

Analysis: Biden to take a tough stance on Big Tech policy

Biden will take a more specific stance on reigning in tech than his predecessor Trump, who only complained about those aspects of that affected him politically.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, January 30, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Many of Big Tech's expected future regulatory challenges are a result of their own making – as in the case of Facebook, Google, and Amazon.

These companies are being charged by some countries with monopolistic tendencies, prompting some of the regulators in states to send warnings to these firms so they can get their act together.

The role of social media on influencing the extraordinary storming of the U.S. Capitol building and tech's subsequent last-minute efforts to curb disinformation and hate speech has put Big Tech under the spotlight.

Among other unprecedented moves were Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube that banned outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump from their platforms because of the danger his postings represented to public safety.



Joe Biden 46th U.S. President



Inside Telecom

Clearly a line had been crossed within the sanctity of free speech, putting Trump in essentially

the same pitch as terrorists and child pornographers who are usually banned from using any social media.

Trump's tweets were deemed as repeatedly trafficking in disinformation about the U.S. election that evolved into statements that inherently inspired widespread violence.

With the suspension of the former president and various fellow travelers from Twitter and Facebook, the amount of misinformation has dropped markedly.

However, it is important to note the calamity of Trump's exodus has narrowly slipped by U.S. regulations of archiving presidential tweets and postings on various other platforms under the Freedom of Information Act.

Also, Facebook and Twitter have eliminated thousands of accounts related to the QAnon conspiracy theory, which wove a dark series about the "DeepState" and child-kidnapping world leadership and expunged the earlier exploding "#StopTheSteal" movement – which claimed massive vote fraud without a shred of evidence.

These moves at cleaning house by Big Tech are first time such action in the political space and illustrate the change of mood and perception from the social media policies in the last few years. This has sparked a worldwide debate over technological jurisdictions on what and whom Big Tech can police on a global stage – especially that countries are leaning towards localizing data extracted from their respective citizens, as Turkey has previously done.

On the U.S. front, Biden will take a much more specific stance on reigning in tech than his predecessor Trump, who only complained about those aspects of that affected him politically, — i.e., Section 230 – which for years has acted as a liability shield for tech separating what is posted on or through these Big Tech services from the services themselves.

Newly sworn-in Biden has promised to get tougher on this particular aspect of Big Tech, such as Facebook for allowing rampant disinformation and has said he will back efforts to repeal of Section 230, which has long served to protect the industry in often controversial cases.

Promulgated more than 20 years ago as part of the Communications Decency Act, Section 230 is a mere 26 words long, but has had a huge impact in protection of Big Tech from liability.

This small codicil was included to allow leeway on freedom of speech, put tech services on similar footing with the U.S. Postal Service, which comparably, is not responsible for the letters people write.

The section opened Pandora's Box in that tech did not self-police the other side of the issue – the posting of hate speech, disinformation, or inflammatory posting designed to cause violence.

Section 230 reads as follows:

“No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider.”

Former President Barack Obama continued to endorse this and other “freedom of speech” policies, along with tax rules and financial incentives embraced by the-then younger tech industry in hopes of fostering growth.

From the Obama administration viewpoint this was for purposes of encouraging innovation to a still maturing sector.

Now 12 years later, following Obama’s double term and Trump’s one, forecasts are that Biden will change course on Section 230.

This expected move is not only because the industry has matured, but additionally to all but the most laissez-faire observer, Facebook, Google, Twitter, and comparable services have grown to encompass many modern communications, which encompass a large spectrum of posting and their often-malignant result. (Please paraphrase this paragraph to make it clearer).

“The era of permission-less innovation is over,” said Darrell West, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who studies tech policy in an interview with U.S. public radio, NPR. “There’s going to be more public engagement, more public oversight and public regulation of the technology sector.”

“Biden will be tougher on the tech sector than Obama was because the party has moved to the left on tech policy,” he said, including the reform of Section 230 known as techs liability shield.

This section of the Communications Decency Act – which at the time, absolved various companies of primary responsibility for what was posted through their services – gave an apt cover from lawsuits, but ultimately is facing stiff and growing opposition from the GOP, Democrats, and Europeans, albeit for very different ideological reasons.

As the new administration was sworn in on Jan. 20, the world can set its watches on the speed of change that will take place by regulators and by the tech industry itself, on this and other key regulatory issues.

While Biden is seeking to revoke Section 230 in the near term, he has neither called for immediate cancelation, nor has the upcoming administration proposed comprehensive replacement for the law.

U.S. vs Google

For monopolistic Big Tech, the potential regulatory snowball has started rolling downhill already

and will only increase under the Biden administration.

Just days before the Nov. 3 general elections, the U.S. Justice Department filed an anti-trust lawsuit against Google. This legal action against the search giant is to date the federal government's largest such anti-trust gambit but follows closely in similar actions that have been under way in the European Union.

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