Online Video Consumption and Content Moderation Policies

BRENNAN SCHAFFNER, University of Chicago, USA

1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

My research background consists of both quantitative and qualitative user studies. As a PhD student, I have several projects related to content sharing platforms and online video consumption. In recent work, I conducted an interview study with Netflix users uncovering relationships between users and platform design elements [2]. The challenges related to Credibility, Trust, and Safety on Netflix, an SVOD (Subscription Video On Demand) platform, heavily overlap with the challenges facing VSPs (Video Sharing Platforms), such as matters of monetization of user attention and proclivity for friction-less UX/UI. For instance, we found that Netflix users often watch for longer durations than they originally intend to, often attributing the excess to the platform design and default behavior of autoplay, which gives users 6 seconds to opt-out of the next piece of content automatically starting. We also inquired about users' perceptions of algorithmic recommendation systems, to which users reflected feeling at times overwhelmed, pushed, or subconsciously exposed to advertisements.

2 CONNECTIONS TO VIDEO-SHARING PLATFORMS

My ongoing work is directly connected to VSPs and the workshop's goals. In an almost-complete project, we are currently scraping and analyzing the content moderation policies of 40 of the most popular platforms, including VSPs such as YouTube, TikTok, and Twitch. For each platform, we are analyzing their policy pages related to moderating content within three areas: copyright, misinformation, and harmful speech. A key question of this workshop is **"How should platform policies be made to improve credibility, trust, and safety on VSPs?"** [1], and this work aims to better understand the connections between legal frameworks and platform policies in pursuit of improved platform policies that better protect users from misinformation and hate speech.

3 RELATED FUTURE WORK

We plan to continue our current work on content moderation policies with user and audit studies on one of the most popular VSPs, Twitch. We will quantify the differences in both how users understand Twitch's content moderation policies and how Twitch enforces its policies across different areas of content (e.g., misinformation vs. copyright). We hypothesize these differences will depend on the preciseness (or vagueness) of the relevant legal frameworks. For example, laws related to copyright are longstanding and direct. As such, platforms implement similar and consistent policies

related to the moderation of copyright-infringing content, and users can predict and understand the platform practices well. On the other hand, challenges related to misinformation are relatively unrepresented in legal frameworks (for a number of reasons); and, as such, platform policies related to misinformation are varied in practice and representation and are unpredictable/obscure for users.

REFERENCES

[1] Shuo Niu, Zhicong Lu, Amy Zhang, Jie Cai, Carla F Griggio, and Hendrik Heuer. 2023. Building Credibility, Trust, and Safety on Video-Sharing Platforms. (2023). https://safevsp.github.io/chiea23-19.pdf.

[2] Brennan Schaffner, Antonia Stefanescu, Olivia Campili, and Marshini Chetty. 2023. Don't Let Netflix Drive the Bus: User's Sense of Agency Over Time and Content Choice on Netflix. In *Proc. ACM Hum.-Comput. Interact. (CSCW '23)*. Association for Computing Machinery, Minneapolis, MN, USA, 32. https://doi.org/10.1145/3579604 Preprint: https://brennanschaffner.com/wp-content/uploads/Netflix_Bus_Interview_CSCW20234.pdf.