Twitter Thread by Rasmus Kleis Nielsen



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What might it mean that Facebook has restricted publishers and people in Australia from sharing or viewing news content?

Some @risj_oxford research

First, 71% in Australia say they've used FB in the past week, 39% say they've engaged with news on FB

The 39% who have engaged with news on FB tend to be younger, women, more on the political left

Most access online news in many ways (direct,search,social,etc), but @dragz have run the numbers, and in 2020, 8% of ■■ internet news users say they ONLY get online news via social 2/9

That's maybe a million+ people? They can go elsewhere for news, but some won't. That's a big blow right there. As we've shown, the effect of incidental exposure on e.g. Facebook is stronger for younger people and those with low interest in news.
https://t.co/Sq8wKz9HsZ 3/9

What will they see instead? Probably mostly family and friends (and ads), given FB has for years dialed back news in the NewsFeed. But some of them perhaps more misinformation. As @jsbrennen et al showed, some #covid19 misinfo does well on social https://t.co/BPtP8z5ZOF
4/9

What will it mean for publishers? Hard to tell, but perhaps 2017 UK tracking data give indication. As @nicnewman and @antoniskalog showed, in UK, a few big publishers dominate direct discovery, whereas social (and search) referrals are bit more diverse https://t.co/ucxDgSihw6
5/9

If it turns out this has limited effect on overall reach of big publishers (and perhaps even slightly increase their direct traffic and other referrals) then that is in line with what happened when Google News closed in Spain, see e.g @silviamajo et al https://t.co/djjv8YAn2v 6/9

Would also be in line w/warnings. As @zoesam93 @LisaVisentin reported, small outlets "which are reliant on these platforms for referral traffic–raised concerns the proposed laws would be detrimental to their businesses and would reduce media diversity"
https://t.co/0VNf7bzDpt 7/9

Some things we know-while 32% of Australians use Facebook but don't get news there, 39% till yesterday DID get news on FB. They will have... different experience, especially impacting younger people, often less privileged, less interested in news. Some will get no online news 8/9

Like impact for public, impact for publishers also likely to vary. If UK data and Spain are guides big publishers may lose a little incremental reach but probably also gain some direct+other referrals. But smaller publishers may be hard hit - as some of them warned in advance 9/9