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ENC1102-0036

7 April 2016

Independent Creators and Freebooting

In November of 2015 Facebook announced that they receive roughly 8 billion video views per day. While that is a quite an accomplishment such a number is practically impossible to achieve. *Kurzgesagt*, or better known as *In a Nutshell* creates a video essay titled “How Facebook is Stealing Billions of Views” to explain how Facebook is able to reach such a milestone thru stolen content and false analytics. *In a Nutshell* is a small design studio based out of Munich, Germany that are known for creating distinct designs, animations, interactive software, and music to inform an audience about the fields of education, science, and commerce. They have worked for clients such as Microsoft, Autodesk, and Audi. They describe themselves as “a small team of like-minded people who want to make science look beautiful. Because it is beautiful.”. In 2013 they launched a YouTube channel to publish personal projects revolving around information and science. As of March 2016 that channel is a prominent YouTube channel with hundreds of millions of views and over 2 million subscribers. The video *How Facebook is Stealing Billions of Views,* was created to persuade, inform, and provide an outlet to convince an audience that Facebook’s statistics are false and about the troubles independent creators face when their content is stolen and reposted without consent, or freebooted and how big sites such as Facebook are doing very little to help.

Facebook boasts about its views but the retention of the viewers is so low that it shouldn’t technically be called a view. Facebook counts a view after 3 seconds and with videos autoplaying as you scroll through your timeline if you scroll slow enough you count as a view, even if the video is muted, compared to videos on a site such as YouTube the user retention is drastically low. On top of that Facebook prefers to show videos from its own player rather than videos from other sources such as YouTube. Facebook tries to keep users on the site for as long as possible to view advertisements so they can make money off of ad revenue. It seems like Facebook has done very little to combat stolen videos. People are constantly uploading content without the permission of the creator or even citing the creator. Some of these people end up creating a large fanbase off this stolen content, sometimes even bigger than the original creator itself. It’s very difficult to even find your stolen content in the first place without it being informed by someone. It’s pretty much luck whether or not you are able to find the stolen content. Unlike sites like YouTube who have safeguards to protect content from being stolen Facebook has no such safeguards and it is a difficult process to claim your content. When a stolen work is found Facebook has a very long process to claim that work as your own and takes a few days to process. By the time the work is processed the content is usually old news and has gained most of the attention that it will ever receive. So by the time something is taken down, it’s too late for it to make an affect and the people who stole the content just get a slap on the wrist allowing them to steal whatever they please with little repercussion. This can become detrimental to some creators who live off their work and could affect someone’s income or a viral piece could be the exposure needed to make or break a career.

The video tries to make it seem as if it is unbiased by including counterpoints and appeals for the offending side such as the fact that Facebook’s business model tries to keep users on their site as long as possible so they can view advertisements and that some freebooters are trying to create a name for themselves by curating content they show a very obvious bias for the case at hand considering the fact that they disclosed that they themselves have been effected by the issue, having their own video stolen and published without their consent. *In a Nutshell* aims to reach a general audience, trying to target anyone who will listen and advocate their stand.

*In a Nutshell* uses a large amount of evidence to reason their stance and provides a list of sources used including statistical evidence to back up their claim about things such as viewer retention. While there is very little academic research on this topic due to it being such a recent event they are unable to bring a lot of academic evidence but instead they provide primary sources of incidents of content being stolen and the long process it takes to get it removed from Facebook from other large YouTube channels and online personalities. They also have dealt with the problem directly, having their own content stolen and reuploaded without consent.

Being a design firm the creators know just what to do to appeal to the emotions of the audience. With a title like *How Facebook is Stealing Billions of Views* , *In a Nutshell* tries to evoke a sense of curiosity out of a potential viewer with such a title by not only informing them of the fact that Facebook is stealing so many views, but also how they are able to do such a thing. *In a Nutshell* does a fantastic job engaging an audience considering their videos look very professional and include visuals, animation, music, and narration that is very aesthetically pleasing. These elements are what make them able to create educational and academic videos on what can sometimes be very confusing topics while still reaching a general audience. The characters in the video are presented in such a way that makes it easy for viewers to understand by providing visual representations of Facebook and creators, personifying Facebook as a sort of giant evil force and antagonizing it as a sort of monster, preying on these tiny innocent birds that represent the independent creators. The narrator has a very smooth and deep voice including a bit of sarcasm and humor in his delivery to help connect to the audience.

By informing and convincing an audience who would be none the wiser of the problems that independent creators have to face and the small amount of options they have to fight back against large companies such as Facebook when it comes to something such as stolen content. *In a Nutshell* was able to create a very compelling argument about the problems creators face and how sites like Facebook are doing very little to help. By combining credible primary sources and first-hand accounts, trying to show a sense of authority over the issue with their large fanbase and reputation, and use of pleasing animation, graphics, and narration.

Kurzgesagt – In a Nutshell. "How Facebook Is Stealing Billions of Views." YouTube. 10 Nov. 2015. Web. 1 Mar. 2016.