

COALITION LETTER:

Ban Surveillance Advertising

As leaders across a broad range of issues and industries, we are united in our concern for the safety of our communities and the health of democracy. Social media giants are eroding our consensus reality and threatening public safety in service of a toxic, extractive business model. That's why we're joining forces in an effort to ban surveillance advertising.

Surveillance advertising – the core profit-driver for gatekeepers like Facebook and Google, as well as adtech middlemen – is the practice of extensively tracking and profiling individuals and groups, and then microtargeting ads at them based on their behavioral history, relationships, and identity.

These dominant firms curate the content each person sees on their platforms using those dossiers – not just the ads, but newsfeeds, recommendations, trends, and so forth – to keep each user hooked, so they can be served more ads and mined for more data.

Big Tech platforms amplify hate, illegal activities, and conspiracism – and [feed users](#) increasingly extreme content – because that's what generates the most engagement and profit. Their own algorithmic tools have boosted everything from [white supremacist groups](#) and [Holocaust denialism](#) to [COVID-19 hoaxes, counterfeit opioids](#) and [fake cancer cures](#). Echo chambers, radicalization, and viral lies are features of these platforms, not bugs—central to the business model.

And surveillance advertising is further damaging the information ecosystem by [starving](#) the traditional news industry, especially local journalism. Facebook and Google's monopoly power and data harvesting practices have given them an unfair advantage, allowing them to dominate the digital advertising market, siphoning up revenue that once kept local newspapers afloat. So while Big Tech CEOs get richer, journalists get laid off.

Big Tech will continue to stoke discrimination, division, and delusion – even if it fuels targeted violence or lays the groundwork for an insurrection – so long as it's in their financial interest.

There is no silver bullet to remedy this crisis – and the members of this coalition will continue to pursue a range of different policy approaches, from comprehensive privacy legislation to reforming our antitrust laws and liability standards.

But here's one thing we all agree on: [It's time to ban surveillance advertising.](#)

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