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## New Facebook features to curb harassment

By JANVIC MATEO

Social media giant Facebook has introduced new features aimed at curbing harassment of users of the online platform.

In a statement, Facebook said it has provided an option to ignore a Messenger conversation, as well as strengthened its system to prevent unwanted contact from a blocked person who created a new account.

The company said the "Ignore" tool on the Messenger prevents cases of additional harassment arising from the victim blocking the abuser.

"We've also heard from groups that work with survivors of domestic violence that being able to see messages is often a valuable tool to assess if there is risk of additional abuse," Facebook said.

"Now, you can tap on a message to ignore the conversation. This disables notifica-

tions and moves the conversation from your inbox to your Filtered Messages folder. You can read messages in the conversation without the sender seeing if they've been read," it added.

The social media giant said the feature, which is available for one-on-one conversations, will soon be rolled out to group conversations as well.

Facebook said it heard stories from people who have blocked someone only to encounter the same harasser using a different account.

"In order to help prevent those bad encounters, we are building on existing features that prevent fake and inauthentic accounts on Facebook," the company said.

"These automated features help us identify fake accounts more quickly and block millions of them at registration every day. However, sometimes a new account created

by someone who was previously blocked might not get caught by these features," it added.

It said they are now using various signals to help proactively recognize this type of account and prevent its owner from sending a message or friend request to the person who blocked the original account.

"The person who blocked the original account is in control and must initiate contact with the new account in order for them to interact normally," it added.

Facebook said it is also working with experts to provide safety resources to people using the platform.

"We've developed new resources for survivors of domestic violence in partnership with the National Network to End Domestic Violence," said the company.

"This is in addition to our work with more than 150

safety experts over the last year in India, Ireland, Kenya, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, Sweden and the US to get feedback on ways we can improve," it added.

Facebook also maintained that it has already prohibited bullying and harassment through its community standards.

"People can let us know when they see something concerning or have a bad experience. We review reports and take action on abuse, like removing content, disabling accounts and limiting certain features like commenting for people who have violated our community standards," it said.

"People can also control what they share, who they share it with and who can communicate with them. These new features for personal profiles give people additional ways to manage their experience on Facebook," it added.

\* social media

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