



Conversion Therapy Online: The Ecosystem in 2023

Search Algorithms Continue to Promote Harmful Anti-LGBTQ+ Conversion Therapy Material and Providers, Especially in Non-English Languages

January 23, 2024, San Francisco – A new global report released today from the [Global Project Against Hate and Extremism](#) (GPAHE) exposes how tech companies' search algorithms and social media platforms continue to preference harmful anti-LGBTQ+ conversion therapy material and online providers, especially outside of the U.S. and in non-English languages. These tech companies, many of which are based in the San Francisco Bay Area, fail to enforce policies that protect users from anti-LGBTQ+ conversion therapy disinformation, even though many claim to do so.

"The persistence of conversion therapy material online, especially in non-English languages, is a stark reminder of the work still needed to protect LGBTQ+ people globally, especially as legislative attempts to dehumanize and roll back rights for the LGBTQ+ community skyrocket," said Wendy Via, GPAHE's co-founder and CEO. "Our report not only sheds light on this issue but also provides easily actionable recommendations for platforms to create a safer and more inclusive online environment."

Conversion therapy encompasses a range of discredited practices aimed at altering an LGBTQ+ individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Numerous global medical and psychological organizations, along with the U.N., have unequivocally condemned these practices, concluding that conversion therapy inflicts severe pain and suffering, resulting in long-lasting psychological and physical damage.

Technology companies are the ultimate gatekeepers of conversion therapy information online today, whereby they are responsible for safeguarding their LGBTQ users who may be vulnerable to such harmful messaging and for diminishing online hate and disinformation. Even after GPAHE's damning prior [reports](#) and with the offer of support in their changing policies, internet search terms and social media algorithms ensnared with disinformation remained, permitting access to harmful information about conversion therapy and its providers even today.

“The alarming report findings present a real opportunity for technology and social media companies, especially based in our own San Francisco Bay Area, to do the right thing and stop contributing to the increasing hate and harm of LGBTQ people in the USA and around the globe. It is not a big ask for transnational tech and social media companies to enforce their social corporate responsibility policies and join us in preventing harm, loss of life, and persecution.” - Francisco O. Buchting, Ph.D. Vice President of Grants, Programs, and Communications at Horizons Foundation

Building on the findings of its 2022 online ecosystem study and its 2022 conversion therapy providers report, the GPAHE extended its research on conversion therapy disinformation to Brazil, Mexico, four West African countries, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Ivory Coast, and South Africa, revealing a disparity in content moderation and the prevalence of harmful materials in non-English contexts, especially in Africa. GPAHE also revisited the US results in English and Spanish. 2022 countries were Australia, Ireland, Germany, Kenya, Colombia, and the US.

This research is funded by [The Global Faith and Equality Fund](#) at Horizons Foundation.

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About GPAHE

The mission of the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism (GPAHE) is to strengthen and educate a diverse global community committed to exposing and countering racism, bigotry, and hate; and to promote the human rights values that support flourishing, inclusive societies and democracies.

About Horizons Foundation

Horizons Foundation envisions a world where all LGBTQ people live freely and fully. The world’s first community foundation of, by, and for LGBTQ people, Horizons invests in LGBTQ organizations, strengthens a culture of LGBTQ giving, and builds a permanent endowment to secure our community’s future for generations. Learn more at horizonsfoundation.org.

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