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FTC: break up the Facebook monopoly

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BREAKING: Facebook is stooping to new lows to delegitimize our work by blaming our activism on Jewish philanthropist George Soros, the favorite scapegoat of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories peddled by the far right.

This abuse of power is another reminder that Facebook executives act like they answer to no one. But they're wrong. The Federal Trade Commission has the power to break up overpowered corporations, and it's up to us to call on the FTC to act now.

Tell the FTC it's time to put a check on Facebook's unchecked power.

Under Mark Zuckerberg's leadership, Facebook—along with its subsidiaries Whatsapp and Instagram—has become a monopoly for online communications across the globe. And despite its privacy promises, at the end of the day, **Facebook's business model is built on surveillance and user manipulation.**

What's worse is that the Cambridge Analytica scandal has shown that **Facebook is ready to rent out the full power of its manipulation machine to any paying third party**—including hostile foreign actors, racist landlords, and con artists.

Here's the good news. **We can take back control over our lives, our data, and our communications from Facebook.** The Federal Trade Commission has the power to regulate corporate monopolies that reduce competition and lead to higher prices, reduced quality of service, and less innovation. And four nominees to the FTC are on the record saying they would investigate big tech firms like Facebook for breaking antitrust rules.

It's hard to overstate Facebook's power over what we see, read, and talk about. By determining what news we see, what accounts get censored, **Facebook sets the tone for political discourse across the world.**

That can be empowering—like when Egyptian democracy activists used the platform to organize mass rallies in 2011. **But it can also mean silencing political dissent and allowing hate speech to fester:** the site has allowed calls for Myanmar's ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya to circulate on its platform, while banning "dangerous" Rohingya groups from the site and its content moderators labeled Palestinian news sources "hate speech" and actively suppressed their content.

Believe it or not, **the FTC is already investigating Facebook in an effort to protect consumer privacy after the Cambridge Analytica scandal.** The FTC also has the power to slap Facebook with a \$40,000 fine for each breach of its privacy promise, which means the company could be hit with trillions of dollars of fines for the 87 million people affected by the leak.

It's easy to feel powerless in the face of secretive algorithms that know what we like, what we click on, and where we go. But we don't need to take on Facebook alone. The FTC has used its power to break up overpowered corporate monopolies before—letting competition and consumer choice prevail over big-brand dominance. **It's clear Facebook meets the FTC's definition of monopoly power.** But it's up to us to push the FTC to take our online rights seriously and launching an antitrust investigation of Facebook.

More information

[The Antitrust Case Against Facebook, Google and Amazon](#)

Wall Street Journal. 16 January 2018.

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Break up the Facebook monopoly.

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