



March 13, 2019

The Honorable Adam Schiff
United States Congress
2269 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Schiff,

Thank you for your interest in our approach to managing the sale and availability of content about vaccinations in our store. As a retailer, we provide our customers with access to a variety of viewpoints, including books and videos that some customers may find objectionable, but we are always listening to customer feedback and making improvements on their behalf.

Amazon does not endorse the content of any book or video it offers, but we strive to offer the widest possible selection of content to our customers and we offer a variety of ways to engage with that content: customers who wish to express their views on any title may do so in reviews, as many do, on its product page in our store. We are also mindful of a global history fraught with book censorship, and we do not take this lightly. Our Prime Video subscription services necessarily have a finite library of changing content and we seek to license, create, and maintain a catalog reflecting the most sought-after digital video content by our customers.

The answers to your specific questions are as follows:

Does content which provides medically inaccurate information about vaccines violate your terms of service?

Our store maintains content guidelines for authors, publishers, and book vendors, as well as video content providers and publishers. Our guidelines address content that is illegal or infringing, generates a poor customer experience, or that we otherwise prohibit, such as pornography. Our guidelines do not specifically address content about vaccines. Similar to other stores that sell books and video content, we provide our customers with access to a variety of viewpoints, including books and videos that some customers may find objectionable.

What actions do you currently take to address misinformation related to vaccines on your platforms? Are you considering or taking additional actions?

Amazon.com is a store where content creators connect with customers. That said we maintain guidelines for the sale and distribution of book and video content, and we are always listening to customer feedback and iterating on our customers' behalf. We believe that retailers are different than social media communities which means we review the content we make available, where we make it available in our store, and how we address content that customers find disappointing. For example, during a regular catalog review for Prime Video, we identified titles that were inconsistent with our policy guidelines and content expectations, so we removed all offers ("Included with Prime," Buy, and Rent). We also review the categorization of content in response to customer feedback to ensure that content is located "on the right shelf" where customers expect to find it. For example, during a review of books opposed to vaccination, we found categorizations that were not consistent with our customers' expectations. We are actively working to resolve this.

601 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Do you accept paid advertising from anti-vaccine activists and groups on your platform? How much has been spent in the past year on advertising on this topic?

We permit publishers and authors to promote content they sell on Amazon through “sponsored product” advertisements. A small number have purchased ad campaigns promoting specific books about vaccination. Other than the promotion of specific products for sale on Amazon, we prohibit general advertising related to public policy or advocacy issues such as anti-vaccination messaging.

What steps do you currently take to prevent anti-vaccine videos or information from being recommended to users either algorithmically or as a suggested search result?

Customers find value in our shopping and discovery tools throughout the store. Our shopping and discovery tools are fundamentally different from web search. Web search engines index sites from across the internet, while we seek to help customers shop for products in the Amazon store. We consider many factors when choosing what products to feature to customers including different attributes of a product (e.g., its title or description), the actions that customers took on our site (e.g., how many times the product has been purchased in the past), and price. Our shopping and discovery tools are not designed to generate results oriented to a specific point of view (whether related to anti-vaccination information or otherwise).

Thank you again for your interest in our policies as they relate to this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Huseman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "H".

Brian Huseman
Vice President, Public Policy