



Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>

Why no answers?

Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>
To: Enock Nyariki <enyariki@poynter.org>

Sat, Sep 3, 2022 at 1:33 AM

Dear Enock,

Thanks for starting to address my two questions. I am numbering my responses to correspond to the issues associated with each question. As to the first question:

1) I appreciate your offer to address the issues I raised in earlier emails. But doing so will not answer for me the question as to why the questions were not answered in the first place. That's an important question touching the issue of transparency. If, for example, the IFCN is literally too busy to address serious questions about its operations, publicizing that difficulty may inspire a benefactor to step in and fund the needed labor. I am simply looking for the explanation the IFCN would put forward for not answering past emails. With my gmail account I can use the search bar and find each of the messages I have sent to the IFCN or emails I received from a given address. It seems safe to assume one with access to the main IFCN account can access any email I sent to the IFCN, assuming it wasn't deleted. I'll attach screenshots to show the one-sidedness of my interactions with the IFCN over the past two years or so. This is not to say the situation was much better before that. You may have to ask somebody with more history at the IFCN, such as Ferdi, why the emails went unanswered. Perhaps you will not be able to obtain an answer. In that case, I'll have to accept the report that you could not obtain an answer to the question. I'll report what I hear from you, for that is all I can do regarding my effort to provide transparency.

2) On this question perhaps I skimmed too much on the background. I apologize if I am guilty of providing too little information to enable you to answer the question. I am aware of the existing system for challenging the determinations of social media fact check partners. It was not always as it is today. The [2019 IFCN review](#) I linked in my earlier email was an IFCN attempt to resolve a disputed fact check. The IFCN itself, through the work of one of its outside assessors, found Science Feedback at fault in that case for using biased sources. The IFCN's ruling resulted in the nullification of sanctions against the Facebook account of Young America's Foundation. At the time, I pointed out the outside assessor had erred in judging the fact check accurate aside from its faulty use of biased sources. The fact check unequivocally assured its readers an ectopic pregnancy treatment counts as an abortion. At the time, I had challenged the slipshod and shifting definition of "abortion" in the Science Feedback fact check. [A recent PolitiFact fact check article](#) found doctors saying they do not consider treating an ectopic pregnancy an abortion. As that finding dovetailed with my criticism of the original ruling, I asked the IFCN to acknowledge its flawed ruling. You may rest assured that Science Feedback would have shown no greater inclination than did the IFCN in acknowledging its error ([fruitless correction request](#)). If, despite that, the IFCN is satisfied with having Meta/Facebook fact-checking partners serve as the sole adjudicators of the challenges to their work, then you can simply tell me no, there is no plan to improve the system. If somebody at the IFCN has time to review the flawed IFCN finding and [compare the Science Feedback fact check](#) to PolitiFact's article on abortion (where the latter undercuts the former) then perhaps you'll be able to answer whether the IFCN acknowledges the error it earlier supported. Or you can tell me the IFCN simply lacks the time for such things, if that is the case. An answer is required for the sake of transparency. Acknowledging error in the 2019 assessment, in combination with Science Feedback's failure to perform a correction on its reporting about abortion, leads to the conclusion that the accountability system for fact-checking partners is flawed or broken, hence my question about the IFCN's potential plans to improve that system.

Rather than asking new questions, I elect to try making the first two questions easier to answer for the record.

I have no wish to overburden you with my questions, so I will ask one or two per month. But I reserve the right to follow up questions where the answers seem lacking.

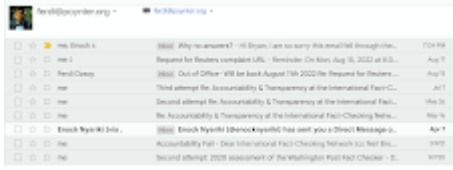
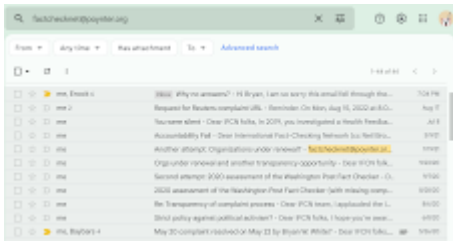
I sincerely appreciate your effort in this. I hope it helps lead to a better IFCN.

You always have permission to share my emails except when I specify otherwise.

[Quoted text hidden]

2 attachments

Screenshot for Enock of unanswered emails over the past two years.png
226K



Screenshot of unanswered emails sent to Ferdi.png
178K