

Facebook's Role

When Facebook was founded, it was designed to be a social network for college students. Nearly 15 years later, it has become so much more than just a space to connect with friends – it is a [source of information](#). Ask any college class how they get their news, and chances are at least one response will be “Facebook,” but how can we trust that the information we see posted and shared is authentic? The truth is, we can't.

Sure, Facebook can (and should) crack down on foreign influence on its site, but even removing all foreign content will not ensure that all content is 100% authentic. Think about it: how many times have you seen that one of your Facebook friends shared an article that seems too outrageous to be true, only to debunk it with a quick Google search? This content doesn't have to be foreign propaganda to be harmful – domestic groups are just as capable of influencing the public to take hateful stances. This post from Twitter User @kristinaxb describes the prevalence of these hateful posts:

<https://twitter.com/kristinaxb/status/1035630191731769344>

The problem is that Facebook has labeled itself an information source, which means that its executives have an obligation to ensure that its users are receiving authentic information. In this thread, Twitter user @trekonomics evaluates different tech companies' roles as public goods, Facebook included:

<https://twitter.com/trekonomics/status/975934105496969221>

So how can Facebook properly function as an information source and become a public good? My answer has nothing to do with making the platform more authentic. In fact, my answer is completely different – I believe that Facebook should return to its roots as a social network, and let other platforms take the lead in information.