

AMID PROMISES TO SHARE ADS WITH CONGRESS, SOME OTHER INTERESTING PROMISES

DC is atwitter with Facebook's announcement that it can, after all, voluntarily share the same information it shared with Robert Mueller with Congress. As part of that announcement, it released a statement from their General Counsel, a Q&A addressing some of the questions that had been generating bad PR, and some promises of additional things Facebook will do to support democracy from Mark Zuckerberg.

I'm most interested in two details in Zuck's statement. For example, this paragraph says Facebook will continue to look at what happened closely.

We will continue our investigation into what happened on Facebook in this election. We may find more, and if we do, we will continue to work with the government. We are looking into foreign actors, including additional Russian groups and other former Soviet states, **as well as organizations like the campaigns**, to further our understanding of how they used our tools. These investigations will take some time, but we will continue our thorough review.
[my emphasis]

While the frenzy responding to this announcement has focused on Russian ads, Zuck just revealed that Facebook is *also* looking at what the campaigns did.

That would permit Facebook to look for any apparently similar activity from campaigns and Russian actors, as we have reason to believe

there was. It also might suggest Facebook is reviewing to see whether Republican dark marketing served to suppress turnout, and if so in coordination with what other actors.

I'd really love to have this information, but note that it is a substantially different thing for Facebook to review Russian actions and for Facebook to review Democratic or Republican actions.

Then there's the promise to work even more closely with other tech companies.

We will increase sharing of threat information with other tech and security companies. We already share information on bad actors on the internet through programs like ThreatExchange, and now we're exploring ways we can share more information about anyone attempting to interfere with elections. It is important that tech companies collaborate on this because it's almost certain that any actor trying to misuse Facebook will also be trying to abuse other internet platforms too.

I think I'm okay with this (and they're legally permitted to do this in any case). But given my newfound obsession with the fact that with any of these global tech companies, you're dealing with intelligence resources that might rival nation-state intelligence, I'm interested in Facebook's efforts to expand the sharing.

Facebook, by itself, may not rival the NSA. But when you put together Facebook, Microsoft, Google, Twitter, and others, then you're beginning to talk really powerful intelligence capabilities.

It's good, I suppose, that that much technical power is going to hunt down Russians. But it might be worth pausing to imagine what else they might cooperate to hunt down.