Diversity by Design? Balancing the Inclusion and Protection of Users in an Online Social Platform

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Abstract

The unreflected promotion of diversity as a value in social interactions --- including in technology-mediated ones --- risks emphasizing the benefits of inclusion without recognizing the potential harm of failing to protect vulnerable individuals or account for the empowerment of marginalized groups. Adopting the position that technology is never value-neutral, we seek to answer the question of how technology-mediated social platforms can accommodate diversity by design by balancing the often tension-ridden principles of protection and inclusion. In this paper, we present our research program, developed strategy for diversity aware content moderation, as well as first analyses and results. Building on approaches from scenario analysis and Value Sensitive Design, we identify key arguments for a ``diversity by design''-agenda. Furthermore, we discuss how these arguments can be operationalized and implemented and provide a critical reflection on the limits of the proposed approach.

Contributions

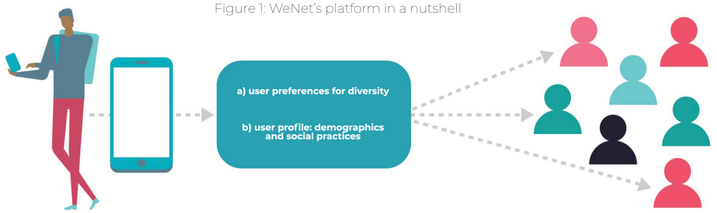
I. We contribute to debates on **content moderation** by developing a framework for diversity curation.

II. This framework is focused on balancing **protection and inclusion**.

III. Based on a Scenario Analysis we provide solutions for how to deal with **value dilemmas** in that context.

IV. We discuss technical options for implementing and automizing our **diversity by design** framework.

Figure 1: WeNet's platform in a nutshell



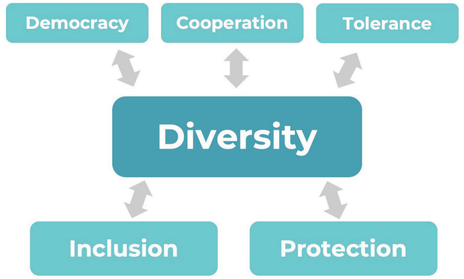
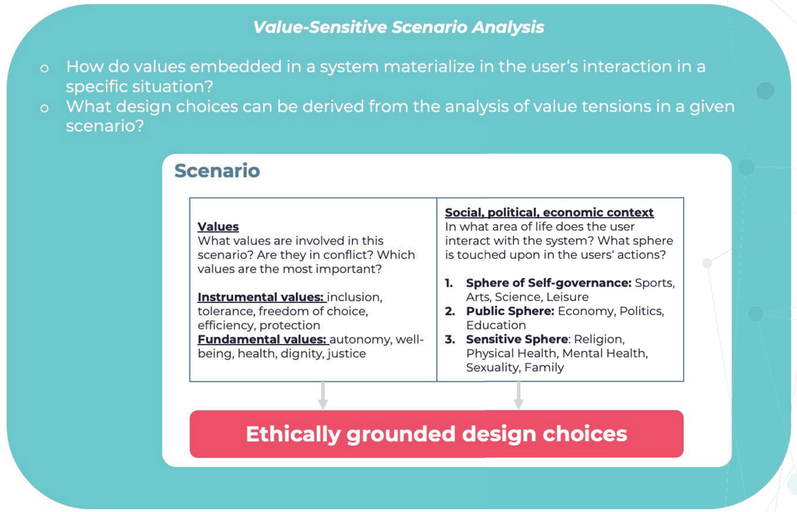


Figure 2: Diversity in a simple diagram

Figure 3: The framework



What would you like to ask? (Users send a request via the chatbot into a community)	"Are you struggling with mental health issues that can make it difficult for you to study? And if so, how do you deal with them?"
Who should receive this request? Someone similar or different? (Users specify in the chatbot)	Someone "similar to me"
Ethical analysis: Is it legitimate to limit the scope of recipients by asking for users who are similar to oneself to answer the request?	Limiting diversity is legitimate (protection argument)
Ethical reasoning	In this scenario, it is imperative for users to be able to limit diversity in order to create a safe space.

Figure 4: An exemplary scenario

Figure 5: Summary of the analysis

scenario#	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
user profile	Khulan Suffers from test anxiety On a scholarship at a university abroad	Sanaya Exchange student from Bangladesh at the university of Trento in Italy Into photography	Sanaya Exchange student from Bangladesh at the university of Trento in Italy Into photography	Bob Studies German language and literature in Germany Writer, has written a novella
request	"Are you struggling with mental health issues that can make it difficult for you to study? And if so, how do you deal with them?"	"Where can I buy a good camera for my photography activities?"	"Are there other semi-professional photographers at the university? Who is interested in starting a photography group?"	"Looking for a native German who is willing to proofread a 90-page literary text for €200. It's mainly about spelling and grammar, but happy for an extra 100€ also with style and wording suggestions."
similar/different	Someone „similar to me“	Someone „similar to me“	Someone „similar to me“	Someone „similar to me“
values involved (those in bold are the dominant values that trump other values)	Well-Being, Health, **Dignity**	**Efficiency**, Freedom of Choice	Inclusion, Social Justice, Freedom of Choice, **Autonomy**	Freedom of Choice, Efficiency, Autonomy, Inclusion, **Social Justice**
Sphere (context)	Sensitive sphere	Sphere of Self-Governance	Sphere of Self-Governance	Public Sphere
Design action	Limit diversity	Limit diversity	Limit diversity	Keep or even expand diversity
Norms	Safe space norm	Efficiency norm	Freedom of choice norm	Non-discrimination norm

Technically implement the identified norms into an actionable policy through Design and Automation

- Operationalizing the Ethical Norms
- Resolving Tensions between Norms
- Determining Appropriate Interventions

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