

**Jonathan Paterson, Managing Editor, The News Movement—
supplementary written evidence (FON0062)**

**House of Lords Communications and Digital Select Committee inquiry: The
future of news: impartiality, trust, and technology**

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to the House of Lords
Communications & Digital Committee inquiry into the Future of News on 27
February.

In our session we were asked to consider ways in which governments, regulators
and the tech industry could help secure the stability of the sector. We are writing
with further detail on our evidence delivered to the committee.

As a social first publisher our natural focus is on the social media platforms and
how they interact with the news industry. Social media deserves to be seen as an
important part of the news ecosystem. Indeed research we conducted with Oliver
Wyman suggests that 60% of 18-24 year olds use social media as their primary
source of news and information.

We believe it is important to ensure that there is a strong supply of quality, non-
partisan news flowing into the social ecosystem. We have built thriving
newsrooms in London and New York to deliver that, and on the commercial side
partnered with other news organisations to help them deliver too. We would
always encourage other publishers to seek out opportunities on social platforms -
particularly to reach those audiences that are avoiding the news delivered via
more traditional channels.

Significant obstacles remain to the flow of authoritative news on social platforms.
While it is relatively easy for news publishers to post content on social platforms,
there remains limited verification of content, a lack of transparency about how
algorithms promote certain types of content, risks that news content is suppressed
or deprioritized and low and opaque revenue opportunities. We all need to do what
we can to ensure the supply of accurate and quality information that is supported
by sustainable models.

By working together we believe good, engaging information can crowd out much of
the misinformation we know pollutes so many people's feeds.

As stated in our evidence hearing we believe that the tech companies can and
should do more to support the news publishers producing content for social
media audiences.

We know what is possible because we can point to many examples of best practice
already adopted by the platforms. But approaches at present are piecemeal,
platform specific, inconsistent and wholly in the gift of the tech companies
themselves.

We would encourage all the tech platforms to adopt policies, standards and best
practice across the board to better serve the news industry and audiences. Policy
makers, who have the convening power, and the industry should be brought
together with the platforms to agree on the best ways to move to a better news
ecology on socials.

A starter list for a new **Code of Practice** should include:

- 1) **Account verification** - simple processes that allow news organisations to be recognisably approved and verified as authoritative sources
- 2) **Amplifying Authoritative Content & News Sources** - finding product opportunities within platforms to ensure that authoritative news content is surfaced to audiences
- 3) **Partnership Managers** - a network of informed partnership managers who understand the business of news and the latest developments in platform approaches
- 4) **Business Development** - build ways to ensure revenue models for news operate with greater transparency and equity with other content providers. Guarantee consistent rates for certified news and content providers
- 5) **Industry Working Group** - bringing together policy makers, news and tech to build dialogue and inform product development that supports authoritative news sources, from legacy brands to new entrants to individual, certified news creators.
- 6) **Algorithmic Reform** - building algorithms that are sympathetic to news content, ensuring key words and images from legitimate news content are not penalised

We do not believe in further regulation of the tech industry. Regulation is a blunt and slow tool, and will always be well behind global market developments. We think the opportunity rests with the tech companies themselves and holding them to account for their pledges to promote accurate information. There is a role for the government to convene these discussions, given the responsibility that our elected officials have to ensure plurality of accurate news media.

There are existing models which could be adopted for the industry to promote best practice. If we look to IPSO, the independent regulator of the UK press, or The Portman Group, the alcohol industry's social responsibility body, industries have come together to ensure there are sector wide standards of best practice.

We should not be under any illusions. The tech companies have not always embraced news publishers, but we propose this in the knowledge that the social platforms are increasingly where audiences go for news and information, and it is the job of everyone to ensure that the content that appears there is as accurate, engaging and as fair as it can be.

We hope this is useful for the compilation of your Future of News report, and thank you once again for the opportunity to contribute to this vital debate.

About The News Movement: We are a social first news publisher operational since 2021. We were established with a mission to change the way that news was done.

We are great believers in journalism's role in democracy, giving people the information that allows them to make informed decisions. But we are all aware and informed by the fact that traditional forms of news are not reaching many audiences. Nowhere is that more acute than in the younger generations.

Furthermore we are also aware that people are increasingly turning to social media as their primary source of news and information. Indeed research suggests 60% of young people get their information first from social platforms. Social is now their search engine. Individual creators are increasingly seen as the authoritative figures. Social is their world.

We were set up in the belief that we should meet our audience where they are, delivering news in ways that work for them, as they consume information today.

Our main news brand delivers editorial content that while always respecting the highest values of non-partisan journalism, features stories and content in ways that work for social audiences. We have built newsrooms in London and New York to deliver news on TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. And we are building the business models to support that.

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