

February 8, 2022

Daniel Ek
Co-Founder & CEO, Spotify
Regeringsgatan 19
SE-111 53 Stockholm
Sweden

Dear Mr. Ek,

Last year, [we wrote to you](#) expressing our concerns over technology Spotify patented that places human rights, particularly the rights to privacy and non-discrimination, at risk. A [global coalition](#) of over 180 musicians and human rights groups called on Spotify to make a public commitment never to use, license, sell, or monetize the speech-recognition patent. Though Spotify [replied](#) to our initial letter, the concerns raised by the global community went unanswered.

Spotify is at yet another crossroads of human rights and its desire to lead in the industry, this time putting human rights and public health at risk in the context of its content governance practices.¹ Spotify should know it [can't solve misinformation by slapping on a simple warning label](#) — especially when there is no clear evidence that content labels or links to information hubs curb its spread. To make matters worse, “The Joe Rogan Experience” podcast is content [acquired and produced exclusively by Spotify](#). This means that Spotify could exercise editorial discretion over what Joe Rogan and his guests say on the platform — if you wanted to engage. Instead, you choose to ignore the podcast’s dangerous COVID-19 claims, making Spotify all the more responsible.

This begs the question: **Is Spotify willing to allow harmful content on its platform to spread, prioritizing the company’s bottom line over public health?** Spotify is certainly not alone in profiting from dangerous misinformation, but given Spotify’s decision to produce Joe Rogan’s podcast, this act is uniquely brazen. If Spotify continues to operate this way, the platform will continue to undermine people’s ability to make well-informed decisions about their health.

It’s time for Spotify to fully address its human rights impacts as a company — not in a piecemeal approach based on trending controversies that draw negative attention, but in a holistic way that centers the human rights of people using its services.

Spotify’s [April 2021 letter](#) to Access Now states that the company “think[s] about issues at the intersection of technology, public policy, and ethics every day.” To help you in addressing these issues, we encourage you to implement the following:

¹ For detailed guidance on protecting human rights in content governance, you can refer to Access Now’s [report](#).

1. **Publish a human rights policy** to demonstrate your commitment to respecting users' rights. A human rights policy is essential for every company and guides cross-functional work in support of digital rights.
2. **Undertake ongoing human rights due diligence** to understand, identify, and address the human rights risks associated with the company's practices on content governance, privacy, and security.
3. **Issue regular transparency reports** detailing how the company responds to third-party requests for user information and takes action against users, content producers, and flagged accounts to enforce its Platform Rules.

Spotify's letter to Access Now also states that the company "will always remain open to constructive dialogue." **We therefore ask you to begin a constructive dialogue by meeting with us to discuss our concerns and by publicly responding to this letter by February 22, 2022.**

Your policies and practices have a tangible impact on society — we urge you to prioritize people's lives and well-being over your profit margins.

Sincerely,

Brett Solomon
Executive Director, Access Now