Redefining
The Social Community

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Executive Summary

Social Media is an ever-growing presence in everyday life. With the introduction of the internet, the online community was also born. It is no surprise that with the advances we see in mobile devices, the community has also advanced, grown, and become more complex with more people joining every day.

As more people join the online community, the more complex the problems will be to address. One, in particular, is the problem of providing a safe space for content commentary. In all social platforms, but most evident on the major social platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, problems within the comments range from simple problems like repetitive and un-engaging layouts to complex and deeply impactful problems like cyber-bullying and misleading harmful facts. There is a great need to find a solution to these problems and redefine the social community.

With your investment, within a year, we will be able to create a minimum-viable-product commenting system that can plug into different social platforms to create a safe space for users and increase engagement amongst the community and it's content creators.

Social Communities

The online social community as a whole is growing every year. Globally speaking, over 45% of the global population is using Social Media (HootSuite), and the average amount of time per day spent on social media totaling two hours and sixteen minutes and increasing each year (HootSuite). With the advances in technology and the money that is being made social platforms like ad revenue and influencer sponsorships, there are no indications that the social community will stop growing.

The Global State of the Social Community

With any community, there are engagement activities that can be found. Of the active social media users, 83% actively engage or have contributed to social media in the past month (HootSuite). Or commenting on a video. On YouTube alone, over "100 million people take a social action every week" (Bullas, J.). This means that they are liking a video, sharing a video, or commenting on a video. However, of the 100 million people performing those social actions, the makeup of those people range greatly in gender identification, age, language, and ethnicity. This leads to one of the problems that all social platforms are experiencing and are in need to find a solution: how to unite the world into a cohesive and inviting community conversation.

Social Media Trends

With all technologies, there are always new initiatives taken on to evolve and grow the technology. Social Media is no different. The initiative trending within the social space are as follows: rebuilding trust, storifying social, closing the ads gap, cracking the commerce code, and messaging eats the world (HootSuite). These overarching goal of these trending initiatives are to integrate seamless revenue models for both the influencers and the platform itself by increasing transparency on privacy and adding new content sharing outlets. Unfortunately, one trend that has not been touched upon yet, that should be touched upon is how to reformat the conversations of the social community.

Case Study: YouTube

YouTube is among the largest social platforms available on the internet, "available in 91 countries and 80 languages" (YouTube for Press). One of the main driving factors of YouTube's success is its symbiotic relationship with its content creators. More specifically, one of its most successful features is its AdSense Program. With this program, Youtube has accounted for "11% of Google's net U.S. ad revenues" (Dutta, A.). With the digital community growing stronger and stronger each year, Youtube has been releasing features aided to bring more money and engagement support for the creator's community.

From Memberships, links to creators' merchandise, and to super chats during live streams, you can see the platform has put time and resources into creating more engagement opportunities between a creator and their community. Unfortunately, there is one part of the platform that seems to have slipped through the cracks of technological advances and evolution: the comments section.

Though comments are not seen as the main content of a social platform, they are a tool that creators and influencers utilize to connect to their community and for the community to connect with each other. Unfortunately, the fact that comments can be seen as repetitive and boring to read through, it is just the tip of the iceberg. There are much more serious problems occurring within the comments section that YouTube and other mega social platforms like Twitter and Facebook have yet to find an appropriate solution for in moderating. Problems such as controlling hate speech, child predators, cyber-bullying and trolling.

These are not just theoretical problems. These are problems that have been covered by national news because of how severe the problem is. One example is that CBS had to disable commenting on one of their live streams covering the congressional hearing on hate crimes because hate speech could not be prevented (Silverstein, J). Another is that YouTube made the temporary

decision to disable all commenting on family vlog channels to prevent child predators from posting inappropriate comments on their children (Binder, M).

The Need: Redesign the conversation

To solve to problem, we need to redesign how the conversation is being moderated and read. We should begin exploring stepping away from a free-for-all commenting environment to an environment that is more user-friendly and conducive to engagement. Only then will members of the community stay in the community for longer, and will the influencer and creators have a tool they can fully utilize to create a meaningful connection with their community.

Redesigning the Social Community

The key to redesigning the conversations within our social community is by introducing automation. By automating moderation, the grouping of repetitve topics, and customized quick responses, we are creating a funneling tool to not only remove the toxicity, inappropriate behavior, and targeted hate, but also to create more engagement by increasing visibility to different converstations on a single topic and providing automated quick responses for community members to utilize.

Automated Moderation

Automating moderation is of most critical importance. Unfortunately, when YouTube, one of the major social platforms available globally, relies on their user base to moderate each other (Kastrenakes, J), it is a sign that there is room for improvement to create a system that does the brunt of the work moderating through the thousands of comments while having the user base decide the level of moderation needed.

The team will create an automated system that removes, hides, or reports to the influencer and platform that might be harmful, hateful, or harassing based off of the platform and influencer moderation preferences. Not only will this system clear the toxicity, inappropriate behavior, and targeted hate, but it will also need to continuously learn new sayings the community creates and attributes to harmful or inappropriate meanings.

UX Redesign including Automation

The second part of the redesign is focused on creating a more usable experience for community members. By using automation to group repetitive topics and responses within a specific thread, members will spend less time scrolling and more time engaging with others in their community. Additionally, by automating quick response phrases curated from the frequently submitted

responses within the thread, members will again, spend less time typing and more time consuming and interacting with the others in their community.

By introducing automation into the user experience redesign, user engagement and retention will increase on a platform, which correlates to increased financial success (Marketing Charts) for the platform, but also for the content creators and influencers. The comments section of any platform is a tool that creators utilize to create connections with their community. Let's make it better.

Cost Benefits

For this project, we will need the following resources listed in the table below to get the prototype built, deployed, and tested. The end goal for this minimum viable product is to be acquired by one of the top 10 social media platforms and integrated into their existing platform base. We are very much aware that this alone has little to no monetization outlets, but we are very much aware that we can package this as a solution a mammoth platform can plug and play rather than develop themselves.

Resource	Cost
UX Researcher	$80,000
UX Designer and Developer	$90,000
AI Specialist	$100,000
Back End Developer	$100,000
IT	$25,000
Shared Office space - WeWork	$12,000
Marketing and Business Development	$43,000
Total	**$450,000**

Let's Strengthen our Communities

We cannot ignore the fact that there are not only major human behavioral problems attached to social platforms but room to advance it's commentary sections. By building out a smart funnel, not only would the community have a cleaner, safer, and non-misleading environment to engage with each other, but the community platforms will also have higher retention and revenue growth due to the higher engagement. Let's redesign the conversation so that it fits with the needs of our generation and the following generations that will soon join us in our digital communities.

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