

Document 1

Facebook blocks Australian users from viewing or sharing news

Facebook has blocked Australian users from sharing or viewing news content on the platform, causing much alarm over public access to key information.

It comes in response to a proposed law, which would make tech giants pay for news content on their platforms.

Australians woke up on Thursday to find that Facebook pages of all news sites were unavailable. Facebook's change also denied Australians access to many key government agencies, including police and emergency services, health departments and the Bureau of Meteorology - something Facebook later asserted was a mistake, saying these pages had been "inadvertently impacted" and would be reinstated, though it did not give a deadline.

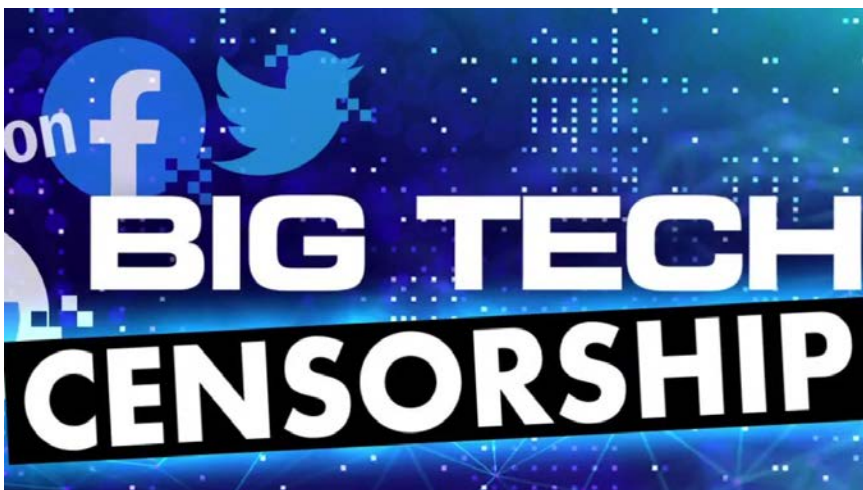
The Australian government has strongly criticised the move and assured it was committed to passing the law.

Elaine Pearson, Human Rights Watch' Australia director said Facebook was censoring the flow of information - calling it a "dangerous turn of events, as cutting off access to vital information to an entire country is unconscionable."

Facebook, then, has decided to show that there are consequences for governments if they want to take muscular action against Big Tech.

<https://www.bbc.com> 18 February 2021

Document 2



<https://www.foxnews.com/>

Document 3

Social media has positive possibilities in pandemic

By Becky Blue, University of Western Ontario

25 Social isolation does not need to be so anti-social, thanks to numerous technologies allowing people to connect in new ways from a distance.

"Social media can be very helpful," Information and Media Studies professor Anabel Quan-Haase said. "Having the right connections can help people make sense of very complex information that is often changing rapidly.

Social networks can also help people feel less alone.

30 "Using social media to help stay connected is a great idea—particularly social media that strengthens existing bonds and helps move existing social groups online. We all belong to sets of networks – co-workers, immediate kin, extended family, friends", Quan-Haase added.

35 Quan-Haase gives examples such as having a glass of wine with a friend over video call, or text messaging with an elderly relative that lives alone, or providing small services rendered by for example shopping for someone in quarantine. These things help to maintain a sense of connection during very stressful times, "Through jokes, humour and silly posts, it also helps us cope." she said.

<https://techxplore.com/> March 27, 2020