

Regulating Behavior in online communities

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A social necessity

- In any form of interaction online or offline certain social etiquette must be adhered to.
- These rule/norms are in place to protect the entities in participation or facilitate constructive interaction.

Overview

- Policies and guidelines: what are they?
- Regulation: What do they contribute to the community?
- Enforcing Regulation

Policies and guidelines

- Defined as a pattern or behavior expected within a particular community in a given situation.
- The shared belief of what is normal and acceptable.
- They impose uniformity of behavior within a given social community, but often vary substantially among communities.

Rules vs Norms

Rules

- Rule are usually steadfast regulations.
- Must always be adhered to.
- Usually serve the interests of the creators of communities.
- Stem from the goals of the creators and administrators.

Norms

- Norms are more synonymous with social etiquette.
- Evolve over time and are subject to change as the goals of the community change.
- They usually stem from the needs of the members and are meant to serve their interests.

Norms cont...

- Norms are unofficial, informal and implicit and are enforced by members of the community themselves through social pressure.

Regulations: What are they for?

- Organize and coordinate the community
- Evolving, competing entities
- Constructions of meaning & identity

Regulations: What are they for? cont...

- External signals
- Internal signals
- Negotiated settlements and rewards
- Control mechanisms

Regulating behavior

- Regulation by the administrators
- Regulation by the users
- Regulation by moderators appointed by administrators

Regulation by Administrators

- Effective in smaller communities with a sufficiently large administrative force.
- In larger communities regulation is handed off to automated machines.
- Popularity restricted to corporate networks where security is of primary concern.

Regulation by users

- This method works best for large user driven communities.
- Gives the appearance of fairness.
- The enforcement of regulations are more contextually aware.
- The sanctions levied are of a more social nature.

Regulation by Moderators

- Combine the benefits of the previous methodologies.
- Allows the administrators to choose responsible members.
- Allows for the interests of both the members and administrators to be addressed.

Enforcing Regulation

- Deterrence
- Prevention
- Detection and Recovery

Deterrence

- Discourage members from defying rules and norms.
- Most efficient form of regulation.
- Usually enforced by demonstrating the consequences of deviant behavior.

Prevention

- Enforced by disallowing deviant behavior.
- Usually enforced by pre-reviewed contribution.
- Not as cost effective as deterrence as the cost of contribution is doubled.

Detection and Recovery

- Detecting patterns or instances of unwanted behavior.
- Most effective in member regulated communities.
- Appropriate measures taken once detected.

Conclusion

- Regulations bring about better communication and interaction by ensuring that pertinent information is shared in a safe and comfortable atmosphere taking into consideration the members' goals and sensibilities.

Thank you