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Feed my Feed: Reflection

Today, Facebook is one of the most widely used social media platform. However, it is still controlled by a multimillion company - which has lead many people to abandon it since it holds too much power over its users. Dorothy Howard sees Facebook groups as an easy way to create small platforms to share ideas within Facebook. Anyone can create a group. As a result, the power goes to the people instead of Mark Zuckerberg.

These groups are usually clusters of people all posting internet garbage, memes, and “cursed” images - joining them places this content right there on your feed, no google search needed! These communities have rules in place to protect the disenfranchised, allows them to speak up and be heard, all while being respected. To join these groups, from my experience, one must answer questions along the line of “can white people say the N-word?” or “Did you read the group rules?” before joining them. ... which contrasts with the free web, without boundaries or moderation, that often creates unsafe spaces for marginalized people under the guise of “free speech”. Even silly shitposting groups bring forth recent news and spaces to discuss them (Leelah Alcorn, Ferguson protests, etc) and become a space of sensibilization and activism.

Despite Facebook itself being an often problematic platform, it is the most accessible one and the best one to use of you want to reach out to many people, since literally everyone uses it. Groups and communities co-opt the platform and turn it into a space for activism.

Less moderated communities like <nettime> can be just safe, however, since it is expected that everyone has similar goals, and there is trust that no one is intending to troll or attack people.

According to Howard, developing more platforms that are almost exactly like Facebook without its constraints leads to creators having to crosspost in every platform to reach as many users as possible. She suggests that using Facebook as a platform and embracing its design isn't giving in to the big corporations - resistance and solidarity can still exist within its networks.

To conclude the article, Howard addresses the anti-Facebook discourse on Facebook itself, and how the irony of using a platform to criticize it should be recognised. Furthermore, using other platforms doesn't protect you from surveillance and labor exploitation, so one might as well use Facebook - subversively.

Works cited:

Howard, Dorothy. "Feed My Feed: Radical Publishing in Facebook Groups." *Rhizome*, 22 July 2015, rhizome.org/editorial/2015/jul/22/feed-my-feed/.