Short Assignment Three

           There is a dark side of content moderation that many people don’t think about, making content moderation much more difficult. The dark side is human moderation, which is people who look through posts reported through the platform’s algorithm or by people. Many posts are caught by an algorithm meant to detect unwanted posts, but some require human attention because it may be borderline against the platform policy. Human moderators must look through thousands of posts a day, which puts a toll on their mental health. In The Underworld of Online Content Moderation, Isaac Chotiner mentions content moderation is an entry-level job, and not many people stay for more than a couple of months. Many social network platforms seek cheap labor from other countries and hire anyone that is interested. The article also gave examples of people that worked content moderation, and they were mentally scarred. A woman who used to work for Myspace couldn’t shake people’s hands for three years after quitting her job because she couldn’t believe how disgusting people were.

           As mentioned in my previous definition of “moderation defines a platform,” the government also has a role with moderation and restricting/censoring posts. Although we didn’t talk about this in class, it is still a large issue to talk about. According to Mashable, in 2019, China invested $150 million in Reddit. A year prior, China blocked citizens from accessing Reddit for a couple of days. This shows that governments like China are interested in opening up social network platforms to their citizens but under certain circumstances. One day, Reddit and other platforms might be under total control by Chinese companies, allowing China to control the content uploaded on the sites. Chinese companies have to conform with the Chinese government, which means that if a Chinese company decided to buy a platform like Reddit or Facebook, everyone using the platform has to conform with whatever the Chinese government implements. China has stringent rules on browsing the internet and censors tons of things which means that if a Chinese company takes over a platform, there will likely be more content moderation.

           Content moderation is necessary, and millions of posts get removed daily for breaking the content guidelines. Moderation is time-consuming and takes a toll on the mind. Many people who do moderation struggle to work more than a year, and the posts that a platform remove vary based on their content guidelines. Users of a platform also help moderate platforms by reporting posts so someone else can look at the post. Although it may be something that is gruesome, it passed the algorithm’s content checker, which means that a post will require human (employee) interaction. As more people join social media platforms daily, more moderators are needed, and so are job benefits. Higher pay and health and wellness checks will help.

References

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