

The Ethical Downsides of Memes

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Abstract

This paper explores the idea of extending current copyright laws in order to regulate and define ethical procedures for the utilization of memes. Memes refer to an idea, style, or behavior, usually through the Internet for humorous purposes. Moore (2019) noted that memes are among the newest Internet inventions that characterize modern online information broadcast changes. For the most part, these memes are essentially entertainment clips or images created by random persons on social media sites from already available content. Even though memes serve as online entertainment to society, there are various concerns in the recent past regarding their ethical implications, mostly when they use images or videos of people without their consent. The paper highlights the downside of such content and explores the unhealthy influence they can have on society. Thus, it is crucial to extend copyright laws to incorporate memes and bar creators using content without authorization from the original source.

Keywords: Copyrights, memes, ethics

Meme's Regulation

One of the primary approaches used when judging content in the contemporary world is analyzing them using principles drawn from ethical theories. As Kurbes (2019) explained, memes' creation is essentially innocent and primarily meant for entertainment from the deontological perspective. Over the years, memes have shown various individuals' talents, especially when bringing out the humor in contemporary issues such as politics and entertainment. The online consumer base is enormous, and people opt to the online platform to socialize and have fun. Therefore, memes are generally safe when assessed from a deontological perspective.

However, exceptional cases have made it necessary to analyze memes' effects in society to establish some regulation aspect. One such case is "Star War Kid," whereby the individual in the meme experienced heavy trolling, forcing him to depression (Moore, 2009). Such cases make it necessary for stakeholders to understand the effects of memes. Other computer and Internet-related technological advancements such as online games have been researched and pros and cons documented.

Although memes offer entertainment and are a source of income for a section of internet users, there is a need to consider their possible dangers. According to Durham (2018), memes have global recognition and are the easiest way for a person to get recognition and perhaps earn money online. Although most people are happy to watch and create memes, there is scant literature that addresses the persons whose images or videos have been used. Durham (2018) explained a need to extend copyright laws to cover memes' creation. Creators must seek permission from the source to ensure that the creator is aware and gives consent. Ethical issues are sensitive, and they are always a lot of gray areas. When it comes to memes, there is a need

for some aspect of regulation. There is no need to come up with new laws concerning online art. However, it is crucial to ensure that the source's interest is duly protected and that persons do not create malicious memes.

Conclusion

The ethical downsides of memes should prompt the creation of regulatory strategies to establish some aspect of control. However, there is no need to develop new laws as copyright laws can extend to incorporate memes. The benefits of the art elicit consideration; therefore, there is no way that they can be restricted entirely. Nonetheless, there is still a need to ensure that they operate within the established ethical guidelines.

References

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