

**2026**  
**SOCIAL MEDIA**  
**SAFETY INDEX**

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## **Key Platform Policies and How to Report Violations**

# PROFITING FROM HATE & DIVISION: THE DANGEROUS BACKSLIDE OF BIG TECH

A Letter from GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis



When GLAAD first began assessing social media platforms through our Social Media Safety Index (SMSI), in 2022, we expected low scores. The pervasive censorship of LGBTQ creators, the constant threats to our community's privacy, and the proliferation of anti-LGBTQ content and behavior made a "failing" start almost inevitable.

What we did not expect, however, was a steady and precipitous erosion of those scores. While TikTok has not declined, both Meta and YouTube have implemented and sustained calculated policy changes this past year that knowingly make LGBTQ people **less** safe: stripping away harassment protections, failing to address the wrongful suppression and demonetization of LGBTQ creators, and continuing data collection practices that leave LGBTQ users with little meaningful control over their own information.

The hate speech policy rollbacks are among the most alarming. In a troubling example of this, Meta continues to openly defy its own Oversight Board's guidance on its Hateful Conduct policy. Meta's revised policy now refers to gay and lesbian people using "homosexuality," an outdated term frequently used by right-wing groups to disparage and stigmatize our community. The policy also now refers to transgender people with the anti-trans term "transgenderism," which right-wing agitators increasingly use to frame the existence of trans and nonbinary people as an "ideology." Equally alarming, Meta's updated policies explicitly allow users to target LGBTQ people with allegations of being "mentally ill" or "abnormal." To be clear, these rollbacks do not merely fail to protect LGBTQ people — they actively give users permission to harass and dehumanize us, not just in the United States, but around the world.

But hate speech is only part of the story. Platforms too often silence and demonetize LGBTQ voices, providing minimal transparency or recourse. At the same time, companies are collecting and profiting from ever-growing amounts of personal data, including information related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Data privacy is an especially important concern for LGBTQ people because involuntary outing can have such serious impacts, even including violence or legal persecution in places where being LGBTQ is criminalized or socially stigmatized. Further, as disclosed in its 2024 Responsible Business Practices Report, Meta has effectively halted public reporting on LGBTQ employee diversity data while dismantling its internal DEI programs.

As some social media companies flout the basic best practices of platform trust and safety, everyone — customers, creators, and brands — must confront a difficult truth: **Meta and too many of its peers have traded a commitment to human rights for the overt backing of anti-LGBTQ hate and the actors who traffic in it.**

The SMSI exists to track these dangerous backslides. While some policy rollbacks have happened without public announcement, this report and GLAAD’s Social Media Safety Program shine a bright spotlight on the ways platforms are failing their users, even as consumers and employees demand, and deserve, better.

**To LGBTQ creators, advocates, and organizations targeted on and by these platforms: these companies need to hear from you. The threats in your DMs, the disinformation fueling anti-LGBTQ legislation, and the bullying that leads to real-world violence are not just “part of the job.” They are systemic failures that tech leaders have the tools to fix, yet they choose to profit from them instead.**

If you are concerned for your own online safety, I urge you to use our [LGBTQ Digital Safety Guide](#). We must continue to hold the line. LGBTQ people have always been here, and we always will be. GLAAD will remain the common-sense voice demanding that these companies be held accountable to their users, their advertisers, and society at large.

In solidarity,

GLAAD PRESIDENT AND CEO  
**SARAH KATE ELLIS**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Six years into GLAAD's *Social Media Safety Index* (SMSI), the verdict on major social media platforms remains the same: these companies are failing LGBTQ users.

Our 2026 **Key Findings** show that online spaces continue to be rife with anti-LGBTQ hate, harassment, and disinformation (content and behavior that can translate to real-world harms).<sup>2</sup> Companies also continue to disproportionately suppress LGBTQ voices and accounts, and continue to withhold meaningful transparency regarding content moderation and data privacy.

This year's SMSI report provides both a **Platform Scorecard** evaluating the policies of six major platforms and a set of **Key Findings and Recommendations** to guide social media companies in improving LGBTQ safety, privacy, and expression online.

The **Platform Scorecard** uses 14 LGBTQ-specific indicators to evaluate the policies and product features of TikTok, X, YouTube, and Meta's Instagram, Facebook, and Threads, adapting the rigorous methodology of [Ranking Digital Rights](#) (RDR), a leading tech and human rights research organization. GLAAD urges all platforms and tech companies to review RDR's extensive research<sup>1</sup> and to prioritize the SMSI's findings and recommendations. The maximum score a platform can receive is 100.

## PLATFORM POLICIES: RETREATS AND ROLLBACKS

The 2026 SMSI **Platform Scorecard** ranks platform policies regarding LGBTQ safety, privacy, and expression. Looking at these dismal scores, it may seem that there is no new "news" in this year's report. The fact that the SMSI's central findings tell the same story of platform failure year after year is, unfortunately, itself newsworthy.

With the exception of TikTok, the 2026 scores dropped across the board. These declines are due to various factors, not all of which is quantified in the SMSI scorecard. Most significantly, both Meta<sup>3</sup> and YouTube<sup>4</sup> continue to maintain their recent anti-LGBTQ policy changes, which have made online environments even *more* toxic and harmful for LGBTQ people. Meta's sweeping early 2025 rollbacks<sup>5</sup> included modifying major sections of its Hateful Conduct policy to allow anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and removing key protections for LGBTQ people, especially transgender people; utilizing anti-LGBTQ terminology to refer to LGBTQ people in its Community Standards; terminating its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs; deleting trans and nonbinary themes on Messenger; and ending its fact-checking program in the U.S.

<sup>1</sup> The [RDR Index](#) offers a robust evaluation of the world's most powerful digital platforms, including indicators on corporate commitments to human rights, content moderation disclosures, data privacy policies and practices, and more.

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Campaign Foundation, *Online Harassment, Offline Violence: Unchecked Harassment of Gender-Affirming Care Providers and Children's Hospitals on Social Media, and Its Offline Violent Consequences*, December 2022, <https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/HRCF-OnlineHarassmentOfflineViolence.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ina Fried, "Meta's new policies open gate to hate," *Axios*, January 9, 2025, <https://www.axios.com/2025/01/09/meta-moderation-transgender-women-hate>.

<sup>4</sup> Taylor Lorenz, "YouTube removes 'gender identity' from hate speech policy," *User Mag*, April 3, 2025, <https://www.usermag.co/p/youtube-removes-gender-identity-from-anuary-9-2025>, <https://www.axios.com/2>

<sup>5</sup> GLAAD, "GLAAD Responds to Meta's Latest Anti-LGBTQ Changes to Content Policy and DEI That Will Harm Users," January 10, 2025, <https://glaad.org/releases/meta-anti-lgbtq-hate-speech-dei/>.

As documented in last year’s SMSI, YouTube removed gender identity from the list of protected characteristics in its hate speech policy around this same time. It remains a standard best practice across all platforms that gender identity is expressly included in protected characteristics lists for hate speech policies and community guidelines in the same way that other historically marginalized categories of people are listed such as race, religion, disability, etc. YouTube’s policy change continues to be particularly concerning given the current climate of ongoing political attacks on the rights, dignity, and lives of transgender people. The company’s 2026 score decline also reflects a retreat from best practices in reporting workforce diversity numbers.<sup>6</sup>

This year’s **Key Recommendations** in this report convey fundamental best-practice expectations for social media platform safety, privacy, and expression. As we have done for the past six years, GLAAD continues to implore social media companies to meet these basic best practices: improve content moderation; provide meaningful transparency; respect data privacy; demonstrate commitments to workforce diversity and civil discourse; and strengthen and enforce policies that protect LGBTQ people from hate, harassment, and disinformation — while also not suppressing LGBTQ content and creators.

GLAAD calls on companies to do more to protect LGBTQ people and all marginalized groups who disproportionately bear the real-world consequences of online hate and harassment, including people of color, women, immigrants, people with disabilities, religious minorities, and others.<sup>7</sup> Platforms must urgently restore and enforce policy protections for transgender and nonbinary people, especially as political fearmongering and legislative attacks escalate locally and nationally<sup>8</sup> — driving documented increases in extreme harassment<sup>9</sup> that platform systems further amplify by incentivizing and rewarding abusive behavior through engagement and monetization.<sup>10</sup> Platforms must also adopt policies and practices that value data privacy and meaningful user control, stop using solely AI for automated restrictions or removals, and invest in trained human moderators who understand LGBTQ contexts across a multitude of languages and regions.



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<sup>6</sup> Shalene Gupta, “Why Companies Should Share Their DEI Data (Even When It’s Unflattering),” Harvard Business School Working Knowledge, February 27, 2024, <https://www.library.hbs.edu/working-knowledge/why-companies-should-share-dei-data-even-when-its-unflattering>.

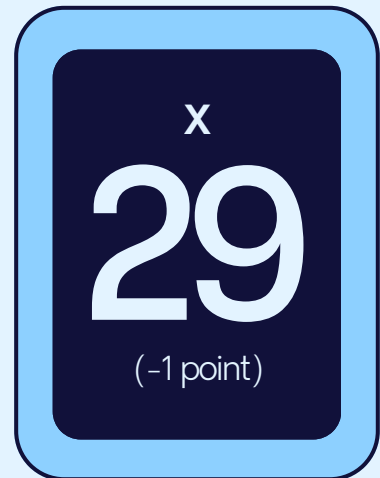
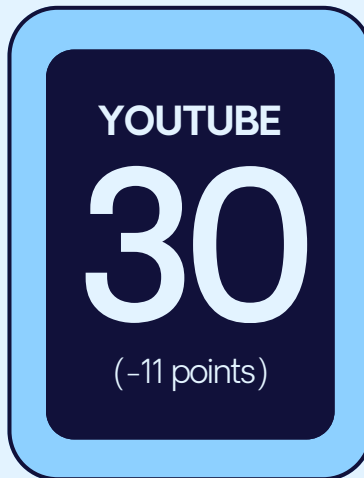
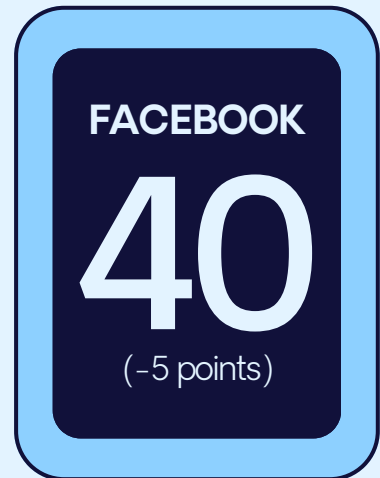
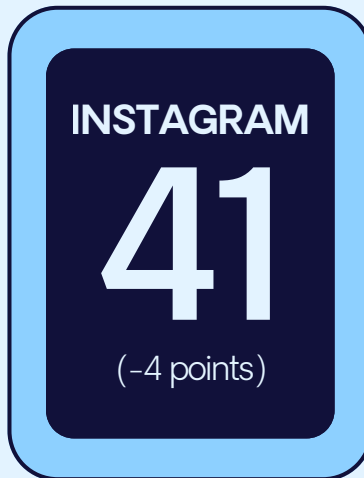
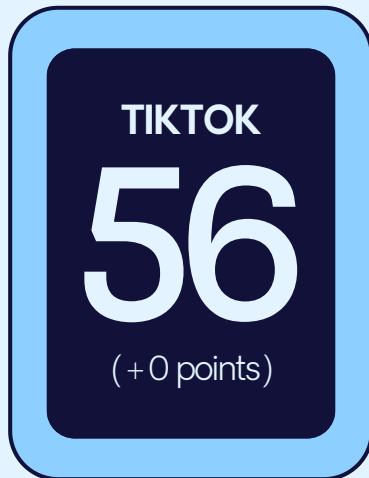
<sup>7</sup> Emily A. Vogels, “The State of Online Harassment,” Pew Research Center, January 13, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/01/13/the-state-of-online-harassment/>.

<sup>8</sup> American Civil Liberties Union, “Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislatures in 2026,” <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights-2026>.

<sup>9</sup> GLAAD, “Make Meta Safe: New Report Finds Increase in Harmful Content Targeting Marginalized Groups Following Policy Rollbacks,” June 16, 2025, <https://glaad.org/make-meta-safe-new-report-finds-increase-in-harmful-content-targeting-marginalized-groups-following-policy-rollbacks/>.

<sup>10</sup> Jason Abbruzzese, “For Hate Groups, It’s a Lucrative Era on the Internet,” *NBC News*, August 29, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/internet/hate-groups-lucrative-era-internet-rcna227442>.

# THE 2026 PLATFORM SCORECARD SCORES\*:



# KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following **Key Findings and Recommendations** are drawn from GLAAD's year-round research and monitoring, and reflect the most basic best-practice expectations for social media platform safety, privacy, and expression. They are intended to accompany the Platform Scorecard and to guide platforms, policymakers, and advocates in addressing the most urgent threats to LGBTQ safety online. Taken together, they describe not a new crisis but a persistent and deepening one, and the steps needed to address it.

## KEY FINDINGS

- The early 2025 hate speech policy rollbacks from Meta and YouTube continue to present grave threats to safety and are harmful to LGBTQ people on these platforms.<sup>11</sup>
- Anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and disinformation online can translate to offline harms.<sup>12</sup>
- Platforms are largely failing to mitigate harmful anti-LGBTQ hate and disinformation that violates their own policies.<sup>13</sup>
- Platforms disproportionately suppress LGBTQ content, via removal, demonetization, unwarranted age-gating, and forms of shadowbanning.<sup>14</sup>
- Social media companies continue to withhold meaningful transparency<sup>15</sup> about content moderation, algorithms, use of AI<sup>16</sup>, and data privacy practices.<sup>17</sup> The rollback of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and other commitments to upholding civil rights across the tech industry has further eroded key safeguards for LGBTQ safety online.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> UltraViolet, GLAAD, and All Out, *Make Meta Safe*, June 2025, <https://makemetasafe.org/>.

<sup>12</sup> Guy Fiennes and Paula-Charlotte Matlach, "Investigation: Five-Year Overview of the Online and Offline Anti-LGBTQ+ Landscape," Institute for Strategic Dialogue, October 20, 2025, <https://www.isdglobal.org/digital-dispatch/investigation-five-year-overview-of-the-online-and-offline-anti-lgbtq-landscape/>.

<sup>13</sup> "A Guide to Anti-LGBTQ+ Online Hate and Disinformation," Center for Countering Digital Hate, June 6, 2025, <https://counterhate.com/blog/a-guide-to-anti-lgbtq-online-hate-and-disinformation/>.

<sup>14</sup> Ada Romero Pastor, "The Censorship of LGBTQ+ Content Online Corresponds with Declines in Freedom for Everyone," *Tech Policy Press*, October 30, 2024, <https://www.techpolicy.press/the-censorship-of-lgbtq-content-online-corresponds-with-declines-in-freedom-for-everyone/>.

<sup>15</sup> Tyler Chang, Joseph J Trybala III, Sharon Bassan, and Afsaneh Razi, "Opaque Transparency: Gaps and Discrepancies in the Report of Social Media Harms," in Extended Abstracts of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '25), 2025, <https://dl.acm.org/doi/full/10.1145/3706599.3719829>.

<sup>16</sup> Riley Gutiérrez McDermid, "TikTok Shifts to AI Moderation With Mass Layoffs," *Gizmodo*, August 22, 2025, <https://gizmodo.com/tiktok-ai-push-layoffs-2000646797>.

<sup>17</sup> A [2024 FTC report](#) found that "Large social media and video streaming companies have engaged in vast surveillance of users with lax privacy controls and inadequate safeguards for kids and teens."

<sup>18</sup> Ryan Adamczeski and Trudy Ring, "These 35 Major Companies Have Ended DEI Programs," *The Advocate*, August 28, 2025, <https://www.advocate.com/news/companies-abandoning-dei>.

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Strengthen and enforce (or restore) existing policies and mitigations** that protect LGBTQ people and others from hate, harassment, and misinformation;<sup>19</sup> while also reducing *suppression* of legitimate LGBTQ expression.<sup>20</sup>
- **Improve moderation** by providing mandatory training for all content moderators (including those employed by contractors) focused on LGBTQ safety, privacy, and expression; and moderate across all languages, cultural contexts, and regions.<sup>21</sup> AI systems should be used to flag for human review, not for automated removals.<sup>22</sup>
- **Work with independent researchers to provide meaningful transparency** about content moderation, community guidelines, development and use of AI and algorithms, and enforcement reports.<sup>23</sup>
- **Respect data privacy.** Platforms should minimize the data they collect, infer, and retain,<sup>24</sup> end targeted surveillance advertising,<sup>25</sup> and give users more control over how their data is used for the development of algorithmic recommendation systems.<sup>26</sup>
- **Promote and incentivize civil discourse** including working with creators and proactively messaging expectations for user behavior, such as respecting platform hate and harassment policies.<sup>27</sup>
- **Demonstrate a commitment to DEI best practices** in reporting voluntarily self-disclosed LGBTQ workforce diversity data annually.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Shae Gardner, “New Report - Beyond Binary: LGBTQ+ Rights in the 2026 Digital Landscape,” *LGBT Tech*, January 26, 2026, <https://www.lgbttech.org/post/new-report-beyond-binary-lgbtq-rights-in-the-2026-digital-landscape>.

<sup>20</sup> Aisha Down, “Meta Shuts Down Global Accounts Linked to Abortion Advice and Queer Content,” *The Guardian*, December 11, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/dec/11/meta-shuts-down-global-accounts-linked-to-abortion-advice-and-queer-content>.

<sup>21</sup> Mona Elswah, Aliya Bhatia, and Dhanaraj Thakur, “Content Moderation in the Global South: A Comparative Study of Four Low-Resource Languages,” Center for Democracy & Technology, June 2025, <https://cdt.org/insights/content-moderation-in-the-global-south-a-comparative-study-of-four-low-resource-languages/>.

<sup>22</sup> Global Network Initiative, “Navigating AI Moderation and the Risks to Free Expression,” November 20, 2025, <https://globalnetworkinitiative.org/navigating-ai-moderation-and-the-risks-to-free-expression/>.

<sup>23</sup> Vineet John Samuel, “The State of Independent Technology Research 2025: Power in Numbers,” Coalition for Independent Technology Research, August 2025, <https://independenttechresearch.org/citr-report-2025/>.

<sup>24</sup> Kara Williams and Caitriona Fitzgerald, “Data Minimization Is the Key to a Meaningful Privacy Law,” Electronic Privacy Information Center, May 9, 2024, <https://epic.org/data-minimization-is-the-key-to-a-meaningful-privacy-law/>.

<sup>25</sup> “Surveillance Advertising Is the Root of Big Tech Monopoly Power. Ban It,” *Fight for the Future*, January 27, 2022, <https://www.fightforthefuture.org/news/2022-01-27-surveillance-advertising-is-the-root-of-big-tech-monopoly-power-ban-it/>.

<sup>26</sup> Marlena Wisniak, “Algorithmic Gatekeepers: The Human Rights Impacts of LLM Content Moderation,” European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, April 2025, [https://ecnl.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/ECNL\\_LLM\\_CM\\_Executive%20Summary\\_2025.pdf](https://ecnl.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/ECNL_LLM_CM_Executive%20Summary_2025.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> “Contagious Civility,” *Tech and Social Cohesion* (Substack), May 30, 2025, <https://techandsocialcohesion.substack.com/p/contagious-civility>.

<sup>28</sup> GLAAD, “Leading National Civil Rights Organizations to Fortune 1000 Executives: Future Business Success Requires Your Commitment to Workplace Inclusion,” September 19, 2024, <https://glaad.org/releases/leading-national-civil-rights-organizations-to-fortune-1000-executives-future-business-success-requires-your-commitment-to-workplace-inclusion/>.

# MAKE META SAFE

Explore the June 2025 [Make Meta Safe report](#) from GLAAD, Ultraviolet, and All Out, which surveyed more than 7,000 Meta users across 86 countries about their recent experiences of hate and harassment on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads. Since the company's early 2025 policy rollbacks, respondents — mostly women and LGBTQ people — report a rise in hateful content, increased self-censorship, and a pervasive sense of vulnerability.

**// As a non-binary trans person, violence against me has skyrocketed since January. I live in daily fear.**

**—Anonymous Meta user**

**72%**

HAVE WITNESSED  
HARMFUL CONTENT  
IN THEIR FEEDS.

**92%**

FEEL LESS PROTECTED  
FROM BEING EXPOSED  
TO OR TARGETED BY  
HARMFUL CONTENT.

**92%**

ARE CONCERNED  
ABOUT HARMFUL  
CONTENT INCREASING  
SINCE THE ROLLBACKS.

**77%**

FEEL LESS SAFE  
EXPRESSING  
THEMSELVES FREELY  
ON META PLATFORMS.

# THE CONTINUING DECLINE OF LGBTQ SAFETY ONLINE & OFF

The political climate in the United States has shifted sharply since January 2025, with direct consequences for social media safety.<sup>29</sup> Coordinated anti-LGBTQ campaigns have intensified, while major platforms have scaled back or eliminated safeguards designed to protect LGBTQ people online.

**Greater detail can be found in the Scorecard summaries for each platform, but some of the most significant current issues include:**

- Right-wing political targeting of the field of tech accountability, trust and safety, and fact checking,<sup>30</sup> including intentional mischaracterization of EU regulatory efforts as “censorship.”<sup>31</sup>
- Continuing erosion of corporate norms around DEI, with impacts on LGBTQ online safety policies.<sup>32</sup>
- Concerns about over-reliance on AI in content moderation and the resulting suppression of LGBTQ content and accounts.<sup>33</sup>
- Concerns about consent and surveillance as companies like Meta, Google, X, and TikTok train generative AI models on social media user data, including public posts, photos, comments, and behavioral data.<sup>34</sup>
- The complex impacts of youth-related social media regulatory and policy changes on LGBTQ youth.<sup>35</sup> As GLAAD has long noted, proposed legislative social media safety solutions must be mindful of not censoring LGBTQ resources or causing unintended harm to LGBTQ users, especially LGBTQ youth.<sup>36</sup>

Anti-LGBTQ hate and disinformation online have surged in tandem with political attacks on LGBTQ rights and a rise in violence against LGBTQ people. As the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (a research organization specializing in extremism) highlights, more than 20 percent of hate crimes reported to the FBI were motivated by an anti-LGBTQ bias for a third consecutive year (in 2024, the most recent data).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> “The Rise of the Tech Oligarchy: Part I — Degradation of the Digital Civic Space,” *Politics of Poverty* (Oxfam America), May 13, 2025, <https://politicsofpoverty.oxfamamerica.org/the-rise-of-the-tech-oligarchy/>.

<sup>30</sup> Jennifer Hansler, “State Department Imposes Sanctions on Former EU Official, Disinformation Group Leaders for ‘Censorship,’” *CNN*, December 23, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/12/23/politics/sanctions-censorship-state-rubio>.

<sup>31</sup> Eliza Gkritsi, “US committee demands Big Tech share private comms with EU officials,” *Politico*, March 16, 2026, <https://euobserver.com/201378/us-republicans-accuse-the-eu-of-decade-long-censorship-campaign/>.

<sup>32</sup> Paresh Dave, “Google, Microsoft, and Meta Have Stopped Publishing Workforce Diversity Data,” *Wired*, November 7, 2025, <https://www.wired.com/story/google-microsoft-and-meta-have-stopped-publishing-workforce-diversity-data>.

<sup>33</sup> “Navigating AI Moderation,” Global Network Initiative.

<sup>34</sup> Ameneh Dehshiri, “Unequal Inputs, Unequal Outcomes: The Human Rights Risks of Generative AI,” OpenGlobalRights, September 11, 2025, <https://www.openglobalrights.org/unequal-inputs-unequal-outcomes-the-human-rights-risks-of-generative-ai/>.

<sup>35</sup> Brookings Institution, “Children’s Online Safety Laws Are Failing LGBTQ+ Youth,” July 9, 2025, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/childrens-online-safety-laws-are-failing-lgbtq-youth/>.

<sup>36</sup> GLAAD, “Solutions for All: Legislative and Regulatory Approaches to Social Media and Tech Accountability - 2024 Social Media Safety Index,” May 2024, <https://glaad.org/smsi/2024/solutions-for-all/>.

<sup>37</sup> “Investigation: Five-Year Overview of the Online and Offline Anti-LGBTQ+ Landscape,” Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

GLAAD's ALERT Desk further confirms this trend, documenting more than 1,000 anti-LGBTQ incidents nationwide in 2025.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, ISD tracked more than 97,000 anti-LGBTQ posts from violent extremist channels in the six months surrounding the 2024 election and inauguration, content that received over 3 million likes, comments, and shares. Targeted hate directed at LGBTQ communities doubled in the period around the inauguration itself, with trans people increasingly the focus. LGBT Tech's 2025 survey further confirms that sixty-eight percent of LGBTQ adults have experienced online harassment, and 45% report it occurs often. For transgender adults, 90% have faced harassment online and 83% in person.<sup>39</sup>

Harmful, false narratives that promote anti-LGBTQ animus have proliferated across platforms, including the repeatedly disproven assertion that transgender people are “violent terrorists,”<sup>40</sup> a trope GLAAD researchers have traced across mainstream and fringe platforms alike.<sup>41</sup> Data contradicts this claim: Fewer than one-tenth of one percent of mass shootings over the last decade were committed by a trans or nonbinary individual.<sup>42</sup> Other popular falsehoods include the baseless myth that LGBTQ people are “groomers”<sup>43</sup> targeting children.<sup>44</sup>

One of the most consequential disinformation campaigns targeting trans people today is the coordinated, malicious effort to misrepresent evidence-based healthcare.<sup>45</sup> This includes the debunked “social contagion” theory,<sup>46</sup> which has been repeatedly enlisted to justify retractions of gender-affirming care for trans youth in more than two dozen states,<sup>47</sup> and inflammatory phrases such as “chemical mutilation” to describe puberty blockers, a medically accepted treatment that anti-LGBTQ actors routinely distort to stoke fear and opposition.<sup>48</sup> These narratives do not exist in isolation: they percolate and gain traction on social media platforms, where algorithmic amplification accelerates their reach and their real-world impact, including in state legislatures actively considering or passing bans on gender-affirming care.<sup>49</sup> GLAAD continues to document and fact-check these harmful, misleading framings in the [Guide to Anti-LGBTQ Online Hate and Disinformation](#).

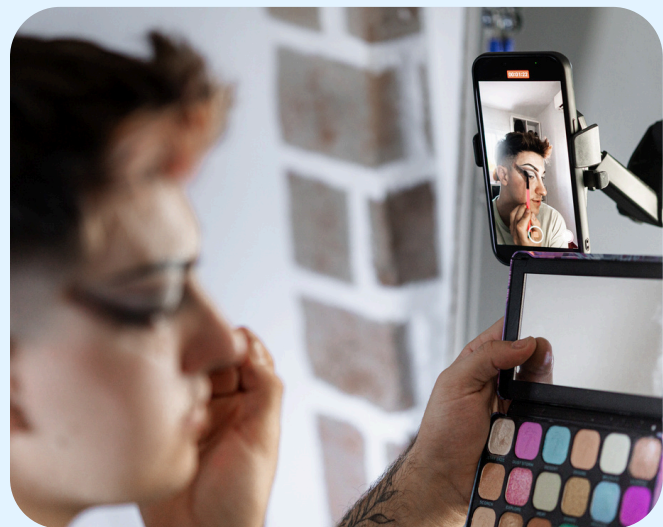


Photo: Ivan Rodriguez Alba via Getty Images

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<sup>38</sup> GLAAD, “GLAAD ALERT Desk Documents More Than 1,000 Anti-LGBTQ Incidents Nationwide in 2025,” January 27, 2026, <https://glaad.org/releases/glaad-alert-desk-documents-more-than-1000-anti-lgbtq-incidents-nationwide-in-2025/>.

<sup>39</sup> LGBT Tech, *ctrl+alt+lgbt: Digital Access, Usage, and Experiences of the LGBTQ+ Community*, June 2025, [https://fc0ed7fa-6ac8-48b8-8e17-528c23d0b0eb.filesusr.com/ugd/d77b01\\_4d1a9f28e94e4e40b16fb35e333eab99.pdf](https://fc0ed7fa-6ac8-48b8-8e17-528c23d0b0eb.filesusr.com/ugd/d77b01_4d1a9f28e94e4e40b16fb35e333eab99.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> Kevin Maimann, “After Tumbler Ridge shooting, false claims about trans people have proliferated online,” *CBC News*, February 11, 2026, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/tumbler-ridge-shooting-trans-community-false-claims-9.7085078>.

<sup>41</sup> GLAAD, “Fact Sheet: Debunking ‘Trans Terrorism’ and Other False Claims in High-Profile Crimes,” September 15, 2025, <https://glaad.org/debunking-trans-terrorism/>.

<sup>42</sup> Ashley Wang, “Few Mass Shooters Have Been Transgender,” *FactCheck.org*, September 17, 2025, <https://www.factcheck.org/2025/09/few-mass-shooters-have-been-transgender/>.

<sup>43</sup> Brooke Migdon, “Republicans Suggest PBS ‘Grooming’ Children with ‘Sesame Street’ Pride Post,” *The Hill*, June 2, 2025, <https://thehill.com/homenews/lgbtq/5329282-republicans-pbs-pride-post-grooming/>.

<sup>44</sup> GLAAD, “Online Anti-LGBTQ Hate Terms Defined: ‘Groomer,’” <https://glaad.org/groomer-definition-meaning-anti-lgbt-online-hate/>.

<sup>45</sup> GLAAD, “Intentional Mischaracterizations of Transgender Health Care,” February 27, 2025, <https://glaad.org/intentional-mischaracterizations-of-transgender-health-care/>.

<sup>46</sup> S. Baum, “Fact Check: Being Trans Is Not a Social Contagion, Despite Latest Submission to UN,” *Erin in the Morning* (Substack), July 18, 2025, <https://www.erininthemorning.com/p/fact-check-being-trans-is-not-a-social>.

<sup>47</sup> Lindsey Dawson and Jennifer Kates, “Policy Tracker: Youth Access to Gender Affirming Care and State Policy Restrictions,” *KFF*, Accessed March 15, 2026, <https://www.kff.org/lgbtq/gender-affirming-care-policy-tracker/>.

<sup>48</sup> GLAAD, “Understanding Anti-Trans Tropes: ‘Chemical Mutilation,’” <https://glaad.org/understanding-anti-trans-tropes-chemical-mutilation/>.

<sup>49</sup> Darius Scott, “Punishing Gender-Affirming Care: Social Media and U.S. Anti-Trans Politics,” *Communication, Culture & Critique*, January 9, 2026, <https://academic.oup.com/ccq/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ccq/tcaf054/8418140>.

Additionally, dangerous narratives are increasingly amplified (and in some cases generated) by AI. The extraordinary rise<sup>50</sup> in deepfake anti-LGBTQ content<sup>51</sup> and non-consensual imagery highlights significant gaps in safety — with social media platforms often failing to adequately identify, contextualize, and mitigate these harms through existing moderation systems and policies. There are also broader accountability questions for the AI companies whose products are used to generate this material. The impacts and consequences can be devastating: For instance, in late 2025 and early 2026, xAI's Grok produced a flood of millions of deepfake non-consensual intimate images (NCII) of women and children.<sup>52</sup> One of the most egregious was a sexualized image of the dead body of Renee Good, the LGBTQ woman who was shot and killed by ICE in Minneapolis; the image circulated within 24 hours of her death and underscores how AI-enabled harm can compound the violence LGBTQ people already face.<sup>53</sup> In response to the Grok deepfake onslaught, governments across the UK, EU, India, France, and Malaysia launched investigations or issued demands for information, a reflection of how AI accountability is now a pressing international regulatory concern.<sup>54</sup>

There is also a longer-term risk that warrants attention: when platforms fail to adequately address anti-LGBTQ hate and disinformation, that content may be incorporated into the broader data ecosystems used to train future AI systems. (That is because the bulk of training data for most AI models comes from websites, encyclopedias, social media content, and other public images and text.<sup>55</sup>) Emerging research suggests that these systems can absorb and reproduce patterns present in their training data, including harmful stereotypes and biases.<sup>56</sup> As a result, gaps in platform moderation may contribute to a feedback loop in which anti-LGBTQ bias is reproduced and scaled through AI systems.<sup>57</sup> This feedback loop may thus shape how LGBTQ people are represented and treated online in years to come.

These are among the most worrying problems negatively impacting the safety of LGBTQ people on social media — and in the real world — today. As one of the leading voices in LGBTQ tech accountability, GLAAD continues to work together with other civil society and human rights groups on these and other issues. [The 2026 SMSI Articles and Reports Appendix](#) showcases the important work being done across the field and is a valuable additional resource.



Photo: kyontra via Getty Images

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<sup>50</sup> Abeba Birhane, Vinay Prabhu, Sang Han, and Vishnu Naresh Boddeti, "Fellow Research: As AI Companies Scale LLM Datasets, They Scale Hate, Too," Mozilla Foundation, July 3, 2023, <https://www.mozilla.org/en/blog/fellow-research-as-ai-companies-scale-llm-datasets-they-scale-hate-too/>.

<sup>51</sup> Alex Bollinger, "Republicans Make Deepfake AI Video of Democrat Giving a Kid Trans Hormone Therapy," *LGBTQ Nation*, December 18, 2025, <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2025/12/republicans-make-deepfake-ai-video-of-democrat-giving-a-kid-trans-hormone-therapy/>.

<sup>52</sup> Kate Conger, Dylan Freedman, and Stuart A. Thompson, "Musk's Chatbot Flooded X With Millions of Sexualized Images in Days, New Estimates Show," *The New York Times*, January 22, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/22/technology/grok-x-ai-elon-musk-deepfakes.html>.

<sup>53</sup> Kat Tenbarge, "Why Isn't There a Bigger Grok Boycott?," *Spitfire News* (Substack), January 8, 2026, <https://theconversation.com/grok-produces-sexualized-photos-of-women-and-minors-for-users-on-x-a-legal-scholar-explains-why-its-happening-and-what-can-be-done-272861>.

<sup>54</sup> Bruna Santos and Shirin Anlen, "The Grok Disaster Isn't an Anomaly. It Follows Warnings That Were Ignored," *Tech Policy Press*, January 9, 2026, <https://www.techpolicy.press/the-grok-disaster-isnt-an-anomaly-it-follows-warnings-that-were-ignored/>.

<sup>55</sup> Lauren Leffer, "Your Personal Information Is Probably Being Used to Train Generative AI Models," *Scientific American*, October 19, 2023, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/your-personal-information-is-probably-being-used-to-train-generative-ai-models/>.

<sup>56</sup> Birhane et al., "Fellow Research," Mozilla Foundation.

<sup>57</sup> Megan Thomas and Meredith Veit, "The impact of AI on LGBTQ+ people: From discrimination to disinformation," *Forbidden Colours*, January 2024, <https://www.forbidden-colours.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/240130-Report-on-LGBTIQ-AI.pdf>.

# LGBTQ SAFETY, PRIVACY, AND EXPRESSION: BASIC BEST PRACTICES



Photo: The Gender Spectrum Collection

Social media platforms fail LGBTQ people in two directions at once. Companies not only fail to adequately moderate harmful anti-LGBTQ material that violates their own policies; they also frequently suppress or block legitimate LGBTQ expression. This includes wrongful takedowns of LGBTQ accounts and creators,<sup>58</sup> mis-labeling of LGBTQ content as “adult”<sup>59</sup> or “explicit,” unwarranted demonetization of LGBTQ content,<sup>60</sup> shadowbanning,<sup>61</sup> and other kinds of suppression of LGBTQ voices. For example, for months in late 2024, Meta quietly blocked teens from seeing content with LGBTQ-related hashtags like #lesbian and “#trans” via search and discovery under its “sensitive content” policy aimed at barring “sexually suggestive content.”<sup>62</sup> Such unwarranted restrictions occur with non-LGBTQ content as well.

These are not incidental errors. They are the predictable result of automated content moderation systems that lack adequate human review, have insufficient LGBTQ-specific training, and fall short on accountability across languages and regions. Understanding why these failures persist requires also examining the business model underlying them. Social media companies generate revenue by maximizing engagement, with algorithms designed to prioritize content that drives shares and interaction. Research shows that emotionally charged and divisive content, including outrage, provocation, and conflict, is particularly effective at driving engagement.<sup>63</sup> This creates a structural incentive to allow misinformation and harmful content to circulate and spread.<sup>64</sup> The costs of that harm are borne by users, particularly those in historically marginalized communities.

As the Platform Scorecard highlights, platforms may collect, infer, and retain sensitive information about users’ behaviors and identities including their sexual orientation and gender identity, to target them with advertising.<sup>65</sup> If this data is released without users’ knowledge or consent, especially in the current political

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<sup>58</sup> Tricia Crimmins, “A Casting Call for Trans Actors Caused Instagram to Suspend Several Accounts for ‘Human Exploitation,’” *The Daily Dot*, July 11, 2024, <https://www.dailydot.com/debug/san-francisco-trans-march-instagram/>.

<sup>59</sup> Nick Wolny, “The Pink Shadow Ban: How LGBTQ+ Influencers Are Fighting Censorship,” *Out Magazine*, July 1, 2024, <https://www.out.com/out-exclusives/tiktok-lgbtq-social-media-censorship>.

<sup>60</sup> Sara Kingsley et al., “‘give Everybody [...] A Little Bit More Equity’: Content Creator Perspectives and Responses to the Algorithmic Demonetization of Content Associated with Disadvantaged Groups,” *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, Volume 6, Issue CSCW2 (November 7, 2022): 1–37, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3555149>.

<sup>61</sup> Tatum Hunter, “What Is Shadowbanning? Why Social Media May Be Hiding Your Posts,” *The Washington Post*, October 16, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/10/16/shadowban-social-media-algorithms-twitter-tiktok/>.

<sup>62</sup> Taylor Lorenz, “Instagram Blocked Teens from Searching LGBTQ-Related Content for Months,” *User Mag* (Substack), January 6, 2025, <https://www.usermag.co/p/instagram-blocked-teens-from-searching>.

<sup>63</sup> Abraham Kim, “Feeling Outraged? Think Twice Before Hitting ‘Share,’” Kellogg Insight, Northwestern University, February 11, 2025, <https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/feeling-outraged-think-twice-before-hitting-share>.

<sup>64</sup> Mihai Avram, Nicholas Micallef, Sameer Patil, and Filippo Menczer, “Exposure to Social Engagement Metrics Increases Vulnerability to Misinformation,” *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*, Volume 1, Issue 5 (July 29, 2020), <https://misinforeview.hks.harvard.edu/article/exposure-to-social-engagement-metrics-increases-vulnerability-to-misinformation/>.

<sup>65</sup> E. Fosch-Villaronga, A. Poulsen, R.A. Søråa, B.H.M. Custers, “A little bird told me your gender: Gender inferences in social media,” *Information Processing & Management*, Volume 58, Issue 3, (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2021.102541>.

environment, LGBTQ people may face targeted harassment, discrimination, or other offline harms — including the threat of being outed, which could subject them to physical violence or cost them their jobs, housing, or familial relationships.<sup>66</sup> In countries where LGBTQ people face criminalization, sexual orientation or gender identity data could be weaponized if accessed by authorities. This creates a difficult tension: the same targeted advertising infrastructure that enables businesses and organizations to reach LGBTQ communities also puts users' personal data at risk.<sup>67</sup> Meaningful data privacy protections are vital for safety, and platforms should develop privacy-protective approaches that reduce the collection and inference of sensitive user data.

In the U.S., civil society experts are increasingly cautioning that there are data collection risks inherent in age-verification systems. As Congress continues to consider consequential youth safety bills like KOSA and COPPA 2.0 and proposals featuring age-verification requirements,<sup>68</sup> some advocates caution that, in addition to involving increased platform data collection, these systems risk disproportionately excluding transgender people whose ID documents do not align with their gender identity.<sup>69</sup>

Social media age-minimum bills have also gained traction, with proposals introduced in states such as Hawaii and Rhode Island. In early 2026, the DC-based tech policy organization LGBT Tech led a broad coalition, including GLAAD, the ACLU, the Center for Democracy & Technology, and the National LGBTQ Task Force, in opposing blanket bans prohibiting users under 16 from social media, noting that such bans “disproportionately harm marginalized youth, including LGBTQ+ youth, young people of color, and those in unsupportive or hostile environments.”<sup>70</sup> Amidst current U.S. legislative proposals trying to address the many problems of social media safety, especially those focused on youth safety, it is important that such approaches be carefully crafted lest they create unintended negative impacts for LGBTQ people and other marginalized communities.

As companies with incredible power and consequential impacts on our lives and society, these platforms simply continue, year after year, to fail us. In the face of this persistent clear reality, continuing advocacy for corporate responsibility remains urgent and imperative. As GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis writes, “To LGBTQ creators, advocates, and organizations targeted by and on these platforms: these companies need to hear from you. The threats in your DMs, the disinformation fueling anti-LGBTQ legislation, and the bullying that leads to real-world violence are not just ‘part of the job.’ They are systemic failures that tech leaders have the tools to fix, yet they choose to profit from them instead.”

As a US-based organization, GLAAD’s focus is primarily domestic. Nevertheless, the global implications of this work are enormous, and GLAAD urges platforms to take responsibility for the safety of their products worldwide. Social media platforms are vitally important for LGBTQ people as spaces where we connect, learn, and find community.<sup>71</sup> While there are positive initiatives these companies have implemented to help support and protect their LGBTQ users,<sup>72</sup> they simply must do more. Social media platforms should be safe for everyone, in all of who we are.

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<sup>66</sup> Internet Society and LGBT Tech, “Encryption: A Factsheet Essential for the LGBTQ Community,” November 1, 2019, <https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2019/encryption-factsheet-essential-for-lgbtq-community/>.

<sup>67</sup> Neal Broverman, “Facebook can’t use your sexual orientation to target ads, EU court says,” *Mashable*, October 4, 2024, <https://mashable.com/article/meta-facebook-lgbtq-ads>.

<sup>68</sup> Justin Hendrix, “US House Subcommittee Advances 18 Child Online Safety Bills,” *Tech Policy Press*, December 13, 2025, <https://www.techpolicy.press/house-subcommittee-advances-18-child-online-safety-bills/>.

<sup>69</sup> Dia Kayyali and Jasmine Mithani, “Age Verification Is Locking Trans People Out of the Internet,” *Tech Policy Press*, December 8, 2025, <https://www.techpolicy.press/house-subcommittee-advances-18-child-online-safety-bills/>.

<sup>70</sup> “LGBT Tech Leads Coalition Statement in Opposition to Age-Minimum Social Media Bans,” LGBT Tech, accessed April 20, 2026, <https://www.lgbttech.org/post/lgbt-tech-leads-coalition-statement-in-opposition-to-age-minimum-social-media-bans/>.

<sup>71</sup> Linda Charmaraman, J. Maya Hernandez, and Rachel Hodes, “Marginalized and Understudied Populations Using Digital Media,” *Handbook of Adolescent Digital Media Use and Mental Health*, July 14, 2022, 188–214, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108976237.011>.

<sup>72</sup> “You Belong Here: Celebrating the LGBTQ+ community on TikTok and beyond,” TikTok Newsroom, June 2, 2025, <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/celebrating-the-lgbtqia-community-on-tiktok-and-beyond>.

# 2026 SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY INDEX PLATFORM SCORECARD

Across 14 LGBTQ-specific indicators, the **Platform Scorecard** evaluates six major social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Threads (whose parent company is Meta); TikTok (parent company: ByteDance); YouTube (parent company: Alphabet/Google), and X. The maximum score a platform can receive is 100.

Each of these platforms have some policies prohibiting hate and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, and other protected characteristics. Given the difficulty of assessing policy *enforcement* methodologically — which is further complicated by a lack of transparency from the companies — these failures are *not* quantified in the Scorecard scores. In GLAAD’s day-to-day research and monitoring, and in reports from other organizations, researchers, and journalists, failures are seen repeatedly in the development, implementation, and enforcement of policies across major platforms.

[Read more about our methodology.](#)



In the 2026 SMSI Platform Scorecard, TikTok receives a score of 56, the same as last year. Overall, the company has made few changes to its public-facing policies relevant to the scorecard indicators since 2025. Unlike some other major platforms, TikTok has maintained strong protections for LGBTQ people and other historically marginalized communities in its Community Guidelines. The company further strengthened policy language around AI-generated content, viral misinformation, and other areas late last year.<sup>73</sup>

In January 2026, TikTok finalized a corporate restructuring that created a separate U.S. entity to oversee the platform's domestic operations.<sup>74</sup> The deal came after the U.S. government proposed banning TikTok over national security concerns, and secured the app's continued operation in the country.<sup>75</sup> Shortly after announcing the new U.S. venture, TikTok updated and clarified its terms of service and privacy policy to comply with national security requirements and state privacy regulations.<sup>76</sup> These updates — along with wider uncertainty<sup>77</sup> about the new entity's connections to the current presidential administration — prompted some users to raise concerns about the company's extensive<sup>78</sup> data collection practices.<sup>79</sup> (At the time, some users incorrectly claimed that TikTok's updated privacy policy introduced new tracking of sensitive personal information, including

immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.<sup>80</sup> That language had appeared in TikTok's previous policy. The January 2026 update did introduce three substantive changes: precise location tracking, collection of AI interaction data, and an expanded off-platform advertising network.<sup>81</sup>) These concerns, while partly overstated, reflect broader questions about data transparency in public-facing policies, an area the SMSI evaluates directly.

The SMSI does not assess the types of user information that social media companies collect,<sup>82</sup> but instead evaluates companies' public-facing policy commitments that give users control over how their sexual orientation and gender identity information is collected, inferred, and used.



Photo: Chesnot via Getty Images

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<sup>73</sup> Andrew Hutchinson, "TikTok Updates Community Guidelines to Address AI Misinformation," *Social Media Today*, August 14, 2025, <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/tiktok-updates-community-guidelines-misinformation-bullying/757740/>.

<sup>74</sup> "Announcement from the new TikTok USDS Joint Venture LLC," TikTok Newsroom, January 22, 2026, <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/announcement-from-the-new-tiktok-usds-joint-venture-llc>.

<sup>75</sup> Sam Levin and Mark Sweney, "TikTok announces it has finalized deal to establish US entity, sidestepping ban," *The Guardian*, January 23, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2026/jan/23/tiktok-us-venture>.

<sup>76</sup> Emmett Lindner, "TikTok Updates Its Terms and Conditions in the U.S.," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/23/business/media/tiktok-us-terms-conditions.html>.

<sup>77</sup> Barbara Ortutay, "TikTok faces app deletions, censorship claims and glitches in days after its ownership change," *AP News*, January 27, 2026, <https://apnews.com/article/tiktok-uninstalls-newsom-censorship-f38b265405f734993728c790d0cc83bcc>.

<sup>78</sup> Patrick K. Lin, "Under U.S. Ownership, TikTok Poses an Even Greater Threat to Americans' Privacy," Harvard Kennedy School: Carr-Ryan Center for Human Rights, January 27, 2026, <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/carr-ryan/our-work/carr-ryan-commentary/under-us-ownership-tiktok-poses-even-greater-threat>.

<sup>79</sup> Chase DiBenedetto, "TikTok just changed its Terms of Service. What does that mean for your privacy?," *Mashable*, January 23, 2026, <https://mashable.com/article/tiktok-new-terms-of-service-data-collection>.

<sup>80</sup> Anna Rascouët-Paz, "Does TikTok's new terms of service allow app to track sensitive info like immigration status?," *Snopes*, January 28, 2026, <https://www.snopes.com/news/2026/01/28/tiktok-gender-immigration-tracking/>.

<sup>81</sup> Reece Rogers, "TikTok is Now Collecting Even More Data About Its Users. Here are the 3 Biggest Changes," *Wired*, January 23, 2026, <https://www.wired.com/story/tiktok-new-privacy-policy/>.

<sup>82</sup> Please see [Ranking Digital Right's Big Tech Scorecard](#) for indicators assessing tech companies' data collection practices.

TikTok does not provide sufficient transparency in this regard, and conflicting statements across two user-facing pages add to concerns over the company's privacy practices.<sup>83</sup> The company's "Inclusion and Belonging Guide" states: "**TikTok does not collect sexual orientation information...** If you choose to share information about your identity such as sexual orientation or gender identity in your bio, videos, or other content, **you can use our privacy tools to manage who, if anyone, can see that information.** This includes the option to **remove it entirely.**" However, TikTok's official [privacy policy](#) clarifies that — if users disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity in their profile, posts, comments, surveys, or through other means — TikTok may still process that information in accordance with state privacy laws. The policy also states: "We use the [Information We Collect](#) for the following purposes: To infer additional information about you, such as your age, **gender**, and interests."

This creates a gap between what TikTok's user-facing guide states and what its policy permits. While the "Inclusion and Belonging Guide" states that users can remove this information "entirely," the platform does not provide users with meaningful options to prevent TikTok from collecting, inferring, or processing sensitive identity information, short of deleting their account. The privacy policy also does not explicitly state whether the company attempts to infer users' sexual orientation or gender identity based on their profile, content, interactions, or other signals. **TikTok should provide users with comprehensive options to control its collection and use of personal information related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and other protected characteristics. The company should also ensure that these options are communicated consistently across its guides and policies.**

In 2025, TikTok made improvements to its advertising policies. Although TikTok's targeted advertising policies continue to explicitly prohibit advertisers from targeting or excluding users based

on their sexual orientation and gender identity, the company had previously failed to explain the processes and technologies that it uses to identify advertisers that violate these rules. During this year's research cycle, TikTok received partial credit for a newly published page titled "[Ad Review FAQs](#)," which states that all ads are reviewed by a person.

The page also explains that ads are subsequently reviewed automatically once set up, a process that typically takes about 24 hours, and that an additional review can be triggered when advertisers edit their targeting location or ad creative.

However, this page provides limited relevant information: it primarily addresses ad content and creative, with insufficient detail on ad targeting specifically. In addition, the company does not clarify whether it employs *other* processes or technologies — such as automated content moderation or user reporting — to identify policy violations. **TikTok should clearly explain all ad targeting parameters evaluated during the review process, and provide further detail on any enforcement mechanisms beyond human review.**

During this research cycle, TikTok also improved its policy commitments to training internal staff on its hate speech and harassment policies. For example, TikTok's page "[Combating hate](#)" makes several references to these trainings, stating that "we understand that hateful behaviors are complex and ever-evolving harms online and offline, which is why we continually look for how we can improve our policies and strengthen our enforcement. This includes regularly training our technologies and content moderation teams to better detect evolving hateful behavior, symbols, terms, and offensive stereotypes." However, TikTok continues to fall short of full credit as it is not clear whether these trainings take place on an annual basis. The company also does not explain whether it provides similar training on other issues related to LGBTQ privacy, safety, and expression on the platform.



Photo: The Gender Spectrum Collection

**TikTok should provide internal training for relevant staff on how to best fulfill its commitments to LGBTQ users at least once per year. These trainings should cover a range of issues related to LGBTQ privacy, safety, and expression.**

As in previous years, TikTok failed to publish any data on the number of LGBTQ employees working across different levels of the company. While it continues to make a public commitment to taking proactive steps to diversify its workforce,<sup>84</sup> this lack of transparency does not allow external researchers and civil society actors to track progress toward this goal. **TikTok should track and publish annual data showing its progress toward reaching diversity and inclusion goals, including voluntarily self-disclosed data on the number of LGBTQ employees across different U.S.-based teams.**

TikTok's hate and harassment policies continue to provide the most comprehensive protections for LGBTQ people of all platforms evaluated in the Platform Scorecard. TikTok also continues to be one of only two platforms with a policy expressly prohibiting both targeted misgendering and deadnaming, and the only company besides Meta to prohibit content promoting harmful conversion "therapy"<sup>85</sup> services. (Though, it should be noted that Meta states it requires "additional information and/or context to enforce" its policy against harmful conversion "therapy" content,<sup>86</sup> while TikTok prohibits it outright.)

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<sup>84</sup> During the 2026 research cycle, the SMSI evaluation standards were modified and clarified. The definition of "data collection" now includes content and other information voluntarily provided by users. See the [research guidance](#) for more information.

<sup>85</sup> "Life at TikTok: Diversity," TikTok, <https://lifeattiktok.com/diversity>.

<sup>86</sup> Conversion "therapy" refers to harmful practices of attempting to change an LGBTQ person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

# META PLATFORMS

INSTAGRAM  
SMSI SCORE:

41

FACEBOOK  
SMSI SCORE:

40

THREADS  
SMSI SCORE:

39

This year, all three Meta platforms see declines — Instagram receives a score of 41 (a four-point decrease), Facebook a score of 40 (a five-point decrease), and Threads a score of 39 (a one-point decrease). As GLAAD highlighted in last year’s report, widely denounced<sup>87</sup> changes to Meta’s “Hateful Conduct” policy in January 2025 removed critical protections for LGBTQ people, especially transgender and nonbinary people, and other historically marginalized groups across the company’s platforms. Among other harmful edits, the updated hate speech policy continues to explicitly permit users to characterize LGBTQ people as “mentally ill” or abnormal.<sup>88</sup> The policy also invokes the right-wing term “transgenderism,” an anti-trans term that falsely frames being transgender as an ideology rather than an innate identity.<sup>89</sup>

These safety rollbacks were not only condemned by GLAAD<sup>90</sup> and other civil society organizations,<sup>91</sup> but rebuked by some employees<sup>92</sup> and Meta’s own Oversight Board.<sup>93</sup> In April 2025, the Board responded to user complaints about two videos shared by an influential anti-LGBTQ account that featured the intentional misgendering of a transgender woman

and girl.<sup>94</sup> The Board’s majority sided with Meta’s decision to leave both videos up, arguing that the posts did not incite violence or discrimination.<sup>95</sup>

However, the Board expressed concerns about Meta’s addition of “transgenderism” to its Community Standards, recommending that the company remove the term “to ensure Meta’s content policies are framed neutrally and in line with international human rights standards.” The Board further advised: “For its rules to have legitimacy, Meta must seek to frame its content policies neutrally, in ways that respect human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination. This could be achieved, for example, by stating ‘discourse about gender identity and sexual orientation’ in place of ‘discourse about transgenderism and homosexuality.’” In its formal response, Meta stated only that it would “consider ways to update the terminology.”<sup>96</sup> In the appendix of its March 2026 *Bi-Annual Report on the Oversight Board* — nearly a year later — the company stated that it was still “assessing feasibility” regarding the proposed change.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Dilara Asardag, “Feminist exploratory interpretive study of the content policy changes of Meta and the corresponding news coverage,” *Frontiers in Communication: Media, Creative, and Cultural Industries*, Volume 10 (August 5, 2025), <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/communication/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1640230/full>.

<sup>88</sup> Kate Knibbs, “Meta Now Lets Users Say Gay and Trans People Have ‘Mental Illness,’” *Wired*, January 7, 2025, <https://www.wired.com/story/meta-immigration-gender-policies-change/>.

<sup>89</sup> The current, popularized usage of the term “transgenderism” arises from anti-trans extremists who seek to delegitimize and dehumanize transgender people by falsely implying that being transgender is an ideology rather than an identity.

<sup>90</sup> GLAAD, “GLAAD Responds to Meta’s Latest Anti-LGBTQ Changes to Content Policy and DEI That Will Harm Users,” January 10, 2025, <https://glaad.org/releases/meta-anti-lgbtq-hate-speech-dei/>.

<sup>91</sup> Pat de Brún, “Meta’s new content policies risk fueling more mass violence and genocide,” Amnesty International, February 17, 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/02/meta-new-policy-changes/>.

<sup>92</sup> Jyoti Mann, “Meta employees react after the rollback of DEI programs — both for and against,” *Business Insider*, January 10, 2025, <https://www.businessinsider.com/meta-employees-slam-dei-roll-back-mark-zuckerberg-leak-2025-1>.

<sup>93</sup> Established in 2020, the Oversight Board is an independent body that reviews contested content moderation decisions on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads. Some civil society groups have raised concerns about the Board’s independence, given that it is funded by Meta.

<sup>94</sup> “Gender Identity Debate Videos,” Oversight Board, April 23, 2025, <https://www.oversightboard.com/decision/bun-lynnk264/>.

<sup>95</sup> Dia Kayyali, “Meta’s Oversight Board Gives Hate a Pass,” *Tech Policy Press*, April 28, 2025, <https://www.techpolicy.press/metas-oversight-board-gives-hate-a-pass/>.

<sup>96</sup> Karissa Bell, “Meta tells the Oversight Board it isn’t removing the word ‘transgenderism’ from its hate speech rules,” *Engadget*, June 20, 2025, [Meta tells the Oversight Board it isn’t removing the word ‘transgenderism’ from its hate speech rules](https://www.engadget.com/meta-tells-the-oversight-board-it-isnt-removing-the-word-transgenderism-from-its-hate-speech-rules-1234567890.html)

<sup>97</sup> Meta, “Meta’s Bi-Annual Report on the Oversight Board, Appendix,” March 19, 2026, <https://transparency.meta.com/sr/meta-biannual-appendix-h2-2025>.

**Consistent with the Board’s guidance, Meta should remove harmful exceptions from its “Hateful Conduct” policy and provide LGBTQ people with strong protections against hate, harassment, and violence across its platforms.**

On its “[LGBTQ Safety](#)” page, Meta published a “Gender Identity Policy and User Tools” policy in March 2023. The page includes language from the company’s former hate speech policy (prior to its January 7, 2025 updates), specifically a commitment to protecting trans, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people from “claims about [their] sexual orientation or gender identity.” Since this document conflicts with the company’s official Hateful Conduct policy and was published more than three years ago, it seems unlikely that this policy is still active and enforced by moderators.<sup>98</sup> **In addition to restoring best-practice policies protecting LGBTQ users, Meta should adopt an explicit policy against targeted misgendering and deadnaming in its Community Standards.**



Photo: Cheng Xin via Getty Images

As in previous years, Meta continues to provide minimal information about the options users have to control whether and how the company processes data related to their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). For example, Meta fails to clarify whether users can control how their inferred or collected SOGI information is used in the development of algorithmic or other automated systems. In December 2025, Meta updated its [privacy policy](#) to include its generative AI products, stating that, “to provide, personalize and improve our Products,” the company will collect data from users’ interactions with Meta’s AI tools (e.g. Llama) to inform targeted advertising.<sup>99</sup> In the U.S. and other countries outside of the E.U. and U.K., Meta does not allow users to opt out.<sup>100</sup>

This policy update further compounds concerns about users’ lack of control over their personal data, given the company’s already pervasive data collection practices.<sup>101</sup> Contrary to some online claims, however, the updated privacy policy does not allow Meta to see or collect data from person-to-person DMs.<sup>102</sup> The company has also used data from users, including public posts, photos, and comments, to train its AI models since at least June 2024.<sup>103</sup> (For E.U. and U.K. users, Meta provides an option to submit a “[Right to Object](#)” form in the Privacy Center. If approved, Meta will stop using their public content to train its future models.) **Meta should give all users clear options to control the collection, inference, and use of their personal data, including how the company uses information related to their sexual orientation and gender identity for the development of algorithmic and other automated systems.**

<sup>98</sup> Meta received partial credit for this indicator assessing policies prohibiting targeted misgendering and deadnaming. Since we consider disclosures published only within the last three years, Meta will not receive credit in the future unless it revises its policies accordingly. Source: “Gender Identity Policy and User Tools,” March 2023, Captured February 8, 2026 via the [Internet Archive](#).

<sup>99</sup> Saumyaa Naidu, “Facebook now uses AI interactions to personalise experiences and ads,” Open Terms Archive, December 28, 2025, <https://opentermarchive.org/en/memos/facebook-now-uses-ai-interactions-to-personalise-experiences-and-ads/>.

<sup>100</sup> Melissa Heikkilä, “How to opt out of Meta’s AI training,” *MIT Technology Review*, June 14, 2024, <https://www.technologyreview.com/2024/06/14/1093789/how-to-opt-out-of-meta-ai-training/>.

<sup>101</sup> Electronic Privacy Information Center, “Social Media Privacy,” <https://epic.org/issues/consumer-privacy/social-media-privacy/>.

<sup>102</sup> Emily Winter, “Will Meta’s planned policy update let it read users’ DMs starting December 2025?” *Snopes*, November 11, 2025, <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/meta-dms-privacy-policy/>.

<sup>103</sup> Eli Tan, “When the Terms of Service Change to Make Way for AI Training,” *The New York Times*, June 26, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/26/technology/terms-service-ai-training.html>.

Lastly, Meta has taken significant steps back when it comes to its public commitments of creating a more inclusive workforce and fostering civil rights.<sup>104</sup> The last time that Meta publicly discussed holding civil rights trainings was in March 2023, when it published “[An Update on Meta’s Civil Rights Progress](#).” According to the company, it introduced “civil rights training for employees to better equip them to identify and address civil rights issues in their day-to-day work. Since [Meta] launched the training in July 2022, it has been taken by more than 50,000 full-time employees.”

But following the 2024 presidential election and the current administration’s executive orders targeting DEI programs and mandates, Meta announced it would abandon its DEI commitments and hiring targets.<sup>105</sup> GLAAD’s research also shows that Meta did not publish any updated diversity hiring data in 2025. **Meta should renew its commitments to taking proactive steps towards creating a more diverse workforce, and publish annual data that tracks progress towards this goal.**



Photo: Ugur Karakoc via Getty Images

<sup>104</sup> Johana Bhuiyan and Dara Kerr, “Zuckerberg’s swerve: how diversity went from being a Meta priority to getting cancelled,” *The Guardian*, February 11, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/ng-interactive/2025/feb/11/dei-meta-facebook>.

<sup>105</sup> Paresh Dave, “Google, Microsoft, and Meta Have Stopped Publishing Workforce Diversity Data,” *Wired*, November 7, 2025, <https://www.wired.com/story/google-microsoft-and-meta-have-stopped-publishing-workforce-diversity-data/>.

# YOUTUBE

SMSI  
SCORE: **30**

Overall, YouTube receives a score of 30, an 11-point decrease from 2025. As noted in last year's report, YouTube's hate speech policy no longer lists gender identity and expression as a protected characteristic, leaving transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming people more vulnerable to hate and discrimination on the platform. In addition, the company's hate and harassment policies continue to provide only partial protections for public figures. During the 2026 research cycle, we found that YouTube's policies no longer contain an explicit exception for LGBTQ people using LGBTQ-related slurs in a self-expressive manner. **YouTube should reverse these recent policy changes and explicitly list gender identity and expression as a protected characteristic. This policy should also provide public figures with comprehensive protections from hate and harassment, and include an exception for LGBTQ users' self-expressive usage of otherwise derogatory LGBTQ-related terms.**

In another concerning policy change, and reflecting a broader trend<sup>106</sup> of tech companies abandoning their DEI commitments,<sup>107</sup> Google failed to renew its commitment to building a more diverse workforce and no longer publishes any self-disclosed data on its LGBTQ employees. In last year's evaluation, Google led its peers on this indicator, committing in its 2024 *Diversity Annual Report* to hiring more employees from historically underrepresented groups and publishing data on the percentage of Google employees self-identifying as LGBTQ. After major news outlets reported that Google planned to roll back its diversity hiring targets in response to the Trump administration's executive orders on DEI in early 2025,<sup>108</sup> no equivalent report from Google followed. **To ensure that its products and services meet the needs of LGBTQ people and other marginalized groups, Google should adhere to these best practice principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and should publish detailed data on the numbers of self-identified LGBTQ employees that shows progress towards these goals.**



Photo: NurPhoto via Getty Images

Google has become less transparent regarding its internal implementation of commitments to protecting LGBTQ people on YouTube. It is no longer clear from the company's public-facing policies whether content moderators receive training dedicated to the safety, privacy, and expression of LGBTQ people and other marginalized groups. Previously, Google's parent company, Alphabet, stated it had an "Inclusion Working Group," as part of its "commitment to making sure the voices of historically underrepresented communities were incorporated in the development of our products, processes, and policies."<sup>109</sup> This statement, published in February 2023, discussing the working group is outdated and it is no longer clear whether this team still exists.

<sup>106</sup> Dominic-Madori Davis, "Here are all the tech companies rolling back DEI or still committed to it — so far," *TechCrunch*, April 17, 2025, <https://techcrunch.com/2025/04/17/here-are-all-the-tech-companies-rolling-back-dei-or-still-committed-to-it-so-far/>.

<sup>107</sup> João da Silva & Natalie Sherman, "Google joins firms dropping diversity recruitment goals," *BBC*, February 5, 2025, [Google joins firms dropping diversity recruitment goals](https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-67443333).

<sup>108</sup> Miles Kruppa, "Google Kills Diversity Hiring Targets," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 5, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/tech/google-kills-diversity-hiring-targets-04433d7c>.

<sup>109</sup> Niccolina Mangroo and Shani Paul, "Building Equity Into Our Products and Policies Through the Inclusion Working Group," YouTube Official Blog, February 27, 2023, <https://blog.youtube/inside-youtube/building-equity-into-our-products-and-policies-through-the-inclusion-working-group/>.

In March 2023, Google published a [report on its civil rights audit](#), which provided the following: “Reviewers receive extensive training to promote consistent, accurate enforcement. YouTube contract reviewers undergo mandatory unconscious bias and LGBTQ cultural sensitivity training, and many of YouTube’s vendors provide market-specific training.” However, the report is now more than three years old, and it is not clear whether bias trainings for content moderators still take place. **Google should clearly explain how it implements commitments to LGBTQ privacy, safety, and expression within the company, including annual content moderator training and having a dedicated LGBTQ policy lead.**

Additionally, YouTube continues to fail to explicitly protect users from targeted misgendering and deadnaming, a common form of online harassment against transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people. (Targeted misgendering involves intentionally using the wrong gender or pronouns when referring to or speaking to a transgender, nonbinary, or gender non-conforming person. Targeted deadnaming refers to the equally harmful act of intentionally using someone’s former name without their consent, which can put them at risk for a form of discrimination, even violence.)

**YouTube should have an explicit policy prohibiting targeted misgendering and deadnaming.<sup>110</sup> The company should also clearly explain the processes and technologies it uses to identify violations of this policy, and provide comprehensive information on how the policy is enforced.**

Lastly, companies like Google should seek to minimize the amount of sensitive personal data about individual users they collect, infer, or process. As previously noted, for LGBTQ people, data privacy is critical because involuntary outing (e.g. through data breaches<sup>111</sup> or government requests<sup>112</sup>) can lead to discrimination, family rejection, violence, or legal persecution, particularly in places where being LGBTQ is criminalized or socially stigmatized.<sup>113</sup> This data — collected and inferred about users’ sexual orientation and gender identity — also powers targeted advertising systems. To protect LGBTQ users from economic exclusion, companies should also have a clear policy prohibiting advertisers from excluding users based on their sexual orientation or gender identity to determine who sees their ads (especially in areas like housing, employment, or finance).

In January 2026, YouTube clarified its “[Personalized Advertising](#)” policy regarding the ability for advertisers to target users based on what the company calls “sensitive interest categories,” such as “[marginalized groups](#),” “[race and ethnicity](#),” “[sexual orientation](#),” “[transgender identification](#),” and “[religious beliefs](#).”<sup>114</sup> The updated policy clarifies that advertisers can market specific products or services related to identity (the aforementioned “sensitive interest categories”) using Google’s predefined audiences. YouTube further explains that “advertisers promoting products and services that fall within sensitive interest categories are unable to use advertiser-curated audiences. This helps ensure that sensitive interest categories aren’t inadvertently used for targeting audiences. Because predefined Google audiences are expressly

<sup>110</sup> Jenni Olson and Leanna Garfield, “Understanding Targeted Misgendering and Deadnaming as Hate Speech,” Tech Policy Press, June 7, 2023, <https://www.techpolicy.press/understanding-targeted-misgendering-and-deadnaming-as-hate-speech/>.

<sup>111</sup> Pavlina Pavlova, “Gendered Harms of Data Weaponization: Historical Patterns, New Battlefields, and the Implications for Democracy and National Security,” *New America*, November 14, 2024, <https://www.newamerica.org/future-security/reports/gendered-harms-of-data-weaponization/>.

<sup>112</sup> Zack Whittaker, “Homeland Security is trying to force tech companies to hand over data about Trump critics,” *TechCrunch*, February 3, 2026, <https://techcrunch.com/2026/02/03/homeland-security-is-trying-to-force-tech-companies-to-hand-over-data-about-trump-critics/>.

<sup>113</sup> Timi Sotire, “Data privacy in Trump 2.0 and LGBTQ rights: What you need to know,” *LGBTQ Nation*, May 18, 2025, <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2025/05/data-privacy-in-2-0-and-lgbtq-rights-what-you-need-to-know/>.

<sup>114</sup> Google, “Update to Google Ads Personalized Advertising Policy,” January 7, 2026, <https://support.google.com/adspolicy/answer/16828044>.

configured without sensitive user signals, all advertisers are allowed to use them, even if they promote sensitive interest categories.”<sup>115</sup>

Google states that its predefined audiences do not include sensitive user signals. While this is an encouraging statement, there is not enough transparency into how Google’s audience-design systems, which lack independent oversight, actually work. The company still allows advertisers to use Google’s *own* audience tools to target — or exclude — users based on “categories” related to their identity.

Notably, YouTube is the only platform evaluated in this year’s Platform Scorecard without an explicit, platform-wide prohibition against targeting or excluding users from seeing ads based on their identity.<sup>116</sup> **Google should have an all-encompassing policy that clearly prohibits advertisers from targeting users based on their protected characteristics — including sexual orientation and gender identity — regardless of the products or services being promoted, or whether they are using Google’s predefined audiences.**

It warrants mention that Google does give YouTube users the option to turn off personalized advertising entirely, meaning the ads they see will be based on the *video* they are watching rather than their identity.<sup>117</sup> (Though, from the video, Google may still attempt to infer who users are and what they may want to purchase.)



Photo: Riska via Getty Images

<sup>115</sup> Google, “Restricted targeting in Personalized Advertising,” <https://support.google.com/adspolicy/answer/143465>.

<sup>116</sup> In 2025, Google received full credit for restricting ad targeting on “sensitive interest categories,” including “Sexual orientation” and “Transgender identification.” For 2026, we clarified that full credit requires an all-encompassing prohibition on SOGI-based targeting regardless of the product or service being advertised, or the source of the audience data. Because Google’s policy retains carveout allowing advertisers to target users with “sensitive interests” via Google-defined audiences, we revised YouTube’s score on this indicator. Source: Google, “Personalized advertising,” Accessed February 12, 2025 via the [Internet Archive](#).

<sup>117</sup> “Control what data Google uses to show you ads,” Google, <https://support.google.com/My-Ad-Center-Help/answer/12156161>.

In the 2026 Platform Scorecard, X receives a score of 29, a one-point decline. X continues to be the only platform besides TikTok that prohibits both targeted deadnaming and misgendering in its community guidelines. However, as in our 2025 assessment, this policy continues to have significant limitations: X only provides this protection “where required by local laws,” effectively requires users to self-report policy violations, and only provides limited protections for public figures. **X should revise its “Abuse and Harassment” policy to provide strong protections against both targeted deadnaming and misgendering regardless of local laws. This policy should not require self-reporting by targeted individuals, and should also provide comprehensive protections for public figures.**

This year’s research indicates that X has slightly improved its transparency regarding the options users have to control what they see on their feeds. However, the company’s policies have become significantly less transparent in other key areas. Though imperfect,<sup>118</sup> detailed transparency reporting has long been industry standard, shedding some insight into how platforms enforce their user policies. In a concerning reversal, X failed to publish any data on its enforcement of hate speech policies and other X rules for 2025, with its most recent [Transparency Report](#) covering the second half of 2024. This lack of transparency is particularly concerning in light of academic<sup>119</sup> research<sup>120</sup> published last year finding an escalation of hate speech on X in the months following the new owner’s takeover of the company.



Photo: Cheng Xin via Getty Images

**X should publish detailed transparency reporting that includes data on the number of pieces of content and accounts restricted for violating policies designed to protect LGBTQ people from hate, harassment, and violence on the platform.**

X’s owner has been vocal in his opposition to DEI practices and hiring,<sup>121</sup> and X continues to make no public commitment to hiring employees from diverse backgrounds. As in previous years, the company also failed to publish any data on the number of LGBTQ employees working at different levels of the company. **X should commit to take proactive steps towards building a more diverse workforce, and publish voluntarily disclosed data that tracks progress towards this goal.**

<sup>118</sup> Chris Stokel-Walker, “Big Tech transparency reports are a big mess,” *Fast Company*, November 1, 2023, <https://www.fastcompany.com/90833376/big-tech-transparency-reports-are-a-big-mess>.

<sup>119</sup> Kara Manke, “Study finds persistent spike in hate speech on X,” UC Berkeley News, February 13, 2025, <https://news.berkeley.edu/2025/02/13/study-finds-persistent-spike-in-hate-speech-on-x/>.

<sup>120</sup> Briony Anderson, “Doxxing to destroy: The convergence of transphobic hate speech and non-consensual disclosure on X,” *Crime, Media, Culture*, Volume 2, Issue 2, (June 19, 2025), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/17416590251345736>.

<sup>121</sup> Beth Reinhard, Faiz Siddiqui and Clara Ence Morse, “Elon Musk, once a tacit backer of DEI, now focuses on anti-White bias,” *The Washington Post*, March 20, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/03/20/elon-musk-race-dei-doge/>.

# METHODOLOGY

The 2026 SMSI **Platform Scorecard** indicators draw on best practices from the [Ranking Digital Rights \(RDR\) Big Tech Scorecard](#), the highly-respected evaluation of the world's most powerful digital platforms on their policies and practices affecting people's rights to freedom of expression and privacy. In addition, the SMSI advisory committee consulted on the formation of the indicators in 2022, when the first annual report launched.

The platforms were selected based on their global scale, influence on public discourse, and relevance to LGBTQ users' safety, privacy, and expression. Together, they represent a cross-section of major social media services with significant user reach and documented impacts on LGBTQ communities in the U.S. and around the world.

All evaluations are conducted looking at the public-facing policies of each platform. While results have global implications for LGBTQ safety, privacy, and expression online, our analysis is based on the English-language versions of public-facing policies and documents covering the U.S. market.

Companies receive an overall average score based on how well they meet the set of indicators, which each include a list of elements.<sup>122</sup> Scores reflect the degree to which a company fulfills each element (earning full, partial, or no credit).

Additional methodology information is available in the [Research Guidance](#) from analyst Andrea Hackl. [The detailed scoring sheets and full list of indicators and elements](#) used in the evaluation process are also available.

For the **Key Findings and Recommendations** of the SMSI, GLAAD's Social Media Safety Program reviewed research, journalism, and reports across the field of social media safety and platform accountability. The Social Media Safety team also consulted with the SMSI advisory committee and other organizations and experts in technology and human rights. In 2021, the inaugural GLAAD [Social Media Safety Index](#) report offered the first-of-its-kind dedicated analysis of LGBTQ safety and social media platforms. There are now many powerful reports and studies devoted to these issues, and some of the most significant of this past year are listed in our [2026 SMSI Appendix of Articles and Reports](#). We urge everyone, especially platform leadership, to read the full reports. Please also refer to GLAAD's [previous SMSI reports](#).

## On the Firewall Between Financial Sponsorship and GLAAD's Advocacy Work

Several of the companies that own products and platforms listed in this report are current financial sponsors of GLAAD, a 501(c)3 non-profit. A firewall exists between GLAAD's advocacy work and GLAAD's sponsorships and fundraising. As part of our media advocacy and media watchdog work, GLAAD publicly calls attention to issues that are barriers to LGBTQ safety, as well as barriers to fair and accurate LGBTQ content and coverage — including issues originating from companies that are current financial sponsors.

# 2026 PLATFORM SCORECARD INDICATORS

- 1: The company should have public-facing policies that protect LGBTQ people from *hate, harassment, and violence* on the platform.
- 2: The company should have a public-facing policy that states it provides users with a dedicated field to *add and change gender pronouns* on their user profiles.
- 3a: The company should have a public-facing policy that prohibits *targeted misgendering*<sup>123</sup> on the basis of gender identity.
- 3b: The company should have a public-facing policy that prohibits *targeted deadnaming*<sup>124</sup> on the basis of gender identity.
- 4: The company should have a public-facing policy that prohibits content promoting so-called “*conversion therapy*.”<sup>125</sup>
- 5a: The company should have a public-facing policy that explains what options users have to *control or limit* the company’s collection, inference, and use of data and information related to their *sexual orientation*.
- 5b: The company should have a public-facing policy that explains what options users have to *control or limit* the company’s collection, inference, and use of data and information related to their *gender identity*.
- 6: The company should have a public-facing policy that states that it does not *recommend content* to users based on their disclosed or inferred sexual orientation or gender identity, unless a user has *proactively opted in*.
- 7: The company’s public-facing policies should state that it does not allow third-party advertisers to *target* users with, or *exclude* them from, seeing content or advertising based on their disclosed or inferred sexual orientation or gender identity, unless the user has *proactively opted in*.
- 8: The company should have a public-facing policy that prohibits *advertising content* that promotes hate, harassment, and violence against LGBTQ individuals on the basis of protected characteristics.
- 9: The company should regularly publish data about the actions it has taken to *restrict content and accounts* that violate policies protecting LGBTQ people.
- 10: The company’s public-facing policies should explain the proactive steps it takes to *stop demonetizing and/or wrongfully removing* legitimate content and accounts related to LGBTQ topics and issues.
- 11: The company should regularly publish data about the actions it has taken to *stop demonetizing and/or wrongfully removing* legitimate content and accounts related to LGBTQ topics and issues.
- 12: The company should publicly commit to providing *mandatory training for content moderators*, including those employed by contractors, focused on LGBTQ safety, privacy, and expression on the platform.
- 13: The company should have a public-facing policy that explains its *internal structures* to best ensure the fulfillment of its commitments to overall LGBTQ safety, privacy, and expression on the platform.
- 14: To create products that better serve all of its users, the company should make a public commitment to *continuously diversify its workforce*, and ensure accountability by periodically publishing voluntarily self-disclosed data on the number of LGBTQ employees across all levels of the company.

[Read more information about the SMSI Platform Scorecard Indicators and Elements.](#)

<sup>123</sup> *Targeted misgendering* is the intentional use of incorrect gender or pronouns when referring to or addressing a transgender, nonbinary, or gender non-conforming person.

<sup>124</sup> *Targeted deadnaming* is the intentional disclosure of a transgender person’s former name without their consent. Deadnaming violates personal privacy, undermines a person’s identity, and can expose them to discrimination or violence.

<sup>125</sup> “*Conversion therapy*,” refers to any psychological intervention aimed at changing an LGBTQ person’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Efforts to address its spread online are complicated by the use of alternate labels, such as “leaving homosexuality” and “unwanted same-sex attraction,” to evade detection.

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If you'd like to support the work of the Social Media Safety program and this report, please donate to GLAAD at [GLAAD.org/donate](https://GLAAD.org/donate).

*Photos courtesy of [The Gender Spectrum Collection](#) and Getty Images*

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The SMSI advisory committee includes an array of respected leaders working at the intersections of tech accountability and LGBTQ rights.

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# ABOUT GLAAD'S SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY PROGRAM

As the leading national LGBTQ media advocacy organization, GLAAD is working every day to hold social media platforms, tech, and AI companies accountable, and to secure safer online spaces for LGBTQ people. The GLAAD Social Media Safety Program produces the highly-respected annual Social Media Safety Index (SMSI) and researches, monitors, and reports on a variety of issues facing LGBTQ people online — with a focus on safety, privacy, and expression.

