

Reddit cracks down on harassment

SAN FRANCISCO, USA: Reddit on Thursday said it is cracking down on abusive behaviour that is keeping people from expressing opinions at the news-focused social network.



"We are changing our practices to prohibit attacks and harassment of individuals through reddit with the goal of preventing them," read an online message from interim chief executive Ellen Pao and her team.

"We are unhappy with harassing behaviour on reddit; we have survey data that show our users are, too."

Pao made headlines early this year for her failed gender discrimination suit against prominent venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers, which has notably backed Amazon, Facebook and Google.

Pao took charge of reddit after being fired from the venture capital firm.

Reddit said that changes enacted were likely to be noticed by only a miniscule percentage of users and were intended to prevent "attacks against people, not ideas."

"We've seen many conversations devolve into attacks against individuals," the reddit team said.

"Instead of promoting free expression of ideas, we are seeing our open policies stifling free expression; people avoid participating for fear of their personal and family safety."

Reddit joined a growing list of online social networks aiming to stem violence and harassment while attempting to safeguard freedom of online speech.

Twitter last month began implementing a new policy aimed at thwarting use of the social network to incite violence, and to crack down on abuse and harassment on the service.

The globally popular one-to-many messaging service also revealed plans to test "a product feature to help us identify suspected abusive Tweets and limit their reach."

Twitter's actions followed initiatives by Facebook as well as Facebook-owned Instagram that aim to crack down on abusive conduct and use of the platforms to promote violence.

Social networks have been struggling with defining acceptable content and freedom of expression, and radical extremism and violence increasingly linked to these services.

Facebook said last month it will not allow the social network to be used to promote terrorism or hate speech as it unveiled a wide-ranging update of its "community standards."

Source: AFP