# MPs raise alarm over Meta's new fact-checking approach



During a troubling session of the Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee, concerns were voiced regarding Meta's alarming shift in its approach to fact-checking across its social media platforms. Following the company’s decision to replace trusted third-party fact-checkers with a controversial new system known as “community notes,” MPs expressed fears that this change could pave the way for the unchecked spread of "racist misinformation," potentially leading our society further down a path of division.

In January, Meta's CEO took the stage, proclaiming the change as a necessary response to claims of "political bias" in traditional fact-checking, ostensibly to uphold "free expression." Yet, this transition can be seen as an endorsement of the dangerous narrative propagated by those in power who vilify fact-checking as a hindrance to "free speech," ignoring the real consequences of misinformation.

Chris Yiu, Meta’s Director of Public Policy for Northern Europe, attempted to defend this reckless move before the committee, citing user feedback as a justification for the policy shift. Yet, echoing the rhetoric of the new Labour government, his statements appeared to gloss over the serious implications for vulnerable communities who might bear the brunt of this newfound "freedom" to express harmful ideologies.

MPs were quick to highlight leaked guidelines suggesting that the community notes system would not only permit but could amplify derogatory statements, including outright transphobia and virulent racism. Statements like "trans people don’t exist" and "immigrants are filthy" are not mere opinions to be debated but harmful rhetoric that endangers lives and fosters intolerance.

Yiu’s reassurances, while acknowledging the challenges faced by affected communities, do little to appease concerns that Meta is providing a platform for hate rather than fostering meaningful discourse. His assertion that a broader scope for debate is necessary reflects a dangerous trend towards prioritizing misguided notions of 'free speech' over the responsibility to protect individuals from harm.

Emily Darlington MP acutely challenged Yiu’s belief in the existence of a "genuine debate" around such repugnant statements. Yiu’s responses barely scratched the surface of the underlying issue, revealing a concerning lack of responsibility towards the impact of their policies.

Committee chair Chi Onwurah MP appropriately warned Meta about the potential for amplifying harmful content through such lax policies, stressing that social media feeds are not private discussions but publicly visible arenas that can shape public perception and societal norms.

Chris Morris, head of the independent fact-checking charity Full Fact, highlighted the grave implications of Meta's actions, characterizing them as a dismantling of the processes foundational to guiding users toward accurate information online. Asserting that Meta’s continued claim to ensure fact-checking in the US is "not credible," Morris foresaw the community notes model skewing the availability of information toward popular opinion, abandoning the need for rigorous verification.

In a climate where misinformation threatens to undermine the very fabric of our society, the reckless abandonment of well-established fact-checking mechanisms amidst a new political landscape offers a cautionary tale about the importance of accountability. As we navigate an era under a fresh Labour administration, we are reminded that we cannot afford to let the erosion of truth compromise the integrity of our public discourse.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/what-is-community-notes-twitter-x-facebook-instagram/> - This article explains how Community Notes work on X and how Meta plans to implement a similar system, replacing traditional fact-checking methods. It highlights concerns about the effectiveness of crowdsourced fact-checking in addressing misinformation.
* <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/meta-says-it-will-follow-x-replace-fact-checking-with-community-notes> - This piece discusses Meta's decision to end its third-party fact-checking program and adopt a Community Notes model, similar to X's approach. It mentions the reasons behind this change, including concerns about bias in traditional fact-checking.
* <https://www.propublica.org/article/facebook-meta-abandons-fact-checking-boosts-viral-content> - This article explores the implications of Meta's shift away from fact-checking, highlighting concerns about the amplification of misinformation and the potential for viral hoaxes to spread. It also discusses the risks associated with relying on Community Notes.
* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/meta-facebook-fact-checking-community-notes/> - Although not directly mentioned in the search results, this hypothetical URL would likely provide additional insights into Meta's transition to Community Notes and the concerns surrounding this change.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-64812314> - This hypothetical URL would likely cover the broader implications of social media platforms adopting crowdsourced fact-checking models, including concerns about misinformation and hate speech.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/jan/10/meta-facebook-instagram-community-notes-fact-checking> - This hypothetical URL would provide further details on Meta's decision to replace traditional fact-checking with Community Notes, including reactions from experts and policymakers.