Meta Ads: printed voting ballots and attacks on electoral integrity
KEY FINDINGS

Attacks persist
Ads continue to attack electoral integrity by attacking electronic voting machines, defending the printed vote and delegitimizing the STF and TSE.

Questioning the integrity of the election
Questions about the electoral system with paid boost are broadcast by supporters of President Jair Bolsonaro, most of whom are candidates.

Support in President Bolsonaro’s speeches
The president's statements against the electoral system are used to support the attacks and are reproduced by advertisers on Meta's platforms.

Defense for the system still outweighs attacks
As in July, the number of ads in defense of the electoral system exceeded the attacks on the polls, driven by candidates allied to Lula.
In a previous study, Netlab collected ads about the electoral system in the Meta Ads interface that ran between June 26 and July 31, 2022. Of the 160 results, 27 attacked the electoral system.

The analysis indicated that Jair Bolsonaro’s speech at the meeting with ambassadors, with attacks on electronic voting machines, the electoral system and the TSE was reproduced in the ads run on Meta, paid for by Bolsonaro pre-candidates.

The data collected and the results produced complement the experiment published by Global Witness. The organization published 10 ads on Meta Ads with false information about the elections and which delegitimize the electoral process, in order to test the platform’s detection capability. All ads, however, were approved.

The experiment indicated that Meta was allowing ads with disinformation about electoral integrity in Brazil on its platform.

Originally, Meta only included in the Brazilian library of ads publications which were related to a political figure, which dealt with an election (regulated as electoral propaganda or not) or that were on a topic considered “social” by Meta. However, there was no definition of “social issues” for Brazil.

On May 19, 2022, it announced new measures and gradually began to include a list of sensitive topics, as in other countries. There was, however, no explicit mention of content which questions electoral integrity and disinformation about the electronic voting machines.

Since then, several civil society groups, especially the manifesto Democracia Pede Socorro, have criticized the delay and lack of efficiency in the measures adopted. Demands have pushed platforms such as Meta for more transparency and effectiveness in the fight against disinformation and harmful content to democracy and social well-being.

Following the release of the Netlab and Global Witness reports, Meta reacted by updating its election protection efforts, including the following statement: “to protect the election in Brazil in 2022, we will ban advertisements questioning the legitimacy of this election.” There is no further information on how the new ban would be enforced.
We collected ads using the same search strategy applied in the previous study. In the Meta Ads library interface, we search for the terms “electronic voting machine”, “electronic voting machine”, “printed vote” and “audible vote”.

We were thus able to update the monthly ad monitoring, as shown in the chart below. In August 2022, 211 sensitive ads on the topic were registered.

The movement of advertisements for the printed vote has been more timid compared to the same period last year, when PEC 135/2019 was voted on Congress.

We analyzed all ads aired in the second half of August (16 to 31/08), with the aim of identifying ads that attack the integrity of the electoral system – and, therefore, would be prohibited by the platform’s policy effective since August 16th.

Among the 138 advertisements published over 15 days, between August 16 and 31, 2022, 14 advertisements attacked the electoral system.

The electoral campaign contributes to the increase in advertisements on electronic voting machines. Overall, candidates allied with Lula defend the electoral system, and Bolsonaro supporters attack and question the integrity of the system.

Weebly
The 14 ads against the electoral system were broadcast by 7 profiles, generating up to 101,900 impressions with an investment of up to R$1,700.

The inauguration of Alexandre de Moraes to the Presidency of the TSE generated advertisements attacking the electoral system and the minister’s announcement.

None of the ads classified as “attack on the electoral system” have been removed by Meta, as of the completion of this report.

Below we present the information from each of these pages and then the creative of the ads found that attack electoral integrity.

### PAGES WITH ADS AGAINST THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGE NAME</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>POLITICAL PARTY</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ADS IN THE ANALYSIS PERIOD</th>
<th>IMPRESSIONS</th>
<th>VALUE SPENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleomar Bueno</td>
<td>State Representative</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Paraná</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.9 thousand</td>
<td>R$ 199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doutor Milton</td>
<td>State Representative</td>
<td>Republicanos</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.9 thousand</td>
<td>R$ 299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe Guimarães</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9 thousand</td>
<td>R$ 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputado Gurgel</td>
<td>Congressman</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.9 thousand</td>
<td>R$ 495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Medeiros</td>
<td>Congressman</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Mato Grosso</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.9 thousand</td>
<td>R$ 297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luana Ruiz</td>
<td>Congresswoman</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Mato Grosso do Sul</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.9 thousand</td>
<td>R$ 298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Ricardo Silva</td>
<td>State Representative</td>
<td>PRTB</td>
<td>São Paulo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29.9 thousand</td>
<td>R$ 199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Candidate for state parliament **Major Ricardo Silva** (PRTB/SP) discloses content about Bolsonaro’s participation in *Flow*. Among the points he considered positive, the advertiser highlights the defense of the **printed voting ballots by Bolsonaro**.

The candidate for state parliament **Cleomar Bueno** (PL/PR) displays a flyer with the candidate Filipe Barros, celebrated as the **rapporteur of the printed voting ballots**.

The candidate for federal deputy **Gurgel** (PL/RJ) discloses his **full interview to Jovem Pan** in defense of Bolsonaro on the printed voting ballots.

Major Ricardo Silva compares audience numbers with the rival candidate and says that Bolsonaro “defended the implementation of the printed vote”. The ad ran 1 time.

Cleomar Bueno highlights the fight for the printed vote of his colleague. The ad ran 1 time.

Gurgel says that counting and checking votes is the “most important tool of a democracy”. The ad ran 5 times.
Congressman José Medeiros (PL/MT) says that Bolsonaro proved that STF seats are occupied by “activists” and defends the printed vote.

Despite speaking out against the “political use” of the electronic voting machine, Felipe Guimarães, who presents himself as an expert in cybersecurity, says: “the responsible body is not competent”.

The candidate for state parliament Dr. Milton (REPUBLICANOS/RJ) questions the guarantee of the electronic voting machine’s integrity.

The candidate for federal deputy Luana Ruiz (PL/MS) criticizes Alexandre de Moraes’ decision to ban candidates from broadcasting fake news. She highlights the “injustice” in the case of Deputy Francischini, who was impeached for spreading disinformation about electronic voting machines in 2018.
REFERENCES


Democracia Pede Socorro. “Papel das plataformas digitais na integridade eleitoral em 2022”. Democracia Pede Socorro, 6 jul. 2022. Available at: https://democraciapedesocorro.com/


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