RE: YouTube Trusted Flagger Program

[redacted]@internews.org Rafiq Copeland

Wednesday, August 17, 2022 at 10:41:07 PM Eastern Daylight Time

To: jmachleder@usaid.gov Joshua Machleder

Hi Josh,

Thank you for the update.

Sending over a list of potential partners' contacts is not something we would be prepared to do at this stage.

I am extremely interested in speaking with YouTube about their Trusted Flagger program, and seeing if Internews could again consider membership (as mentioned, previously the NDA they requested us to sign made this untenable). We would very much like to be a partner as we think the program aligns with our mission. We have social media monitors already operating in about 20 countries, so it would be a good fit.

If we feel that YouTube is doing enough to meet the needs and reasonable expectations of their 'trusted flaggers', then I would also consider recommending participation to a range of our partners, and would be happy to facilitate introductions should those partners be interested.

Our position is that these trusted programs are potentially one of the most important tools we have available to protect platform users – but only if they are done correctly. Currently we are alarmed by the lack of consultation and consideration that has gone into the design process. Partners are volunteering huge amounts of time to make these programs work, with zero accountability or transparency. Ultimately I would like to engage in some co-design processes with the platforms and participating partners. This is the direction we are heading to with Meta. The feedback I have from partners is that YouTube's system is much better than Meta's – but there are still some frustrations.

FWIW between various partners and sub-awards I am pretty sure USAID is currently funding a lot of staff around the world to flag issues to the platforms through these trusted programs. I think given the labour, expertise and – in some cases – risk involved, we can ask for some transparency about how they operate, and whether they meet the needs of the people using them.

In any case, I would love to talk with them and get our network plugged into the YouTube system. I think that would be the first discussion to have, and we could potentially take it from there.

Best,

Rafiq Copeland |Senior Advisor - Platform Accountability

[redacted]@internews.org | **Signal/WhatsApp:** [redacted]

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From: Joshua Machleder <jmachleder@usaid.gov>
Sent: Thursday, 18 August 2022 10:48 AM
To: Rafiq Copeland <[redacted]@internews.org>
Subject: Re: YouTube Trusted Flagger Program

Hey Rafiq,

Just wanted to quickly get back to you on this as I'm back in DC and did have a chance to talk with YouTube, alas, not at length on this issue. Our contacts at YouTube said that if there are local groups that would be recommended to serve as "Trusted Flaggers" that we should send over a list of potential organizations for consideration (with some information / contacts, etc.). Let me know if you want me to get more information, if you feel that might help -- I likely won't be speaking to them until next week or so.

Best, Josh

On Fri, Aug 5, 2022 at 7:47 AM Joshua Machleder <jmachleder@usaid.gov> wrote:

> Thanks Rafiq,
>
> First -- the survey work that you're doing with Meta sounds fascinating. Good luck on that and I really look forward to checking out what you produce later this year.
>
> Let me follow up in terms of the interest on behalf of YouTube's Trusted Flagger program and find out how they want to engage. When I met with them last month, they were thinking of how to build out their program in a way that would make them more 'context aware' in the different 'markets' where they operate.
>
> Best, J
>
> On Fri, Aug 5, 2022 at 8:39 AM Rafiq Copeland <[redacted]@internews.org> wrote:
>
> > Hi Josh,
> >
> > Just wanted to follow up quickly on your mention of YouTube's Trusted Flagger program.
> >
> > We have been trying for a couple of years now to get Meta to improve their Trusted Partner program to make it responsive to partner's needs – not to mention more effective in its stated aims. We are now conducting a comprehensive review of the program and aiming to speak with or survey around 10% of Meta's partners globally. Hoping to finish around October. We're still working with Meta to get the improvements we're after, but have told them this will be a public document, as we want to make it fully available to all the partners and relevant stakeholders.

We have had much less to do with YouTube's current flaggers' program. At one stage YouTube had asked us to sign an NDA which we found to be prohibitive to our participation so we were unable to move beyond that (although I have since been assured that was probably a mix up, so who knows). In any case, if they're focussing on building this up, I would love to be involved. Aside from direct participation, I'm sure that much of the thinking we have done around Meta's partnership model might be relevant to YouTube as well.

Let me know if there is any way we can contribute.

Best,

Rafiq Copeland |Senior Advisor - Platform Accountability

[redacted]@internews.org_| **Signal/WhatsApp:** [redacted]

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Josh Machleder (*he / him/ his*)

Senior Media and Internet Freedom Advisor

USAID | Center for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
[redacted]
Email:jmachleder@usaid.gov

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Josh Machleder (*he / him/ his*)

Senior Media and Internet Freedom Advisor

USAID | Center for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
Office: [redacted]
Email:jmachleder@usaid.gov

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