

June 10, 2019

# Content Policy Research on Social Media Platforms request for proposals (phase 2)

## This Research Award is now closed

There is an ongoing, global conversation about how social media and technology companies decide and enforce what is and isn't allowed on their platforms. To this end, Facebook has a set of [Community Standards](#) that are designed to encourage expression and create an environment that is safe and respectful. Last year, we [updated our Community Standards](#) to include the internal guidelines we use to make decisions about content, and we began publishing [key metrics](#) that demonstrate how we enforce these standards.

To help develop a rigorously investigated body of research around these evolving issues and improve our content policies, Facebook requests research proposals designed to examine online content and ways to reduce harmful content. This includes, but is not limited to, research that will help us develop better content policies and assess possible interventions, including experimental and observational studies, along with qualitative and analytic work to understand the mechanisms by which online rhetoric has the potential to influence offline events.

In 2019, Facebook will grant awards of \$50K to \$100K USD per awardee to fund projects of up to 12 months in duration. This RFP challenge is open to applicants worldwide from academic and/or research institutions that are eligible for research funding. This includes individual researchers addressing a well-defined problem, or multiple university departments with a diverse set of skills to solve a more complex multi-disciplinary challenge. We encourage emerging scholars to apply.

Researchers can submit proposals for any domain related to the topics below. We describe some examples for each topic, but we will consider proposals related to topics that are not specified as examples.

Our current areas of focus include:

- **Bullying and Harassment.** We know online bullying and harassment can affect our community in a number of ways. Such malicious actions may play a role in political

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in order to build on these tools and make our platforms as safe as possible, we would like to support research on:

- Automating detection of bullying or harassing content
- Improving reporting models and user education around reporting content
- Building taxonomies and frameworks related to specific vulnerable communities
- Designing interventions
- **Fairness in Global Enforcement.** Operating at scale presents unique challenges. Facebook is a platform for content posted by billions of people every day across hundreds of languages and cultures. In order to better account for this global scale, we want to support research on:
  - Mapping the similarities and differences between Facebook policies and existing international frameworks
  - Minimizing bias in machine learning and artificial intelligence
  - Identifying key indicators that help machine learning and human reviewers better understand the context around online content

Payment will be made to the proposer's host institution as an unrestricted gift. With this, overhead is typically limited to 5-8%.

## To Apply

We ask applicants to submit a 2-3 page proposal. Proposals should include:

- A research question and a clear statement of work
- A summary of the project (1-2 pages) explaining the area of focus, a description of techniques, relevant prior work, and a timeline with milestones and expected outcomes (recall that the timeline should be no more than 12 months)
- A draft budget description (<1 page) including an approximate cost of the award and explanation of how funds would be spent. Proposals are highly encouraged to focus funding on project personnel, especially PhD students. Proposals from small collaborative teams are also encouraged.
- Name(s) of the researcher(s) involved in the proposed work with their CV/resume or links to Google Scholar pages
- Indication of any previous or current connections/collaborations with Facebook (in which case please provide context and name the Facebook contacts). Successful awardees will be listed on the Facebook Research website and are encouraged to openly publish any findings/insights from their work.
- Funding will be \$50K to \$100K per proposal, depending on the specific requirements.

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## Eligibility

- Organizations must be a nonprofit or non-governmental organization with recognized legal status in their respective country (equal to 501(c)(3) status under the United States Internal Revenue Code).
- Applicants must be the Principal Investigator on any resulting award.
- Applicants may submit one proposal per solicitation.

## Timing and Dates

- Applications are now closed.
- Awardees will be notified in September and all funds will be dispersed within three months of the award date (no later than the end of the calendar year).
- When applicable, awardees will be invited to attend workshops in their region to meet with Facebook researchers and other experts. Attendance is not mandatory to qualify for the award but it is encouraged.

## Terms and Conditions

- By submitting a proposal, you are authorizing Facebook to evaluate the proposal for a potential award, and you agree to the terms herein.
- You agree that Facebook will not be required to treat any part of the proposal as confidential or protected by copyright, and may use, edit, modify, copy, reproduce, and distribute all or a portion of your proposal in any manner for the sole purposes of administering the website and evaluating the contents of the proposal.
- You agree and acknowledge that personal data submitted with the proposal, including name, mailing address, phone number, and email address of you and other named researchers in the proposal may be collected, processed, stored and otherwise used by Facebook for the purposes of administering the website and evaluating the contents of the proposal.
- You acknowledge that neither party is obligated to enter into any business transaction as a result of the proposal submission, Facebook is under no obligation to review or consider the proposal, and neither party acquires any intellectual property rights as a result of submitting the proposal.

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