5. five per cent of the company's daily | e. is fake |
| 6. how large tech companies | f. in the ocean |
| 7. potentially illegal content circulating | g. with information |
| 8. Hundreds of bogus | h. on X |
| 9. flooding | i. deal with the hate speech |
| 10. a drop | j. of posts |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What regulations do social media platforms need?
- What hate speech have you seen online?
- How worried are you about events in Israel and Gaza?
- What is your advice for people in the region?
- How much faith do you have in the truth of what you read online?
- What should happen to people who post inflammatory content?
- What questions would you like to ask a social media boss?

Spelling

- Social media is washa with information
- opened an inovgaitsetn
- EU officials have epsexdres concern
- being used to iaetssinedm illegal content
- Failure to ifrisacloatsty address these issues
- the company's daily global rotnuver
- This was deelihsbsta to monitor how
- effective iaomttigin measures
- illegal content lctaicgriun on X
- from Iranveet authorities
- nltraaifmym content
- tmdelean this was a drop in the ocean

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. c	3. j	4. b	5. d
6. h	7. f	8. i	9. e	10. a

Role Play

Role A – X

You think X is the best social media site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): TikTok, Facebook or Instagram.

Role B – TikTok

You think TikTok is the best social media site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): X, Facebook or Instagram.

Role C – Facebook

You think Facebook is the best social media site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): TikTok, X or Instagram.

Role D – Instagram

You think Instagram is the best social media site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): TikTok, Facebook or X.

Speaking – Social Media

Rank these with your partner. Put the best sites at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| • X | • Instagram |
| • Facebook | • TikTok |
| • Pinterest | • SnapChat |
| • YouTube | • LinkedIn |

Answers – True False

1	T	2	F	3	F	4	F	5	T	6	T	7	F	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.