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March 15, 2019

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### **Washington Post**

Social media platforms including Facebook Inc. are facing harsher scrutiny after a shooter accused of killing 49 people in two mosques in New Zealand appeared to livestream the murders over the internet. While platforms including Twitter and YouTube said they moved fast to remove the content, users reported it was still widely available hours after being first uploaded to the alleged shooter's Facebook account. The video, which shows a first-person view of the [killings](#) in Christchurch, New Zealand, was readily accessible during and after the attack — as was the suspect's hate-filled manifesto.

Facebook, YouTube and other social-media platforms are struggling to scrub offensive content from sites that generate billions of dollars in revenue from advertisers. In the U.S., those sites also have been criticized for spreading political misinformation, with Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg being called before Congress. [Read more about how Facebook is struggling to clean up toxic content.](#)

In August, a shooting at a Madden 19 video-game tournament in Jacksonville, Florida, was captured on live video. Earlier last year, YouTube star Logan Paul posted a clip of a dead body hanging from a tree in Japan, prompting the Google-owned video portal to [remove](#) his channels from a preferred advertising program.

[Facebook, Google and other big tech giants are about to face a “reckoning,” state attorneys general warn](#)

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Just before the alleged gunman opened fire, he urged viewers to subscribe to the popular YouTube channel PewDiePie, which itself has been criticized for posting offensive footage in the past. In response, YouTube said it’s “working vigilantly to remove any violent footage.” “Our hearts are broken over today’s terrible tragedy in New Zealand,” YouTube, which is operated by Google, said in a Twitter posting.

Facebook acted swiftly to contain the fallout. “Police alerted us to a video on Facebook shortly after the livestream commenced and we quickly removed both the shooter’s Facebook and Instagram accounts and the video,” Facebook said on its Twitter account. “We’re also removing any praise or support for the crime and the shooter or shooters as soon as we’re aware.”

Mia Garlick, of Facebook in New Zealand, said, “We will continue working directly with New Zealand Police as their response and investigation continues.” This week, [negative sentiment](#) toward Facebook rose to the highest in almost eight months on rival social network Twitter, as the company raced to fix a worldwide outage and faced reports of a grand jury investigation. Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg, who uses the moniker PewDiePie, said on Twitter that he was “absolutely sickened having my name uttered by this person.” – **Bloomberg**

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Q: My wife and I were born and raised in Pittsburgh, and although we have moved around the country, we have always felt an attachment to Pittsburgh and its news. We are currently living in Grove City, and Armstrong Cable supplies the cable programming. We have seen a move away from the Pittsburgh channels, with programming switching to Youngstown. The only Pittsburgh Channel we currently receive is KDKA, Channel 2 (CBS). Channels 4 and 11 have been replaced with corresponding Youngstown channels. PCNC has been eliminated (as well as several non-Pittsburgh channels), with no corresponding substitute. Can you give any insight on what the rationale is in eliminating the Pittsburgh channels? We’d love to have them back.  
-- Dick, Grove City

Rob: Pittsburgh stations are not “must carry” – local market stations a cable company has to carry per government regulations – as Mercer County is part of the Youngstown, Ohio, TV market. Once upon a time, cable companies would carry a second ABC, NBC or CBS channel, but that was before TV stations came to so heavily rely on retransmission payments from cable companies. With TV stations demanding cable operators pay them to pass through their signals, in many cases cable companies will choose to only carry the stations they must carry.

“The Youngstown network affiliates have always been part of the cable TV package in that area and historically we were also able to provide access to most Pittsburgh stations as well,” explains Armstrong spokesman Dave Wittman via email. “Unfortunately for consumers in fringe areas like Mercer County all across the country, access to out-of-market signals is vanishing. Armstrong must abide by the multiple federal regulations, especially retransmission consent, that have increasingly made “importing” out of market broadcast stations very challenging if not impossible in today’s marketplace. We have been lobbying federal officials for years to obtain relief for our customers, but the National Association of Broadcasters is a formidable opponent to

our views. Network affiliation contracts also increasingly protect home markets to maximize advertising opportunities.

“Many Armstrong employees live in the Grove City area and we are well aware of how many of the residents desire Pittsburgh/Pennsylvania news & sports,” he continued. “Armstrong would love to offer Mercer County customers the choice of Pittsburgh stations rather than Youngstown, but that is not an option. We continue to offer KDKA to provide access to Pittsburgh/PA news, sports including local Steelers broadcasts and weather (as far as I know we are the only cable/satellite provider in Mercer County to offer any Pittsburgh station).” – **Rob Owen’s “TV Q&A” column in *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette***

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Emergency call centers sometimes have a hard time pinpointing an address when a person dials 911 from their cellphone. Sussing out where inside a building the caller is located is even tougher.

The Federal Communications Commission on Friday is set to vote on a new standard that would for the first time specify how precise the in-building vertical location data that wireless carriers send 911 call centers must be. The agency will then seek public comment. The regulator is proposing that altitude data be accurate within three meters, or 10 feet, of a 911 cellphone caller. That, in effect, means dispatchers would receive a location that is accurate to the floor level of where the caller is standing in most cases. The largest margin of error would essentially be one floor above and one floor below.

That standard of three meters is both specific enough to help dispatchers and first responders and feasible enough for nationwide carriers to achieve with new technology by 2021 for 80% of indoor wireless 911 calls, FCC staff said in meeting documents. Carriers must first comply with the standard in areas with the largest populations of cellphone users. “Anything further than that might have been too difficult to develop and would have taken a lot longer. Anything greater than that and we thought emergency responders might not have gotten specific enough information,” said Ajit Pai, chairman of the FCC, in an interview.

Cellphone calls account for more than 80% of the 240 million 911 phone calls made annually, but locating those callers has long been a challenge. In recent years regulators have taken steps to force carriers and technology companies [to more precisely pinpoint](#) the horizontal or street-level location of callers and [transmit that data](#) to 911 call centers. They are now increasingly focused on finding ways to determine what floor of a given building a caller is on.

The altitude problem is particularly acute in large cities where problems locating callers in skyscrapers can significantly delay emergency responders. Carriers and public safety-focused companies are developing technologies that measure barometric pressure on a caller’s smartphone to glean how high above sea level or the ground a smartphone is located.

Some 911 industry executives say determining altitude is a harder problem to solve than finding a caller’s horizontal location in part because there aren’t many use cases today that rely on vertical location information. Horizontal location, by comparison, is used for apps such as Google Maps and Uber. As recently as late last year

there was disagreement between a trade body representing the largest nationwide wireless carriers and public safety industry groups about what degree of accuracy was feasible for the vertical standard.

CTIA, the association that represents the wireless industry, said at the time the location data should be accurate within five meters of the caller, because more precise information was too hard to consistently obtain. Groups representing 911 operators, however, argued that first responders needed more precise information. The CTIA changed its stance in December. "We are encouraged by the FCC's effort to establish a common goal that we can work towards together with the public safety community," said Matt Gerst, vice president, regulatory affairs at CTIA.

Today, there are only a few companies able to deliver that vertical location data including mobile location providers NextNav LLC and Polaris Wireless. Alphabet Inc.'s Google is also experimenting with technology to solve the problem. Under the FCC's proposal, carriers will also be allowed to send vertical location data based on information within a new database of verified addresses of Wi-Fi hot spots and beacons that help determine where cellphone callers are. That database is scheduled to go live by April 2021, when carriers would have to comply with the proposed rule. – **Wall Street Journal**



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