

Long Story, short (13)

Social media and online hate, transphobia, and homophobia

“Long Story-Short” is a weekly email describing one LGBTQIA+ inclusion principle around 250 words (or less!) while demystifying some of the complexities around LGBTQIA+ inclusion in humanitarian and development environments.

You know, You don’t HAVE to use Meta and X

“Trans people aren’t real, They’re mentally ill;” “Gays are not normal;” “Trans people are freaks;”
“Women are crazy”

Examples of statements that Facebook’s new policy guidance deem “OK”

She is “dead, killed by the woke mind virus.”

- Elon Musk, on his own daughter, a transgender women, in an interview with noted transphobic propagator Jordan Petersen

If you had a local partner or supplier who open espoused hateful rhetoric about trans people (or who gave Nazi salutes), would you continue contracting them?

Social media has always had a volatile side, and it has always suffered from providing access to users espousing hate, discrimination, and violence. But recently, the owners, management, and internal policy frameworks of X (twitter) and Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Threads) have been openly espousing homophobic and transphobic positions and advancing deeply hateful policies, alongside racism and sexism.

(Remember, Elon also recently enthusiastically gave a Nazi salute – **TWICE!**)

It might feel like you *have* to use X or Facebook to reach audiences. But remember that it is normal – often essential – for those working in civil society, rights, humanitarian aid, the UN, and government, to question the values and ethics of the service providers you engage.

The PRIDE Centre made the decision not to use X or any Meta platforms (including WhatsApp) in January. We have also policy about not engaging with service providers that espouse homophobic, transphobic, or racist positions, which applies to digital services like Facebook and X.

Leaving these platforms is REALLY easy. There are *many* other platforms that reach wide and diverse audiences. You can use these to reach your key audiences and, in doing so, help to build their reach. NONE of them are perfect and ALL of them still risk providing platforms to promote hate. However, these platforms have content moderation frameworks which better safeguard against hate and violence.

Bluesky – microblogging site not dissimilar to Twitter. Growing rapidly in audience and reach.

LinkedIn – For all the mockery it endures, it seems like EVERYONE uses LinkedIn. We find it has excellent reach and gets substantially more valuable, meaningful engagement than X or FB ever did.

Mastodon – Another microblogging site with a more European audience

Signal – The perfect antidote to WhatsApp! More secure and avoids issues faced by rival platform Telegram regarding providing a safe platform for hate groups.

TikTok – Concerns about TikTok have centered on national security and its use by security agencies. Also worth noting that TikTok has also been criticized for limiting the reach and using “shadow bans” of some LGBTQIA+ content.

Others? I am *sure* there are platforms that we haven’t considered. If you have recommendations, please let me know!

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