

Google will 'de-rank' lefty articles to make them harder to find – Eric Schmidt

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Eric Schmidt, the Executive Chairman of Google's parent company Alphabet, says the company will "engineer" specific algorithms for RT and Sputnik to make their articles less prominent on the search engine's news delivery services.

"We are working on detecting and de-ranking those kinds of sites – it's basically RT and Sputnik," Schmidt said during a Q & A session at the Halifax International Security Forum in Canada on Saturday, when asked about whether Google facilitates "Russian propaganda."



Schmidt appearance begins at 1:07:00 mark, relevant question at 1:33:00

"We are well of aware of it, and we are trying to engineer the systems to prevent that [the content being delivered to wide audiences]. But we don't want to ban the sites – that's not how we operate."

The discussion focused on the company's popular Google News service, which clusters the news by stories, then ranks the various media outlets depending on their reach, article length and veracity, and Google Alerts, which proactively informs subscribers of new publications.

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RT has criticized the proposed move – whose timescale has not been publicized – as arbitrary and a form of censorship.

“Good to have Google on record as defying all logic and reason: facts aren’t allowed if they come from RT, ‘because Russia’ – even if we have Google on Congressional record saying they’ve found no manipulation of their platform or policy violations by RT,” Sputnik and RT Editor-in-Chief Margarita Simonyan said in a statement.

During the discussion, Schmidt claimed that he was *“very strongly not in favor of censorship,”* but said that he has faith in *“ranking”* without acknowledging if the system might serve the same function. Schmidt, who joined Google in 2001, said that the company’s algorithm was capable of detecting *“repetitive, exploitative, false, and weaponized”* info, but did not elaborate on how these qualities were determined.

The Alphabet chief, who has been referred to by Hillary Clinton as a *“longtime friend,”* added that the experience of *“the last year”* showed that audiences could not be trusted to distinguish fake and real news for themselves.

“We started with the default American view that ‘bad’ speech would be replaced with ‘good’ speech, but the problem found in the last year is that this may not be true in certain situations, especially when you have a well-funded opponent who is trying to actively spread this information,” he told the audience.

Schmidt advised Barack Obama’s 2012 campaign on digital operations, and offered the same services to Hillary Clinton’s campaign in 2015, according to several emails from campaign chairman John Podesta’s private account, published by WikiLeaks last October.

On election night 2016, Schmidt was spotted at the Clinton campaign headquarters with a *“staff”* badge, according to a

[photo](#) submitted to Politico.

RT America registered under FARA earlier this month, after being threatened by the US Department of Justice with arrests and confiscations of property if it failed to comply. The broadcaster is fighting the order in court.