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OPEN FOR PROMPTS, OPEN FOR FILLS: CREATIVE DEPLOYMENT OF SOCIAL NETWORK SITES INTO FANDOM KINK MEMES

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Introduction: You Don't Know Me, Just 'Everything' About Me

Profile-centric social network sites, including but not limited to Facebook, offer platforms for online communication that make core assumptions about how users want, or should want, to display information and perform identity. These assumptions can guide what is and is not distributed between users. The ease of use social network sites offer may prevent users from thinking critically about the kind of interactions they are performing. Creative deployment of existing social network site architecture offers the possibility for users to define the online experience they want, rather than the one they are told they should have. The social network site calls out, make a profile! Add friends! Subscribe! Follow! However, these commands, both written on the interface and coded in the structure of the site, can be used differently, against their intent.

This paper considers fandom kink memes as creative deployments of LiveJournal.com and Delicious.com architecture. In creative deployment, fandom participants refashion an online space out of a preexisting site, crafting a social space that does not formally exist prior to intervention on the part of participants. Kink memes are a collective, anonymous space for requesting, distributing, and encouraging fan fiction. Participants are not permitted to post to the meme while logged into their LiveJournal.com accounts and the Delicious.com account is collectively maintained. Instead of undertaking the resource intensive project of developing a new social network or archive site, kink meme participants fashion the social experience they desire out of the architectural idiosyncrasies of existing online platforms. Indeed, the flexibility found in the LJ architecture means that the site continues to be used, even as other members of the user-base have moved on to other platforms. LJ continues to be relevant because of architectural elements not found in other sites. The meme is a playful and purposeful rearrangement of existing resources.

This paper is rooted in careful textual and formal analysis of the visual and interactive aspects of the LiveJournal.com interface, the Delicious.com interface, and kink memes constructed from these two sites. The Dragon Age Kink sites (<http://dragonage->

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kink.livejournal.com/ and http://www.delicious.com/dragonage_kink) are used as the basis for formal analysis of how kink memes are fashioned on each platform.

Kink Memes on LiveJournal: One!User, ?? Participants

Research on LiveJournal.com often discusses identity performance through both profile space and journal entries (Kendall, 2007; Lindemann, 2005). The seeming contradiction between the public aspect of social network sites and the private notion of diary or journal writing is examined. Research concerning LiveJournal.com's connection with fan cultures focuses on the fan and her product, rather than the particular interaction between fan, product and social network site (Lothian, Busse, & Reid, 2007).

The LiveJournal.com kink meme is registered in the LJ system as a *user account* where a single user is assumed, rather than the *community account*, where multiple users are assumed. Kink meme participants post anonymous comments to a post initiated by the journal maintainer(s). Participants "prompt" other users, asking for stories with specific sexual acts or character pairings. They "fill," where someone's prompt is fulfilled by a fan fiction writer. Finally, they may comment on existing prompts and fills, offering encouragement, criticism, or endorsement. By using the comment feature, the only means of anonymous posting on LJ, rather than posting new entries from logged-in user accounts, the social network site convention of profiles as the unit of interaction is disrupted. Many other social network sites have done away with anonymous commenting, leaving LJ as an architecture that can fulfill a specific desire not accounted for in other platforms.

Kink Memes on Delicious.com: Fun:With_Tags, Fun:With_Folksonomy

Delicious.com, a social network site for organizing and sharing bookmarks, has drawn particular attention from library scientists interested in collaborative or social tagging (Golder & Hubermann, 2006). De.licio.us, Delicious.com's precursor, has been considered in regards to folksonomies, where collaborative tagging leads to a classification system without hierarchy (Mathes, 2004). The single user to single account equivalence assumed of most social network sites is necessary for studying tagging behavior contributing to folksonomies.

The Delicious.com kink meme iteration is a single account that indexes the comments on the LiveJournal.com account. Thousands of comments attach to a single post on LiveJournal.com, making the whole project difficult to navigate and occasionally "breaking" the post, keeping other users from commenting. LiveJournal.com allows for the tagging of posts but not individual comments. Comments do have unique URLs that can be bookmarked and tagged on Delicious.com. In this way, the architecture of Delicious.com is used to fill a gap left in LJ. By exploiting features of both sites, meme participants can approximate the online space they desire.

There are fewer Delicious.com meme archivists than LiveJournal.com meme participants, since login information is required to engaging in tagging. Still, multiple individuals use a single login and the meme remains collective. The disruption of the single user-single profile paradigm mirrors that which occurs on LJ. Kink meme tags on

Delicious.com resemble a controlled vocabulary in places and collaborative tagging in others, but the process remains strongly collective.

Conclusion: Combating Calcification

Fan fiction communities are conceptually equipped to construct new uses out of existing social network sites. Fan fiction is predicated on the idea that existing canon is material for expansion and reorganization. Derecho (2006) declares fan fiction to be “an ethical practice” because it “is philosophically opposed to hierarchy, property and the dominance of one variant of a series over another variant” (p. 77). Kink memes are a playful and creative expression of online interaction with a distinct ethical dimension. The existing site encourages one style of behavior, increasingly a profit conscious one, and kink meme participants behave counter to these encouragements.

The LiveJournal.com and Delicious.com kink meme accounts disrupt the social network site assumption that the individual profile is the basic unit of interaction within the platform. Anonymity is in conflict with core assumptions regarding the public or semi-public display of social connections and profiles (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Creativity is highlighted over individual performances of personality or taste because all fan fiction is posted to the meme through LiveJournal.com's anonymous comment feature and by the meme using a single Delicious.com account to index content. In kink memes, social network site architectures are suggestions, not hard and fast rules. Manipulating existing platforms allows those with new ideas to carve out an online space that is still accessible by a targeted audience. It is our job, as users, artists, and appreciators, to ensure that social network sites do not become calcified in our lives. We should question, manipulate, and create.

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