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Mr. Didier Reynders  
Commissioner for Justice  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049 Brussels

28 April 2020

Dear Commissioner ~~Reynders~~, *Dear Didier,*

Thank you very much for your letter of 21 April, and for your continued leadership in the fight against deceptive and unfair commercial practices online by those seeking to exploit the COVID-19 crisis. As you note, these challenging times highlight the importance of ensuring that people can trust the information they see online. Please know that, although our services are targeted by bad actors seeking to exploit the crisis far less frequently than many other services, we remain fully committed to combatting COVID-19-related misinformation and fraud on Bing (and indeed on all our services).

In our letter of 30 March, we described several measures we have taken to ensure that users of Bing have access to authoritative information during the COVID-19 pandemic. To recap, these include making regular refinements to our Bing search algorithms to try to prevent manipulation of search results by bad actors, and to help ensure that authoritative and trustworthy sites rank higher in Bing search results than low-quality sites. We have also implemented a number of additional measures specifically targeted at COVID-19-related misinformation and fraud, including placing Public Service Announcements about COVID-19 at the top of search results, and pointing users to special COVID-19 “information hubs” on Microsoft News when Bing users enter certain common COVID-19-related search terms. As a result of these and other efforts, a person searching for information related to COVID-19 on Bing is almost certain to be presented from the outset with highly authoritative content about the pandemic from trustworthy sources (more information on these initiatives is available [here](#)).

As also communicated in my prior letter, Microsoft Advertising continues to take steps to block ads directly related to COVID-19 that violate our advertising policies—because they exploit COVID-19 for commercial gain, spread misinformation, or may pose a danger to user health or safety. We continue working to enhance our policy enforcement mechanisms to promote a safe online environment for our users.

Since the date of my last letter, Bing has taken additional steps to promote trustworthy information on COVID-19. On 20 April, for instance, we [announced](#) that we were releasing our COVID-19 case tracking data—which we use to populate Bing’s COVID-19 tracker and which



we generate from trustworthy sources such as the WHO and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—to those in academia, research, and the public sector for non-commercial purposes. We also released a Bing-powered COVID-19 widget for developers who want to display this data on their own sites, thereby making it available to more people across the web. And we are making available to the public, under an [open license](#), aggregated, anonymous data showing the [COVID-related search terms](#) that users from across the world have entered on Bing. By making this type of trustworthy COVID-19 data more widely accessible and usable, we hope that people are less likely to confront or be misled by fraudulent or other untrustworthy claims.

In addition, as you may know, Microsoft joined other technology companies in a [public statement](#) on 16 March 2020 discussing our collaborative industry efforts to address COVID-19 misinformation. Cognizant of how misinformation can spread across platforms, we are working together to share information and threat trends, as well as publicly available information and academic resources. (Of course, individual companies continue to make content moderation and enforcement decisions according to their own terms of use and policies.)

During this challenging period, our various Microsoft teams have been hard at work rolling out and refining these and other initiatives. As a result, we do not have metrics available at this time to quantify the effect that these measures have had. Further (and as described further in my prior letter), often the most effective and scalable ways to tackle disinformation require algorithmic solutions and refinements, such as automatically elevating more-authoritative sources of information above less-authoritative ones. These methods do not easily lend themselves to generating quantitative metrics.

Accordingly, we do not believe that a bi-weekly reporting update of such metrics on our end would be productive at this time. This may change as the nature of the misinformation and our response to it evolves, and if it does, we will be certain to let you know. In addition, we would be pleased to remain in close and regular contact with the Commission on what we are doing to help make online experiences safe and trustworthy for users during this difficult time.

Thank you again for your leadership and attention to these important issues. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, or my colleague Cornelia Kutterer, with any further questions.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Casper Klynge", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Casper Klynge  
Vice President for European Government Affairs  
Microsoft