HERE'S HOW WIKIPEDIA PLANS TO TACKLE MISINFORMATION, HARASSMENT ON ITS PLATFORM

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: IT, Internet and Communications

Here's how Wikipedia plans to tackle misinformation, harassment on its platform. | Photo Credit: [Reuters](#)

(Subscribe to our Today's Cache newsletter for a quick snapshot of top 5 tech stories. Click [here](#) to subscribe for free.)

The Wikimedia Foundation on Tuesday unveiled a Universal Code of Conduct to tackle harassment, abuse, and misinformation on Wikipedia, the global online encyclopedia.

With the new code, the foundation wants to create a global set of community standards for addressing negative behaviour on the site by laying out a set of guidelines of expected and unacceptable behaviour.

"Our new universal code of conduct creates binding standards to elevate conduct on the Wikimedia projects, and empower our communities to address harassment and negative behaviour across the Wikimedia movement," Katherine Maher, CEO of the Wikimedia Foundation said in a statement.

The move comes after Wikipedia marked its 20th anniversary on January 15, and aims to combat deliberate introduction of false or inaccurate content and prevent the abuse of power or influence to intimidate others.

Like other Wikimedia projects, the new code of conduct is a crowdsourced project with more than 1,500 volunteers, representing five continents and 30 languages in 19 different projects at Wikipedia. The result is an easy-to-read, comprehensive set of a 1600-word guideline.

What is the Code?

The two parts of the code lists out appropriate and inappropriate behaviour on the platform. The code applies to editors, Wikimedia employees and users, without any exceptions, and those failing to comply will be sanctioned by the platform.

The expected behaviour outlines showing respect to others, listening and understanding what people of other background say. The code encourages users to contribute in improving the quality of work through positive feedback and constructive criticism. Besides, it asks experienced users to help newcomers hone essential skills and stand up for them whenever needed.

On the other side, the Universal Code of Conduct calls out to identify situations of unacceptable behaviour, including harassment, abuse of power, privilege or influence and, content vandalism and abuse of projects.

Any form of harassment such as insults by name calling, using slurs or stereotypes to attack gender, caste, culture, sexual orientation, and race and religion is unacceptable. Additionally, sexual harassment, threats of physical violence, trolling, sharing others' private information, and encouraging others to do the harm is also condemned.

Similarly, abuse of power in any form and introducing biased, false, inaccurate or inappropriate content, or hindering, impeding or otherwise hampering the creation of content is banned.

Besides, hate speech in any form, or discriminatory language aimed at vilifying, humiliating, inciting hatred against individuals or groups on the basis of who they are or their personal beliefs is not welcome.

The code also prohibits use of symbols, images, categories, tags or other kinds of content that are intimidating or harmful to others outside of the context of encyclopaedic, informational use.

"The Universal Code of Conduct marks an important step in the evolution of our mission to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for our contributors, and a more open and powerful movement for free knowledge," María Sefidari, Chair of the Board of the Wikimedia Foundation said.

Wikimedia did not specify what happens to those who violate the new rules. The foundation is working on the second phase of the code, and it will be another part of the platform's effort to curb inadequate behaviour in the online community.

Your support for our journalism is invaluable. It's a support for truth and fairness in journalism. It has helped us keep apace with events and happenings.

The Hindu has always stood for journalism that is in the public interest. At this difficult time, it becomes even more important that we have access to information that has a bearing on our health and well-being, our lives, and livelihoods. As a subscriber, you are not only a beneficiary of our work but also its enabler.

We also reiterate here the promise that our team of reporters, copy editors, fact-checkers, designers, and photographers will deliver quality journalism that stays away from vested interest and political propaganda.

Suresh Nambath

Please enter a valid email address.

Data from research firm IDC showed Apple's shipments surged 22% to a record 90.1 million phones in the quarter, giving it global market share of 23.4%.

A contest among Wyoming schoolchildren will decide the new supercomputer's name.

Subscribe to The Hindu now and get unlimited access.

Already have an account? Sign In

Start your 14 days free trial Sign Up

You can support quality journalism by turning off ad blocker or purchase a subscription for unlimited access to The Hindu.

Sign up for a 30 day free trial.