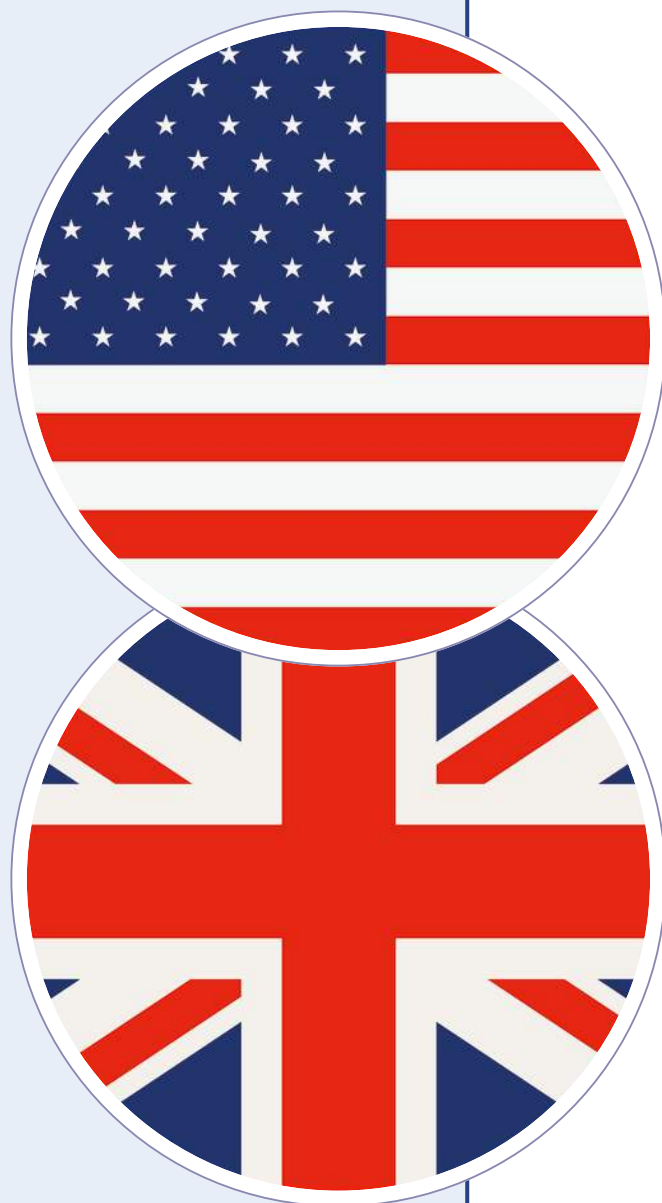


Englisch betrifft uns

EBU on the Web 2020/7

Topical texts in
English lessons

- *Comprehension*
- *Analysis*
- *Creative writing*
- *Background information*



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The Topic

Social Media and Advertising

Social media plays a very important role in today's life, as it enables people, among other things, to share ideas and interact with others, or access information very quickly. Studies have shown that many people spend as much as 25% of their time on social networking platforms. These platforms have to a certain extent changed the way people live their lives today and have made communication much easier. Social media platforms come in different forms such as, e.g., blogs, business forums, podcasts, photo sharing, weblogs and their importance can be observed particularly in the fields of business and advertising. Over the past years they have become an ideal place for advertisers as they can reach a bigger target group than before.

The example of *Facebook* clearly illustrates this development. *Facebook's* ad revenue will continue to increase this year with net US digital ad revenues increasing by 4.9% to \$31.43 billion. This increase has taken place despite the growing number of brands pulling ad campaigns due to the coronavirus pandemic and also despite the fact that more brands pulled ad spend from *Facebook* for the month of July in support of "Stop Hate For Profit", a campaign in protest against what they call *Facebook's* failure to remove hate speech and misinformation from its platform.

The article presented in this unit deals with the topic of hate speech and misinformation on the platform and the "Stop Hate for Profit" campaign for companies to withdraw their adverts from the *Facebook* platform and thus to deprive *Facebook* of its revenue.

Ties to obligatory topics

Issues of (social) media, advertising, racial problems

Background information – further links

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/23/business/media/facebook-ad-boycott.html>

The article from the New York Times examines the reasons why many companies and brands have stopped posting advertisements on Facebook.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-53225139>

"Could a boycott kill Facebook?" – The article on the BBC website deals with the consequences of the boycott providing various links to background information.

The Text

“Facebook to be hit by its largest ever advertiser boycott over racism”
(Alex Hern, *The Guardian* 24 June 2020)

The Link (URL)

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/jun/24/ben-and-jerrys-joins-facebook-advertising-boycott-racism>

Annotations

abusive – using cruel words or physical violence

to apply – to use something such as a method, idea, or law in a particular situation, activity, or process

‘Autonomous Zone’ – the “Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone” was an occupation protest and self-declared autonomous zone in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Seattle, Washington; the zone was established on June 8, 2020 by George Floyd protesters and was cleared of occupants by police on July 1, 2020

Ben & Jerry’s – an American company that manufactures ice cream, frozen yogurt, and sorbet

CEO – Chief Executive Officer, the person with the most authority in a large company

to commit – *here*: to say that someone will definitely do something or must do something

to facilitate – to make it easier for a process or activity to happen

looting – to loot: to steal things, especially from shops or homes that have been damaged in a war or riot

moderation – control of your behaviour, so that you keep your actions, feelings, habits etc. within reasonable limits

NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, an American civil rights organization

North Face – an American outdoor recreation product company

operating officer – the person with responsibility for the normal everyday management of the operations or activities of a company

Patagonia – an American clothing company that markets and sells outdoor clothing

to perceive – to notice, see, or recognize something

policing – the way that an industry or activity etc. is controlled in order to make sure that people obey the rules

precedent – an action or official decision that can be used to give support to later actions or decisions

to pull out – *here*: to stop doing or being involved in something, or to make someone do this

Rei – American outdoor and sporting goods company.

to stare down – to look at someone for so long that they start to feel uncomfortable and look away

subsidiary – a company that is owned or controlled by another larger company

Unilever – a British-Dutch multinational consumer goods company

Washington, D.C. – formally the District of Columbia, the capital city of the United States of America

Assignments

Pre-reading assignments

1. What have you heard or seen about the problem of hate speech in social media in general and on *Facebook* in particular?
2. In case you are a *Facebook* user, do you pay attention to the adverts posted there?

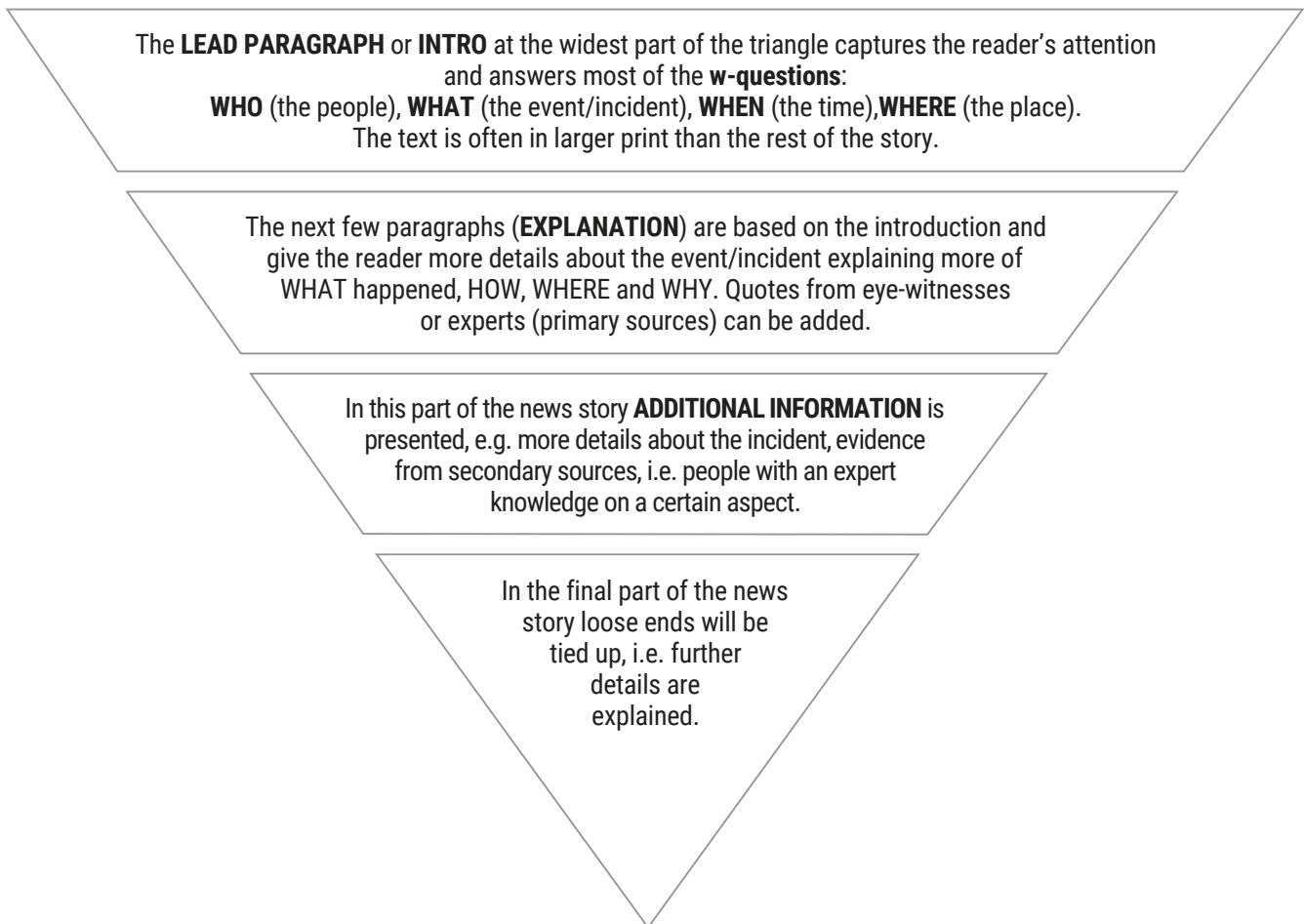
Analyzing the newspaper article

Comprehension

3. What, according to the journalist, has *Facebook* been criticized for recently?
4. Explain the various reactions to *Facebook*'s hate speech policing.
5. What is *Facebook*'s standpoint in the debate?

Analysis

6. The article from *The Guardian* is a news story, which gives the reader the latest news about a recent incident or event. The typical structure of a news story is called "Inverted Pyramid Structure" and consists of the following parts:



Read the article again carefully and try to find out if the structure above can be identified in the text.

Post-reading assignments

7. Comment on Joy Howard's quotation "Facebook is not committed to change. They will only say what money makes them say. It's time for us to put our money where their mouth is."
8. How do you feel about hate speech in social media? Should it be deleted/blocked or should it be left visible according to the principle of freedom of speech?

Mediation

9. Imagine your English course is dealing with the topic of *Facebook's* policy on hate speech and the boycott by US companies. You would like to make a contribution to the discussion by informing the course about the reactions by German companies. Read the text below and summarize the main aspects in the English language.

Unzählige Firmen weltweit, vor allem auch amerikanische wie Unilever oder Ben & Jerry's, beteiligen sich derzeit an dem Werbe-Boycott gegenüber Facebook. Damit soll erreicht werden, dass Facebook sich künftig aktiv gegen die Verbreitung von Hassreden und Falschinformationen in seinen Netzwerken einsetzt. Auch die ersten deutschen Marken haben bekannt gegeben, am Facebook-Boycott #StopHateForProfit teilzunehmen. Große Sportartikelhersteller, zum Beispiel, aber auch Mittelständler ziehen ihre Budgets zurück. „Meldet man Hasspostings bei Facebook, passiert meistens nichts. Facebook macht nur genau so viel, wie es machen muss. Sie könnten, wollen aber nicht aktiv dagegen vorgehen“, heißt es in einer Begründung von Fritz Kola.

(<https://www.fritz-kola.de/2020/06/29/kein-geld-fuer-hass/>)

Die Neubrandenburger Stadtwerke, zum Beispiel, haben die Werbung bei Facebook bis auf Weiteres ausgesetzt, um ein Zeichen gegen Rassismus zu setzen. Das Unternehmen erklärte: „Wir unterstützen damit die Initiative 'Stop Hate For Profit', die sich gegen Hass und Fremdenfeindlichkeit auf der beliebten Social-Media-Plattform richtet. Uns ist bewusst, dass ein einzelnes Unternehmen – egal ob groß oder klein – hier allein nichts erreichen kann. Aber je mehr Firmen sich beteiligen, umso sichtbarer wird der Protest für Facebook. Hass, Rassismus und Fehlinformationen in Kauf zu nehmen, um möglichst große Gewinne zu erzielen, widerspricht den Werten unseres Unternehmens. Jeder von uns hat Verantwortung für die Gesellschaft und ein gutes Miteinander – wir als kommunales Unternehmen genauso wie weltweit agierende Firmen.“

(<https://www.neu-sw.de/ueber-uns>)

Suggested Solutions

1. Individual answers
 2. Individual answers
 3. Points of criticism: *Facebook's* policing of hate speech, in particular its inaction over hate speech on its website; a tweet posted by Donald Trump, which was declared "abusive" by Twitter, was left up on *Facebook*, the tweet remained visible on *Facebook* without a warning; *Facebook's* refusal to apply its moderation policies against Donald Trump; *Facebook's* CEO Mark Zuckerberg did not show any understanding of voter suppression on the part of the US president ; *Facebook* is disseminating Trump's call for violence against protesters; *Facebook* is not committed to change, its focus is solely on profit regardless of any collateral damage posts may cause.
 4. Reactions to *Facebook's* hate speech policing: large advertiser boycott by some of the biggest US companies; a number of agencies and many smaller advertisers advised all clients to support the boycott; the boycott was coordinated by the campaign group "Stop Hate for Profit" with the call to businesses not to advertise on *Facebook*; the campaign group asked *Facebook* to take down Trump's posts and to remove "all ads from content labeled as misinformation or hate"; civil rights leaders condemned Zuckerberg for his refusal to acknowledge how *Facebook* is facilitating Trump's call for violence against protesters
 5. *Facebook's* position (Carolyn Everson, vice-president): respects the brands' decisions; remains focused on removing hate speech; provides critical voting information; cooperation with marketers and civil rights organizations "to be a force for good"
 6. Structure of the news story according to the "Inverted Pyramid Structure"
- LEAD PARAGRAPH (Paragraph 1): Who? *Facebook*; WHAT? Advertiser boycott; WHEN? July 2020; WHY? *Facebook's* policing of hate speech; (WHERE?) US
- EXPLANATION (Paragraphs 2–5): More details about the boycott, e.g. the boycott is coordinated by "Stop Hate for Profit"; the companies boycotting *Facebook*; an "abusive" tweet posted by Donald Trump was left up on *Facebook* including quotations by Trump
- ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Paragraphs 6–11): talks between activist leaders and Zuckerberg including quotations; more information about "Stop Hate for Profit"; the positions of the advertisers
- FINAL PARAGRAPH (Paragraph 12): *Facebook's* position presented in the quotation by one of its vice-presidents
7. Individual answers
 8. Individual answers

9. The important factor in a mediation task is not to translate word for word, but to present the main aspects/ideas in your own words.

Main aspects of this article: Following the initiative of multiple US/international companies, German companies are beginning to participate in the „Stop hate for Profit“ campaign by withdrawing their advertising from *Facebook*. Among them are well-known producers of sports goods and also smaller businesses.

They object to the fact that *Facebook* fails to act of its own accord against hate speech and even ignores re-

ports of hate speech and misinformation on its platform.

One concrete example are the Neubrandenburg public services that have stopped all advertising on *Facebook* in a stand against hatred and racism as this contradicts the firm's policies. They consider social responsibility to be everyone's duty. In their eyes even a small firm can contribute to the campaign and the more firms participate, the more pressure is exerted on the platform.

The Text

Facebook to be hit by its largest ever advertiser boycott over racism

Brands including North Face, Ben & Jerry's and Patagonia pulling out in July over hate speech policing

Alex Hern Wed 24 Jun 2020

Facebook will be confronted with its largest ever advertiser boycott in July, as a coalition of some of America's biggest brands, including The North Face, Ben & Jerry's and Patagonia, commit to pulling advertising from the platform in a row over its policing of hate speech.

The boycott has been coordinated by the campaign group Stop Hate for Profit, set up after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, which put out a call to

businesses "to stand in solidarity with our most deeply held American values of freedom, equality and justice and not advertise on Facebook's services in July".

Ben & Jerry's, a Unilever brand known for its social activism, became the latest advertiser to join the campaign on Wednesday, pulling all advertising in the US, as Facebook stared down another wave of criticism for its inaction over hate speech on its site. Three outdoor clothing firms – The North Face, Patagonia and Rei – announced this week that they were removing their adverts from Facebook and Instagram.

In a repeat of the crisis that began the boycott, a tweet posted by Donald Trump has again been declared "abusive" by Twitter, yet left up on Facebook.

"There will never be an 'Autonomous Zone' in Washington, D.C., as long as I'm your President," Trump tweeted on Tuesday morning. "If they try they will be met with serious force!" Later that day, the post was blocked on Twitter, with a warning that "This tweet violated the Twitter Rules about abusive behavior". On Facebook, however, the same post remained visible with no warning, and has gained more than 200,000 interactions from users.

Facebook's perceived refusal to apply its moderation policies against Trump has been widely criticised. In early June, when it preserved a post from the president declaring "when the looting starts, the shooting starts", civil rights leaders condemned its CEO Mark Zuckerberg for his refusal to acknowledge the context of the message.

The three activist leaders – the heads of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and Color of Change – met Zuckerberg, the chief executive of Facebook, and Sheryl Sandberg, its chief operating officer.

Vanita Gupta, Sherrilyn Ifill and Rashad Robinson said in a statement: "He did not demonstrate understanding of historic or modern-day voter suppression and he refuses to acknowledge how Facebook is facilitating Trump's call for violence against protesters. Mark is setting a very dangerous precedent for other voices who would say similar harmful things on Facebook."

Facebook's failure to act prompted the call from Stop Hate for Profit, a coalition of groups including the

NAACP, Color of Change, and Sleeping Giants, a non-profit organisation that campaigns against advertisers spending on hate sites.

The group has a series of demands for Facebook that go beyond taking down Trump's posts and include removing "all ads from content labeled as misinformation or hate".

As well as receiving support from large advertisers, the group has been backed by a number of ad agencies, and many smaller advertisers. 360i, a digital advertising subsidiary of the Japanese group Dentsu, last week advised all clients to support the boycott, while the boutique New York agency Pearmill made the same call earlier in the month. Facebook generates nearly \$70bn (£56bn) a year in advertising revenue.

Joy Howard, chief marketing officer of the password manager Dashlane, one of the participants in the boycott, said: "Facebook is not committed to change. They will only say what money makes them say. It's time for us to put our money where their mouth is."

Facebook said it respected the brands' decisions and remained focused on removing hate speech. "We respect any brand's decision, and remain focused on the important work of removing hate speech and providing critical voting information. Our conversations with marketers and civil rights organisations are about how, together, we can be a force for good," said Carolyn Everson, vice-president of Facebook's global business group.