

# Facebook pulls down fake accounts linked to Egypt and France

Fake accounts tied to Egypt posed as news outlets and posted about topics including the coronavirus.

Facebook said Thursday that it pulled down more than 300 fake accounts, pages and groups tied to France and Egypt in March, including some that posed as news outlets and shared content about various topics including the novel coronavirus.



The company removed 81 Facebook accounts, 82 pages, one group and 76 Instagram accounts linked to Egypt for engaging in "coordinated inauthentic behavior," which means that those running these accounts were misleading others about who they were and their motives. Working with Twitter, Facebook said it found links to an Egyptian marketing firm called Maat. These accounts frequently posted in Arabic and some posed as news outlets, sharing content about topics such as the civil war in Yemen and Libya, coronavirus and sports. CNET couldn't immediately reach Maat.

"Some of that news touched on coronavirus as one would expect, because it is such a critical issue in public debate today," said Nathaniel Gleicher, who heads cybersecurity policy at Facebook. Discussion about coronavirus was still "fairly limited," he added, and was one of many topics posted by the fake Facebook pages. One post from a page named "Egyptian House" said that Egypt was the safest country for tourists in 2020.

Another network of fake accounts on Facebook was linked to the Sète region of France. These accounts shared content in French about local news topics such as municipal elections and immigration. The social network removed 51 Facebook accounts, nine Pages and nine Instagram accounts tied to France. One Facebook page masqueraded as the news outlet Politico and shared a post that stated "Why should you vote for Sébastien Pacull in the next municipal elections?"

Facebook released the new data on the same day that Twitter said it pulled down 20,348 accounts linked to Egypt, Honduras, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Serbia that were taking direction from the government, sharing articles from suspicious news websites or pushing pro-government content.

Gleicher said that the accounts Twitter pulled down were linked to networks Facebook had already removed in 2019. Some accounts tied to Serbia were removed for violating Facebook's spam policies.

"Actors often use different platforms in different ways," he said.

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