Mozilla wants to use people's stories to shame YouTube into being better

Mozilla is trying to shame YouTube into doing more to fix its numerous recommendation algorithm issues, many of which can lead users down dangerous content spirals.

With a new social media campaign called #YouTubeRegrets, Mozilla is asking people to submit their own experiences of falling down the recommendation rabbit hole, and discuss how they got from point A to point B. Everything is done through a Google Doc, which includes a little more information about the project.

"Once, at 2 a.m., you searched YouTube for 'Did aliens build Stonehenge?' Ever since, your YouTube recommendations have been a mess: Roswell, wormholes, Illuminati," Mozilla writes. "YouTube's recommendation engine can lead users down bizarre rabbit holes – and they're not always harmless."

YouTube has been accused by tech critics, reporters, and academics of not taking enough action to fix its recommendation algorithm. Concerns over how younger YouTube users, including children, teenagers, and young adults, access content on the site have led to company executives, including CEO Susan Wojcicki and chief product officer Neal Mohan, speaking out about the company's responsibility when it comes to recommending the most authoritative videos on most subjects. Still, countless reports have discovered that people are easily and effortlessly drawn into a network of harmful content, which YouTube often describes as borderline (meaning it doesn't warrant being removed, but is less likely to be

recommended).

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Mozilla’s goal is to use people’s collected experiences to “help put pressure on YouTube to do better.” Once the stories are collected, Mozilla’s team is going to bring them to a meeting with YouTube’s team to “ask them to make serious commitments towards fixing this problem.”

It’s unclear if this will actually do anything to move YouTube’s process along – something the company has repeatedly said it’s focused on fixing – but at least one former YouTube engineer sees it as a start.

“Now when you see absurd/hateful recommendations on YouTube, you have somewhere to report by which video it started,” Mozilla fellow Guillaume Chaslot tweeted.

If you want to submit a story to Mozilla, you can do so here.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/9/12/20862352/youtube-algorithm-recommendation-social-campaign-mozilla-firefox