

Memorandum For: Alejandro Mayorkas

From: Afoma Muojekwu

Subject: Social Media Raids

Main Point:

Raids on social media platforms pose a threat to individual users due to power in numbers, fear mongering, and defamation. A recommendation to mitigate the effects of a raid could be to make sure that users are made aware of the rules of the platform and be well protected by the platform in the instance of a raid or mishap.

Background:

On many social media platforms, people come together to conduct what is known as a “raid” on other users. In many cases, like on Twitch, this can be a positive activity and will boost the viewership of a content creator. However, on platforms like Instagram, a raid is conducted a bit differently, and in a more negative light. Users will conglomerate in a direct message group chat and plan out raids to conduct on different targets. Once the target is chosen, every user in the chat will mask their account under the theme chosen and proceed to bombard the account with comments, likes, reports, and direct messages. The user that is being targeted will have little protection from this once it happens because if they report it to Instagram it is their word against hundreds of users. This phenomenon was more prevalent in the 2016-2018 time period, but can still be seen in niche parts of many social platforms today.

Evidence:

Option 1: Certain platforms aim to prioritize freedom and certain platforms aim to prioritize being a safe space. Educate people and professionals on which platforms are meant to be safe and which ones could contain sensitive content, so that they may make their decision based on what experience the site promises to offer (i.e the current state of X/Twitter: expect anything, risk seeing unexpected content. NickJr.com: safe space, expect safety/protection to be prioritized). Ensure that the user has a truthful idea of which space they are in.

Option 2: If a certain platform advertises itself as a safe space and people choose to be users of that promised safe space, enforce that they uphold that standard and are thorough about making sure that any suspicious activity gets addressed.

Option 3: If the platform is a safe space, thoroughly check those who are signing up for it. Inform them that any misdemeanors will result in the monitoring, limiting, or banning of their account based on the level of offense.

Conclusion:

It is important to protect other users from users with bad intentions in platforms that are meant to be safe. In the meantime it is important to encourage those spaces that have not yet prioritized safety, to do so.