

Brazil's Largest Paper Ditches Facebook as it "Effectively" Suppresses Professional Journalism

by Jake Johnson via *lex* - CommonDreams *Friday, Feb 9 2018, 8:12pm*

international / prose / post

Accusing Facebook of discriminating against "quality" content and accelerating the spread of "fake news" with its newly-unveiled [algorithm](#), Brazil's largest newspaper Folha de S. Paulo—which boasts a print and online subscriber base of 285,000 people—has [announced](#) that it will no longer publish its articles on the social media platform.



"In effectively banning professional journalism from its pages in favor of personal content and opening space for 'fake news' to proliferate, Facebook became inhospitable terrain for those who want to offer quality content like ours," Sérgio Dávila, Folha's executive editor, said in a [statement](#).

In an article published on Thursday, Folha—which has over 5.7 million followers on Facebook—noted that over the past several months it had begun to detect a sharp decline in interactions not just with its own Facebook posts, but with those of other major Brazilian newspapers as well.

By contrast, the newspaper's analysis found, "fake news pages received [five times](#) the number of engagements that professional journalism received."

For this decline in engagement, Folha blamed Facebook's new algorithm, which the paper said "privilege[s] personal interaction contents, to the detriment of those distributed by companies, such as those that produce professional journalism."

"This reinforces the tendency of the user to consume more and more content with which it has affinity, favoring the creation of bubbles of opinions and convictions, and the propagation of fake news," Folha argued. "These problems have been aggravated in recent years by the mass distribution of deliberately false content...as happened in the U.S. presidential election in 2016."

The decision to abandon Facebook was ultimately "a reflection of internal discussions about the best ways to get the content of the newspaper to reach its readers," the paper concluded. "The disadvantages of using Facebook as a path to this distribution became more evident after the social network's decision to reduce the visibility of professional journalism on its users' pages."

Responding to Folha's move, Jeff Benício, a columnist for the Brazilian news and entertainment website Terra, [urged](#) other organizations to do the same.

"Other news organizations should follow Folha de S. Paulo's footsteps," Benício wrote. "If there's a mass exit, the social network will lose relevance and become...a virtual space for family and friends to joke around."

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