

Influence in the Open

Social Platforms and the Challenge of State-Controlled Media

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DEFINING INFLUENCE OPERATIONS

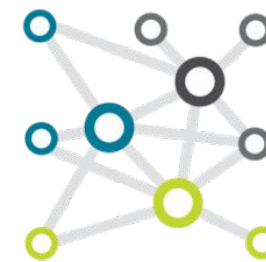
“A coordinated effort to manipulate or corrupt public debate for a strategic goal.”

01 VARIETIES OF INFLUENCE OPERATIONS



Overt IO

State media,
official
government
influencers, etc.



Covert IO

Coordinated
Inauthentic
Behavior (CIB)

CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING STATE MEDIA

The Designation Problem:

How should platforms even define and identify state media?

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- How much funding is needed to be “state-controlled”?
- What if publicly-funded outlets have mechanisms in place to preserve editorial independence?
- What about other means governments use to exercise editorial control?

The Treatment Problem:

What should platforms do about state media?

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Integrity Risks

- Tons of variation in whether the content from state media is “harmful” or propagandistic.
- Risk to public debate often depends on larger market forces and ways information is consumed online.

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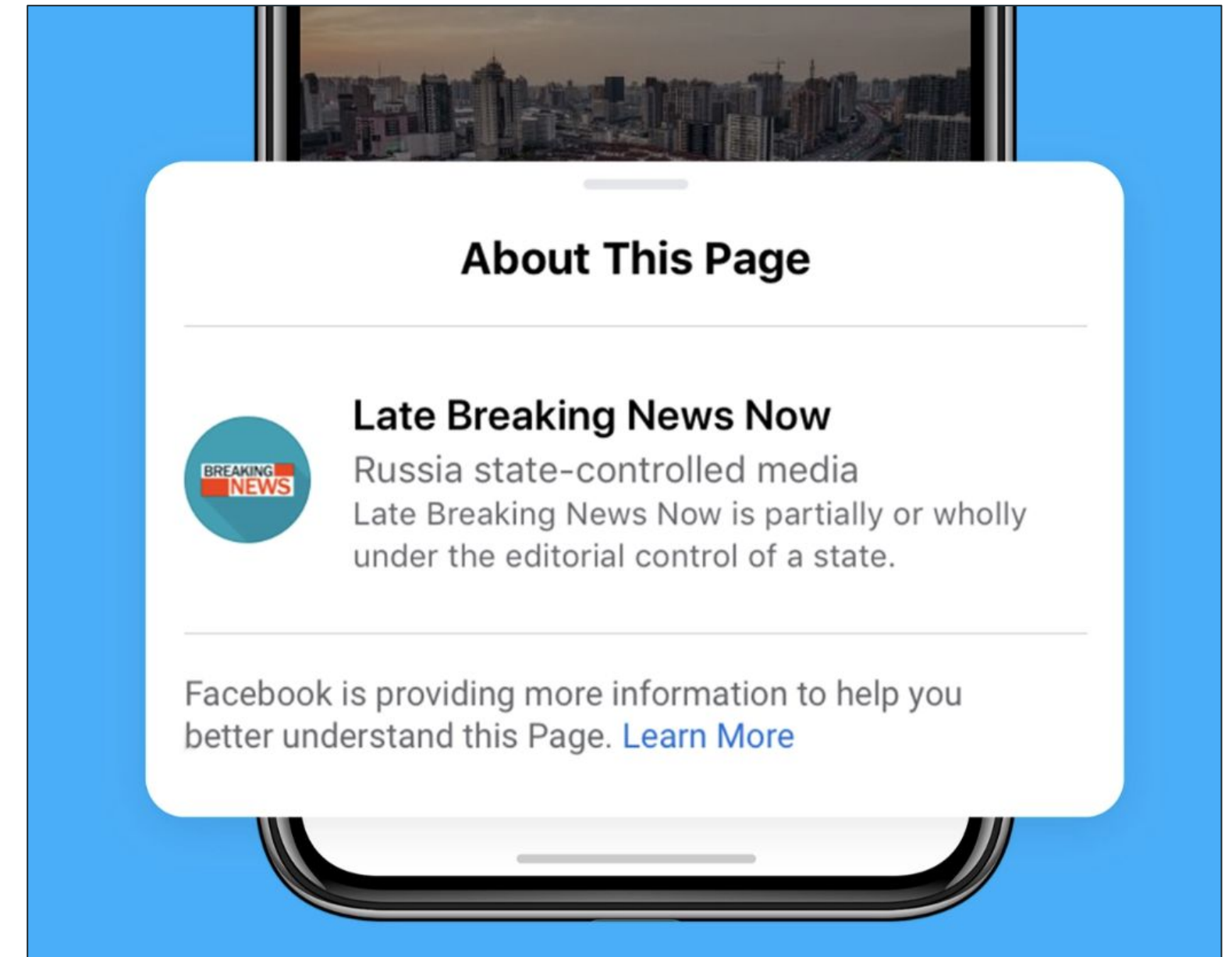
Over-enforcement Risks

- May infringe on right to access information under Article 14 of UDHR.
- Can lead to unintended consequences, like limiting exposure to counter-speech and exacerbating news deserts.
- Can lend legitimacy to authoritarian efforts to censor political debate.



A Transparency First Approach

- Label publishers that are “wholly or partially under the editorial control of the government.”
- Designed to empower users to make informed decisions about the content they consume.
- Important to apply community standards enforcements to outlets, like we do any user.



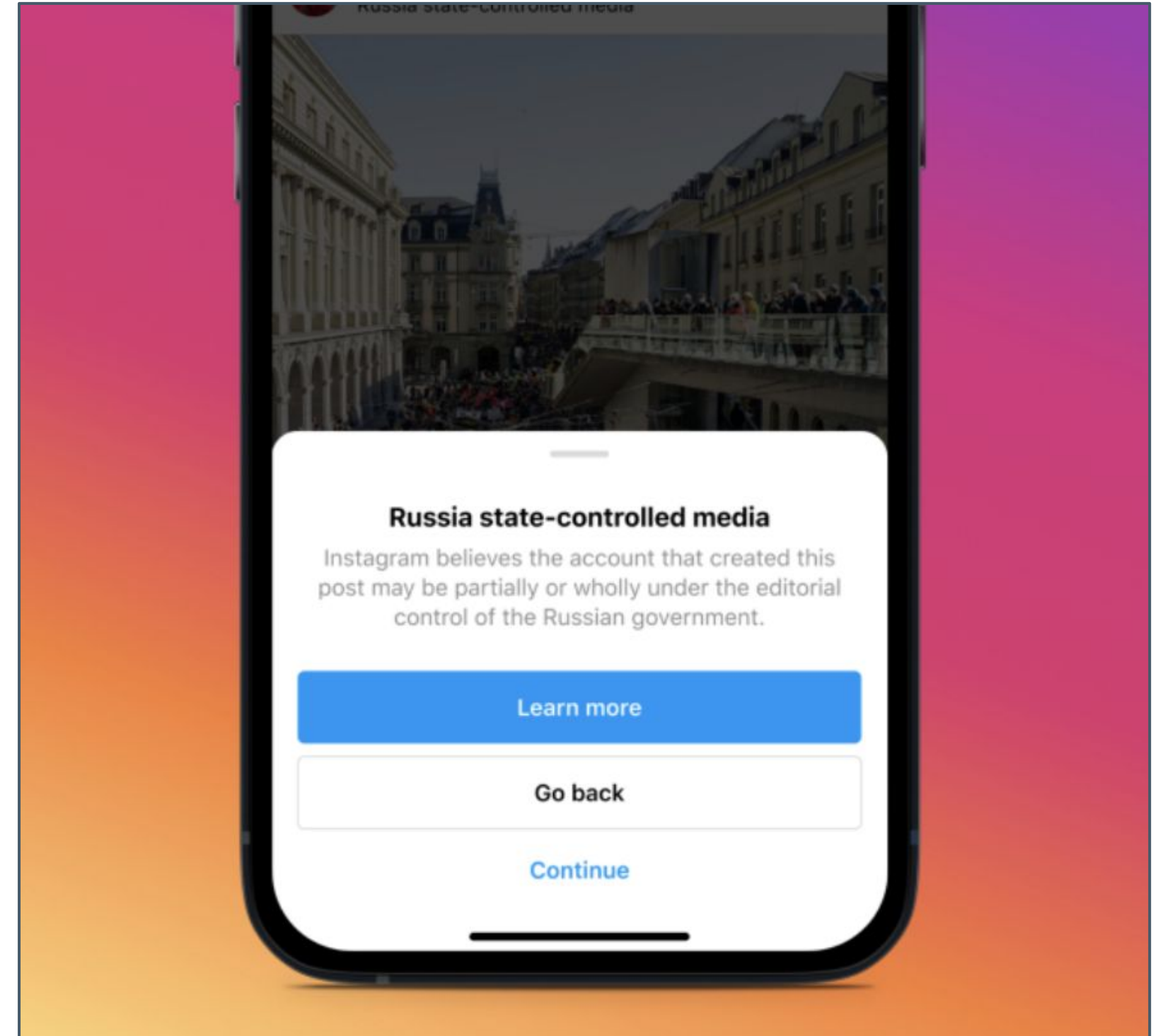
ADAPTING TO TIMES OF CRISIS

New State Media Enforcements

We've applied new enforcements against Russian state-controlled media. This includes:

- Blocking ads globally
- Demonetizing their Pages and Accounts
- Demoting content in Feeds
- Adding additional product interventions to increase transparency on these outlets

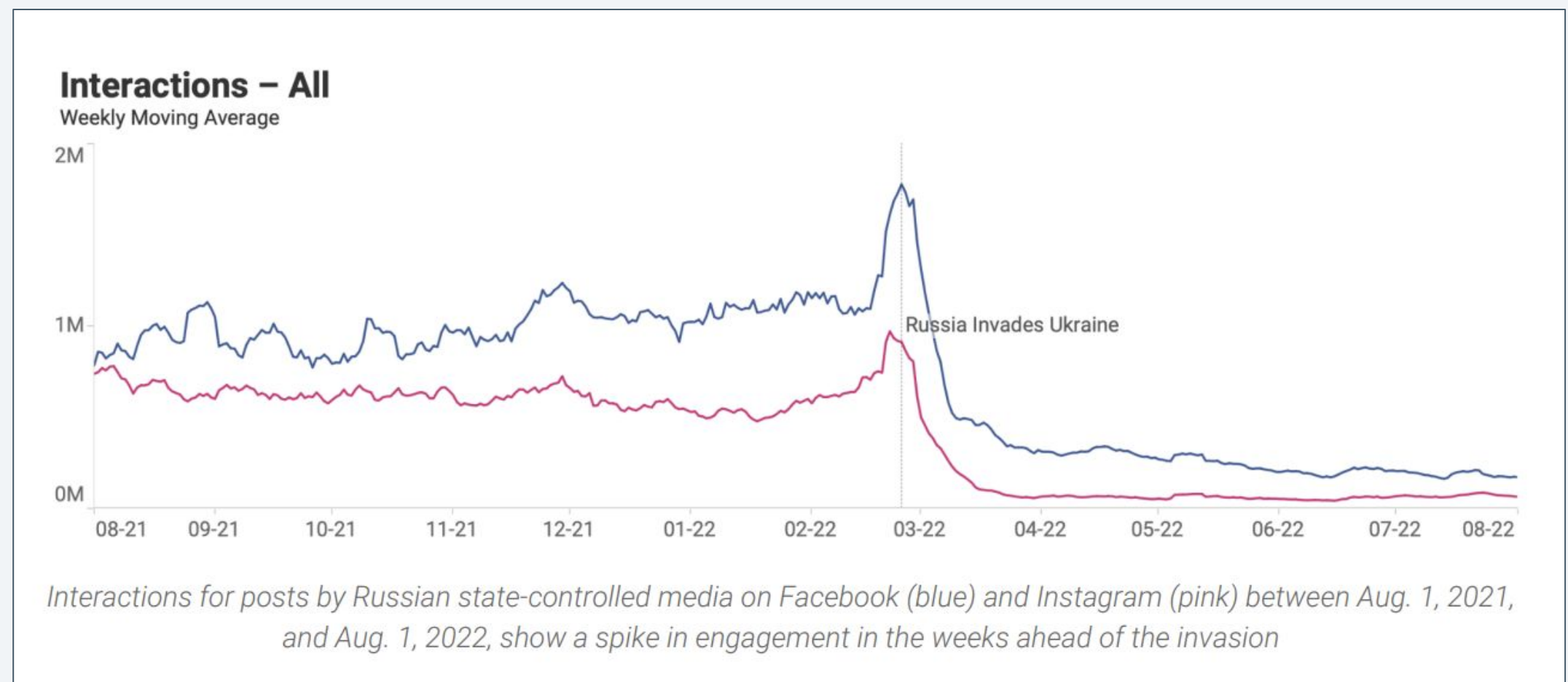
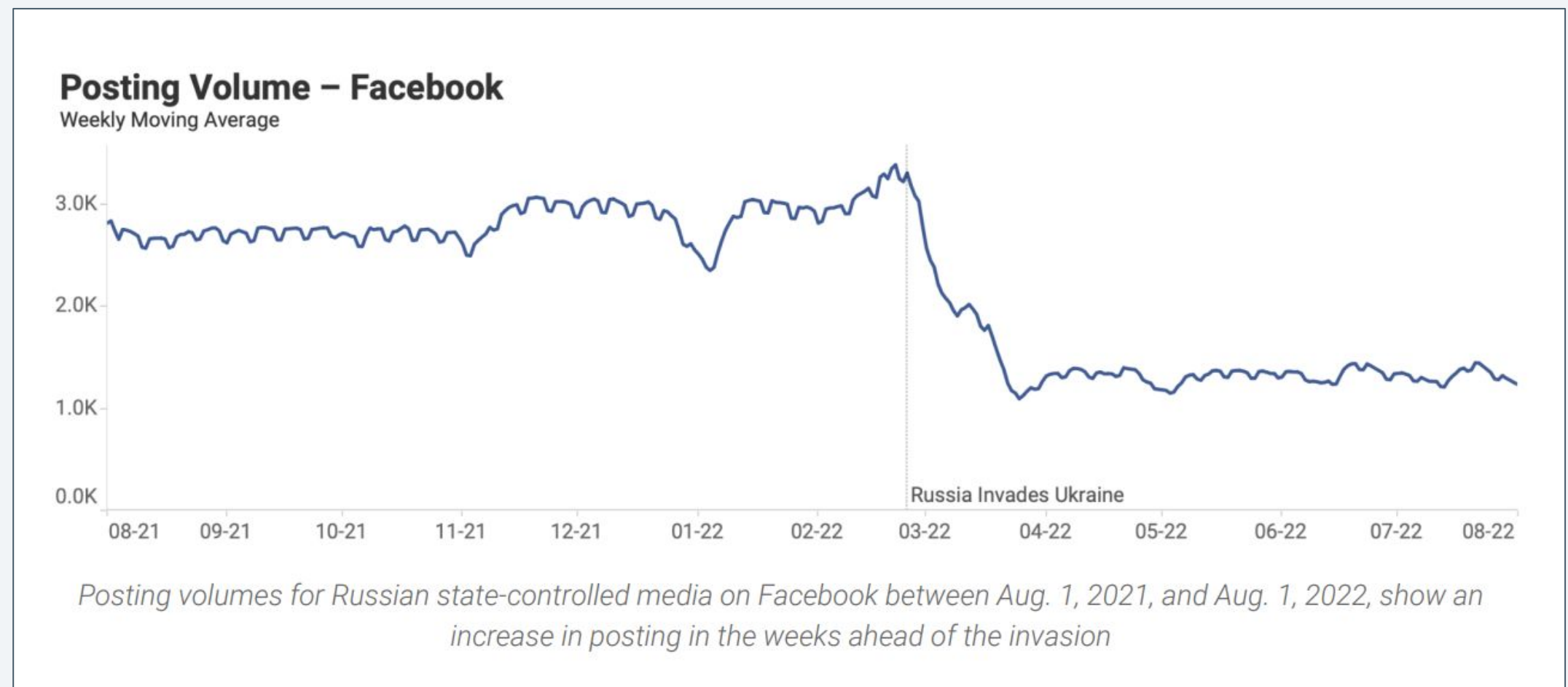
We've taken these actions globally – across all languages in which Russian state-controlled media operate.



Reduced Activity, Reduced Engagement

Graphika's [research](#) shows that posting volume on FB and IG are down 43% and engagement levels have fallen 80% from the previous year.

These drops were observed globally, not just in areas where some Russian state media outlets faced additional restrictions.



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- Potential for harm becomes more immediate – both at individual and societal-wide levels.

Marianna Vyshemirsky: 'My picture was used to spread lies about the war'

🕒 17 May 2022



Russia-Ukraine war



| The beauty influencer was accused of being an actor after this photo was published

Marianna Spring

Presenter, War on Truth podcast

Navigating trade-offs not easier

- Potential for harm becomes more immediate – both at individual and societal-wide levels.
- Access to information and the impacts on counter-speech also more important.

Anti-war protester in studio disrupts live Russian state TV news

By Mark Trevelyan and Conor Humphries

March 15, 2022 12:20 PM EDT · Updated a year ago



Summary

- Woman seen shouting, holding anti-war sign for several seconds
- Opposition tweet of incident draws millions of views
- Pro-Kremlin channel is main source of news for many Russians

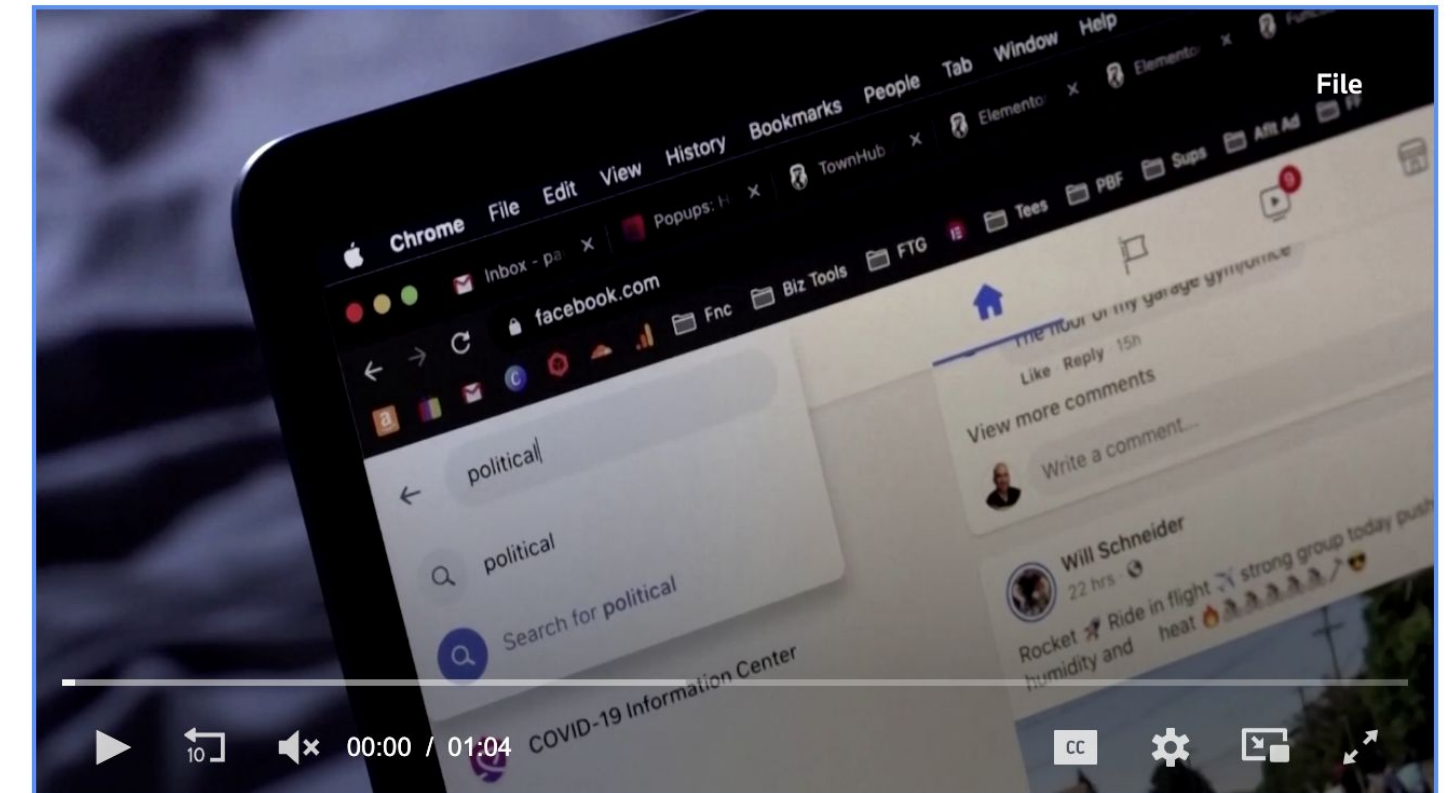
Navigating trade-offs not easier

- Potential for harm becomes more immediate – both at individual and societal-wide levels.
- Access to information and the impacts on counter-speech also more important.
- Government actions can negatively affect the information environment.

Russia blocks Facebook, accusing it of restricting access to Russian media

By Elizabeth Culliford

March 4, 2022 7:16 PM EST · Updated 2 years ago



March 4 (Reuters) - Russia is blocking Meta Platforms Inc's (FB.O) Facebook, the country's communications regulator said on Friday, in response to what it said were restrictions of access to Russian media on the platform.

The regulator, Roskomnadzor, said there had been 26 cases of discrimination against Russian media by Facebook since October 2020, including restrictions in recent days on state-backed channels like RT and the RIA news agency.

Navigating trade-offs not easier

- Potential for harm becomes more immediate – both at individual and societal-wide levels.
- Access to information and the impacts on counter-speech also more important.
- Government actions can negatively affect the information environment.
- Emotions run high during crises.

Companies and bars rename Moscow mule cocktail to show support for Ukraine



Here's how the Russia-Ukraine conflict started and the role the West plays in it

The dissolution of the USSR was just the beginning of the conflict. Here's why Russia has been vying for control over Ukraine ever since. *USA TODAY*

LAFAYETTE, Ind. — As Russia's invasion of Ukraine enters its second week, an [Indiana vodka company called for suspending the name of a popular cocktail](#), the Moscow mule.

