

Democracy By Design | Summary

BOLSTERING SYSTEM RESILIENCE

Targeted Friction & Context to Mitigate Threats

Election integrity vulnerabilities on social platforms often stem from their own architecture: The features designed to make platforms frictionless and maximize engagement – from recommendation algorithms to reshare buttons – can also serve to warp discourse and undermine democracy.

Extensive research from experts and tech companies themselves indicates that content-agnostic soft interventions that introduce targeted friction and context – bolstering the resilience of their systems and better informing users – can significantly mitigate threats. *Platforms should:*

- **Use well-designed interstitials** when users engage with things like old articles or state-controlled media
- **Utilize virality circuit breakers** to automatically flag fast-spreading posts and trigger a brief halt on algorithmic amplification
- **Restrict rampant resharing** during election season by removing simple share buttons on posts after multiple levels of sharing
- **Implement clear strike systems** to deter repeat offenses, curtail the outsized impact of malign actors, and better inform users

COUNTERING ELECTION MANIPULATION

Safeguards Against Malign Actors & Automated Systems

Malign actors have weaponized social platforms to meddle in elections, attack democracy, and erode our shared reality. Now their capacity for manipulation has been turbocharged by new technology, including powerful algorithms and generative AI tools tailor-made for high-impact, low-cost influence operations.

Platforms must do everything in their power to thwart unlawful efforts to interfere with elections or individuals' free exercise of their right to vote – including efforts to intimidate voters or mislead them on how to participate – and to counter manipulation more broadly. *Platforms should:*

- **Prohibit, in policy and practice, the use of generative AI or manipulated media to:**
 - Falsely depict election irregularities
 - Fraudulently misrepresent the speech or actions of public figures in video, audio, or images
 - Create personalized political or issue ads that microtarget voters with distinct content generated by using their personal data
- **Implement strong provenance standards** and require clear disclosures within any political or issue ad that features AI-generated images, video, or audio
- **Clearly present users with the main parameters of algorithmic systems** as election season starts, and prompt them to opt in

PAPER TRAILS

Fostering Trust Through Meaningful Transparency

Just as machine voting systems are backed by paper trails to ensure our elections are trustworthy and secure, platforms that shape the information ecosystem must finally open up the black box and start showing their work. The status quo has yielded distrust from all sides, with partisans suspecting foul play, neutral observers unable to make informed evaluations, and non-English speakers [left behind](#).

Platforms must begin disclosing meaningful data to voters, independent researchers, and election officials regularly in order to engender trust and substantiate integrity measures. *Platforms should:*

- **Clearly and accessibly detail in one place** all election-related (or applicable platform-wide) policies and approaches
- **Release regular transparency reports during election season** – broken down across widely spoken languages – detailing high-performing and violative content, enforcement, and resource allocation
- **Provide independent researchers with direct access to platform data** to inform studies, threat analysis, and systemic impact assessments