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## Key insights

- **Fact-checking organizations are the 3rd most used reference globally** when someone proposes a community note on X, only behind X itself and Wikipedia. Links to fact-checkers that are part of EFCSN or IFCN are **present in 1 of every 27 notes proposed**.
- **The community notes that contain a link to a fact-checking organization are more trusted by X users and thus much more likely to become visible** alongside tweets that contain misinformation: only 8.3% of all proposed notes become visible, but it is 12% of those citing evidence from a fact-checking organization and 15.2% if it comes from a European fact-checker.
- **Community notes that cite the work of fact-checking organizations are faster**. They are proposed by users faster after the original tweet is posted and they are rated as useful by users also more quickly. **Community notes with evidence from fact-checkers become visible 90 minutes earlier than general notes**.
- **Despite performing better than most other sources in X community notes**, over 85% of all notes proposed that cite evidence from independent fact-checking organizations are still not visible because of X's misguided focus on "consensus among diverse users" rather than "factuality" when deciding which notes to show.
- **The study comes from analyzing the 1,175,837 community notes published in 2024** that were available for public download.

## Summary

Debunks from fact-checking organizations are the product of rigorous research and transparent editorial processes. They rely on multiple quality sources and apply consistent methodologies to assess the accuracy of any claim they investigate. Because of that, it is no surprise that **many X users consider fact-checks to be the golden standard** when they are required to list a source as they are proposing a community note for a tweet.

[Fundación Maldita.es](https://www.fundacionmaldita.es) analyzed all visible and non-visible Community Notes proposed globally by X users in 2024 that were available for public download, a dataset of over **1,175,000** and found that roughly 1 in every 27 notes proposed globally contained a link to an article from a fact-checking organization verified by the European Fact-Checking Standards Network ([EFCSN](https://www.efcsn.org/)) and/or the International Fact-Checking Network ([IFCN](https://www.ifcn.org/)). **That would make fact-checkers the third global most cited source in proposed notes behind X itself and Wikipedia .**

The problem is not so much that there are no good notes proposed for tweets containing falsehoods, but that **X is often not showing those notes to users**. That is because X only shows the notes that generate consensus among users with “[different political ideologies](#)”. [According to our study during the last EU election](#), **less than 15% of the tweets containing electoral disinformation had a visible community note** and, among the 20 most viral debunked posts that received no action from the major digital platforms, 18 were on X with over 1,5 million views each.

In spite of that, **the likelihood of a community note becoming visible in a tweet rises significantly when it cites evidence from a fact-checking organization**. If only 8.3% of all proposed notes are rated as useful and become visible on X, that percentage rises to 12% for the ones that link to a fact-checker, and goes even higher to 15.2% for those using evidence from European fact-checkers.

And despite much insistence to the contrary, the **community notes that cite evidence from fact-checking organizations are faster in addressing misinformation than the rest**. It takes less time for them to be proposed after the original tweet (4 hours and 25 minutes, 23 minutes less than the usual) and they become visible alongside the tweet after being rated as useful much sooner than the other visible notes (5 hours and 40 minutes, 24 less than the median time for all notes). All in all, community notes with evidence from fact-checkers are visible 90 minutes earlier than general notes.

Still, the data shows that a lot of **useful information for users is effectively being concealed by X** because of its false premise of equating truth with consensus. 85% of all notes proposed that cite evidence from independent fact-checking organizations are not visible in the tweet they address. Now that other major platforms such as Meta and YouTube announce their intentions to implement programs similar to community notes, it is critical for them not to repeat X's mistakes and collaborate with professional fact-checking organizations in making sure:

- Notes with quality sources and expert knowledge are favored over “consensus”
- Notes appear faster in the most dangerous and viral misinformation
- Organized groups or users with multiple accounts are prevented from manipulating the system
- Those repeatedly lying and receiving notes face consequences, such as removing verification checks and/or the ability to monetize
- Platforms cannot interfere in the process and withdraw notes due to external pressures

## Fact-checking in proposed Community Notes

3.7% of all notes proposed globally contain a link to a fact-checking organization in the sources cited, roughly one in every 27. It might not seem like a large number, but let's take in consideration that the single most cited domain outside X itself is Wikipedia at 8%. Next in line after the fact-checkers would be YouTube at 2.9%.

### Most repeated domains in proposed notes

Rank	Domain	Number of proposed notes
1	X.com	248,698
2	Wikipedia	94,758
3	Fact-checking organizations	43,142
4	YouTube	35,136
5	BBC	21,643

 FUNDACIÓN MALDITA.ES Source: X's Community Notes Data

The fact that the work of the fact-checking organizations surpasses a global video platform valued at more than \$455 billion in relevance is remarkable and a testimony to the usefulness of their work. Several individual fact-checking organizations also appear in the global Top-50 most cited domains in proposed notes, such as Snopes or Politifact, and others that have in-house fact-checking units such as Reuters, AP, or the Washington Post.

The ranking reflects the weight English-language notes have in the program. We have been able to automatically classify roughly 90% of all proposed notes (well over a million of them) according to language and 62% of them are in English. In turn, 48% of the most-cited 50 domains are sites that overwhelmingly publish in English. In spite of that, the relevance of the work of fact-checking organizations in other languages is remarkable.

If we take Spanish, the second most frequent language in proposed community notes with over 100,000 of them (9.6%), we will see **Maldita.es as the 12th most used global reference**, with another three fact-checking organizations from Spain, Argentina, and Mexico also in the top 50. In Italian, Facta.news occupies the second place and in Polish, the nonprofit fact-checking site Demagog is 10th.

All in all, there is at least one fact-checking organization in the top 20 most-cited domains on Community Notes in the five biggest official languages in the EU: German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Polish.

#### Most repeated domains in proposed notes for EU's biggest official languages

Rank	Spanish	German	French	Italian	Polish
1º	X.com	Wikipedia	X.com	Wikipedia	X.com
2º	Wikipedia	X.com	Wikipedia	X.com	Wikipedia
3º	YouTube	Tagesschau	Le Monde	Facta.news	Rzeczpospolita
4º	Infobae	YouTube	Légifrance	Open	YouTube
5º	Google.com	Der Spiegel	YouTube	Agenzia ANSA	Gov.pl
6º	El País	Gesetze im Internet	France Info	YouTube	Money.pl
7º	Instagram	Deutscher Bundestag	Libération	Google.com	TVN24
8º	Boletín Oficial del Estado	Die Welt	BFMTV.	La Repubblica	Business Insider
9º	ELDiario.es	Die Zeit	Le Figaro	Il Post	Polska Agencja Prasowa
10º	BBC	ZDF	Le Parisien	Bufale.net	Demagog
11º	El Mundo	Statista	Ouest France	Fanpage.it	SEJM
12º	Maldita.es	CORRECTIV	20 minutes	Corriere della Sera	Wolters Kluwer
13º	La Nación	Norddeutscher Rundfunk	TF1 INFO	Sky TG24	WP Wiadomości
14º	ABC	Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung	Service-Public.fr	Instagram	Bankier.pl
15º	Newtral	Bayerischer Rundfunk	Google.com	Il Fatto Quotidiano	Onet Wiadomości
16º	Real Academia Española	Legal Tribune Online	Radiofrance	RaiNews.it	Gazeta Prawna
17º	El Confidencial	Tagesspiegel	Assemblée nationale	La Stampa	Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych
18º	TikTok	Süddeutsche Zeitung	Instagram	Wired	Wydarzenia w Interia
19º	La Vanguardia	Deutschlandfunk	Factuel AFP	Reuters	RMF24
20º	Argentina.gob.ar	Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk	Le Point	Treccani	OKO.press

## Visibility of notes containing Fact-checking

While the presence of links to fact-checking organizations in proposed community notes is encouraging, the whole effectiveness of such a program depends on when and how those notes become visible for the user alongside the tweet that contains misinformation. On X, the proposed notes only become visible when they are rated as “useful” by users who usually disagree. Essentially, it evaluates the consensus of people with “[different political ideologies](#)”.

[Focus on consensus](#) has been found to mean that notes with reliable information do not become visible for users or take too long to do so, particularly on highly polarized topics. However, it is important to remark that the **notes that cite evidence from fact-checking organizations are still much more likely to be rated as useful by those diverse users and to become visible on X.**

For any random community note that is proposed globally, only 8.3% become visible. If we take those that contain a link to a recognized fact-checking organization within EFCSN or IFCN, their likelihood of becoming visible rises to 12%. Finally, if we take into account only those that cite a link to a European fact-checking organization as evidence for the note, the percentage goes even higher to 15.2%. **Notes that contain evidence from fact-checkers are clearly considered more useful by the “diverse users” X is focusing on.**

### Overview of different groups of notes

Notes	Rate of visible notes	Time from post to note proposed (median)	Time from note proposed to visible (median)	Time from post to visible note (median)
General	8.30%	4:48:58	6:04:20	14:17:14
Fact-checkers Globally	12.06%	4:25:57	5:40:31	12:47:47
European Fact-Checkers	15.23%	4:42:01	5:53:30	12:44:36

 FUNDACIÓN MALDITA.ES Source: X's Community Notes Data

Ideally, community notes should become visible as soon as possible when they are useful, so as to give as many users as possible the additional context they need while the tweet is experiencing maximum dissemination. **As much as some critics of fact-checkers argue that community notes might be speedier in reacting to highly viral disinformation, X's data shows that is not the case.**

On the contrary, the visible **community notes that cite evidence from fact-checking organizations take less time to be proposed** after the original tweet is posted (4 hours and 25 minutes, which is 23 minutes less than usual) **and then are considered useful by the users, and thus become visible alongside the tweet, much earlier than the other notes** (5 hours and 40 minutes, 24 less than the median time for all notes).

All in all, **community notes with evidence from fact-checkers are visible 90 minutes earlier than general notes if you compare median times**. Despite the methodical work that a fact-check requires, the content produced by the independent fact-checking organizations organically fares better in speed and user evaluation, even with X's misguided focus on "consensus" rather than factuality.

## Fact-checkers and Community Notes done right

Mark Zuckerberg might have said it is time to “get rid of fact-checkers and replace them with Community Notes similar to X” but **at Fundación Maldita.es we believe that the work of fact-checkers and the involvement of communities against disinformation are not contradictory at all, but essential and complementary.**

At Maldita.es we monitor and debunk misinformation every day, and we find out about most hoaxes thanks to our community. We do not have eyes everywhere, so the ‘malditos’ put us on the trail whenever they find something suspicious and they send it our way asking if it is true. We receive hundreds of those queries daily and that community input is essential for us in fulfilling our mission. That is why we believe that community notes can help a lot against misinformation if the system works correctly.

If Meta and others follow X's model as announced, they should be aware of its strengths and weaknesses. In X, notes are proposed by users when they come across a post that they think needs context, which is a great idea because it helps identify misinformation, but then an algorithm decides whether they are visible next to the original publication based on the consensus on their “helpfulness” according to the ratings of different users - **that part has worked much worse** as this analysis shows.

The evidence from X clearly shows that users rely on the work of fact-checking organizations often to propose community notes; also that the notes that cite fact-checking generally find more consensus among users; and finally that, because of that reason, they appear more quickly. However, other things need to be addressed before a Community Notes program can be really effective on X, on Meta's platforms, or anywhere else. What is needed is that:

- Notes with quality sources and expert knowledge are favored over “consensus” among users who usually disagree
- Notes appear faster in the most dangerous and viral misinformation
- Platforms prevent organized groups or users with multiple accounts from manipulating the system
- Repeatedly lying and receiving notes has some consequence for the user, such as removing the blue verification check or the ability to monetize
- Platforms that enable Community Notes cannot then interfere in the process and withdraw notes due to pressures beyond their users'.

## Methodology

The dataset taken into account for this analysis relies on [X's Community Notes data](#) available for public download (specifically 'Notes data' and 'Note status history data' archives) on January 13, 2025. It was limited to notes created between 1/01/2024 and 31/12/2024, which accounts for a total of 1,175,837 notes proposed by users taking part in the program (referenced as 'general group' during the document). Nevertheless, the information provided by archive 'Notes data' (the text of the note, among others) was not available for 118,373 of the total.

Notes referenced as 'visible' in the document are those that at the time of data download had 'CURRENTLY RATED HELPFUL' as its current status, meaning they are publicly displayed in the interface.

Domains included in the text of the notes were extracted and grouped when necessary (i.e. *youtube* + *youtu.be*, *tiktok* + *vm.tiktok*, language domains for *wikipedia.org*, *x.com* + *help.x.com* + *business.x.com* + *communitynotes.x.com* and its variants with 'twitter'). URL shorteners (e.g. X's *t.co*) were discarded. Moreover, notes were automatically classified by language of the text using python library 'langdetect'.

For insights on time, the median was calculated only for those visible/helpful notes at the time of data download for all groups. Three different time spans (in hours) were considered: 1) time between a user posted the tweet and the tweet had a note proposed, 2) time between the note was proposed and it became visible for the first time, 3) time between a user posted the tweet and the note became firstly visible.

This research assesses the role of fact-checking in Community Notes through the performance of 179 organizations who currently comply with high standards and best practices independently assessed by experts. A number of these fact-checkers exist as a unit inside a wider media outlet, for those cases, the domain of the media outlet was considered when a dedicated 'URL' for fact-checks does not exist.

For the group of fact-checking organizations in Europe, the domains of verified members of the European Fact-Checking Standards Network ([EFCSN](#)) were considered. These are organizations based in a country member of the Council of Europe, Kosovo, Belarus or Russia. The organizations are listed [here](#).

As for fact-checking organizations globally, the domains of signatories of the International Fact-Checking Organization ([IFCN](#)), active or in renewal as of January 2025, were considered. Those that are as well verified by the EFCSN are also included in this group. The organizations are listed [here](#).

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