

Oct. 30, 2015

Thank you for your letter earlier this month and for your feedback. My name is Alex Schultz and I work with our teams that help protect people on Facebook.

Over the last year we have had many conversations with community leaders and safety organizations around the world about how we can improve our processes to make sure they work for everyone. Let me outline the work that is underway and address in detail the five points you raise.

We require people to use the name on Facebook that their friends and family know them by, and we'll continue to do so. From experience, we know this policy helps make Facebook safer. When people use the name others know them by, they are more accountable for what they say, making it more difficult to hide behind an anonymous name to harass, bully, spam or scam someone else.

A review of our reports from earlier this year showed that bullying, harassment or other abuse on Facebook is eight times more likely to be committed by people using names other than their own than by the rest of the Facebook community. That is, when profiles were reported to us and our reviewers asked the person to verify the name on the profile, our analysis showed that the people behind these inauthentic profiles were much more likely to be involved in some form of bad behavior.

However, we know the current process does not work for everyone. We are working on several improvements, with two goals in mind: First, we want to reduce the number of people who are asked to verify their name on Facebook, when they are already using the name people know them by. Second, we want to make it easier for people to confirm their name if necessary.

These improvements will take some time to test and implement, but a team is working on this and people should start seeing the tests in December. Between now and then, we will be gathering additional feedback from the community to make sure we are on the right track. Once the changes are rolled out, we will learn how people use them and continue to make further improvements.

We are deeply invested in making this better. I've seen first hand how people — including LGBT people — can be bullied online by people using fake or impersonating accounts. At the same time, I've walked with our head of Community Operations at Pride in San Francisco, and heard the feedback from the LGBT and other communities that our policy and tools aren't enabling people to be their authentic selves on Facebook. We also understand the challenges for many transgender people when it comes to formally changing one's name. That's why we're making changes now and in the future, and will continue to engage

with you and all who are committed to looking after the most vulnerable people using our product. It's a balance to get this right — we want to find a line that minimizes bullying but maximises the potential for people to be their authentic selves on Facebook.

To address the points in your letter:

*Request 1: "Commit to allowing pseudonyms and non-legal names on its site in appropriate circumstances, including but not limited to situations where using an every day name would put a user in danger, or situations where local law requires the ability to use pseudonyms."*

We do not require people to use their legal names on Facebook. Instead, we ask people to use the name that other people know them by. We also appreciate that identity and names are deeply personal matters and can vary significantly across cultures, and we want to be sensitive to these issues.

As such, we are working to improve the way people confirm their name on Facebook. Historically, when people were prompted to confirm their Facebook profile name, there was no opportunity to give additional details or context on their unique situation.

We now plan to test a new process that will let people provide more information about their circumstances. This should help our Community Operations team better understand the situation. It will also help us better understand the reasons why people can't currently confirm their name, informing potential changes we make in the future.

Some people, such as political activists, want to use Facebook to advance a public cause but they don't want to do it using their Facebook profile. For some of these situations, our Pages product allows people to publish a Page without disclosing who the administrator is. Pages have much of the same functionality as personal profiles: you can like and comment on posts, message people privately and have an unlimited network of connections. We know that this solution does not work for everyone, but believe this product may be useful to people who do not want to use their personal profiles for advocacy.

*Request 2: "Require users filing real name policy abuse reports to support their claims with evidence. This could come in written form, multiple-choice questions, or some alternative documentation."*

Based on feedback from our community, we are building a new version of the profile reporting process that requires people to provide additional information about why they are reporting a profile.

This will help our teams better understand why someone is reporting a profile, giving them more information about the specific situation.

*Request 3: "Create a compliance process through which users can confirm their identities without submitting government ID. This could include allowing users to submit written evidence, answer multiple-choice questions, or provide alternative documentation such as links to blog posts or other online platforms where they use the same identity."*

Facebook no longer requires government IDs to verify people's identity. People can confirm their name with many forms of non-legal identification, including things like utility bills, a bank statement, a piece of mail, a library card, a school ID card or a magazine subscription label.

We've improved how we explain this process and more details are available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/help/159096464162185>. We're continuing to explore more options for people to be able to confirm their identity.

*Request 4: "Give users technical details and documentation on the process of submitting identity information such as where and how it is stored, for how long, and who can access it. Provide users with the ability to submit this information using PGP or another common form of encrypted communication, so they may protect their identity information during the submission process."*

By default, Facebook uses a secure connection (https) when people use our service. That means when people submit IDs to us, the information is encrypted. Only people in our Community Operations team dealing with cases can see these IDs, and we do not retain IDs after they have been reviewed.

Going forward, IDs submitted to Facebook as part of this process will be encrypted when they are temporarily stored on our servers. The ability of our team to decrypt these IDs will expire after 30 days. The encrypted IDs will then be deleted shortly after that. We will outline these protections for people in our Help Center.

*Request 5: "Provide a robust appeals process for users locked out of their accounts. This could include the ability to request a second review, to submit different types of evidence, and to speak to a real Facebook employee, especially in cases involving safety."*

When people go through the process of confirming their name today, there are real people helping them, including advising them on the various types of non-legal documents they can provide. We also offer support in different languages. We are always trying to improve the experience to make it more personal.

As part of the process we are testing, people will be able to give more information about their situation and receive more personalized help throughout the confirmation process.

Thank you for your constructive suggestions. We know there is more work to be done, and we want to incorporate your ongoing feedback as we continue working on this.

Yours,

Alex Schultz