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From the Silicon Valley Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/sanjose/news/2020/03/17/google-facebook-twitter-join-other-tech-giants-in.html>

Google, Facebook, Twitter join other tech giants in bid to curb fake COVID-19 posts

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A band of the biggest names in social networking has joined together in a vow to curb fraud and misinformation about the coronavirus from being shared on their platforms.

The rare joint statement issued by Facebook, Twitter, Google, YouTube, LinkedIn, Reddit and Microsoft called on others to join them to fight false information that has spread in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Each of the companies in the group previously announced steps they were taking to stamp out misinformation about the virus. But they now say they are also working closely together in the effort.

"We're helping millions of people stay connected while also jointly combating fraud and misinformation about the virus, elevating authoritative content on our platforms, and sharing critical updates in coordination with government health care agencies around the world," the group said.

"We invite other companies to join us as we work to keep our communities healthy and safe," they added.

Facebook also posted a summary on Tuesday of the steps it has taken and announced a pair of \$1 million donations it is making.

In one, it is partnering with The International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) to help increase their capacity. In the other, it is partnering with Lenfest Institute for Journalism and the Local Media Association to offer grants to local news organizations that are covering the virus in the U.S. and Canada.

The tech giant has also banned ads and listings that sell face masks, that it believes are intended to create panic or that imply certain products can cure the virus.

The World Health Organization's director-general said last month that bogus posts on social media are as dangerous as COVID-19.

"We're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in an address at the Munich Security conference on Feb. 15. "Fake news spreads faster and more easily than this virus, and is just as dangerous."



BRYAN THOMAS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

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