Imagining Algorithms in Everyday Social Media Life

An Investigation into the Algorithmic Imaginary within the Elsagate Discussion on Reddit

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Abstract

It is important to research media users' awareness and perception of the increasingly omnipresent algorithms on the social media platforms they use, for those algorithms can have the power to shape social and domestic life by mediating, supplementing, augmenting, monitoring and regulating social interactions. Although a variety of sociologists, communication researchers and media scholars focus on the social construction of technology in general, little research has focussed on the social construction of algorithms, or as media scholar Taina Bucher puts it, the 'algorithmic imaginary'. By using a currently relevant phenomenon related to algorithms, namely the Elsagate phenomenon occurring on YouTube Kids, I investigate how aware social media users are of algorithms, how the algorithmic imaginary is shaped, and how part of the digital media discourse on algorithms takes shape. My argument is that the changing relationship between Internet users and social media platforms and their algorithms not only caused algorithmic awareness and changing algorithmic imaginaries, but also shifted domestic power structures. Results showed that the Reddit users are only slightly aware of YouTube Kids' algorithms, but they were actively confronted with questions about their responsibility, agency and power in relation to the usage of algorithmic platforms in domestic life.

Keywords

Algorithms, Algorithmic imaginary, Algorithmic awareness, Social media platforms, Elsagate, Discourse analysis.

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The Elsagate Phenomenon

> *We just deleted the YouTube Kids app from the iPad today after discovering*
> *my 3 year old nephew was watching creepy Mickey Mouse and friends videos*
> *and strange adaptation of PBS Kids logos and intros that were strangely disturbing,*
> *and, that he was being recommended more and more creepy videos even after*
> *we blocked multiple channels. At this point, it was like the app had been taken*
> *over by a virus of creepy videos. I went on Reddit to see if other people were*
> *talking about this and that's when I learned about Elsagate.*
> -   JaxJames on r/Elsagate

YouTube's popularity among children 12 years of age resulted in the creation of the child focused platform 'YouTube Kids' in 2015. YouTube Kids is designed with special child-friendly filters and several parental control options, so that the platform can function as a safe environment for young children to watch cartoon shows on and to discover the world through videos (Perez). Although several algorithms are at work on the YouTube Kids platform to filter out content with violence, sexuality or fetishes in order to protect child viewers, from YouTube Kids' launch onwards, such videos have nonetheless started to appear and shocked both children and their parents (Di Placido; Maheshwari). The appearance of these videos on the child-friendly platform was eventually coined by the Internet community as the 'Elsagate phenomenon', or 'Elsagate' for short. Elsagate, named after the frequent occurrence of the famous Disney princess Elsa in these child-unfriendly videos, thus refers to the controversy around large numbers of so-called inappropriate YouTube Kids channels and videos (Di Placido). These videos often include children's favourite cartoon characters, such as Elsa, Spiderman, or Peppa Pig, in animated or live action videos, in violent or lewd situations, often set in nursery rhymes (Maheshwari).

After naming the phenomenon 'Elsagate', the news of the circulation of videos with sexuality, violence and fetishes on YouTube Kids started to spread, both in popular media articles and on social media.[1] In turn, this caused, and was caused by, a widespread discussion on Twitter and, particularly, on Reddit. Reddit is designed as a community-driven platform for submitting, commenting, and rating of links, articles, images, videos, and text posts without character restrictions (Singer et al. 517). The platform therefore enabled tens of thousands of people to join a special subreddit, called Elsagate or r/Elsagate, on which they could discuss the Elsagate phenomenon (Satherley). Because of the large global media coverage of Elsagate, together with the

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[1] It was covered by dozens of news articles, in America (The New York Times), in England (The BBC), The Netherlands (NOS), Germany (Der Standard), Spain (Sputnik Mundo), Italy (NewNotizie), and even in Mexico (Mundo TKM) and China (Hongkong Free Press). It was further openly discussed by famous rapper B.o.B., comedian Joe Rogan, and Internet commentator Philip DeFranco.

increasing decline of advertisers, Google hired thousands of moderators who have been actively seeking and flagging Elsagate videos since 2017, thus feeding the YouTube algorithm data from which it should learn (Crawford & Gillespie 411). Because of the hired moderators, Google has since discovered and removed over 270 YouTube accounts and over 150,000 child-unfriendly videos, and is still actively seeking such videos on the YouTube Kids platform (Dredge; Kulwin).

The assumption is that because YouTube Kids' algorithms are central to the working of the YouTube Kids platform and the existence (and continuation) of the Elsagate phenomenon, the Reddit debate on Elsagate should contain a glimpse of how media users talk about, imagine, perceive and experience YouTube Kids' algorithms, and all that, today, is popularly included under the heading 'algorithms'.[2] The aim of this research is therefore to investigate this glimpse into media users' experiences with algorithms, which is also called 'the algorithmic imaginary' by media scholar Taina Bucher, to eventually investigate the broader discourse around algorithms (30). My argument is that the changing relationship between parents and the YouTube Kids' platform, and its algorithms, not only caused algorithmic awareness, algorithmic literacy and changing algorithmic imaginaries but also shifted domestic power structures.

This analysis is situated within research on how people socially understand technology in general, also called the 'technical imaginary' by sociologist Patrice Flichy, which is framed by the discursive construction of media (Flichy 698; Lister et al. 69). Specifically, within the technical imaginary, this research investigates how people socially understand algorithms. The term 'algorithmic imaginary', thus coined by media scholar Taina Bucher, is used to describe the way people imagine, perceive, and experience algorithms (30). Therefore, this concept is central to the analysis of Reddit users' experience with algorithms. However, as Bucher uses the concept of algorithmic imaginary to investigate how this affects further social media use, I use the concept to investigate the construction of the algorithmic imaginary to eventually research a small part of the popular digital media discourse on algorithms. I do not use an experiment, as computer scientists Hamilton et al. suggest and eventually did, or investigate algorithm specific expressions, as Bucher did, but instead use a socially relevant event related to algorithms to investigate in, I argue, a more natural way:

- If and how aware Reddit users are about algorithms;
- How they imagine and experience algorithms to investigate how they socially construct algorithms; and
- Subsequently, how a part of the popular digital media discourse on algorithms is created.

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[2] As one may notice in the rest of the analysis, code, coded objects, processes, AI and software in general is also often thought of by the Reddit users as being algorithm related.

By first using quantitative digital research methods in combination with keywords, as media professor Richard Rogers suggested, it is validated whether a part of the Elsagate discussion on Reddit is indeed focused on certain YouTube Kids' algorithms (79). In other words, it is investigated whether and to what extent the Reddit users are aware of algorithms (Hamilton et al. 636). Then, a qualitative critical discourse, as described by linguist Teun van Dijk and further explained by David Helsmondhalgh, is performed on specific parts of the Reddit discussion that show some algorithmic awareness, with the goal of investigating how Reddit users construct the algorithmic imaginary and to link this to the broader discourse around algorithms (Van Dijk 97; Helsmondhalgh 130). The central question in this research is therefore:

How is the algorithmic imaginary of Reddit users constructed in light of the Elsagate discussion
 Sub-questions of this research are:

1) Is there any form of algorithmic awareness in the Reddit discussion on the Elsagate phenomenon and if so, to what extent are Reddit users aware of algorithms?
2) What do Reddit users imagine and experience about algorithms in light of the Elsagate discussion on Reddit that shows algorithmic awareness?
3) How is part of the popular digital media discourse on algorithms shaped within the discussion on r/Elsagate?

According to both computer, media scholars and social scientists, it's important to research media user's awareness and perception of the increasing omnipresent algorithms on social media platforms, for they may possess the power to shape social and domestic life (Hamilton et al. 632; Bucher 33; Uricchio 125; Kitchin & Dodge 9). Social scientists Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge argue that as part of coded objects, infrastructures, processes and assemblages – which are often popularly known as 'algorithms' -, actively shape people's daily interactions by mediating, supplementing, augmenting, monitoring, regulating and facilitating these interactions (9). Furthermore, media scholar Mercedes Bunz argues that algorithmic awareness can further open public debate about the use of algorithms and eventually change the way people act with and on algorithmic platforms (Bunz 250; Hamilton et al. 632; Bucher 40). As sociologists Michael Bloor and Fiona Wood state on discourse, every discourse – in this case, a part of the popular digital media discourse on algorithms – invites a different course of action; here, it invites a different way of handling algorithmic platforms such as YouTube Kids (54). Algorithms are thus not only the actual processes that steer our social communication and interaction, but how people perceive and think about these processes also changes our interactions with these algorithms.

When Social Media Platforms, Their Algorithms and Their Users' Imaginations Meet

This section lays out the theoretical background of the current study. First, the platform YouTube and its subdivision YouTube Kids are explicated on, for this contextualizes the general discussion on r/Elsagate. Second, an academic overview is given of what I argue are important theories and ideas on the concept of algorithms, to contextualize the algorithmic discussion on r/Elsagate and support the narrowing down of the corpus selection in the method section. Third, theories explicate people's imaginary of the Internet, and specifically algorithms, and it will be explained how these theories will be used for further analysis.

YouTube Kids as Algorithmic Platform

As media scholars Jean Burgess and Joshua Green argue that YouTube has a contrasting and open character, I argue that the Elsagate videos could have the potential to be both created and spread throughout the popular platform because of, among other things, this contrasting and open character (Burgess & Green 6). It allows non-professional users to create and share content on a platform in which niche groups could freely engage with that content, while the platform's business model could profit from this engagement (Burgess & Green 6; Van Dijck 110). YouTube could profit from the engagement of its users because the users create data that the platform can use for its algorithmic processes, which stimulates longer watch time and increasingly personalized advertisements. Specifically, YouTube Kids is actively collecting children's data and using this data for their algorithmic processes to build personalized data profiles to customize advertisements (Maheshwari 'YouTube Is'). While YouTube advises children not to use the platform and YouTube Kids asks parents for their consent, YouTube is at the same time making big advertisement deals with toy factories,[3] acknowledging the fact that children (and their data) are indeed a big part of their business model and ignoring several children's online privacy protection laws.[4]

Returning to the introduction, there could be multiple reasons for the global reaction to the Elsagate phenomenon. One reason may be that people were shocked to hear that it was possible to bypass YouTube Kids algorithms, despite the algorithms having been extensively researched by Google's software engineers (see Appendix A; Baluja et al.; Covington et al.). The Elsagate

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[3] A reference is made here to last year's 'eight-figure' advertisement deal between YouTube Kids and toy's brand Mattel (Gutelle).

[4] Among those laws is the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, an American law that guarantees the privacy of children under thirteen years on internet, by imposing 'certain requirements on operators of websites or online services' to keep them from 'collecting personal information online from a child under thirteen years of age' (Federal Trade Commission 3927). However, YouTube is actively collecting children's data and using these for algorithmic processes with the justification that it advised children not to use the platform, and YouTube Kids is actively collecting children's data with the justification of obliging parents to set up a family account and to consent to the collection of their children's data (Orlowski).

phenomenon could thus prove that large technology companies, such as Google, can still not entirely transfer all responsibilities to automatic ranking, filtering, monitoring, and other functions created by software programs built on machine-learning algorithms. Another reason could be the so-called 'parental dilemma'. Social scientists', such as Lynn Sharp Paine, have showed that parents already feel guilty for not giving their children enough personal time and attention, and now they transferred an, arguably small, part of their parental responsibilities to a platform that makes use of, and is used by, their children's data for their algorithmic processes (Paine 81). As one Reddit user states: 'The [Elsagate videos] are designed to be picked up by YouTube's algorithm in such a way that they come up one or two videos after some 4 year old's parent opens up YouTube Kids on their iPad, presses turns on auto-play, and walks away to try to get some chores done' (Appendix H.96). In any case, Internet users were actively confronted by the Elsagate phenomenon with YouTube Kids' data collection, algorithms and business model on which it is built, as well as their own parenting methods in combination with questions about the usage of media in domestic life (Lister et al. 243).[5] These sociotechnical actors only came together when the platform stopped working as was previously thought that it should (Cressman 5).[6]

The Academic Contextualization of Algorithms

Not only are algorithms central to the workings of social media platforms such as YouTube and YouTube Kids, but they are also central to this research into Reddit users' social construction of algorithms, or the algorithmic imaginary.[7] While this research into the algorithmic imaginary focuses on people's own arguments when discussing the concept of algorithms, I argue that it is fruitful for a researcher to first gain knowledge of algorithms in a media-specific academic context, so one knows exactly to what extent media users have or still lack algorithmic knowledge and to use keywords (which are underlined) as basis for further corpus selection.

Media professors William Uriccho and Viktor Mayer-Schönberger argue that <u>algorithms</u> have been central to culture for a long time, but with the datafication of society and increasing reliance on

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[5] The analysis hereafter will further support this statement.

[6] A short reference could be made here to Bruno Latour's ideas of black boxes and 'punctualization'. Latour uses the concept of black boxes often to describe technical objects that appear to be self-evident or obvious to the observer, such as the YouTube platform and its algorithms. Upon opening the black box, a variety of social aspects and associated technical elements are being put forward for investigation (Cressman 5). Accordingly, punctualization refers to the process by which 'complex actor-networks are being black boxed and linked with other networks to create larger actor networks' (Cressman 6). In this case, YouTube's algorithms function as black boxes of actor-networks on its own, but are seen as one black box, which is then again linked with other networks of both human and/or non-human actors (Cressman 7).

[7] A reference is made here to Van Dijk and Poell's four social media logic functions - programmability, popularity, connectivity and datafication - which actively change and guide social interactions on social media platforms. They argue that datafication, and using these data for algorithmic processes, is the logic in which all other logics are grounded (9). Datafication is the transformation of all kinds of social action into online quantified data, thus making real-time tracking and predictive analysis possible (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier 75).

algorithms to organize this data, algorithms have gained a more prominent and <u>automated</u> role in both contemporary culture and academic research (Uricchio 125; Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier 75). Communications professor Tarleton Gillespie states that there are, despite its prominence, still many ways to talk about algorithms, for algorithms have various definitions across different research disciplines (18). Technical scientists would describe that in order to create an algorithm, a <u>model</u> - a computational formalization of a problem and its goal – must be formulated (Gillespie 20). Subsequently, an algorithm is created, which is 'the procedure for addressing the task as operationalized' (Gillespie 20). In less technical terms, an algorithm is thus much like a recipe: it is a logical series of programmable steps consisting of functional interactions of <u>variables</u>, steps, and indicators for organizing and acting on a body of <u>data</u> to quickly achieve the desired outcome (Gillespie 19).[8]

   While the previous technical description might imply that all algorithms are objective organizing schemes to obtain an unbiased outcome, communication and media researchers highlight that this is not always the case, particularly not for social media-specific algorithms that include human intents, biases and prejudices (Gillespie 23; Diakopoulos 400; Uricchio 131; Rieder & Röhle 71). Furthermore, while working with or researching a social media platform, more bias could be created by algorithms' <u>autonomous</u> and <u>self-optimizing</u> decision-making (Diakopoulos 400; Uricchio 133). Social media algorithms make autonomous decisions by <u>prioritization,</u> <u>classification</u>, <u>association </u>and <u>filtering</u>, which are often chained in order to make 'higher-level decisions and information transformations' (Diakopoulos 400). According to computer scientist Enging Bozdag, particularly the filtering of data, which is the inclusion or exclusion of certain information according to various regulations and standards, could result in a presentation of delimited data <u>personalized</u> to the user or researcher (Bozdag 210; Uricchio 134). The Elsagate phenomenon is just one small example of how autonomous decision making through prioritizing, classifying, associating and consequently filtering of content on a platform can impact everyday life.[9]

   To undermine the relative power that social media algorithms have through autonomous decision-making, and for the public to be able to reproduce it, criticize it, and make more informed decisions, media and communication scholars, such as professors Bernhard Rieder and Theo Röhle, argue that more <u>transparency</u> of the methods, workings, and assumptions of the algorithms is

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[8] The example of an algorithm as resembling a recipe is used in many different texts, courses and even in one of my previous researches analysing a YouTube Kids network. However, I find it such a striking and clarifying analogy, that I decided to use it here again.

[9] While it can, and will, be argued that algorithms and algorithmic processes are not only responsible for the Elsagate phenomenon and the parent's emotional reaction, arguably, the algorithmic processes helped making Elsagate content popular and being able to show up on the recommended videos. When children eventually saw these videos, next to more child-friendly YouTube videos, they could be traumatized or at least slightly shocked and this could in turn change their perception on everyday life.

needed (71). However, corporations such as Google limit how transparent they are to protect their algorithms that have become intellectual property and when being transparent may undermine their business (Crawford 87). Researchers from both computer and media studies argue that by using smart interface design, the platforms therefore only show the outcomes of certain algorithmic processes, while hiding the exact algorithmic processes, thus creating black-boxed algorithms (Eslami et al. 153; Hamilton et al. 633; Rieder & Röhle 76).[10] Although these black-boxed algorithms are not entirely accessible or visible, philosopher Maurice Jean Jacques Merleau-Ponty suggests that people have always encountered the world through invisibilities and are accustomed to mentally constructing an object, in this case an algorithm, without actually perceiving it (78). This means that in order to make sense of these black-boxed algorithms, people are creating their own ideas about what they are and how they work (Bucher 32).

The Algorithmic Imaginary for Analysing Discourse

As shown, there are several approaches to thinking about (social media) algorithms in the academic field, but less research has focused on the social construction of algorithms in everyday (social media) life.[11] However, everyday life is exactly the site 'in which the popular meanings and uses of new media are negotiated and played out', where practises – such as the Elsagate phenomenon – and relationships – such as between parents, children and media – are being made sense of (Lister et al. 239).

Although Bucher argues that algorithmic awareness and algorithmic imaginary are separate concepts, I argue that they are related concepts, as different awareness levels might give rise to different algorithmic experiences and ideas (Bucher 32). Key authors researching algorithm awareness are computer scientists Kevin Hamilton, Karrie Karahalios, Christian Sandvig and Motahhare Eslami (632). They describe algorithmic awareness as the extent to which users are aware of algorithms that underlie the workings of a platform.[12] Hamilton et al. propose that a research project on algorithmic interfaces, such as the algorithmic YouTube Kids interface, while having limited access to the actual algorithm, such as YouTube's filter algorithms being the

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[10] Only a few works describe to some minor extent the actual YouTube algorithms, such as research performed by Google engineers Baluja et al, Google researchers Paul Covington et al. and algorithm strategist consultant Matt Gielen, all of which has been explicated on in Appendix A.

[11] A reference must be made here to Wiebe E. Bijker's book on the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT), a school within STS, in which Bijker, among other things, argues that social institutes shape technology (4). However, I would argue for a more Latourian approach in which there is an interplay between non-human and human actors that shape technology (Cressman 3).

[12] As is the case, as Van Dijk and Poell argue that algorithms that datafication, and using this data for algorithmic processes, is the condition in which other social media logic functions - such as programmability, popularity and connectivity - are grounded (9).

intellectual property of Google, should strive to examine users' expressions to determine their awareness of processes at work throughout their everyday consumption (636).

A key author describing the social construction of technology in general, by investigating the discourse on technology, is sociologist Patrice Flichy. Flichy was the first to apply imaginary, specifically technical imaginary, to the field of the Internet.[13] He used it to study the jointly, created imagined world in which technology develops, or as he describes it, 'the study of the imaginatively created common world required to develop a technical device' (698). According to Flichy, the contemporary social imaginary is collectively created by sharing, negotiating, and eventually accepting certain understandings, which enable new forms of innovation and new ways of using those innovations (699). The social imaginaries, utopias and dystopias, which are created and which together create the technical imaginary, are seen by Flichy as an essential part of social practices, as something with which people make sense of certain objects (698).

Within the concept of the technical imaginary, which describes the social construction of the Internet at large, Taina Bucher was the first to focus more specifically on people's social construction of algorithms, thus coining the term 'algorithmic imaginary'. Algorithmic imaginary, according to Bucher, refers to "the ways of thinking about what algorithms are, what they should be [and] how they function" (39 - 40). Algorithms are not only constituted by computational processes and coding, but also by institutions, people, contexts, and the way that people make sense of – in other words how they perceive, imagine and experience – algorithms (Bucher 32). It is important to note that media users do not actually encounter the algorithm as such, but they encounter the outcomes of algorithmic processes that generate certain moods, sensations, and ideas about the algorithms (Bucher 32). Thus, for this research, there is no need to actually access the algorithm itself, for it can be argued according to Bucher that the algorithm is 'accessed' through people's experiences (32). Flichy states that this imaginary is important, because it is necessary to produce a collective meaning, which is then negotiated and can eventually be accepted by all (699).

The awareness and subsequent imaginary of algorithms are investigated to examine how algorithms are viewed in everyday social media life. Media scholars Martin Lister et al. identify that research on information and communication technologies in everyday life often emphasizes 'the shifting or negotiated meanings and implications of media technologies as they are adopted and consumed in the home' (243). Often, the usage of new media coincides with changing domestic boundaries, relationships, and changing Foucauldian domestic power structures. As Lister et al. describe, households have their own dynamics and politics with which they negotiate the meaning

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[13] He was neither the first to coin the concept of the imaginary nor is he the first to apply it in media studies, for Jacques Lacan already mentioned The Imaginary in psychoanalytic theory and De Lauretis et al. already applied technological imaginary in film studies, but Flichy is the first to apply the concept of technical imaginary to the field of internet.

and usage of new media in everyday life (243). As linguist, Van Dijk believes that exactly those ideas, such as societal values, norms, and power structures are subtly embedded into the linguistics of media texts (Helsmondhalgh 130; Van Dijk 97). Therefore, this analysis will investigate the Reddit user's comments for their word order, lexical style, coherence, local semantic moves, topic choice, and rhetorical figures, to investigate a part of the broader discourse within the algorithmic imaginary (Van Dijk 99).

Method

In this section, it will be explicated how this research analyses Reddit users' construction of the algorithmic imaginary. First, the corpus selection is discussed. Second, the corpus is prepared for analysis, thus strategies for analysing both the algorithmic awareness and the algorithmic imaginary within the corpus are clarified. As this research uses digital methods, three digital tools were made use of and are shortly explained in Appendix B.

Corpus Selection

Before any analysis can be done, a corpus must be selected and obtained. The second most referred to platform, after Twitter,[14] to discuss Elsagate on was Reddit, which not only hosted an entire popular subreddit dedicated to the topic, on which lengthy discussions could unfold, but whose API also proved to have no time restrictions for obtaining comments. Using Python Reddit API Wrapper and notebook application Jupyter, both of which are detailed in Appendix B, all comments on the ten most popular posts of the now-archived subreddit Elsagate (r/Elsagate) were gathered.

The entire subreddit was created by Reddit user *dornhoeschen* on the 23rd of June, 2017, and since acquired 43,893 subscribers. Specifics of the ten most popular posts on the subreddit, including date of creation, the creator, total percentage of upvotes, and number of Reddit points – which is the number of upvotes minus the number of downvotes – are listed in Appendix C. It is important to note that none of the Reddit users are anonymous, for they all have been asked for permission to use their Reddit name and comments (see Appendix D).[15] The total amount of words collected from the

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[14] At first, the aim was to obtain Twitter conversations about the Elsagate phenomenon, for a lot of Elsagate news articles pointed towards the Elsagate Twitter conversation. However, the Twitter application programming interface (API) has a time limitation, which restricts the acquisition of tweets from longer than seven days ago, while the Elsagate discussion was at its peak between August 2017 and December 2017. Furthermore, Bucher only analysed expressions about algorithms on social media platform Twitter that included the word 'algorithm', which restricted her findings in two ways: Twitter had a 140-character restriction, which limited the opportunity for large discussion, and more nuanced tweets discussing or acknowledging algorithms have not been included in her research.

[15] Because of ethical questions concerning privacy, consent to mention the Reddit users' names and comments is asked of all Reddit users mentioned within this research (Van Es, Coombs & Boeschoten 175). However, just over 20 Reddit users e-mailed back, even after e-mailing for a second time, as can be seen in Appendix D.

ten most popular posts in the Elsagate subreddit amounted to 1,778 comments, which in total have 86,678 words, all created between the 26th of June, 2017, and the 1st of January, 2018.[16]

Corpus Pre-Analysis

Capturing Algorithmic Awareness

To investigate the Reddit users' algorithmic awareness within this dataset, this research makes use of quantitative digital research methods, in this case specifically text mining techniques and tools, on the corpus of data collected from Reddit. Text mining can be defined as '[…] a knowledge-intensive process in which a user interacts with a document collection over time by using a suite of analysis tools' (Feldman & Sanger 1). Text mining is specifically focused on the identification, and eventually extraction, of representative characteristics of texts made by language (Feldman & Sanger 1). It exploits techniques from corpus-based computational linguistics, in this case corpus analysis toolkit AntConc to investigate the Reddit posts (Anthony 729; see Appendix B).

Keywords have been used within AntConc to find Reddit posts within the dataset that to some extent describe, explain, trace, indicate or judge algorithms. As media professor Richard Rogers explains, keywords can be useful for social research, for they can indicate the levels of concern for an issue and rank certain actors, such as Reddit users and their comments on algorithms (79). Because keywords influence the outcomes of the queries on AntConc, I will follow Rogers suggestion to use keywords that negatively judge, neutrally indicate, and positively describe algorithms (87).[17] Some keywords were found through the use of the academic contextualisation of algorithms, such as the keywords 'associate', black-box', 'model', 'platform', and 'filter', and others through manually investigating the dataset for algorithmically indicating keywords, such as 'AI', 'bot' and 'formula'; all have been justified in Appendix E. All keywords and their conjugations of these words were searched for in the dataset using AntConc. Eventually, all message including some acknowledgement of algorithm were assembled into a dataset to be further investigated for their construction of the algorithmic imaginary and broader discourses (see Appendix H).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Although quantitative research into a corpus of texts proves to be valuable, it is supplemented in this research with a qualitative textual analysis in the form of a critical discourse analysis as described by

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[16] While obtaining the data, comment information has also been acquired. Therefore, a high number of words simply exist out of 'Parent ID', 'Comment ID', 'Username', and the parent IDs, comment IDs and usernames of the Reddit posts and the author itself. After filtering these words out, only 86,678 words remained, which are the actual comments of Reddit users. It is necessary to have these exact numbers for they will prove to be helpful in the quantification of the algorithmic awareness in the first part of the analysis.

[17] This is something that Bucher did not include in her research, for she only found messages which explicitly stated 'algorithm' (Bucher 32).

Van Dijk. Van Dijk's theoretical and methodological investigation will be used to examine all collected comments that include algorithm-related keywords, to discover how the algorithmic imaginary and a part of the popular digital media discourse on algorithms is shaped. An indication is given of how to perform such a linguistically emphasized critical discourse analysis based on an example from the corpus: 'I agree, but at this point things have escalated to the point where content like that is related to other Elsagate content based on keywords, I believe it's been a slow build to this point. A snowball effect of algorithm soup' (See Appendix H.32 and I.32).

First, the researcher should aim to find the global meaning of a text. This can be found by seeking out and listing topics of discourse, also called semantic macrostructures, as derived from local microstructures of meaning (Van Dijk 102). In short, topics are strategic devices which can emphasize certain meanings, control the understanding of the text, and even influence the formation of certain 'mental models' (102). In the example, the topic, or macrostructure, could be 'Elsagate content is related to each other via algorithmic processes'.

Second, the research should aim to find local meanings, which are 'the meaning of words […], the structures of propositions, and coherence and other relations between propositions' (Van Dijk 103). Many forms of implicit or indirect meanings should be investigated; this is information that can only be inferred from the meaning of a text, such as implications, presuppositions, allusions, and vagueness and is often used to de-emphasize certain things (Van Dijk 104). In the example, the choice of the words 'snowball effect' and 'slow build' might be investigated, which could point to algorithms being negative and out of control, and YouTube users being overwhelmed and unable to do anything about the algorithmic processes that are central to the message, as can be seen from the macrostructure. Furthermore, many objects are implied or presupposed, such as the word 'things', which in this context points towards the workings of the platform in general and its social consequences, but also 'content like that', which has a negative connotation pointing towards violent, sexual, or fetish-inclusive content on YouTube Kids.

Third, the pragmatic properties of a communicative event should be determined, which are subtle formal structures such as syntactic structures, propositional structures, and rhetorical figures. They suggest something about the intention, mood, emotion, perspective, opinion, and concerns of the author (Van Dijk 106). In the example, the last sentence forms the essence of the message, for it does not have a verb, and is rather formed as a statement. Furthermore, the sentence construction points towards algorithms having an agency of their own, and Internet users, which are not mentioned, are passive recipients of the algorithms' actions.

Finally, the local context should be made clear to give an explanation of and critical insight into the discourse and its analysis (Van Dijk 108). Both the global and local context create a mental

context model, which controls and constrains the author's text and talk, and, in turn, constrains the recipients' ways of interpretation (Van Dijk 109). The overall global context of the entire dataset is the domain of media-literate Internet users, of which the age and knowledge are not known, and who frequently use social media platforms such as YouTube and Reddit.[18] The local setting of the communicative event is therefore logically the Internet, but more specifically a reaction to another Reddit comment stating that algorithms are involved in the spreading of Elsagate content. The author of the comment is not only given additional authority, as seen from the author's 18.5K Karma Points which show the author's familiarity with the platform, and the comment's own 21 upvote points, but the author is also actively engaging in a conversation with the addressee, as seen in the 'I agree, but' statement. The context here is not defined by participants knowing each other, for presumably there is no knowledge about the participants, but the platform's goal is to invite Internet users, who are often media literate, to discuss and exchange information in an informal, yet polite manner.

In conclusion, by implementing Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis on the Reddit posts, the social representations of algorithms can be revealed and power structures can be discovered. By closely looking at the language that is used, connections are made between individual examples of texts and broader patterns of reality construction and power and sociality as a whole (Helsmondhalgh 137). For a comprehensive overview of the critical discourse analysis, see Appendix I.

The Algorithmic Awareness

Following Flichy and Bucher's research, this section investigates the different levels of algorithmic awareness by first quantitatively analysing algorithm-related keywords, followed by a qualitative analysis of algorithmic keywords. For a full overview of the 30 most used words in the dataset, which according to Rogers point towards the most discussed topics and which are viewed as socially relevant, see Appendix F (Rogers 79).

'It's Just Compute Algorithms Being Computer Algorithms'

The first three most semantically interesting words, and some of their conjugations, within the dataset are 'videos' and 'video' (used 857 times); 'kids', 'children' and 'child' (used 717 times) and 'YouTube' (used 388 times) (Appendix F).[19] These words briefly capture the essence of the discussion, which focusses on particular videos on YouTube Kids aimed at children. Looking at the context of the

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[18] One must notice that when age/knowledge is not known, such as with Reddit, a special context model appears.

[19] After disregarding conjunctives, articles and verbs. For a full overview of the thirty most semantically interesting words in the dataset, see Appendix F.

discussion, the general words 'video' or 'videos' are logically clustered with words describing them as 'creepy', 'weird', or 'disturbing', indicating Reddit users' negative feelings towards the Elsagate videos.

Reddit users are not sure what exactly is the source of the Elsagate phenomenon and what it entails, and often do not mention any involvement of algorithms. This is indicated by the fact that the words 'algorithm', 'algorithms', and 'algorithmically' are altogether used only 42 times in the dataset (0.048% of all words in the dataset), which are divided over 33 different comments (1.856% of all comments in the dataset) (see Appendix G). The words are used to indicate flagging algorithms,[20] ranking algorithms,[21] (de)monetization algorithms,[22] filter algorithms,[23] watch time algorithms,[24] suggestion algorithms,[25] popularization algorithms,[26] content-creating algorithms,[27] and 'computer algorithms' in general.[28] According to many Reddit users, the Elsagate phenomenon exists partly because someone is 'abusing',[29] 'manipulating',[30] 'exploiting',[31] and/or 'gaming'[32] these algorithms through 'the use of SEO/keywords/bots and a host of other black hat techniques'.[33]

Reddit users are often slightly aware of YouTube-specific algorithmic processes, such as the 'filtering', 'ranking', [34] and 'recommending' of YouTube videos by using, for example, 'keywords' that steer recommendation[35] and popularization[36] algorithms. Additionally, Reddit users are aware of YouTube's algorithms as a 'self-reinforcing' and 'automated' mechanism, which tracks trends in

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[20] Gelkor states: 'A few months ago YouTube rolled out an algorithm that started flagging many videos from different content creators as not being eligible to receive revenue from advertisement.' (Appendix H.7).

[21] Yungnugger: 'These just don't seem like keywords the algorithm would easily reinforce [...]' (Appendix H.28).

[22] Gelkor states: 'And setting and forgetting a strict demonetization algorithm seems like the laziest way to try to "starve out" these videos instead of actively taking a role in fixing it' (Appendix H.27).

[23] Spookthesunset: 'It's far more effective to get Google to do a better job filtering this stuff out' (H.105).

[24] Mann360zamboni states: 'People making 1 hour videos on nonsensical bullshit , just to be favored by the algorithm for having a longer run time' (Appendix H.31).

[25] Megasus states: 'Aren't they obviously bots to boost the comment count and tilt yt's suggestion algorithm?' (Appendix H.47).

[26] Unknown2: 'Lol dude it's the algorithms which dictate what's popular and hence what gets made.' (Appendix H.49).

[27] Spookthesunset states: 'Whatever algorithmically generated content fulfils that basic formula feeds directly into the next iteration of algorithmically generated content' (Appendix H.46).

[28] Spookthesunset states: 'It is just compute algorithms being computer algorithms' (Appendix H.40).

[29] Zerik25 states: 'Yes, money and abusing the YouTube algorithm is an option' (Appendix H. 29).

[30] 66team: 'Sadly, the "best" case scenario is that this is all only about money and manipulating the algorithm to get ad revenue' (Appendix H.48).

[31] Monstertruckwifeswap. 'I feel like this combination of factors is pretty close to how a thing like this comes about, tie it in with YouTube neither wanting to rock the revenue boat nor draw attention (and lawyer fees) until they absolutely have to move on it, and this is where we end up' (Appendix H.20).

[32] Eliasv: 'That totally fits with the theory. It's an attempt to game the algorithm' (Appendix H.35).

[33] None: So through clever use of SEO/keywords/bots and a host of other black hat techniques they gamed the algorithims to get them popular' (Appendix H.45).

[34] This can be seen in sentences such as: 'Those [Elsagate] channels probably have made it past a lot of Google's filtering and already have a high ranking [...]' (Appendix H.91).

[35] 'Recommend' and 'keyword' are often used to denote algorithmic processes that uses certain keywords to recommend certain videos, for example: '[Elsagate] videos are placed alongside more innocent content auto played/recommended' (Appendix H.45).

[36] Yungnugger states: 'These just don't seem like keywords the algorithm would easily reinforce and are also concepts that don't make sense to the very young children videos like this would target' (Appendix H.28).

videos and popularizes them.[37] Reddit users also seem somewhat aware of both the advantages and disadvantages of the auto-play option, which uses the recommendation system to automatically play suggested videos on YouTube Kids.

Following Reddit users' argumentation, they thus imagine a variety of algorithms and use many different words interchangeably to point to algorithms, algorithmic processes, and algorithmic outcomes.[38] There are Reddit users who argue that there is one AI in place, Reddit users who think there is one algorithm in place, and Reddit users who argue that there are multiple algorithms at work within the YouTube Kids platform.[39] Algorithms generally thought of as just working,[40] and are less often given more thought by, for instance, stating that there are 'all sorts of factors [that] feed into the algorithms' (Appendix H.20).[41] It seems as if it is argued that the algorithms are being too incomprehensible to understand, and many therefore simply refer to 'the YouTube algorithm' when discussing any algorithmic process.[42]

The Algorithmic Imaginary

Building on previous investigation, all messages that to some extent show algorithmic awareness, together with their accompanying r/Elsagate discussion threads, have been further analysed using Van Dijk's methodology. As Van Dijk suggested, the context ('local context'), topic ('macro-structure'), word meanings ('local meaning') and formal structures ('pragmatic properties') of every comment have been analysed - and described in Appendix I – to discover discourses of social inequality, domination and power struggles (Van Dijk 102 – 109; Van Dijk 113). When conducting the critical discourse analysis, the three most dominant discursive themes, which at the same time demonstrate how Reddit users imagine and experience algorithms, have been found and will be elucidated on hereafter. The three most dominant, and for this research most relevant, discursive

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[37] Relightit states: 'It's far, far more likely that the content is also based on algorithms that track trends in popular videos, making the whole scheme a self-reinforcing mechanism, which is why there is a shitload of videos and "viewers" (Appendix H.50).

[38] For example, in one comment, a Reddit user imagines both a 'keyword tracker', a suggestion algorithm and a popularization algorithm while using words such as 'AI', 'automatic processes' and 'technology' in general.

[39] Internet_and_stuff suggests that there is only one AI at work on YouTube: 'It is essentially vicious circle being created in which the YouTube AI can produce content to increase engagement' (Appendix H.14). And as other Reddit users state 'Yes, money and abusing the YouTube algorithm is an option' (Appendix H.29), 'The whole platform is full of users exploiting the algorithm YouTube has in place' (Appendix H.31) and 'They were favoured by the YouTube algorithm' (Appendix H.36).

[40] See Spookthesunset's comment stating, 'it is just compute algorithms being computer algorithms' (Appendix H.40).

[41] See also the comments at Appendix I.47, humans are often not included when talking about algorithmic processes as if they are not involved in any algorithmic process.

[42] As can be seen from comments such as 'Yes, money and abusing the YouTube algorithm is an option […] ' (Appendix I.29), '[…]they were favoured by the YouTube algorithm' (Appendix H.36) and 'It[']s mostly just gaming the YouTube algorithm […]' (Appendix I.37).

themes within the Reddit posts are algorithmic responsibility,[43] algorithmic agency[44] and power struggles within part of the popular digital media discourse on algorithms.[45]

'The Main Thing is Not to Mix Up Responsibilities'

Reddit users do not fully agree on what method, organisation or person should take responsibility in tackling both the Elsagate phenomenon and the platform's algorithms. In the dataset, many discussion threads therefore cover the dilemma of responsibility. Often, large media companies, such as Google, YouTube, and Disney, are believed to play important roles in the development and handling of the Elsagate phenomenon and the platform's algorithms. Google is mentioned as having the primary responsibility to stop Elsagate content from appearing on YouTube and YouTube Kids,[46] YouTube is mainly mentioned for having a lack of responsibility for and addressing the Elsagate content that appears on YouTube Kids, [47] and Disney and Marvel are considered to have responsibility for the use of their cartoon characters.[48]

However, as one Reddit user states: 'The main thing is not to mix up responsibilities' (Appendix I.84). While parents are frequently mentioned in the r/Elsagate discussion, they are almost nowhere mentioned as being responsible, while they are legally bound to have primary responsibility for their children. They are often only mentioned as having responsibility for stimulating awareness of the Elsagate phenomenon, rather than taking responsibility for their children's viewing habits.[49] As one Reddit user mentions: 'You should have stayed short and sweet, highlighting the importance of parents being around their children and monitoring their activities.'[50] Or, as a few Reddit users argue,

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[43] For example, one Reddit thread talked responsibility in relation to money and algorithms (Appendix I.29); another talked about the responsibility of children (Appendix I.54); another about the responsibility of parents and the automated functions of the YouTube platform (Appendix I.62, I.66 and I.67); another about Google's responsibilities to 'crack down on' its algorithmic functions (Appendix I.5, I.63, I.105 and I.109); another on the responsibility of algorithmic functions alone (Appendix I.103); and another discussion thread mentioned all before mentioned parties as being responsible (Appendix I.84).

[44] For example, Reddit discussion threads on r/Elsagate showed that agency was attributed to AI (Appendix I.1 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6); bots (Appendix I.72, I.77 and I.82); algorithmic functions (Appendix I.66, I.82 and I.91); or 'the' algorithm in general (Appendix I.28, I.36, I.38, I.40 and I.48).

[45] For example, discussion threads focus on the power of AI (Appendix I.12); the power of algorithms (Appendix I.70); the power of technology in general (Appendix I.44 and I.102); and on the powerless users (Appendix I.39), children (Appendix I.56) and parents (Appendix I.52 and I.71).

[46] As Spookthesunset states: 'Should Google allocate more resources to filtering it? Yes' (Appendix I.109) and 'It does sound like google has at least recognized the problem' (Appendix I.63). As can be seen from the syntax structure in which Google has been prioritized and seen as one unit representing the entire company, which is repeated throughout the whole comment, Google has the main responsibility for handling with the 'problem'.

[47] And, according to some Reddit users, YouTube is only demonetizing videos, thus closely linking YouTube to capitalistic ideology. But according to Reddit users, 'setting and forgetting a strict demonetization algorithm seems like the laziest way to try to 'starve out' these videos instead of actively taking a role in fixing it' (Appendix I.27).

[48] As can be seen in statements such as '[...] [M]arvel and [D]isney refuse to do anything about it even though they are by now being constantly emailed by concerned parents […]' and 'Why isn't Disney doing anything about this?' (Appendix I.48)

[49] As Reddit user JaxJames, quoted at the introduction, writes: 'I went on Reddit to see if other people were talking about this and that's when I learned about Elsagate, etc. Thank you for bringing attention to this, I'll do my best to continue to spread the word.'

[50] Scapestrat0: 'You should have stayed short and sweet, highlighting the importance of parents being around their

that it is an interplay between adult parents watching their children, YouTube carefully revising their algorithms and monitoring their creators, and content creators both flagging and stopping the creation of Elsagate content.[51]

'The Algorithm Handles This'

Not only do companies have the first responsibility to respond to, act on and handle with the Elsagate phenomenon, according to Reddit users, but they also have agency, even more than individuals do. In this context, YouTube is often presented by Reddit users as being a single subject with agency, capable of thinking, handling and overseeing its whole platform.[52] Furthermore, Internet users are often opposed to 'Big Companies' such as YouTube and Google, polarizing the individual against large companies. This can be seen in the rhetorical opposition of 'Elsagate uploaders' to 'YouTube' (Appendix I.25), more generally 'YouTubers' against 'Google' (Appendix I.21), and even more generally, 'people' against 'entire industries or big companies' (Appendix I.8).

According to Reddit users, algorithms are seen as having even more agency than the companies for which they perform tasks. Algorithms are believed to have the agency to watch,[53] delete[54] and flag[55] content. One Reddit user even states that algorithms, bots, and other technical processes work together, without human supervision, to obtain certain outcomes.[56] On top of algorithmically managed social media platforms, it is even believed that the Elsagate content itself is 'algorithmically generated content': The content is believed to be created by an 'AI' or 'algorithm' that 'tracks trends in popular videos', which is then incorporated in the content, while 'the titles are all generated with machine intelligence', 'making the whole scheme a self-reinforcing mechanism (Appendix I.3, I.4, I.46 and I.50).[57] Reddit users thus often blame algorithms for certain outcomes and

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children and monitoring their activities - as there as much disturbing sh*t on TV as much as on Youtube and on the Internet' (See https://www.reddit.com/r/ElsaGate/comments/7e5pnk/for_anyone_looking_for_a_ easy_way_to_share_the/dq3lyv4/).

[51] As Aberjadoch states: '[…] adults should watch their kids, and YouTube should clean up their act even though kids shouldn't be on it unsupervised, but none of that gets the content creators off the hook' (Appendix I.84). He also effectively uses the metaphor of the bait: the bait is the Elsagate videos, children take the bait, creators make the bait, parents should be watching their children not take the bait and YouTube should watch both its creators and its algorithms spread the bait (Appendix I.84).

[52] As can be seen from sentence constructions such as 'YouTube is doing something' (Appendix I.5), YouTube is aware' (Appendix I.5), 'YouTube needs to address this' (Appendix I.41), 'YouTube should clean up their act' (Appendix I.84), 'YouTube gets even more' (Appendix I.112), 'YouTube is not tackling this' (Appendix H.117), 'You'd think YouTube would have made the Kids App only display curated content by default' (Appendix H.116).

[53] As GeharginKhan states: 'If a video is watched by a human, not an AI' (Appendix I.2).

[54] As KonkeyD0ong states: 'I've had completely innocuous videos removed [while the] whole process was autonomous' (Appendix I.70).

[55] Gelkor states: 'The AI got *really* aggressive with flagging recently' (Appendix I.6).

[56] As Eliasv states: 'Bots sharing/liking/commenting on content in order to make it appear more popular (to encourage the platform to present it to more real users) is standard operating procedure' (Appendix I.85). What the author is indirectly acknowledging here is that bots work with the algorithm's preference's to create a certain outcome: the higher ranking of certain Elsagate videos.

[57] As Uricchio mentions, algorithms could work on their own by algorithmically re-ordering data, informed and shaped by

content, while any human agent is hidden, stating that 'the algorithm or bot handles this' (Appendix I.7). By ascribing agency to algorithms, they are being distanced from humans, often to fend off criticism. In doing so, it seems as though 'the algorithm' alone is 'responsible for particular results or conclusions' (Gillespie 24).

Powerful Algorithms

The Reddit users' assignment of agency to companies and algorithms could be linked to their assignment of power to companies and algorithms, causing power struggles on both an industrial and domestic level (Van Dijk 114; Foucault 93).[58] On a domestic level, a power struggle can be seen among children, parents and algorithms. To some Reddit users, children are seen as being able to actively make decisions on their own.[59] To most Reddit users, algorithms are seen to actively make use of children (and especially the data they create).[60] But very few arguments suggest that parents have any power to handle with the Elsagate phenomenon.[61] When parents are given a certain agency in the corpus, parents are regarded as only being able to flag Elsagate content,[62] as not using any authority or power, [63] and as being subdued to the wishes of their children.[64] Closely linked to this domestic power struggle is the afore mentioned parental dilemma, for it seems as though a new power (namely the algorithmic platform YouTube Kids) is changing previously determined family power structures. When parents willingly delegate their parental responsibilities to others, in this case an algorithmic platform, their children may start to view their parents as replaceable and non-unique members of the family (Paine 92). Parents, however, do feel guilty for leaving their kids alone with the seemingly safe application and its algorithms.[65] As one Reddit user simply states: '[these

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algorithmic assessments of data and algorithmically calculated to achieve certain data markers for other algorithmic processes (134).

[58] A short reference is made here to Foucault, who argues that power is not an institution, nor a structure, but it is 'the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate' (92). It is everywhere, could be produced and reduced at any moment, and is created at the interplay of multiple points and actors, both human and non-human (94).

[59] As Deorder states: 'These YouTube videos are this disturbing because they know children do seek and want to test their boundaries' (Appendix I.21). Especially the last part of the sentence suggests children's own power.

[60] As AlienLoveTriangle states: '[…] it was because of algorithms trying to milk every last cent of ad revenue from kids who don't know any better' (Appendix I.26).

[61] See Appendix I.21, in which subjects of the argumentation are money, the YouTube algorithm and toddlers, but where there is no agency handed to the involved parents.

[62] Although this is also often assigned as the power that algorithms have, see 'YouTube rolled out an algorithm that started flagging many videos' (Appendix I.7) And if a parent would flag Elsagate content, he would only provide data points from which a specific algorithm might learn and from which it becomes more self-improved (Crawford & Gillespie 411: Uricchio 133)

[63] Again, PatrickBateman87 states: 'The [videos] are designed to be picked up by YouTube's algorithm in such a way that they come up one or two videos after some 4 year old's parent opens up YouTube Kids on their iPad, presses turns on auto-play, and walks away to try to get some chores done' (Appendix I.96).

[64] As Spookthesunset states: 'These are little kids binge watching youtube videos. […] I doubt there is a parent there watching these videos with Kiddo [children]' (Appendix I.62).

[65] As can be seen from statements such as 'I doubt there is a parent there watching these videos with Kiddo' (Appendix I.62).

videos are] aimed at children who[se] parents are being lazy and just give a kid an iPad to watch these videos all day so they don't have to do any parenting'.[66]

By using active sentence constructions, prioritizing algorithmic related nouns, polarizing algorithms to Internet users, and using various metaphors, it is suggested that algorithms do have power, and Internet users who make use of algorithmic platforms are subordinate to those algorithms.[67] This is especially denoted by frequent use of the metaphor of the attacker and the victim, in which the algorithm is seen as 'the attacker' and the YouTube users are seen as 'the victims'. Some Reddit users argue that the algorithms 'force' children to watch content,[68] while others state that algorithms 'target' YouTube users.[69] One Reddit user uses the metaphor of a 'swarm' to explain how algorithmic bots are 'unleashed' and then start to 'kill' by 'suffocating' the good and 'encouraging' the bad.[70] Another Reddit user uses the metaphor of an 'arms race' to describe Internet users 'fighting' against 'the algorithm'.[71] Algorithms are even believed to create a 'cyber warfare'. [72] It is as Gillespie already formulated, 'in the context of nearly a century of a celebration of the statistical production of knowledge and long-standing trust in automated calculation over human judgment, the algorithmic does enjoy a particular cultural authority' (24). According to Reddit users, one might thus argue that algorithms gain a strong agency and power of their own in domestic life.[73]

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[66] This Reddit comment is from the initial investigation into the large dataset, and can be found here: https://www.reddit.com/r/ElsaGate/comments/6o6baf/what_is_elsagate/dq2gwkt/.

[67] By polarizing algorithms ('them') and internet users ('us'), Reddit users not only polarize outgroups and ingroups, but giving them an unequal amount of power (Van Dijk 103).

[68] As Demographiccausation states: 'Don't' forget that the YTK app auto plays. Kids would be forced to watch like it or not' (Appendix I.64).

[69] As Gelkor states: 'So in the last week or so there are a lot of 'normal' content creators being rapidly automatically targeted by YouTube's Demonetization AI, and I don't think they are the exception […]' (Appendix I.7).

[70] As IanPhlegming states: 'But there are a ton of bots unleashed on Reddit every day. It's what's killed a lot of subreddits already, suffocated conversation, encouraged groupthink' (Appendix I.83).

[71] As Prom3th3an states: 'And it [limiting the number of videos that could be uploaded with Spiderman in its title] would give the #ElsaGate uploaders a lot less of a chance to experiment with how to break the algorithms, instead of it being a symmetrical arms race' (Appendix I.25).

[72] As Lemonslip states: 'Would it be too farfetched to think that this is just another form or cyber warfare? […] This [investment into the creation of Elsagate content] therefore feeds into the mechanism, where more and more children will be exposed to disturbing content by giving the content an initial boost so that it gets picked up by the algorithms' (Appendix I.41).

[73] As can be seen from OffendedPotato's Reddit comment: 'A lot of it [watching Elsagate content] comes through the kids app even, so most of the views are just toddlers plopped in front of an iPad with autoplay' (Appendix I.73). The autoplay and the YouTube Kids app as a whole are seen as powerful agents, deciding what the children watch.

'The Algorithm'

The aim of this research was to determine how the algorithmic imaginary of Reddit users is constructed by investigating Reddit discussions about a currently relevant phenomenon related to algorithms, namely the Elsagate phenomenon, to eventually discover part of the popular digital media discourse on algorithms. First, while computer scientists argue that algorithmic awareness is slowly developing, I argue that there is only a vague algorithmic awareness within the discussion on r/Elsagate (Hamilton et al. 631; Dourish 1). Supporting this statement is the fact that only 362 words of the dataset to some extent describe, explain, trace, indicate, or judge algorithms, which amounts to less than half of a percent of all words within the dataset (see Appendix G). Just as the academic field has numerous ideas on algorithms, Reddit users have multiple and varying ideas about what algorithms are and how they work. Only YouTube-specific algorithmic processes such as filtering, ranking and recommending of videos are discussed in depth. Many therefore simply refer to 'the YouTube algorithm' when discussing any algorithmic process, supporting Gillespie's statement that for the broader public, algorithms are seen as 'something unattainably complex' (18).

On the topic of algorithmic imaginary, three discourses were explicated and together form Reddit users' main ideas and beliefs on algorithms. In the discourse of responsibility, agency and power, there is one common theme in almost all arguments: parents are argued to have less responsibility, less agency, and little power to act, in comparison to big companies, and especially, their algorithms. Algorithms are viewed as powerful objects or beings, having their own agency and acting over the less-powerful parents, and often, their children. In domestic life, this is not only seen in relation to the parental dilemma, but it also caused certain power dynamics to shift between parents, children and algorithmic platforms. Especially showing algorithms' believed power to act upon others is the frequent mention of 'the algorithm', which acts, performs, gives outcomes, and even creates on its own. This last finding makes this particular case extra interesting for an investigation into the algorithmic imaginary, for it demonstrates how Reddit users – to some extent – imagine algorithms to be working on different levels: both managing and creating content on social media platforms. Algorithmic self-regulation and self-creation is something that poses new questions for both Reddit users and media scholars, because human agency and power in relation to algorithms cannot be ignored, but, according to Uricchio, their position could be renegotiated (134 - 135).

As demonstrated, Reddit users were actively confronted, to some degree, by the Elsagate phenomenon with YouTube Kids' business model, which is based on children's data collection and using these data for algorithmic processes, as well as with their own usage of algorithmic platforms in domestic life. To quote one Reddit user: 'What's the plan here? Just raising awareness?'.[74] My

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[74] See for the original comment, Mr_Gigadibs' comment: 'I'm from /r/all. What's the plan here? Just raising awareness?

suggestion is to indeed raise more awareness, not only of the Elsagate phenomenon in general, but more importantly of the algorithms on social media platforms, which actively steer (social) interactions. Reddit users also argue that algorithms have the ability to act, while Internet users are unable to regulate this technology. I argue that to raise more awareness and to show people that they have responsibility, agency, and power in algorithmic context, demystifying platforms' algorithms could potentially result in a higher awareness of factors involved in algorithmic processes, more knowledge of those processes and thus arguably a higher feeling of power to act upon and with those algorithmic platforms.[75]

Discussion

First, it should be noted that the discourse analysis on its own has multiple implications, for it is a subjective, qualitative content analysis into people's argumentation style, but not their actual ideas. Freudian critique of research into discourses notes the way reality, as we perceive it, is not always written or spoken out loud, but is often a subconscious construction (Freud 91). Another critique on discourse analysis is the way how our language system can be both an advantage and a threshold to express certain ideas about reality, for the complexity of the language system determines, to a large extent, the complexity of thoughts that can be expressed. Additionally, language does not solely create discursive knowledge, but so do actions, something that cannot be analysed within the limits of this research. Furthermore, this research has some typical structural limitations, for it assumes that language can be analysed at a certain fixed point in time. However, I am fully aware that time is never frozen, language always changes, and that when finishing the analysis, it will only provide a glimpse of the popular digital discourse on algorithms as captured between the 26th of June, 2017, and the 1st of January, 2018.

Second, I have limited the discourse analysis by including just one source, Reddit comments, and only a selection, the top ten posts and their comments. In Foucauldian terms, if one would perform a discourse analysis, it would include the analysis of multiple sources. However, as Van Dijk mentions, a 'full' or 'complete' discourse analysis can never be given, unless the time and word count are unlimited, therefore certain choices and selections must be made (99). It should, therefore, be stated that only a specific part of a popular media discourse on algorithms is investigated by looking at the chosen ten most popular posts of the Elsagate subreddit. However, the fact that algorithms are barely spoken of in the comments of the most popular r/Elsagate posts, could also be supporting

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Trying to shame Youtube into doing something about it?'(https://www.reddit.com/r/ElsaGate/comments/ 7gutaj/congratulations_relsagate_you_are_subreddit_of/dqm9e0g).

[75] A reference is here made to Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality,* in which he argues that power is based, among other things, on knowledge, and knowledge in turn can give certain power, although this power-knowledge relation is a very unstable dynamic (98).

the fact that there is indeed limited algorithmic awareness and that, if there is any, the afore

mentioned themes are likely to be the most discussed. I will therefore recommend for future

research to include discussions from other sources, such as Twitter and 4Chan, on which the

phenomenon was also widely discussed, and including additional texts from blogs such as Wired,

Medium and Forbes, and news outlets such as BBC, The Guardian, and The Washington Post.[76] The

limitations of this research, such as word count and time restriction, limit the research to the

selection of the discussion on Reddit.

Third, there are limitations to the knowledge that can be gained by using text mining

techniques (McKee 147). For instance, the decision to include some keywords and exclude others in

the quantitative analysis using AntConc creates bias for the rest of the research. I am aware that the

used tools, methods, hardware and software necessary for this research influenced the outcome.

More may be discovered about people's views on algorithms, for algorithms not only pose

difficult questions to academics, but also to Internet users who frequently use – although

unknowingly – algorithmic social media platforms. Further research may combine an investigation

into the algorithmic awareness and the discursive construction of reality with, as Lister et al. suggest,

people's actual usage of algorithms and algorithms' material and technical nature, also set in a more

neutral algorithm-related context (243). Nonetheless, this research has begun to show how people

imagine algorithms in everyday social media life.

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[76] As I stated in the introduction, I didn't have the time, nor the space to research news articles, which are definitely part of the current researched discourse. The Elsagate phenomenon was widely covered first by the *The Guardian,* which led to reporting of the Elsagate phenomenon by *BBC, The Independent*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*, to name just a few (Dredge; Hern; Griffin; Emba; Maheshwari).

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Appendix

Appendix A: On Investigating the Actual YouTube Algorithms

Because YouTube's algorithms lie at the heart of the discussion on Elsagate, a short explanation of its algorithms must be given. As stated before, because of the economical and intellectual status of algorithms such as at work within the YouTube Kids platform, it is almost impossible for both users and researchers to open up those black boxed algorithms. Only a few meaningful papers with research on the exact algorithms of the platform have been published, a few of which will be elucidated hereafter.

In 2008, Google Engineers Baluja et al. released a paper with research on the YouTube recommendation algorithm. It is an highly technical exploration of three different but equivalent interpretations of the YouTube adsorption algorithm, which is an algorithm that provides personalized video suggestions for users by classifying each video based on co-viewed videos (Baluja et al. 895). In their research, they find that the more information the algorithm has about a user, the better targeted the recommendations will be (903). The general conclusion of their research is that only recommending new and popular videos or most commonly co-watched videos is not as effective as one might initially think (904).

In 2016, Google researchers Paul Covington, Jay Adams and Emre Sargin released a highly technical paper on the workings of the (seemingly entire) YouTube recommendation algorithm to give the reader an insight into the functions of YouTube's Browse, Suggested Videos, and Recommended Videos (191). They state that the recommendation algorithm on YouTube faces three major challenges: the large scale of the user base and video corpus; the balancing of both new content and well-established videos in an ever growing dynamic corpus; and the difficulty to exactly predict user behaviour due to noise created by sparsity, messy metadata and a variety of external factors (191). Their recommendation system seems to be built on Baluja et al.'s algorithmic exploration in which they use multiclass classification of YouTube videos. Only Covington et al. emphasize the embedding of the video in a user's history and context to determine the discrimination of videos and to generate candidate videos (192). Subsequently, the ranking algorithm calibrates these candidate videos by the video's specific metadata describing both the video and a user's relationship to the video (195). For both filtering processes, candidate video generation and ranking, a deep neural network is being constructed so that the algorithm may learn and continue to automatically add categorical features to videos and assign scores for ranking (193; 195).

This latest work, although still largely vague at some points, inspired algorithm strategist consultant Matt Gielen to attempt to reverse engineer the YouTube algorithm in order to provide advice for social media creators. Gielen states that the most important factors on which YouTube

recommendations are based is watch history, search history and demographic information ('Reverse Engineering'). What Gielen derives from Covington et al.'s research is that the main goal of YouTube is to stimulate as much user watch time as possible. One of the most important aspect of the YouTube algorithms, is that they are designed to include some form of machine learning by running on data and 'learning' from queries and results in order to further stimulate watch time (Gillespie 20; Gielen 'Reverse Engineering'). As Gielen states that certain training data are used for the algorithm to 'learn', note must be given to the bias that can exist in working with such training data, for it has to be carefully selected and prepared to be able to represent actual data on which an algorithm might work (Gillespie 21).

Not only has the YouTube algorithm the power to filter (by candidate generation and ranking) and therefore shape the content that is given to the users, but it also has the power to determine what kind of content is created. The algorithms that filter the videos have a preference for videos with a minimum of ten minutes (for those can create more watch time), for videos with popular labels (for those can be easily linked to other popular co-viewed videos) and for channels with a regular daily video upload frequency (for the ranking algorithm will score your videos higher) (Gielen 'Goudzoekers') Because creators often want to grow their channel and grow their audience, they conform to these ideas inherit in the algorithm and aim to create videos of more than ten minutes covering a popular subject and uploading at least once a week but preferably once a day.

Appendix B: Used Tools to Obtain Reddit Comments

Before any analysis can begin, a dataset has to be assembled and prepared for the analysis (Kitchin 101). This research will make use of digital methods, for it will deploy online tools and data for the purpose of social research (Rogers 75). Three of these tools, Python, Jupyter and AntConc, will be explicated on hereafter.

Python and Jupyter

Using Python Reddit API Wrapper, or acronym PRAW, in combination with notebook application Jupyter, all comments of the ten most popular posts of the now archived subreddit Elsagate (r/Elsagate) have been gathered. To understand the process, one must first understand what programming language is. Programming language is a computer language that describes the arrangement or syntax of a list of statements with actions a computer must carry out in order to finish a task (Kelly 1). Often used programming languages include Java, C, C++ and, as is chosen here, Python. Python is a modern programming language that supports 'object-oriented, functional and imperative programming styles' (Kelly 3). This means that with python, one can combine data and a functionality within one object (object-oriented programming); one can use mathematical functions to perform calculations without changing the data (functional programming); and one can describe how changes to a dataset can be made in a linear manner (imperative programming) (Kelly 3 – 5). Python is chosen among other programming languages for its relatively simple readability and usability. Programming language python is used in Jupyter, which is an open source notebook application which can be opened on a web browser and integrates many different programming languages, such as Python, and their results on one page (Kluyver et al. 88). The Python code is written and loaded in one cell of the Jupyter interface, while the output, the Reddit posts, appeared directly below it and are stored as part of a document (Kluyver et al. 88). An overview of the python script which has been used in Jupyter, including a step by step explanation, can be found hereafter.

The Python Code for Obtaining Reddit Comments

```
import praw
import sys

reddit = praw.Reddit(client_id = 'XXX', client_secret ='XXX', username = 'XXX', password = 'XXX',
user_agent = 'XXX')

submission = reddit.submission(id='XXX')

submission.comments.replace_more(limit=None)
for comment in submission.comments.list():
    print(20 * "-")
    print'Parent ID:', comment.parent()
    print'Comment ID:', comment.id
    print'Username:', comment.author
    print comment.body
```

Before one can use the script, one first has to install a 'pip package' in their python environment, which is the recommended tool for installing other python package. Accordingly, one can type 'pip install praw' in their python environment to install 'praw packages', which is a python package specifically focussed on accessing Reddit's Application Programming Interface. Finally, 'sys', or system-specific parameters and functions, have to be installed to provide access to variables used or maintained by the interpreter. The interpreter is a program that forms the bridge between the written python program, which is in this case a command to retrieve Reddit comments, and other programs, in this case the Reddit Application Interface Program (Lutz 23). Hereafter, one has to create an account on Reddit, pretend to create an application and in doing so obtain a personal client ID, client secret, username, password and user agent. The client ID, client secret, username, password and user agent have to be obtained and filled in on the spaces in the code that are now indicated with 'XXX'. Also, the reddit submission ID has been removed, but can be replaced with every reddit submission ID, which can easily be found within the weblink of the submission. [77]

A step-by-step explanation of the python code will now be given. First, 'praw' is imported, which means that Python is connected with the Reddit Application Programming Interface. Second, the system-specific parameters are imported, which connects Python with the Reddit API. Third, reddit is accessed by entering certain personal and private credentials. Fourth, it is being made clear what must be retrieved from the API, namely all Reddit submissions, and where one can get it, namely from a submission with a particular ID. The difficulty is that Reddit comments are not linear

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[77] For instance, the submission ID of the 'What is Elsagate?' submission, with weblink
https://www.reddit.com/r/ElsaGate/comments/6o6baf/what_is_elsagate/, is the code after 'comments', thus
'6o6baf'. To find all comments within the 'What is Elsagate?' submission, simply replace the current ID within
the python code with '6o6baf'.

data, but are organised as a tree of data. In order to open up and retrieve the entire tree of data, "replace_more" is added with no limit of how often the data tree can be opened up, as to obtain all comments. Accordingly, the "submission.comments.list()" will make sure that all layers of comments will be obtained, not just the top comment and the top reply. The "for… print" statement will make sure that every comment will be printed with twenty separation marks to separate the different comments (-), the parent ID (*comment.parent*), commend ID (*commend.ID*) and the author's username (*comment.author*) before actually stating the entire comment (*comment.body*).

AntConc

After obtaining all comments of the ten most popular Reddit post on r/Elsagate, the dataset has been further investigated by searching for certain keywords within the dataset (see Appendix C). All keywords and their conjugations of these words, have been searched for in the dataset using AntConc's word list and KWIC concordance tool. AntConc is a corpus analysis toolkit that includes a KWIC concordance tool, search term distribution plot, original file view, word cluster and lexical bundle, word lists and keyword lists (Anthony 730). For this research, the word list is used to investigate which words frequently reappear in thedataset, the KWIC Concordance tool is used to find specific keywords, and the file view option is used to investigate the keywords in the context of their comment.

Appendix C: Specifics of The Ten Most Popular Reddit post of Subreddit Elsagate

Name of Reddit post	Type of Reddit post	Creator	Date of creation	Total reactions	Total points	Percentage Up-votes	Explanation of content
I think it's time more people knew about Elsagate	Original post	TheLocal Gamer	26 June 2017	143	3815	100%	The Reddit user starts the post with an explanation of the Elsagate phenomenon, followed by questioning how the videos make it past YouTube's 'suggestive filter' and ending in stating that everyone should gain more knowledge of the phenomenon
Well… Here's some kids literally smoking	Image	FaeZinx	21 November 2017	168	3618	98%	The image shows two children, one boy in a Spiderman outfit and a girl in an Elsa dress, smoking.
Post Malone and H3H3 Try to Make Sense of 'Elsagate'	YouTube video	Siarl_	18 November 2017	168	3023	98%	A YouTube video on which Post Malone and H3H3 talk about the Elsagate phenomenon.
What is Elsagate	Moderator Post	dornhoeschen	19 July 2017	540	2684	100%	An extensive explanation and exploration of the Elsagate phenomenon including links, articles and videos on the subject
Joe Rogan spreading awareness about #Elsagate. This is slowly evolving into a full-blown scandal. Hopefully YouTube will be pressured into actually doing something.	Theory	Amidza	28 November 2017	99	2660	97%	A tweet is shared from American actor and comedian Joe Rogan. The tweet states: "This is some really bizarre shit: Something strange is happening on YouTube #Elsagate." It includes yet another link to a YouTube video of famous Youtube Channel "The Outer Light' that explains what the Elsagate phenomenon is.
My YouTube account was hacked a while back. After a year or so of not being able to access it, it became 'Elsa-fied'.	Theory	Fratboy Fredrick	10 November 2017	86	2436	99%	The theory which is been put forward is that a lot of channels who create Elsagate videos are hacked accounts. The creator of this post argues why he or she thinks that is the case.
For anyone looking for an easy way to share the basic info about #Elsagate with the masses,	Picture	Throwaway 4Elsa	20 November 2017	61	2437	99%	An infographic is shown which begins with red letters stating "YouTube is #NOTFORKIDS". The infographic includes

Name of Reddit post	Type of Reddit post	Creator	Date of creation	Total reactions	Total points	Percentage Up-votes	Explanation of content
here is an infographic I made you can share							a warning, frequently occurring themes and cartoon characters and a general call to share the infographic with parents and caretakers.
Congratulations r/Elsagate! You are Subreddit of the Day	Article	SROTDroid	1 December 2017	28	2327	97%	On December 1^{st,} 2017, r/Elsagate was chosen as the best feature of the day. In a small statement, guest writer JTHistl3 states that r/Elsagate tries to 'raise awareness about the recent trend of absurd, sexualised, violent or otherwise abusive content found on YouTube and YouTube Kids'.
Let's get real for a second. These videos exist for a reason, and it's not pedophelia.	Discussion	Internet_and_stuff	19 November 2017	446	2289	88%	The Reddit user starts of with stating that he has experience using YouTube, but he or she is wondering where the Elsagate videos come from, why they are created, why they are targeted at kids and what the comments mean. The Reddit users wants to understand why the phenomenon exists without falling back on the argument that it is all because of pedophiles.
These videos are so similar that I can't help but think that they come from the same source, despite coming from different channels.	Image	Groupgasm	18 October 2017	39	1756	100%	It shows an image of 25 thumbnails of Elsagate videos which have been categorised in 5 groups to show how the thumbnails, and possibly also the entire video, are very similar to each other.

Appendix D: Reddit Users' Consent

Original Private Message Sent

Dear [Reddit user's name], my name is Judith and I am currently studying at the Utrecht University in The Netherlands. I am doing research into how people imagine and experience algorithms. Lately, I've been reading r/Elsagate posts to discover how (and if) people are aware of algorithms and how they talk about algorithms within the Elsagate discussion and I discovered that you have made a few very interesting and substantial argumentation points on this topic. Would you mind if I include your Reddit username and a few of your comments in my research? If you want to, I could even send you the research in advance or when it's finished, if you're interested (but I have to warn you, it will be 10.000 words). In advance, thank you for reading this and I await your reaction! Kind regards, Judith

Received Messages

Reddit username	Date of consent	Reddit user's reply to first message	Reply to Reddit user	Reddit user's reply to second message
BeiberWeinier	21 – 03 – 18	I wouldn't mind one bit. Thank you.	Thank you very much for your quick reaction! I just wanted to make sure in case you rather had me anonymizing your username. Anyway, I'll let you know what I make of it and again, thank you for your reaction!	You're welcome
Cmann360-zamboni	24 – 03 – 18	Hello Judith I'm very sorry for the late reply! Yes feel free to include my username and any other comments as well. Very interesting work it sounds like! I would love to read it whenever it is available! I am greatly interested in learning about your studies!	Hi, you're not late at all, but exactly on time! I've only started with looking into the whole dataset and I thought it would be ethically sound (and polite) to ask for your permission. It is only fair that you get an option to be anonymized, don't you think? And of course, I will let you know when my research is finished! That will probably be around the end of May though, but still, I will send it to you! Kind regards, Judith	-
Deorder	20 – 03 – 18	Hello Judith. You may include my username and comments in your research. If you have any questions about algorithms and how they can be used to influence opinion, reinforce bias and for monetization purposes I may help you as well. I am a CS with over 20 years of professional experience. If you prefer I can read / answer in Dutch as it is my native language. I am interested and look	Thank you so much for your answer! Your experience explains your thorough reactions concerning algorithms. I'm working on my research 'till the end of May, so it may take a while before you will receive the research. Anyway, I am very glad that I have your permission to include your comments.	No problem. You can get some more input from the summary of my comments I updated over the years (many are in Dutch): https://pastebin.com/AdcqC973 It is about a year out of date. Note that some people may consider the mentioned topics controversial. Most comments are substantiated with links to what are considered official / trustable sources.

Reddit username	Date of consent	Reddit user's reply to first message	Reply to Reddit user	Reddit user's reply to second message
		forward to see your research.		Good luck with the project!
Dontbuy-anylogos	22 – 03 – 18	i yeh sure i dont mind. im surprised you felt the need to ask permission to be honest but go ahead can you please tell me which comments your referring to and more about your research in general? please do send me the research when you finish it sounds very interesting	Hi, I just wanted to be as ethically sound as I can be and asking the writers of comments for permission is definitely an ethical thing to do ;) I am understanding how and why people talk about algorithms the way they talk. So I am not yet started with the discourse analysis, but I've started with a quantiative research into algorithmic awareness, meaning that I am currently looking into how many times (and how) algorithm related words are being used. For example, I've used one of your comments stating ''Dear X, I am not a parent but I want to bring something to your attention.' Which I use now to show that people are actively trying to get the phenomenon (and hopefully the algorithms behind the algorithm) to the attention of other internet users. I hope that at the end of my research people will be more aware of algorithms in general and the effect they have within society (this is a general statement, but still). Kind regards, Judith	Ok sure. That comment was a quote from a letter I wrote to my local MP by the way. Do you think an algorithm is behind the elsagate videos? Please dont forget me the research when you've finished, I'm really interested in this stuff
Eliasv	21 – 03 – 18	Hi Judith, my name is Elias, or just Eli is fine :). Sure of course, no problem at all! Even if you want to include my comments as examples of misconceptions I won't be offended ;), it's just nice that someone has found some use for them haha. Good luck with your research, and I'd be delighted to see the product of your work when you're done.	Hello Eli, thank you for your quick response! I think that my research will find both surprisingly knowledgeable comments and misunderstandings about algorithms, both are actually interesting for my research. I'll definitely contact you again once I'm finished with my research (which will probably be at the end of May). Again, thanks for your quick reaction!	Fantastic, I look forward to it. Once again, good luck! :)
Ermadrod	21 – 03 – 18	I have no problems with you using a few of my comments, feel free to use	Thank you for your quick answer! I just wanted to check if you were OK with	-

Reddit username	Date of consent	Reddit user's reply to first message	Reply to Reddit user	Reddit user's reply to second message
		whatever you'd like. I would like to see the finished research if it's no trouble for you!	me not anonymizing your Reddit username. And of course, I will send you my finished research, I hope (and strongly believe) that it will be an interesting research. However, you will have to wait for a little while, since my research will probably only be finished at the end of May. Anyway, thank you very much for your answer!	
Fartherreaches	24 – 03 - 18	I'm not too big on my theory anymore, but if you think it adds to your research, feel free to do so =) And I would love to read the paper, it sounds interesting! Sorry for the late reply, I don't go on here too often..	Hi fartherreaches, you're not late at all! Right on time, I would say. I just wanted to make sure if you didn't want me to anonymize your Reddit username and comment, I believed that was (and is) the polite and ethical way to do ;) I will definitely send you the research when it's finished! Anway, thank you for your reply!	-
Gelkor	20 – 03 – 18	That would be fine, yes. And I'd love to read the research when it's done. Thank you and good luck. =)	Thank you very much! I definitely think that it will be a thought-provoking research, I hope to open people's eyes to the importance of algorithmic knowledge. I will let you know when the research is finished, that will probably be around May.	-
Internet_and_ stuff	21 – 03 – 18	Hey there Judith, I'm happy to be a part of your study, thanks for getting in touch! An update would be great for whenever it's complete. Thanks again, Michael	Hi Michael, no problem at all, I'll stay in contact!	-
JoshuaMohaw knz1	04 – 04 - 18	I do not mind at all, a least you asked. I will very well allow you to use it via your study at uni. you a have been doing - JosuaMohawknz1	-	-
Mbbmbbmm	21 – 03 -18	Hi Judith, thank you for reaching out and asking my permission. It is an interesting topic that you are researching. Since the Elsagate phenomenon is kind of a hot topic and in order to clarify if necessary, and also because I am curious -	Good morning mbbmbbm, I am understanding how and why people talk about algorithms the way they talk. So I am not yet started with the discourse analysis, but I've started with a quantiative research into algorithmic awareness, meaning that I	Hi Judith, if you could keep me updated, that would be very much appreciated. Good luck with your research. Kind regards, Mbbmbbmm

Reddit username	Date of consent	Reddit user's reply to first message	Reply to Reddit user	Reddit user's reply to second message
		which are the comments that you want to quote and what is your understanding of the points I made? Kind regards, Mbbmbbmm	am currently looking into how many times (and how) algorithm related words are being used. For example, I've used one of your comments stating 'Why do these videos get recommended or queued in the first place though? I don't understand what's going on there.' Which I use now to show that although a lot of conversations discuss the how and why of the phenomenon, still a lot about the phenomenon (and YouTube's algorithms which are at the core of the phenomenon, or so I argue) are not really known. And that is actually really fine, because that is what my research is about! I hope that at the end of my research people will be more aware of algorithms in general and the effect they have within society (this is a general statement, but still). Kind regards, Judith	
Megasus	21 – 03 – 18	Go right ahead, thanks! I'd be very interested to see the finished product.	Thank you for your quick answer! I just wanted to check if you were OK with me not anonymizing your Reddit username. And of course, I will send you my finished research, I hope (and strongly believe) that it will be an interesting research. However, you will have to wait for a little while, since my research will probably only be finished at the end of May. Anyway, thank you very much for your answer!	I'm sure it'll take a tremendous amount of work and research. Best of luck!
Monstertruck-Wifeswap	21 – 03 – 18	Sure, go for it. Hope there is something useful or at least thought provoking, or something like that. While I couldn't guarantee to be able to keep up, I'd surely be interested in whatever you come up with. Have a good one, and good luck with it.	Thank you very much! I definitely think that it will be a thought-provoking research, I hope to open people's eyes to the importance of algorithmic knowledge. I will let you know when the research is finished, that will probably be around May.	-

Reddit username	Date of consent	Reddit user's reply to first message	Reply to Reddit user	Reddit user's reply to second message
Mr_Gigadibs	01 – 05 – 18	-	A while ago, I send you an email. I would kindly ask you if you could take the time to look at it. It's about asking for your consent to use your username and some of your comments within the r/Elsagate discussion for my University research project! Thank you very much in advance!	Sorry, I haven't been on in a while. Sure, you can use whatever.
MrLangosta	21 – 03 – 18	Sure, go ahead.	Thank you very much for your quick reaction! I just wanted to make sure in case you rather had me anonymizing your username. Anyway, I'll let you know what I make of it and again, thank you for your reaction!	-
Muckl3t	21 – 03 – 18	Sure that's fine	Thank you very much for your quick reaction! I just wanted to make sure in case you rather had me anonymizing your username. Anyway, I'll let you know what I make of it and again, thank you for your reaction!	No problem, good luck with your project.
NintendoTrump	21 – 03 – 18	Beste Judith, Tuurlijk mag je de informatie gebruiken. Veel succes met je onderzoek! Met vriendelijke groet	Äh super bedankt. Ik wilde even checken of je niet liever geanonimiseerd wilde worden, vandaaar het berichtje. Nogmaals, bedankt!	-
Opalmagnus	21 – 03 -18	You absolutely may! I'm kind of flattered to hear that I said some potentially smart things. I'm especially surprised because I can't necessarily say I'm great with algorithms at on the numerical level since I have a lot of trouble with processing numbers. Also, I would be happy to see your research afterwards! I'm really interested to see what you find even though I haven't been following Elsagate as closely as I used to.	Thank you very much for your kind reaction! It doesn't matter that you're not good with processing numbers, it is the degree of awareness and knowledge you convey through the discussion of algorithms that I am interested in. I think that everyone that to some degree acknowledges the existence of algorithms within the Elsagate discussion, is really smart! Anyway, I will let you know when I finished the research. Kind regards, Judith	I might not get to see your research after all, but I hope it comes out great :) Wishing you all the best.
Offended-Potato	06 – 04 - 18	Oh yeah, go ahead.	-	-
Patrick-Bateman87	21 – 03 – 18	Hello Judith, Thank you for reaching out and for being so courteous	Hi, thank you so much for your answer! If anything is unclear, I will definitely ask	-

Reddit username	Date of consent	Reddit user's reply to first message	Reply to Reddit user	Reddit user's reply to second message
		as to ask permission to use my comments in your research. I'm glad to hear you found them interesting. I certainly don't mind at all if you include whatever comments you'd like to, and I suppose I don't really have any problems with you including my username either if you feel it's necessary. I'd love to see a copy of your research when it's finished. And if you ever have any questions about anything I've written or anything like that please don't hesitate to ask. I'm happy to help. Thanks again and good luck with your research. I look forward to reading it when it's completed.	you ;) Again, thank you and you will hear from me!	
Pupomin	17 – 04 – 18	-	A while ago, I send you an email. I would kindly ask you if you could take the time to look at it. It's about asking for your consent to use your username and some of your comments within the r/Elsagate discussion for my University research project! Thank you very much in advance!	Yes, please do, and I would appreciate a link to see your research when you are ready!
Spookthe-sunset	13 – 04 – 18	-	A while ago, I send you an email. I would kindly ask you if you could take the time to look at it. It's about asking for your consent to use your username and some of your comments within the r/Elsagate discussion for my University research project! Thank you very much for your reply in advance!	I don't recall getting an email, but sure… go ahead!
The Local Gamer	06 – 04 - 18	Hey. I don't know if you're still doing this, probably not. I haven't checked Reddit in a while, sorry. Sure. Go ahead.	Hey, I am still doing the research, so thank you for your reaction! Kind regards, Judith	-
Unicorn-Fukei42	24 – 03 – 18	Hi Judith, which comments are you going to include specifically? Is the research going to be	Hi, good that you asked! I am trying to understand how and why people talk about algorithms the way	Hi, OK no problem.

Reddit username	Date of consent	Reddit user's reply to first message	Reply to Reddit user	Reddit user's reply to second message
		publicly accessible when completed? Kind regards, UnicornFukei42	they talk. So I am not yet started with the discourse analysis, but I've started with a quantitative research into algorithmic awareness, meaning that I am currently looking into how many times (and how) algorithm related words are being used. For example, I've used one of your comments stating 'Some people think it's a big conspiracy, other people think [it's for] money […]' Which I use now to show that people are actively trying to understand the how and why's of the phenomenon. I hope that at the end of my research people will understand that the algorithms actually played a big part in the existence of the algorithm and be more aware of algorithms in general and the effect they have within society (this is a general statement, but still). Kind regards, Judith	

Reddit username	Date of consent	Reddit user's reply to first message	Reply to Reddit user	Reddit user's reply to second message
		publicly accessible when completed? Kind regards, UnicornFukei42	they talk. So I am not yet	

Appendix E: Algorithm Related Keywords with Justification and Source

Keyword (and conjugations)	Justification	Source
AI	While an algorithm is only a part of an AI, in Reddit posts the terms are used interchangeably. Therefore, the keyword 'AI' is used to find algorithm related comments.	Reddit comments
Algorithm; algorithms; algorithmically	This is the central concept of this investigation into the algorithmic imaginary of Reddit users in light of the Elsagate phenomenon.	Gillespie 18
Associate; associates; associated; associating	Algorithms make autonomous decisions by prioritization, classification, association and filtering, hence the word 'associate' and its conjugations as keywords.	Diakopoulos 400
Auto	Algorithms make autonomous decisions, hence the prefix 'auto-'.	Diakopoulos 400
Automated	Algorithms make autonomous or automated decisions, hence the word 'automated'.	Diakopoulos 400
Autonomous	Social media algorithms make use of autonomous decision-making.	Diakopoulos 400
Autoplay	'Autoplay' refers to the way how algorithmic processes on YouTube not only recommend videos, but accordingly automatically play them after each other.	Gielen 'Reverse Engineering'
Black-box; black box	Algorithms are often black-boxed, meaning they have a limited accessibility and are a major challenge for researchers and users, hence the word 'black-box' as keyword.	Reider & Röhle 76
Bot; Bots	While a bot is not the same as an algorithm, it often makes use of algorithms, and are many times seen by Reddit users as being the same. Note that bots often have a negative connotation.	Reddit comments
Classify; Classifies; classified; classifying; classification	Algorithms make autonomous decisions by prioritization, classification, association and filtering, hence the word 'classify' and its conjugations as keywords.	Daikopoulos 400
Data	An algorithm is a logical series of programmable steps consisting of functional interactions of variables, steps and indicators for organizing and acting on a body of data to quickly achieve a desired outcome	Gillespie 19
Filter; filters; filtered; filtering	Algorithms make autonomous decisions by prioritization, classification, association and filtering, hence the word 'filter' and its conjugations as keyword.	Diakopoulos 400
Flag; flags; flagged; flagging	'Flag' and 'flagging' are mentioned in the introduction as being one of the actions Google has been doing and YouTube users are encouraged to do, for flags create data points	Crawford & Gillespie 411

Keyword (and conjugations)	Justification	Source
	for the algorithm, from which the algorithm should learn.	
Formula	An algorithm can be seen, and is a few times by Reddit users seen, as a mathematical formula for addressing a task and obtaining certain outcomes. 'Formula' is not necessarily mentioned by Gillespie, but is a play on the technical and mathematical side of algorithms.	Gillespie 19
Generate; generates; generated; generating	Generate (and its conjugations) is in this case chosen because of two reasons: 'generate' can point to the way platform users are generating data which is again used for algorithmic processes; and 'generate' can point to the way the algorithmic processes in turn generate filtered and personalized outcomes.	Van Dijck & Poell 9; Bozdag 210
Interface	By using smart interface design, platforms such as YouTube show only the outcomes of certain algorithmic processes, hence the word 'interface' as keyword.	Eslami et al. 153
Invisible	The algorithms are often invisible, but people are accustomed to encountering the world through invisibilities.	Merleau-Ponty 78
Keyword; keywords	Data is filtered by including or excluding certain information according to various regulations and standards. In this case, keywords are only one variable of all regulations and standards to decide if certain data, YouTube videos, should be included or excluded on the YouTube Kids platform.	Gielen 'Reverse Engineering'
Machine; machines	One of the most important aspect of the YouTube algorithms, is that they are designed to include some form of machine learning, hence the word 'machine' as keyword.	Gielen 'Reverse Engineering'
Model; models	To create an algorithm, a model has to be formulated, which is a computational formalization of a problem and its goal. Therefore the word 'model' is used as keyword to point to the creation of an algorithm.	Gillespie 20
Personalize; personalizes; personalized; personalization	Filtering of data could result in a presentation of delimited personalized data to the user, in this case filtering would mean presenting a personalized selection of YouTube videos to the user. Therefore, 'personalize' and its conjugations is used as a keyword to point to certain algorithmic processes.	Bozdag 210

Keyword (and conjugations)	Justification	Source
Platform; platforms	YouTube is an algorithmic platform, therefore the keyword 'platform' is used to vaguely point to the YouTube algorithms which are situated on the platform.	Van Dijck & Poell 9
Prioritze; prioritizes; prioritized; prioritization	Algorithms make autonomous decisions by prioritization, classification, association and filtering, hence the word 'prioritize' and its conjugations as keyword.	Diakopoulos 400
Process; processes	Prioritization, classification, association and filtering are seen as algorithmic processes. Furthermore, algorithms in general are often referred to as 'processes', according to Kitchin and Dodge. Therefore, the keyword 'process' and its plural form are used as keywords to point to algorithmic processes and algorithms in general.	Kitchin & Dodge 9
Rank; ranks; ranked; ranking;	Datafication, and using this data for algorithmic processes, is the condition in which programmability, connectivity, but also popularity are grounded. Using data and algorithms, popular videos are being ranked on the platform. Therefore, the word 'rank' and its conjugations are used as keywords to point to specific algorithmic processes which rank videos according to popularity.	Van Dijck & Poell 7
Recommend; recommends; recommended, recommending	The YouTube algorithm suggests certain YouTube videos to its users to stimulate as much watch time as possible by using algorithms based on machine-learning by running on data and 'learning' from queries and results. One must note that 'suggest' and 'recommend' can in this context be used interchangeably.	Gielen 'Reverse Engineering'
Self-optimize; self-optimization; self-optimizing	According to Uricchio, algorithms have the ability to self-improve and self-optimize without active human intervention. Therefore 'self-optimize' is used as a keyword to point to this algorithmic specific ability	Uricchio 127
self-improve; self-improvement; self-improving	According to Uricchio, algorithms have the ability to self-improve and self-optimize without active human intervention. Therefore 'self-improve' is used as a keyword to point to this algorithmic specific ability.	Uricchio 133
Self-reinforce; self-reinforcement; self-reinforcing	Also, according to Uricchio, algorithms not only have the possibility to self-improve, but also to self-reinforce their own algorithms, therefore this word is also used as a keyword.	Uricchio 133.
Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	The YouTube algorithm suggests certain YouTube videos to its users to stimulate as	Gielen 'Reverse Engineering'

Keyword (and conjugations)	Justification	Source
	much watch time as possible by using algorithms based on machine-learning by running on data and 'learning' from queries and results. One must note that 'suggest' and 'recommend' can in this context be used interchangeably.	
Transparent; transparency	To undermine algorithmic power, transparency is needed. Therefore 'transparent' is used as a keyword.	Rieder & Röhle 75
Variable; variables	Algorithms can be seen as a logical series of programmable steps, consisting of functional interactions of variables. Therefore, 'variables' is used as a keyword.	Gillespie 19

Appendix F: Word List of The 30 Most Semantically Interesting Words of the Entire Dataset

Ranking	Frequency	Word
22	640	Videos
30	432	Kids
32	388	YouTube
40	345	People
57	242	Content
61	217	Video
66	201	Children
68	198	Channel
70	195	Stuff
95	142	Channels
97	139	Shit
101	134	Elsagate
103	133	Something
107	123	Money
110	122	Comments
114	111	Dornhoeschen
119	109	Elsa
125	101	Reddit
127	99	Internet
132	95	Time
133	94	Disney
145	84	Child
146	84	Things
147	83	Views
156	77	Someone
168	73	Kid
171	70	Anything
178	66	Deleted
181	66	tv
183	65	Conspiracy

Appendix G: Exact number and Percentage of Algorithm Related Keywords in the Dataset

Keyword (and conjugations)	# word appearances in the dataset	% word appearance in the dataset	# comment appearances in the dataset	% comment appearances in the dataset
AI	38	0.043	24	1,350
Algorithm; algorithms; algorithmically	42	0.048	33	1,856
Associate; associates; associated; associating	8	0.009	6	0.337
Auto	14	0.016	12	0.675
Automated	5	0.006	5	0.281
Autonomous	1	0.001	1	0.056
Autoplay	5	0.006	4	0.225
Black-box; black box	0	0.000	0	0.000
Bot; Bots	71	0.082	32	1.800
Classify; Classifies; classified; classifying; classification	1	0.001	1	0.056
Data	10	0.012	8	0.450
Filter; filters; filtered; filtering	11	0.013	10	0.562
Flag; flags; flagged; flagging	23	0.027	13	0.731
Formula	8	0.009	8	0.450
Generate; generates; generated; generating	38	0.044	26	1.462
Interface	0	0.000	0	0.000
Invisible	0	0.000	0	0.000
Keyword; keywords	20	0.023	14	0.790
Machine; machines	9	0.010	9	0.506
Model; models	9	0.010	5	0.281
Personalize; personalizes; personalized; personalization	0	0.000	0	0.000
Platform; platforms	5	0.006	5	0.281
Prioritze; prioritizes; prioritized; prioritization	0	0.000	0	0.000
Process; processes	8	0.009	6	0.337
Rank; ranks; ranked; ranking;	9	0.010	6	0.337
Recommend; recommends; recommended, recommending	7	0,008	7	0.394
Self-optimize; self-optimization; self-optimizing	0	0.000	0	0.000
self-improve; self-improvement; self-improving	0	0.000	0	0.000
Self-reinforce; self-reinforcement; self-reinforcing	2	0.002	2	0.112
Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	28	0.032	24	1.350
Transparent; transparency	0	0.000	0	0.000
Variable; variables	1	0.001	1	0.056
Total:	**373**	**0.430 %**	**262**	**14.736%**

Appendix H: Reddit Comments as Organised by Keywords

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
1	AI	For anyone looking for an easy way to share	Coolfuckingname	20-11-17	25	dq3b3td	Totally agree. To be clear, i believe there are many forces at work here, probably AI, youtubers scrambling for views, poor vietnamese animation workers, pedophiles, russian intel, etc. But all this will be taken advantage of by 'those who pull the strings' behind government/corporations, to get the internet under control. In the end, theres always only one primitive goal. Control.
2	AI; platform	It's time more people know about Elsagate	GeharginKhan	11-12-17	1	dr35dbd	I think Youtube Kids should be system where videos have to be reviewed to be put on there, not just reviewed to be taken off. If a video is watched by a human, not an AI, before getting put on YT kids, it will remove these kinds of videos from the platform.
3	AI	It's time more people know about Elsagate	Dontbuyanylogos	30-7-17	752	dkxv23b	it's not just that they contain that content. south park is fairly vile but it's also got some sort of artistic quality to it. they make you think with their vileness the elsagate videos are just pure crap, like they were made by AI or something. if you bring up a kid on that as their media they are going to grow up intellectually retarded and i'm not using that word lightly
4	AI; generated; machine; model	It's time more people know about Elsagate	Demonkin6969	10-11-17	73	dpmx35j	Many are made by AI, using libraries of 3d models and free libraries of motions to act out. The titles are all generated with machine intelligence.
5	AI	Joe Rogan spreading Awareness	Gelkor	18-11-17	42	dq07ca8	Sorry, really new here, but on the topic of YouTube doing something about this: From what I gather it seems one of the biggest likely reasons for these videos to exist is ad-revenue by manipulating children, right? Is it possible that the recent 'ad-pocalypse' and YouTube's demonetization AI running literally amok on all videos *is* YouTube's response? IE could YouTube be aware of this and the demonetization AI is trying to demonetize these videos rapidly en-mass and other content creators being caught in the crossfire? If so it's kinda totally worth it IMO. I'm not sure but it seems like these two things could be linked.
6	AI; flagged	Joe Rogan spreading Awareness	Gelkor	18-11-17	22	dq0803b	The AI got *really* aggressive with flagging recently, is all, and that could be linked.
7	AI; Algo-rithms; bots; flag; process	Joe Rogan spreading Awareness	Gelkor	18-11-17	26	dq0a0ei	A few months ago YouTube rolled out an algorithm that started flagging many videos from different content creators as not being eligible to receive revenue from advertisements. A lot of these videos seemed to be false positives, things from regular content creators making 'normal' videos, while some of them were from channels that probably needed to be demonetized. A couple weeks ago YouTube mentioned they were updating the algorithm to refine it's process. A week or so ago, the algorithm or bot that handles this started going pretty overboard. Now a LOT of

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							content creators are starting to report that their videos are seemingly automatically flagged as demonetized, and once they manually appeal the demonetization, their video is made available to have ads run on it again in about 24 hours. For example, something as innocuous as an attorney reading a public court legal briefing while petting his dogs gets flagged as demonetized, only to be appealed and overturned (confirming it as a false positive), and then for his very next video to be flagged immediately. So in the last week or so there are a lot of 'normal' content creators being rapidly automatically targeted by YouTube's Demonetization AI, and I don't think they are the exception, it's seems likely that if the AI can flag normal content this easily, that it is likely flagging the harmful content immediately as well now, which would require it's creators to try to appeal in order to get ad revenue, and their videos will not stand up to manual approval.
8	AI; algo-rithm; flag	Joe Rogan spreading Awareness	Xervicx	19-11-17	8	dq0y5gq	>algorithm They keep saying that, but yet they're also paying people minimum wage to sift through videos and categorize them as friendly or unfriendly, then categorizing them even further by *why* they're unfriendly. I've personally seen and worked on some of them on mturk, and I've seen some on other similar websites as well. And this was *before* the adpocalypse happened. Strangely enough, some Youtubers never appeared on those HITs (tasks). Some appeared a suspiciously common amount of time. Currently there are a lot of middle eastern (not sure where, not familiar with the language) videos that get posted in HITs that are being worked on right now. But a lot of those HITs used to come through every single day. I'm talking tens of thousands of HITs daily, with the HITs paying less than minimum wage, and it basically pays people to flag videos as not being family friendly, or not being completely inoffensive, or not being for kids, etc. There was always some variation being made. And even now, there are channels where videos are demonitzed before their videos are even published. Certain channels could have a video of them eating cereal and talking about the weather and it would get demonitized, while some really shit stuff would happen in certain other channels and they'd still be monetized. And the problem is that there's consistency in it, too. So they can talk about their algorithm all they want. They can say it's all automatic if they want. But I personally worked on those tasks. Any Youtuber being demonitized consistently understands that there's more going on that just 'Oops, our automatic system is hurting your channel'. Notice how it conveniently tends to be the Youtubers who criticize entire industries or big companies, or tend to have views that aren't super tame, or tend to have styles that aren't bland.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							There's a pattern to the demonitization. They've admitted there are whitelisted and blacklisted channels. So no matter how much they claim it's some automatic AI, there's proof that that's bullshit.
9	AI	Joe Rogan spreading Awareness	aberjadoch	18-11-17	9	dq0bfh1	Why is showing ads to children something they can sleep well with, anyway? Yeah I know, too radical, but in my very own lala land, they could simply have stayed decent people and none of this would ever had happened, or at the very least, we couldn't have explained it away with 'oh, they just do it for money, not to hurt children'. They could work towards it, and get a big chunk real quick because it's all very similar, all linked with each other, all tagged in similar ways. They could even be more useful by just SAYING more. So far they just said they would 'deal with it" and since then hardly anything happened. That's kind of worse than saying nothing, since now people are getting comforted for no good reason (I'll believe it when I see it) about a problem they really should know about, before they can even muster the energy to learn about it. And isn't visualizing information one of their strengths, why do we mostly have these cobbled together imgur things still? Why does this mostly spread through grass roots, while many who should be helping fantasize of AI gone rogue with ad revenue? I'm not saying they chose this, it's a big company with a lot of moving parts. And lawyers, we can't forget that. I don't want to be in the shoes of the person who needs to draw a line. It's easy to say ElsaGate crosses it, but they still would have to define one. That alone would explain the delay, as sad as it is. But I still don't think the demotization of advertiser-unfriendly content, often individual videos of channel owners, not whole channels, has anything to do with ElsaGate. That'd be like preparing for fixing your house by breaking your garage, makes no sense to me.
10	AI	Let's get real for a second	kingzebragaming	20-11-17	5	dq39mzb	If it's an "AI" are the AI also making apps in the same vein under titles like "Girl Games"? My guess is no. Did an AI make Maffa.com and all the other creepy websites when you Google "Girl Games"? My guess is also probably not. If you want to call a tomato and orange knock yourself out. The videos are clearly grooming videos and very deliberately so.
11	AI	Let's get real for a second	farther reaches	19-11-17	21	dq1guw9	I saw a thread with a screenshot of a guy explaining that these videos are made with the help of an AI, and honestly, it checks out. Explains why all the characters are all the same western cartoon characters, because these people buy pre-made assets and scenes and the AI generates these videos randomly.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							Explains the eerie similarity of the thumbnails, since it's probably using a template and changing it slightly. Also saw a thread where a guy claimed when you slow down a video's voice audio it's weird quotes - maybe the AI takes audios from audio databases, speeds them up and uses them so there's no need for manual recording. I think the creepy pedophiles are just a side product, and these cartoon channels are just using shock values such as pee and poop because it applies to little kids, cause they find it funny, and there's people with weird fetishes and all that. Just a maximum revenue generator, I think.
12	AI; flagging	Let's get real for a second	Ultra_Deus_Vult	20-11-17	0	dq2tb64	Maybe, just seems stupid that they would put their whole operation in jeopardy by putting all this trash in kid videos that would put their monetization at risk. Most of these videos are full of taboo sexual fetishes, and traumatizing imagery. I remember staying up late one night when I was around 5 or 6 and that old show Night Flight came on, it had messed up animations, one that freaked me out pretty bad that I can still remember cuz it had a decapitated Donald Duck's head bouncing down a staircase slowly, that is pretty tame compared to what our kids are seeing today. I couldn't imagine a kid actually enjoying this trash. They could probably get the same amount of clicks with animations kid's might actually enjoy. That's the main problem with this explanation, but shock value gets views I guess, just seems it would have a negative effect in the long run, and it is since people are just now finding out about it and flagging these channels left and right. There are people who put razor blades on monkey bars at public parks just to be evil so I'm not gonna just say it's all an AI running on keywords, some people are just messed up. The claymation ones and adults dressing up are the worst but it's all messed up.
13	AI	Let's get real for a second	nice_halibut	19-11-17	77	dq1yddn	It was these extreme things, which aren't even hard to find, that first brought attention to the whole horror show. Then, quickly, the category broadened to include less overtly transgressive stuff and things that were more easily explained by more innocuous rationales like buggy AI, click baiting and scripts to inflate comment counts.
14	AI; keyword	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	19-11-17	8	dq1gyw2	Definitely not discounting that theory, but it does leave out the slew of live-action videos that follow similar if not the same narratives as animated videos. I believe it's a combination of AI or an advanced keyword generator, with lots of human intervention. /u/Wayne_Skylar sums it up well: > You can't analyze the animations while ignoring the live-action videos that use a lot of the exact same tropes. Once you consider them both as having the same cause, you have to apply Ocams razor. Somehow these content creators have figured out a way to discover specific keywords that are profitable. As a software developer, watching these animations and their simplicity has me seriously considering how

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							difficult it would really be to produce animations of this simplicity in a procedurally generated fashion. This in no way makes me sleep easier. It is essentially vicious circle being created in which the YouTube AI can produce content to increase engagement with the help of human creativity to bridge the 'content gap' that it itself cannot (yet) create.
15	AI; generates; keyword; machine; process suggested	Let's get real for a second	whuttupfoo	20-11-17	2	dq34j3w	You have no grasp on how AI works man. Current machine learning isn't up to a level where whole episodes can be automatically generated with dozens of art styles across hundreds of channels with sound effects correctly placed. If that were the case then you'd see a ton of AI generated videos being cashed in on outside of the genre of "fucked up child videos". If there were to be some sort of algorithm at play it would be something of a keyword tracker that tracks which words will generate the most views with the least amount of promotion and a high chance of being placed into suggested videos, which that process doesn't have an AI involved in at all. It's just analytics.\n\nIf these guys actually had AI technology capable of generating hundreds of different types of episodic content then they would be making far more money selling that AI technology outside of YouTube monetization schemes.\n\nThese guys are either selling marketing packages to each other or posting these for free on underground forums which they would in turn use to outsource content creators to make these videos. I imagine everything from the story, to the keywords, to the audio, to the art style, to live actors, are all being outsourced from different parts of the world. They could have as much as 5+ people whom never met each other, creating each episode where the person who has the marketing package is the only one aware of where the episode is being uploaded. The content creators probably have no clue where these vids are ending up. They're probably just being hired on Fiver, Upwork, Craigslist or some similar service, not knowing what their content is going to air on.
16	AI	Let's get real for a second	altbekannt	20-11-17	0	dq2hsh2	hese content creators are real dudes. some often in front of the camera (e.g. ethan bradberry). also there's [this redditor] (https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/7d5in3/ a_group_of_perverts_are_targeting_kids_on_youtube/)who worked for a company, that animated those clips. it's mostly the idea that is copied and not the whole image. an AI would not re-arange the whole setting in a picture (e.g. table left when all the other templates are right tabled) but the copycats do. also sometimes they switch the whole animation style and the perspective. why create such an advanced AI, when entry level animators can do the same for cheaper?
17	AI; generated; machine	Let's get real for a second	[deleted]	19-11-17	13	dq1v4th	**spook**thesunset'\n\nUsername checks out.\n\n>LOL. "Shills". The cry of every nut ball everywhere. Get real dude.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							Oh sorry, I forgot, shills only exist in the eyes of "nut ball". Astroturfing, forum sliding, people being paid to spew certain narratives..totally doesn't exist!! Only in the eyes of a nutty conspiracy theorist! Machine generated? Would like to see some proof of that.. I have spoken to people who work in animation that say it is simply not possible for AI to create much of this disturbing content. But, go ahead, provide evidence of the particular AI/software/methods used. >What makes you think these people care if this crap affects kids. If they ONLY wanted to make money they wouldn't be creating content of urinating on each other, drinking out of toilets etc etc
18	AI	Let's get real for a second	farther reaches	19-11-17	2	dq1h47t	Yeah, that's actually more like it - it's definitely some labor work, but AI is playing a fairly big part in it too.
19	AI	Let's get real for a second	farther reaches	20-11-17	3	dq2idl4	yeah as i said before AI probably isnt playing as big of a role as i said in my original post, but it definitely is playing a part in the whole fiasco also i hope you realize the /r/nosleep subreddit is for authors to share their written horror fiction, not real experiences
20	AI; algorithm; automated; generate; process	Let's get real for a second	Monstertruck Wifeswap	19-11-17	3	dq1heqg	I feel like this combination of factors is pretty close to how a thing like this comes about, tie it in with Youtube neither wanting to rock the revenue boat nor draw attention (and lawyer fees) until they absolutely have to move on it, and this is where we end up. Then once the thing gets rolling, all sorts of factors that feed in to the algorithms which track what kind of content attracts views could easily spiral into this type of a situation. If this thing had started off at least in part through AI or semi-automated processes, it's conceivable that the fuss stemming from dubious content (which may initially have been pulled from a list of terms and factors which seem to generate a lot of views) would just feed that by causing those controversial themes to be selected blindly, since an algorithm that games monetization doesn't know or care about the difference, just notes those terms cause a lot of views and comments "for some reason", and cause it to snowball. Then you have the bought views and gibberish comments, confusion over the strange and inappropriate content, and stream of extra views as people wander in wondering what the fuck is going on here providing an environment it's pretty easy to hide (and bask) in if you're some kind of sicko, easily imitated proven moneymill content for knock offs and imitators (our offbrands have offbrands!), so on and so forth. All the elements you've touched on certainly seem plausable as contributing factors, throw them together in what is pretty much an emergent environment/situation which isn't properly regulated or controlled yet and whee, we have a bizarre, disturbing and confusing shitshow on our hands.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							That's how it seems to me at least, but I just watch this thing like I'm rubbernecking at a car smash. I can't pretend to be either informed or invested personally.
21	AI; generated; auto; data	These videos are so similar	deorder	18-10-17	189	dojgv7j	They seem auto generated just like what they used to do with those black/grey-SEO microsites. People used to make a lot of money with them (some even > 10 million $ a month): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsite and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_farm Google turned a blind eye to the people that were among the first doing this and made the most money. The bigger ones even rented entire data center floors full of servers. I knew one of them because we had our servers in the same data center. Everyone else, the smaller ones, got banned by Google while the bigger ones could continue. Most of how this works can be found at (especially before 2010 when the microsite trick still worked for most): https://www.blackhatworld.com In the OPs case it looks like they have a lot of pieces, 2d sprites, that they re-use for their cutout-like 2d animations. If this is true it is mostly about the money and to get as much viewers as possible. Children are an easy target: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1ThqDahd7M&app=desktop (http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1337599/) > "the film focuses on the explosive growth of child marketing in the wake of deregulation, showing how youth marketers have used the latest advances in psychology, anthropology, and neuroscience to transform American children into one of the most powerful and profitable consumer demographics in the world." and teens as well: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/view/ These youtube videos are this disturbing because they know children do seek and want to test their boundaries. Also interesting: https://medium.com/@d1gi/faketube-ai-generated-news-on-youtube-233ad46849f9
22	AI	These videos are so similar	DCrouchelli	25-11-17	5	dqaquvh	They're created entirely by ai's
23	AI; associate; generate	What is Elsagate	SwiftMustache	20-11-17	58	dq3tggc	The theory that these videos exists to make kidnapping easier doesn't seem that far stretched anymore...

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							But yeah, I remember reading something a long time ago about how kids can easily associate colours with emotions and actions.
							The AI generated content to maximize profit is still the likely culprit. I hope. I really goddamn do.
24	AI; generated	What is Elsagate	SwiftMustache	20-11-17	2	dq3vusa	Yeah. I've just been seeing people jump on the russian scare wagon about it. But this is a business, not propaganda. I'm pretty sure it's just AI generated content to maximize profits. Or maybe to make kids more receptive to kidnapping if we want to theorize more deeply. It's not a joke for sure. Too much went into it, there is indeed an agenda about it. Money? Sex? Trafficking? Hell if I know. Let's just not go all red scare about it before we burn the bridges between countries more than they already are.
25	Algorithm; algorithms	For anyone looking for an easy way to share	Prom3th3an	20-11-17	3	dq3prjy	YouTube could still limit the number of videos with Spiderman/Elsa tags/titles to a handful per uploader per month, and it wouldn't have much impact on legit fan content. And it would give the #ElsaGate uploaders a lot less of a chance to experiment with how to break the algorithms, instead of it being a symmetrical arms race.
26	Algorithm; algorithms	It's time more people know about Elsagate	AlienLoveTriangle	10-10-17	42	dplzcmx	I always assumed that it was because of algorithms trying to milk every last cent of ad revenue money from kids who don't know any better. I always hated the almost pedophilic nature of the content, but now that I've heard rumor of the videos being used as code for finding CP and comments encrypted for info about child trafficking, I'm 100 percent invested in this. I'm usually never the one to buy into conspiracy theories, but I want to dig as deep as far as I can here to see if it might help someone.
27	Algorithm; algorithms	Joe Rogan spreading Awareness	Gelkor	18-11-17	3	dq0bodu	I'd like to think they realize something is wrong with it. And setting and forgetting a strict demonetization algorithm seems like the laziest way to try to "starve out" these videos instead of actively taking a role in fixing it.
28	Algorithm; algorithms; keyword	Let's get real for a second	Yungnugger	19-11-17	340	dq1mn3c	I would have agreed with most of your reasoning yesterday, before I saw these "eat shit", "forced slavery", "cosmetic surgery gone wrong" types of videos. These just don't seem like keywords the algorithm would easily reinforce and are also concepts that don't make sense to the very young children videos like this would target. Also the animation looks too sophisticated to be something completely randomly assembled like "5 little Hitlers jumping on the bed", which is insane but ultimately just a product of arbitrary keyword scrambling. I believe your explanation applies to a large chunk of what we're seeing, but there's still videos getting millions of views that are disturbing, hand-crafted and seem to be driven by some malicious or at least deranged intent, rather than only profit-optimization. (I don't believe in a real "conspiracy", it's just a vague sense of inexplicable fucked-upness being rampant here)
29	Algorithm; algorithms; Associate	Let's get real for a second	zerik25	19-11-17	21	dq1nbbm	Yes, money and abusing the YouTube algorithm is an option, but not necessarily the correct one. Sure, a fair portion of these videos and channels are indeed bandwagoning the trend for some easy cash. The other portion are these sinister videos, both live action and animation. A toddler may not understand

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							what is happening on their screens, but they associate those inappropriate behaviours with good things (e.g. tied up with tape = laugh). The 'pedophile ring' scenario is highly unlikely, yes. The 'mass grooming of children' scenario, not so unreal after all. I'll link you to a YT channel explaining the psychological effects these videos MIGHT have on children: https://www.youtube.com/c/investigatingyoutube
30	Algorithm; algorithms	Let's get real for a second	dimozo	19-11-17	1	dq1xv9v	Can we also talk about the algorithm producing Occam's Razor posts?
31	Algorithm; algorithms; platform	Let's get real for a second	cmann360zamboni	19-11-17	6	dq1kni4	I've known it from the very start. The whole platform is full of users exploiting the algorithm Youtube has in place to favor good content over bad. People making 1 hour videos on nonsensical bullshit , just to be favored by the algorithm for having a longer run time. The people animating these videos are only after the money. H3H3 illuminated this problem when he analyzed how the MoeBradberry boys did their spider-man and Elsa channel.
32	Algorithm; algorithms; keywords	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	19-11-17	21	dq1j70u	I agree, but at this point things have escalated to the point where content like that is related to other elsagate content based on keywords, I believe it's been a slow build to this point. A snowball effect of algorithm soup.
33	Algorithm; algorithms	Let's get real for a second	HooperAoapjm	19-11-17	1	dq1ki3k	Plus, all it takes is for one pornographic term to go in the system by mistake before the algorithm will inevitable focus on that one as it brings more views.
34	Algorithm; algorithms; keyword	Let's get real for a second	Yungnugger	19-11-17	48	dq1ouh2	Of course, most of the people profiting from this are regular people, desperate for money, who got lucky. But some videos just do not fit the mold of "weird, because the algorithm selects for that type of weird content". They just seem bizarre and gross in a specific, non-random way (for example, as I said, "forced slavery" is not a keyword the algorithm would boost, I presume).
35	Algorithm; algorithms	Let's get real for a second	eliasv	23-12-17	0	dt3rs3d	That totally fits with the theory. It's an attempt to game the algorithm. Comments make the video look popular and legitimate which gets it shown to more people. Again, that's exactly what you'd expect them to do.
36	Algorithm; algorithms; autoplay	Let's get real for a second	Threesixzero	20-11-17	0	dq2moy4	Yes, the same amount of money. They could make videos about benign subjects (like something you'd see on SpongeBob), but they don't. The reason these videos catch the attention of children is because of the popular cartoon characters and superheroes they use, not because of their traumatizing subjects. There is no basis to believe the depraved subjects of these videos is the reason for their success. Kids watch these videos on autoplay and those videos are successful is because they were favored by the YouTube algorithm.
37	Algorithm; algorithms; autoplay	Let's get real for a second	OffendedPotato	7-12-17	1	dtveyrh	Its mostly just gaming the youtube algorithm with popular searchwords so they show up in related videos everywhere. Try to watch one of them, then you'll see that they will show up in related videos, thus will get played when kids watch on autoplay.
38	Algorithm; algorithms; generates	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	19-11-17	31	dq1ihm4	I think that applies to an extent, but seeing how so many of these videos are so successful, and the rate they're being churned out, the amount of copycats we're seeing pop up, we can safely assume that they're making money hand over fist.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							Someone needs to pay for all this animation. Even if they were generated by an algorithm, someone needs to pay for all the assets to be created and artwork. Someone needs to pay for all these actors, editing time, camera equipment, costumes. There's no doubt that these videos are harmful, but to me it's clear that money is a key motivator. These videos don't make themselves, and they would have to be making a profit to be made at such scale by so many different sources
39	Algorithm; algorithms	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	19-11-17	8	dq1iroo	How could you know that? Without speaking with the creators directly there's no way for sure to know what makes these videos so successful. Everyone on this sub is just speculating until we hear from an actual creator and curator of content. Also, I believe the more harmful content came later with copycats and further iterations of "algorithm soup" as it's been called.
40	Algorithm; algorithms; bots	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	14	dq1u41s	> I just find it odd how every bottle in that video is from the same brand I bet that "jonnie walker" sounds like a kids name and something to do with walking. So the "order form" the bot sent to this content creator included that phrase and whoever created this particular video shrugged and got some jonnie walker liquor boxes... Is it a fucked up result? You betcha. But I doubt it is malicious (at least in the way you might think). It is just compute algorithms being computer algorithms. Same way the bots in /r/SubredditSimulator post some pretty crazy stuff every now and then...
41	Algorithm; algorithms; bots	Let's get real for a second	lemons lip	20-11-17	101	dq2t82v	You actually make a good point here about corrupting western children. It may be worth remembering that Russia interferes with American elections by manipulating Facebook to create discord in communities - paid ads to make people think aggressively. Would it be too far fetched to think that this is just another form or cyber warfare? A way to desensitise children to themes that would otherwise be considered abhorrent? Think about it; The money made from the high volume vids can be reinvested into - clickfarms for views - bots for comments - investment into hacked American YT accounts This therefore feeds into the mechanism, where more and more children will be exposed to disturbing content by giving the content an initial boost so that it gets picked up by the algorithms. Then again. It could all just be a coincidence. Either way, YouTube needs to address this as soon as possible, or it will find itself in the position of Facebook and Twitter where they are now being held into account for their lack of action.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
42	Algorithm; algorithms	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	20-11-17	0	dq2pzsx	> not because of their traumatizing subjects Yup. But those came about as the result of algorithms, not because (((soros))) and the lizard people are in the back pocket of Disney. Jesus christ you people are insane.
43	Algorithm; algorithms	Let's get real for a second	dooties t	19-11-17	6	dq1pk89	absolutely - wouldn't disagree with you there. i don't disagree either that it's damaging to kids to see it. i'm just saying that i can see how this kind of content makes it into the algorithms in the first place.
44	Algorithm; algorithms	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	16	dq23gpy	> yet you completely disregard the more human element behind this, in the trauma that is inflicted by children as a result of this, as well as inaccurately claiming that this content is created by bots, when it is also created by humans, with live actors I'm not questioning or debating that at all. I don't think a single person in this sub is questioning the harm this stuff can cause to kids who watch it. All I'm doing is countering all the people who think this is some kind of deep conspiracy involving the illuminati, the NFL and the saucer people. There is a *lot* of people going way off the deep and when this shit is quite simple to explain. It's just dudes trying to make a buck off kids watching youtube videos. (well, ...make that buck using rather sophisticated computer algorithms and a ton fraudulent activity). That it does harm to kids is not up for debate. Of course it does. Of course it needs to be stopped. But if you want to stop it, you need to understand it. And to understand it you need to stop thinking like a parent who cares about their kid or an honest, upstanding moral person who does everything above the board and put your mind into the modern world of internet fraud... ...which is a fucked up and fairly scary place considering the power of modern computing...
45	Algorithm; algorithms; bots; keywords; recom-mend	Let's get real for a second	[delete d]	19-11-17	3	dq24lb5	I'm glad we can come to some sense of agreement. >All I'm doing is countering all the people who think this is some kind of deep conspiracy involving the illuminati, the NFL and the saucer people. There is a lot of people going way off the deep and when this shit is quite simple to explain. It's just dudes trying to make a buck off kids watching youtube videos. (well, ...make that buck using rather sophisticated computer algorithms and a ton fraudulent activity). The one thing here though, maybe this shit isn't as simple as you think it is. You understand the mechanics in the way they have been able to profit from this. But in order to profit they would have to make it more popular. So through clever use of SEO/keywords/bots and a host of other black hat techniques they gamed the algorithims to get them popular. But as a consequence of this, these videos are placed alongside more innocent content autoplayed/recommended. Now, the wider point I want to make is that these videos didn't have to be so disturbing in nature.. they could game the system with more innocent content if they wanted to, since the content doesn't matter so much when your gaming the system. You said it yourself "Kids--they'll binge watch anything you put

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							in front of them." That is where you have to begin questioning the motives of those who make the content, in order to desensitize, traumatize and disturb children. I cannot accept an argument that stipulates "they did it because they weren't thinking about it", no, I think there was real malice involved. I don't want to repeat the disturbing imagery that is contained within these videos, you already know most of it, and thought has been put into making those videos.
46	Algo-rithmically	Let's get real for a second	spookt he sunset	19-11-17	74	q1xdmf	> Why do some videos teach children the wrong colors? Red = Blue, or feature an animation of a crying baby if the colors are correct? The videos don't have to make any sense. All that matters is they are viewed a lot. More views = more ad revenue = more money. Whatever algorithmically generated content fulfills that basic formula feeds directly into the next iteration of algorithmically generated content. It's evolution in action!
47	Algorithm; algorithms; bots	Post Malone and H3H3	Megas us	18-11-17	15	dq0ppiw	Aren't they obviously bots to boost the comment count and tilt yt's suggestion algorithm?
48	Algorithm; Algorithms	Post Malone and H3H3	66team	18-11-17	42	dq0lch7	I don't think it's funny at all. Sadly, the "best" case scenario is that this is all only about money and manipulating the algorithm to get ad revenue. Even if that's true, think about all the children seeing all this sexual content disguised as children's videos. Nothing funny at all about that. And that's the "best" case scenario.
49	Algorithm; algorithms; data	These videos are so similar	[delete d]	07-11-17	89	dphqqk0	Lol dude it's the algorithms which dictate what's popular and hence what gets made. No government conspiracy. It's just data and automation.
50	Algorithm; algorithms; Self-reinforcing	These videos are so similar	Drowsy -CS	09-11-17	44	dplgq5g	It's far, far more likely that the content is also based on algorithms that track trends in popular videos, making the whole scheme a self-reinforcing mechanism, which is why there is a shitload of videos and "viewers".
51	Algorithm; algorithms	What is Elsagate	Unibro w4o9	22-11-17	2	dq78u4e	That's exactly the point of the white list. It would be a limited but ever growing library of curated and reviewed content. The bullshit wouldn't be able to abuse algorithms to get seen, because they haven't been whitrlisted
52	Algo-rithmically	What is Elsagate	Diotim a245	28-11-17	1	dqgm1gc	While appropriate the toy manufacturers do the same... They algorithmically come up with new toys market them towards kids that was easily influenced towards them.. Overpriced of course.. And parents are guilted into buying the garbage for kids year after year because their kids have been brainwashed into it.
53	Associate; associates; associated; associating	Let's get real for a second	Justso me-chickyo	25-12-17	2	drqml3c	Ya but I would think Disney wouldn't want to be associated with this..... Or even to have kids associate this shit w/ their charterers in it. Fuck idk the longer I spend on here the more confused I get lol
54	Associate; associates; associated; associating	Let's get real for a second	aberjad och	19-11-17	2	dq26coe	> I also think it would be super-risky for a company to pay for this large of an advertisement in children's videos. In too a direct way, yeah. But that's not the only way, and any company consists of many people, including

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							people higher ups can fire while feigning disgust at their actions, and the people who profit would in many cases rather be shareholders than those who work there. Around shit like this, blackmail is also possibility. And depending on what someone is blackmailed with, it could outweigh any sort of money, and any risk other than X getting out. Not saying that makes it likely, especially since all the brands in the videos are advertised everywhere already anyway. It's hard to say what stuff is aimed at what age, but at least for very young kids, a brand doesn't evoke as much familiarity or credibility (I mean, like Spiderman and Elsa etc. are used). So in my mind, the companies have more to gain than the video makers, because using actual products right left and center might raise unwanted attention, be it from lawyers or parents. Kids associate colorful things that seem remotely edible with sweets anyway, no need to actually put M&M and Cola and Snickers there? And while showing Pepsi and Cola in the same video might seem like something neither company would like, it's still much better for them than showing kids generic fruit juice or something. > I am not saying we shouldn't think in all kinds of different directions but to me it seems like probably something more than simple greed is behind it. Oh, I absolutely agree, greed alone, be it ad money from content creators or companies wanting to get them while they can't even talk yet, doesn't even begin to explain the pervasive abusive patterns. Just because I don't consider it impossible for companies to have a hand in the product placement (it's not even placement, it's outright fetishism, though more of the objects than the brand) doesn't mean I consider that the sole explanation or necessarily part of the explanation. > And I don't really buy those easy explanations that blame the children and an automatic system, so any responsibility vanishes into thin air. Yeah, s**ame** here.
55	Associate; associates; associated; associating	My YouTube account has been hacked	thatguy0900	10-11-17	30	dplyxpb	The owner of the site trawls the deepweb for public private info dumps. If it says the email is pwned then that's because the email with an associated password is in a publicly released database.
56	Associate; associates; associated; associating	What is Elsagate	VegeKale	16-11-17	128	dpw5kjb	I don't think it's particularly hard to believe. I couldn't quite make out the full implications of that link but it seemed like it was saying each child is brainwashed to think of them selves as a certain colour from a young age and they are taught to be a very specific role that they associate with that colour, rinse and repeat for other colours you want that person to have and eventually you can use colours to trigger a certain mindset in a person. In these videos the colours seem to be a bit differently organised I think, and it's a more insidious programming than the overwhelming use of colour described in the article but here's some possibilities that I can think of.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							* Blue. If you're in a blue room you should expect something bad to happen and you shouldn't put up a fight because Elsa is always blue and bad things happen to her and she doesn't usually try to stop them. * Yellow frequently seems to fix all the problems so if you're feeling unhappy, lost or scared and a person wearing hivis yellow approaches you, obviously that person will make everything better and you should go with them. * Black is scary and dangerous so if a person in a black suit (security) shows up you should be scared or run and hide. * Purple means something bad is happening that is meant to be funny. Probably happening to spiderman (red) so if you're in a purple costume it's actually ok to hurt other people, especially if they're dressed as spiderman. Conversely if you're dressed as spiderman or elsa you can't stop the Joker. * Red. Spiderman and red I find a bit harder to pin down, he changes from protector and saviour, to victim a lot. I'm not sure if this is meant to be someone to emotionally connect to like with Elsa but it seems to often involve the breaking of spiderman from thinking he's ok to being not ok anymore and being unable to help elsa in a lot of the videos I've seen. Along this same vein I'm bothered by the idea that a giant, painful, needle poking into the bottom is the cure-all for literally everything in so many videos. I've really only been properly reading about #elsagate since this morning and I'm horrified by what these people are willing to do to children and what this could potentially be doing to so many children who are watching these videos. Even if it isn't deliberate, these sorts of thoughts could still be being implanted.
57	Associate; associates; associated; associating	What is Elsagate	Muckl3t	14-11-17	299	dpsjze7	So does anyone know why Disney (and the other associated companies) don't have the videos removed? This seems to be a pretty big negative story involving their licensed characters. They must have a legal team that should be on top of stuff like this.
58	Auto; flagged	It's time more people know	mercurly	9-11-17	16	dplewsh	Thankfully unlisted videos still get auto-scanned and flagged. Source: My streaming software defaulted to using my PC speaker out as an audio input, flagging every single one of my live stream videos for copyright infringement.
59	Auto	Joe Rogan Spreading Awareness	Xervicx	20-11-17	1	dq3io1z	Yeah, which is why channels that encourage skepticism or at least *don't* encourage mindless consumption of content tend to get hit harder than the ones that *do* encourage that sort of behavior. But the thing is, it's not that they're worthless to advertise to. I don't care how informed someone is, if something seems worth it, they'll be more interested in buying it. Advertisements typically aren't meant to bring in new customers, but are

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							instead meant to retain an existing customer pool. They want to keep bringing people back, so they remind them that Pepsi still exists, that Doritos taste good, that a Ford truck is a vehicle, etc. Advertisements serve as reminders more than anything. And most of the commercials on Youtube are just general "Hey remember, our product/service exists" commercials. But the biggest reason why the "advertiser friendly" thing tends to be bullshit is that content that's considered "family friendly" or "advertiser friendly" or whatever the next bullshit phrase is ends up having ads that will in no way appeal to children. Car commercials? Auto insurance? Some hardware? Tools? Old Spice? Families aren't sitting down and watching Youtube videos. They're not sitting there after dinner watching their favorite family friendly Youtubers. People in general are watching them alone, so anything that's "family friendly" is going to have advertising that won't work on anyone who "family friendly" standards applies to, because the advertising isn't meant for them.
60	Auto	Let's get real for a second	Jessie_James	19-11-17	17	dq1m3ef	Frankly, the comments look identical to when my kids use my phone to type. Lots of gibberish and then a few words of auto-correct and then gibberish.
61	Auto; gene-rate; keywords	Let's get real for a second	Detective4	19-11-17	2	dq2c71c	>Create a tool that generates animations based on keywords Lol, if someone had a tool capable of auto-generating sophisticated, 10+ minute long 3D animations with coherent plotlines, character interaction, post production, SFX, scoring and voiceovers, then YouTube ad revenue would be the least of their concerns. They could sell the tech to Disney or the like for a billion fucking dollars. You guys are clueless about multimedia production. This stuff is hand made. Source: working in multimedia and post for over a decade.
62	Auto; Suggested	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	87	dq21pgp	> parents decided to share your videos That isn't how these are getting watched. These are little kids binge watching youtube videos. Think "four year old" + iPad + "auto play" + "infinite depth of suggested content". I doubt there is a parent there watching these videos with Kiddo.... > If it's only about money, why are they taking the unnecessary risk of getting their accounts banned? Accounts for posting on youtube are almost as cheap and easy to create as reddit accounts. Banning accounts isn't gonna stop this at all. Stopping this is significantly harder and is gonna take some dedicated engineering effort on Google's part.... People make a ton of money gaming Google (or anything with $$$ attached to it) and they have gotten really, really good at it.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
63	Auto; generate	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	18	dq21zvm	> I don't see anything being done about this It does sound like Google has at least recognized the problem. This shit is a *hard* (read "expensive even for google and very time consuming") problem to solve in a way that doesn't negatively impact legitimate users ^(or Google's revenue). It took Google many years to really crack down on bullshit search results. I dunno if you remember, but there was a few years a while ago where a lot of your search results were for really weird auto-generated sites and link-farms. People would game the fuck out of google by plastering wordpress sites with bullshit comments that linked back to whatever they wanted to gather traffic.... These days, it seems like that is mostly a thing of the past....
64	Auto	Let's get real for a second	Demo Graphic causation	19-11-17	13	dq1h8kq	Don't forget that the YTK app auto plays. Kids would be forced to watch like it or not
65	Auto; Generated	These videos are so similar	AdventurePee	20-11-17	4	dq331nk	this is reminiscent of the whole "finger family" phenomenon, where videos are auto-generated with the same song and general style but with different characters featured as the finger puppets.
66	Auto	What is Elsagate	Gibson fan159	28-11-17	12	dqg85th	> who's parents are being lazy and just give a kid an ipad to watch these videos all day so they don't have to actually do any parenting That's a very unfair statement. Although I'm sure it happens, a lot of parents' intentions are to find educational videos for their kids to watch. But due to auto play (and actually not supervising your children), these "ad revenue" videos get put in que and end up going down the rabbit hole automatically. My advice to parents is to turn off the "auto play next video" function.
67	Auto	What is Elsagate	AJolly Redditor	11-12-17	12	dr3bvuo	Nah, i think the problem is more with the parents, who leave the kids alone, so the unsupervised kid is atracted by the bright colored character he likes, like elsa, hulk or superman. My solution is to not only turn off auto play, but to be around your child and maybe even make a "safe videos" playlist for them.
68	Automated	Let's get real for a second	of_mendez	20-11-17	1	dq3dcvx	. believe there could be other explanations, I even believe you are honest, but you could introduce your alternative without dismissing the main one, I will show you how: "maybe A low life programmer and video designer is gaming youtube by using an automated creator of edgy content cause it gets the views, this checks cause the key words are so obvious and the quality so low" Edit: THe pedophiles are there, but in much much much much much higher numbers and more wealthy that people claim
69	Auto-mated; bots; ranking	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	30	dq1wdtm	> I forgot, shills only exist in the eyes of "nut ball". Calling people who have the most logical, simplest explanation "shills" is exactly what an astroturfing, forum sliding nut job does. Actual "shills" behave exactly like you do--spreading misinformation and instilling fear, uncertainty and doubt. > If they ONLY wanted to make money they wouldn't be creating content of urinating on each other, decapitations with babies crying, drinking out of toilets, anal injections... etc.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							Not true because they *very clearly* **are** posting those things using automated bots. Clearly videos featuring spiderman pissing on decapitated babies with needles in their butt makes more ad revenue than those without or they wouldn't be posting them. The fact that these videos are bizarre, highly disturbing, and outright fucked up does *not* automatically that there is some deep dark conspiracy involving disney, the NFL and the illuminati. It is *easily* explained by the fact that those fucked up attributes make more money than videos that don't have those attributes. There is a very simple explanation to this. Higher Ranking == More Clicks == More Ad Revenue. Period. Full stop. Arguing anything else requires some pretty beefy proof.
70	Auto-mated; auto-nomous; machine; model; process	Let's get real for a second	Konkey_D0ng	19-11-17	15	dq27fr2	Well said. I think machine learning could explain the peculiar nature of these videos. r/subredditsimulator is not a trained model. Hence it's incoherency. What disturbs me is these videos apparently are coherent and posses ideation. They are intentionally wrong with colors, intentionally frightening, intentionally follow a plot from previously made content, etc. I'm very suspicious of YouTube's blatant disregard for the removal of this content. I've had completely innocuous videos removed saying it violated *some* portion of the ToS. Wholely ambiguous. It also said my account would be restricted **unless I immediately appealed the decision (2-3 days IIRC).** So obviously I appealed it without having any clue as to what they thought I did. I had to write explanations defending myself when I was never told the accusation. I never found out what triggered it. I only received a brief email saying it was an error and my video would be restored and I wouldn't be penalized. The whole process was autonomous. I never was given the option to interact with a support member. My point is, if it's automated and that simple to remove content from my decade old, YT Partner program account, why is it so hard for these horrible videos? It's perplexing.
71	Auto-mated; bots	Let's get real for a second	of_mendez	20-11-17	1	dq3cno3	Look, The amount of views and the fact that it looks super automated points to the fact that is profit motivated, I understand that kids may go to adult swim or these videos just because they are odd and stimulating, but the way I see it the videos are too low quality to be aimed for 10+. this is not 10+ material, this is 7 years or less, look at them, they dont even talk on the videos, is retarded, nobody can be watching this if they can form a real sentence, I think that part is obvious for everybody, adults dont go there to interact with babbling kids, they are there for eachother, the fact that all the fetish categories are represented + the age thing makes me believe the goal is to instigate/induce/embolden the specific fetishes on random kids, creating sociologically more individuals of young age with a

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							secret crooked sexual drive = grooming... I do believe reddir management deleted pizagate cause media matters and sharia blue are threatened by powerful pedos being outed, they have censored reddit to protect the adrenochrome addicts, EVERYBODY knows this now in the conspiracy forums, there is no stopping it and censorship doesnt help, if you seem to be attempting to helping them you will get called a paid bot, if your account is old you'll be suspected of selling it, the paranoia is justified
72	Auto-play; bots	Let's get real for a second	[deleted]	19-11-17	109	dq1pto8	This post is shilly as fuck. Bots are up in here. "TL:DR; its for the money" - is such a horseshit theory. Drinking out of toilets, anal injections, decapitations with babies crying. Kids don't go seeking this shit out. Many kids who are being traumatized by this shit aren't even old enough to read or write, they are given the iPad or phone as a way to keep them quiet. These videos are keyworded and tagged to appear alongside innocent content. Kids are content with more innocent content, but this shit comes up on autoplay alongside innocent content. No nefarious purpose? No intent to cause trauma or condition kids with fucked up content? LMAO you think they simply think "It won't effect the kids, I'll make my money".. Do you know this kind of explanation allows it to become normalized and for people to escape punishment?
73	Auto-play	Let's get real for a second	Offended-Potato	06-12-17	2	dtuku2b	Hey I know this is two months ago but I couldn't help myself. I don't think the kids actually go looking for this, its more like they start watching stuff like toy channels on autoplay which will send you to all the depraved shit. A lot of it comes through the kids app even, so most of the views are just toddlers plopped in front of an ipad with autoplay.
74	Bot; bots	Joe Rogan spreading awareness	Confession Beer_	19-11	9	dq279oq	I said in my comment that it's probably nothing and I think it's really far fetched, I'm just repeating what I saw and what other Redditors figured out. They literally plugged it into a translator, or some kind of decoding program that looks for patterns and out came weird creepy messages. Do I think it's pedophiles using some code to talk to each other? No, you're right that doesn't make any sense. But none of this does. Most likely it's bots trying to punch up the comment sections to make the video more visible. The fact this gibberish is showing up on all these videos adds credibility to the bot theory. But I'm not gonna rule anything out it's discovered where these videos come from, who makes them, and why these bizarre themes seem to repeat across all these channels.
75	Bot; bots; generate	Joe Rogan spreading awareness	shrekinator	19-11-17	5	dq2cxn3	To me, these weird videos do make sense. They've been proven to generate an insane load of views and revenue. So upstart tech firms in Tiger countries try to cash in on this gold rush with very cheap, low effort, recycled animations and sound. I've also noticed white, western looking families all partake in Elsa/spiderman videos with their children. I'm guessing they're also participating in the gold rush. The massive amounts of views? First you buy a load of bots to get the ball rolling. Infants will do the rest. Same for the comments.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
76	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	Jbaltus 2016	19-11-17	8	dq1w38z	I personally believe the gibberish in the comments is just kids just typing random shit, because they found this "cool button than does things". Their channels look way too legit and diverse to be bots, they have real account names and profile pictures, sometimes they even have foreign names like in Arabic and speak other languages. Either they are insanely good at creating Bots or they are just confused kids.
77	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	OpalMagnus	19-11-17	4	dq1wo1x	I sincerely think that bots are upping the view counts so they're more visible in the searches. But I honestly think people are doing this because the enjoy the idea of causing children mental distress. Even if it's not pedophiles per se, I definitely think it's a trolling/humour thing. It's like people who like stealing candy from babies or crushing kids stuff. They like the idea of ruining a child's innocence.
78	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	scapestrat0	19-11-17	31	dq1npzg	Because the worst that can happen is that you get a copyright strike, if you get 3 they close your channel. Not a big deal for those vietnamese spammers with account-farming bots.
79	Bot; bots; generated; machine	Let's get real for a second	spookthesunset	19-11-17	31	dq1utwu	> This post is shilly as fuck. Bots are up in here. > > LOL. "Shills". The cry of every nut ball everywhere. Get real dude. > It won't effect the kids, I'll make my money What makes you think these people care if this crap affects kids. The simplest, easiest explanation is this is machine generated garbage controlled by people trying to exploit YouTube to make a buck. If you understand how these kind of fraudsters operate and the technology available to them you'd see how this makes 100% sense (which to be fair, many people do *not* understand the scale and magnitude of modern internet fraud). Period. End of story. Anything beyond that requires some pretty extraordinary evidence...
80	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	Mopsus-	20-11-17	23	dq2mzdh	> What bots? People like him are such incredible narcissists that they think the only way somebody could disagree with their supreme ideas is if they're being paid by a Satanic deep state shadow government.
81	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	threesixzero	23-12-17	1	dt3e7j8	That theory falls apart with all of the bots that are being utilized by these channels. These channels use scripts to comment on each others' videos, which is why they have comments that follow the exact same template. I have seen channels that have few videos and few views but thousands and thousands of subscribers. It is not as simple as different unconnected groups of people copying each other. There is a large concerted effort going on.
82	Bot; bots; ranking	Let's get real for a second	[deleted]	19-11-17	9	dq1xcrs	> Calling people who have the most logical, simplest explanation "shills" is exactly what an astroturfing, forum sliding nut job does. Actual "shills" behave exactly like you do--spreading misinformation and instilling fear, uncertainty and doubt. You got me!

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							Despite arguing that we should not normalize this content and those who created it should be punished. Thats what Youtube pays me to think. >"most logical, simplest explanation" Far from it. It's always amazing when people will invent the most absurd shit in order to maintain their image of themselves being rational. "It's all bots man, just bots making this shit. When its not bots, its just people man, just people wanting to make money and obviously they are completely innocent in their intentions." > Clearly videos featuring spiderman pissing on decapitated babies with needles in their butt makes more ad revenue than those without or they wouldn't be posting them >It is easily explained by the fact that those fucked up attributes make more money than videos that don't have those attributes. There is a very simple explanation to this. Higher Ranking == More Clicks == More Ad Revenue. Period. Full stop. Arguing anything else requires some pretty beefy proof. False. There is much more popular innocent content for kids than those videos, created by mainstream kids TV production companies. These videos are buried amongst that content.
83	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	IanPhlegming	20-11-17	39	dq3apfu	> Unless you're telling me there's 852 propaganda spreading elsagate video making pedophiles on here. Nope. But there are a ton of bots unleashed on Reddit every day. It's what's killed a lot of subreddits already, suffocated conversation, encouraged groupthink. "Tin foil hats" also a loaded term, created to shut down debate and conversation. Pretty funny, too, considering it was originally a phrase created to mock people who believed in stuff like this: http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/13/politics/cuba-us-diplomats-acoustic-weapons/index.html
84	Bot; bots; generate	Let's get real for a second	aberjadoch	19-11-17	21	dq1h4g5	> These videos are playing on the same notes that clickbait videos and articles do for adults Yeah, or as OP said > Feces, urine, spiders, needles, sex, all things that are normally considered "bad" when you're a kid. This feeling of watching something that you're not supposed to watch is probably quite stimulating for kids, so they keep watching and the creators keep creating. Bait is still first and foremost bait. Yeah, don't take bait, but also, don't bait. That kind of comes first, because without baiting, the concept of taking bait would not even exist. > Believe it or not, the kid's willingness to watch is a big part of the issue, so pointing out that there's something attractive about these videos is not "victim blaming".

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							Being physically even present in the location, not knowing kung-fu, all such things are also "a very big part" in any rape. However, here's the distinction: without the attacker that would be no problem. It's normal for kids to be interested in exciting things and stuff they don't understand, that's how they learn, after all. And that wouldn't be a problem if there weren't abusers exploiting it. Just like taking a stroll at night wouldn't be a problem without rapists. The main thing is to not mix up responsibilities. Yes, people should take care where they go at night, but just as importantly, people shouldn't rape. So when a rape was committed, that's the part one should deal with. Likewise, adults should watch their kids, and YouTube should clean up their act even though kids shouldn't be on on it unsupervised, but none of that gets the content creators off the hook. > Obviously this kind of content is universally and undeniably a hit amongst children, these videos are generating billions of views We haven't the faintest idea how many of those views are from bots or click farms, these views don't translate directly to actual views. Not that you're wrong, of course kids watch these videos. They're not getting forced. But that doesn't make it not victim blaming when OP talks about how it's really just mostly bizarre things kids dig, and how any actual abusive stuff is just a spin-off. That's just bullshit, every day a few posts get written to make the claim, and they never hold any water. If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it just might be a duck. Just because people also dig in comments and talk about pedophile rings and whatnot doesn't mean pretending that this isn't directed deliberate and systematic abuse isn't still wishful thinking.
85	Bot; bots; platform	Let's get real for a second	eliasv	23-12-17	0	dt484oh	I never said there wasn't a connection, I just explained how the connection and spam can be explained in another way. I also never claimed that your explanation is implausible, I simply supported the claim that it is not the *only* plausible explanation. In particular I'm trying to explain how the theory does not "fall apart" and in fact predicts this exact phenomenon. If you think this is the only instance of wide-scale botting you are the one who is naive. Have you never heard of e.g. spam bots and like-farming before? Most of the internet is filled with this stuff. Bots sharing/liking/commenting on content in order to make it appear more popular (to encourage the platform to present it to more real users) is standard operating procedure. If this were *not* happening then *that* is what would make OP's theory fall apart. You have it backwards.
86	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	threesixzero	23-12-17	0	dt4d5eq	There's a difference between using bots and [this](https://image.prntscr.com/image/iQ5pb1ybTgCWr1J6hCXJcQ.png).

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
87	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	[deleted]	19-11-17	9	dq231pd	I think you are focusing too much on the SEO/money making side of things. You have a fairly accurate idea of how this machinery operates, yet you completely disregard the more human element behind this, in the trauma that is inflicted by children as a result of this, as well as inaccurately claiming that this content is created by bots, when it is also created by humans, with live actors. You forgot to talk about the anal injections, the drinking from toilets, the urinating on each other, the disgusting imagery that causes trauma to children. Why do you disregard this reality? You only see the machinery.
88	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	tetrisnamie	19-11-17	1	dq2axdq	So the question turns into, why do videos made professionally still have bot comments if they don't need them? I agree wholeheartedly with your assessment I just need an explanation on this https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pf0TLdxJzZc
89	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	3bedrooms	19-11-17	7	dq2a2wj	let's be glad the robots are still churning out content in the uncanny valley stage. because soon the bot videos will be indistinguishable from human ones.
90	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	tricksta616	19-11-17	60	dq266j5	I remember hearing how 4chan discovered one of these channels was just a bot that made and uploaded videos based on comments so they just spammed the comments with Hitler and shrek. One of them is even called "5 little CJ GTA jumping on the bed". I agree with op to a degree, it's definitely not one huge conspiracy, and i remember being a kid and watching shit like "ELMO KILLS BARNEY" and feeling edgy, but some of this shit is too fucking deranged to be innocent.
91	Algo-rithm; bot; bots; generated; filter; machine; rank; data	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	58	dq1tthz	I think a lot of people haven't been exposed to what bots can do and worse, the very sophisticated manner fraudsters operate on the internet these days. Modern internet fraud is quite sophisticated. It's a real, big-money business. Just one that happens to be largely illegal and completely immoral. Under the cover of these content "creators" is a whole shady underworld of scams and scammers. You've got people who try to compromise people's google accounts and sell them to these folks for use in posting videos & comments. You've got folks who do nothing but try to take data breaches (equifax, yahoo, linkedin, adobe, sony, etc...) and extract every last username / password and then go around and sell that list. These "creators" pay money for those lists and use them to try to get into google accounts. You've got people who run spearfishing scams to try to target popular youtube video posters in order to take their established channel over. Those channels probably have made it past a lot of Google's filtering and already have a high ranking--why try to build up reputation with a new channel when you can just take over an existing one? There is also the botnets these folks rent time on. You know that computer your parents have that keeps getting viruses? That computer could be posting these youtube comments right now. Let's not even start with all the compromised "internet of things" devices connected to the internet like webcams, DVD players, etc. Even hacked Android phones can do this stuff. Anything that is connected

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							to the internet can be harnessed for breaking into accounts, posting comments on youtube, etc. People need to go look at /r/SubredditSimulator for a while. That is 100% bot traffic posting machine generated stories and comments based on high-ranking posts in real subreddits. Granted those bots post almost coherent sentences and stuff, but that is by design--nobody would upvote a subreddit full of gibberish. The gibberish comments in these youtube videos aren't meant for humans to read. Making bots that post semi-coherent comments isn't cheap or easy, so they don't bother. They exist only to try to fool YouTube into a higher page rank. If Google's algorithms change such that comments must be somewhat coherent in order to count against ranking, you better believe these bot owners will update their bots. You'll start seeing something that looks closer to /r/SubredditSimulator ... This shit is deep, but not in the way some people here think it is. It isn't a conspiracy. It is just one aspect of the shady underworld of modern internet fraud.
92	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	Scroog eMc Duck00	19-11-17	2	dq2f0cq	Good bot. Too bad it didn't reply to the guy who fucked up.
93	Bot; bots	Let's get real for a second	EstaticT oBe Depres sed	3-12-17	5	ds4nasz	If someone is making them and not a bot they might just swap around he colours for shits and giggles if it doesn't have much effect on the videos success.
94	Bot; bots	My YouTube account has been hacked	Analiga tor	13-12-17	2	dr65nfj	Some more proof into the idea that a lot of these are run by bots https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ek_QTUBN2BU this was posted on a elsa channel. A common key-phrase they use to connect all the fucked up shit is "bad baby" and they just posted this song by a band called bad baby, or is called bad baby idk.
95	Bot; bots; ranking	Post Malone and H3H3	Spookt he sunset	19-11-17	17	dq23x1i	There is no "coded comments". It is just garbage posted by bots in an attempt to boost the ranking of the video. Go visit /r/SubredditSimulator--that subreddit is all bots doing nothing but chatting with eachother....
96	Bot; bots; algorithms auto; generated;	Post Malone and H3H3	Patrick Batema n87	20-11-17	6	dq3wp4u	In addition to what others have said, a major indicator that 12-13 year olds are likely not the ones watching this shit is the fact that for the most part the channel names and video titles and descriptions don't really make much sense at all or have much of a logical structure to them. For the most part, the titles of these videos read more like the tags for a video than they do titles. By 12-13 (honestly, probably much earlier than that now), kids are already fans of specific youtube channels and series, in addition to your standard films and television shows. I'm not going to say that they all understand everything they watch as well as adults (though I honestly believe a large portion of them do), or that they can't be entertained by some utterly nonsensical stupid shit, but there's also no way they're going to look at one of these videos, its title, and the channel that uploaded it and not think it's some kind of bot-generated scam or something. These videos aren't designed to generate real fans, or be found by kids consciously browsing through

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							youtube in a manner similar to how an adult would. They're designed to be picked up by youtube's algorithm in such a way that they come up one or two videos after some 4 year old's parent opens up Youtube Kids on their iPad, presses turns on auto-play, and walks away to try to get some chores done.
97	Bot; bots	Post Malone and H3H3	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	5	dq2429g	> Occam's razor, dude Yup. Simplest explanation is called bots dude. More comments == higher pagerank. Same as it is on facebook, instagram, reddit... anything really.... For fuck sake a search for "youtube comment bot" returns some kind of open source youtube comment generator: https://www.supagrowth.com/youtube-comment-bot. There are probably more sophisticated ones you can pay money for.... Go look at /r/SubredditSimulator if you don't believe me. That is all bots doing nothing but having semi-coherant conversations with each other....
98	Classify; Classifies; classified; classifying; classification	What is Elsagate?	pupomin	20-11-17	14	dq3s0kp	Fascinating analysis, would you consider linking to time offsets in some example videos where these color mappings hold? I'm curious if videos could be classified by whether they adhere to some or all of those rules. That would be a good way to group them by intent, and maybe by producer (assuming that visual style and channel alts vary).
99	Data	Let's get real for a second	time_keepson slipping	21-11-17	6	dq5w3ha	It seems to me that a lot of disparate stuff is getting lumped together under the broader "Elsagate" title. From the perspective of parents with children who might end up watching this stuff, that makes sense. But in terms of trying to figure out what in the fuck is behind all this, it probably doesn't. Somebody ought to do some data crunching and analysis on the differences between different kinds of videos (real children, live actors playing characters, finger family and related weirdness, animated characters engaging in cartoon violence). I would think each of these things might have different audiences and different creators with different motives. Even the assertion below about putting terms like "suicide" and "piss" into titles--that's not something I've seen as much as people in this thread seem to be claiming happens, so it may also be its own genre.
100	Data	Let's get real for a second	clgfandom	20-11-17	1	dq3l42e	> What I'm arguing is that the initial purpose was for profit, and has spun in to abusive content. It's not as black and white as some people would like to believe. I too think it's mixed. Being a contrarian and some business experience myself, my initial hypothesis is pretty similar to yours. But you are also making this "black and white" with a title saying it's Not for pedophilia. I agree with most of your point, but what makes you so confident to say that only "a very small portion" of viewers are pedo. I have heard psychologists claiming it's more prevalent than public believed, so I am on the fence on this point until I see more data shown/cited. Sellers don't necessarily have to be a pedo themselves to sell stuff to pedo. The primary motive often is profit. The question is how much morality(varying amount of harm done to kids)

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							would they be willing to trade for some amount of money.
101	Data	My YouTube account has been hacked	ScarXLXX	16-11-17	1	dpwfpxu	According to haveibeenpwned my email has been revealed in a data breach of the site DLH.net I never signed up on DLH, wtf The site has also let me know that my email was placed in a text file full of emails for hackers to use or whatever Luckily it was breached ages ago and since then I have been constantly changing my security details, and my account is good to go. Certainly scary that I didn't even know.
102	Data	My YouTube account has been hacked	buge	10-11-17	37	dpm27yk	It tells me details about all the compromises that my email has been in. I type in my email and it lists 10 compromises, here's one of the compromises for example: >BTC-E: In October 2014, the Bitcoin exchange BTC-E was hacked and 568k accounts were exposed. The data included email and IP addresses, wallet balances and hashed passwords. >Compromised data: Account balances, Email addresses, IP addresses, Passwords, Usernames, Website activity What more information do you want?
103	Filter; filters; filtered; filtering	It's time more people know about Elsagate	TheLocal Gamer	15-10-17	81	doeoyuc	Alright. This is the first time I've logged on Reddit in about a week, because I haven't found time for Reddit. Just got a lot of replies very recently for some reason. The surprising thing isn't the porn. Or even child porn. We've all been to *that* side of YouTube where we've probably seen something that isn't all that legal. It's that this shit isn't being taken down. It's that this shit gets right past the suggestive filter. Viewbots get placed on the videos, and whadd'ya know, the video is skyrocketing to the top of the youtube kids app.
104	Filter; filters; filtered; filtering	It's time more people know about Elsagate	Battlestar Faptastula	9-11-17	17	dplfk5n	Though apparently this public stuff is getting past the filters, so maybe the private stuff has ways to too.
105	Filter; filters; filtered; filtering	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	25	dq1xkli	> Also, why isn't Disney doing anything about this? What makes you think they aren't? I'm sure they are pestering the fuck out of Google to get them to better filter out this kind of garbage. What they aren't gonna do is go after the creators because a) they are very hard to find, b) they probably live in regions that don't give a fuck about intellectual property and c) for every one they squish another three will pop up. It is far more effective to get Google to do a better job of filtering this stuff out. ...which trust me, is *not at all easy* The black-hat people who do this stuff are very smart, highly motivated by money and will almost certainly invent new ways to route around anything Google does.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
106	Filter; filters; filtered; filtering	Let's get real for a second	scapestrat0	19-11-17	5	dq1oq3t	Sorry to hear that. Wouldn`t be easier to just entirely remove Youtube from your daughter phone at least till they sort out their kids content filters?
107	Filter; filters; filtered; filtering	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	15	dq1xt02	> You betting on something that makes not a lick of sense certainly elevates it. It only doesn't make sense because many people outside of the anti-fraud industry do not truly grasp how sophisticated modern internet fraud has gotten. That shit is completely whack! This stuff is just cut & dry black-hat SEO garbage. Same as it was on wordpress forums, same as it was with all the weird shit you used to find in google search results.... Not a single bit of this content has to make any sense at all. The only thing that matters is people (kids) watch it and they get ad revenue from google. Everything else is the content generators trying to get past google's filters and get ahead of all the other competing content generators....
108	Filter; filters; filtered; filtering	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	12	dq1um3h	> Why wouldn't they be afraid of copyright lawsuits for the characters they're using? Consider: * these folks are most likely not in any place that enforces intellectual property violations. * the content channels they pop up are a dime a dozen and if you squish one, another two will pop up in its place. * these folks take some steps to cover their tracks * they probably aren't yet a juicy enough target to go after. That is not to say that Disney and what not isn't going to Google's door and asking *them* to do a better job filtering this garbage out....
109	Filter; filters; filtered; filtering	Let's get real for a second	Spookthe sunset	20-11-17	89	dq2i31h	> I mean first off.. why would they do that? Because there is apparently a huge set of people in this subreddit who are more interested in entertaining whack-job conspiracy theories than dealing with the boring old facts like the fact that this is no different than every other case of black-hat SEO bullshit that existed since the dawn of SEO. The fact Disney hasn't addressed their Micky Mouse issue is almost certainly just run of the mill corporate incompetence. It is shitty, fucked up content? Yes. Should kids be watching it? Hell No. Should Google allocate more resources to filtering it? Yes. Should Disney take more action? Yes. Is it the secret work of (((soros))), the NSA and the lizard people? No. This sub is well on its way to pizzagate / boston bomber / reddit witch hunt du jour. Just look at how many of the wackos are getting upvotes. Which is a shame since this is actually a thing that people with kids need to know about.
110	Filter; filters;	Post Malone and H3H3	Thebest atheist	19-11-17	25	dq1pgs4	My thoughts exactly. They have other Elsa type videos on that profile. Also, if you look very carefully there are words that show up on the screen. I

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
	filtered; filtering						guarantee if you looked at them through a filter you can read what it says. The colored screens, bottom third of the frame. I didn't try to read, I didn't even watch all the way through.
111	Filter; filters; filtered; filtering	What is Elsagate	baters	28-11-17	2	dqgey3c	Apologies if this has been asked before, but is there any way to block/filter [this is not the same] any of these offending channels from appearing in searches in either YouTube or YT Kids apps?
112	Flag; flags; flagged; flagging	Joe Rogan Spreading Awareness	aberjadoch	18-11-17	9	dq0a04c	No, that could not be, because it would be trivial to recognize these videos, to at least have heuristics flagging them for human review. Each ElsaGate channel has links to N more, it's not like you have to look for needles in a haystack. Plenty of material to plain plenty of things on.\n\nYou do realize that for every dollar ad revenue a channel owner gets, YouTube gets even more?\n\n> I'm not sure but it seems like these two things could be linked.\n\nHow does it seem so? Because it has both demotization in it? Why not connect to to anything that has pixels in it, or is on the internet, or any other number of things that is really just grasping for straws.
113	Flag; flags; flagged; flagging	Post Malone and H3H3	tundrazero	3-12-17	3	ds4mo4v	You're so right now after the whole Logan Paul videos, Kritikal and Pyrocynical released videos on it and less then 6 hours they were taken down. Kritikal was sus, they flagged his for misleading/metadata for the first time.
114	Flag; flags; flagged; flagging	What is Elsagate?	Joshua Mohawknz1	21-12-17	1	drk75k2	Well I just realised that if we stop watching them.. maybe they won't be popular and then they will die out!!.. But the kids do.. So we need to flag the videos and refuse to watch them and maybe they will die out like everything.\n\nAnd don't yell at me saying it won't work.. I don't know everything but they might still be there but not to the whole world.
115	Flag; flags; flagged; flagging	What is Elsagate?	blablaPotato	18-11-17	16	dq0fjnj	Seems like not exactly racism but rather homophobia? Lgbtq groups flag is each colour of the rainbow, so my guess is what they want to say is that the only right and happy way to live is "cis white".\n\nEdit: Idk man Thats pretty fucked up
116	Flag; flags; flagged; flagging	What is Elsagate?	CrayolaS7	12-12-17	6	dr4mbwj	You'd think youtube would have made the kids app only display curated content by default rather than using the same "allowed until flagged" system of the main site.
117	Formula	Let's get real for a second	threesixzero	19-11-17	10	dq1n89r	There are so many of these videos and many of them follow [the exact same cookie cutter formula](https://www.reddit.com/r/ElsaGate/comments/773w8o/these_videos_are_so_similar_that_i_cant_help_but/). It would be naive of me to believe this is not a part of a large concerted effort to drive some agenda. It could be evil people trying to condition and traumatize kids. Since YouTube is not tackling this and is very unfair to truly innocent channels, it could be YouTube itself trying get people to beg for censorship (Hegelian Dialectic - problem, reaction, solution). Idk what it is but it isn't normal.
118	Formula	Let's get real for a second	[deleted]	19-11-17	29	dq2fahc	Because *not every* channel that follows this formula is "innocent". The wave can be ridden by people who do aim to show messed up things to kids.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
119	Formula	Let's get real for a second	eliasv	22-12-17	0	dt1zdja	But spamming lots of videos which fit the same formula is explained perfectly by OP's theory. When they find something which works and gets a lot of hits they recreate it. Obviously they will do that, there is no need to invent a conspiracy to explain it.
120	Formula	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	20-11-17	3	dq3jrgs	> This is in regards to the animated videos, and live action videos that all seem to systematically follow the cartoon character themes. Also > **Pedophiles in the comment section, a secret pedophile ring?** They make up an insanely small portion of the comment section on these videos, and are more than likely an unfortunate by-product of the attention these videos are getting from kids. Every time someone finds a creepy comment, it gets posted on /r/elsagate as if all these videos are flooded with pedophiles. The reality is, peodophiles exist. Where do you think they hang out on the internet? Where the kids hang out, because they're pedophiles. Sure they're there, in much smaller numbers than people claim, but I don't see a strong connection between the pedophiles and the creators of these videos. As well as > **Edit: to address the child abuse and live action videos that follow a similar theme** I believe these videos spun out of the success and popularity of the original Spiderman and Elsa videos. Clearly these people don't think they're doing anything wrong, because most of them are willing to share their faces and identities with their viewers. If it was about sharing children or child pornography, especially on a large scale, I don't believe there would be so many people sharing their identities. That doesn't mean these people aren't necessarily abusers or pedophiles themselves, it only makes the theory of an interconnected child sex trade very unlikely. Most likely, people saw the millions of views from Spiderman and Elsa videos and thought "I can do that", so now they attempt to replicate that same formula, even at the expense of their children. Easy money.
121	Formula	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	20-11-17	3	dq3x5ep	> **Edit: to address the child abuse and live action videos that follow a similar theme** I believe these videos spun out of the success and popularity of the original Spiderman and Elsa videos. Clearly these people don't think they're doing anything wrong, because most of them are willing to share their faces and identities with their viewers. If it was about sharing children or child pornography, especially on a large scale, I don't believe there would be so many people sharing their identities. That doesn't mean these people aren't necessarily abusers or pedophiles themselves, it only makes the theory of an interconnected child sex trade very unlikely. Most likely, people saw the millions of views from Spiderman and Elsa videos and thought "I can do that", so now they attempt to replicate that same formula, even at the expense of their children. Easy money.

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122	Generate; generates; generated; generating	Joe Rogan	Tragic16	20-11-17	3	dq3454d	IMO, the lack of a clear end game is what makes this whole thing super sinister. Why create such depraved videos featuring fictional characters and incredibly negative themes? To desensitize children? It's definitely working, but there's no educational value. Yeah, these videos generate a lot of revenue for the makers, but so do other normal videos that target children. Is there some psychopath looking to damage the future generation and speed up the imminent destruction of the planet? Sometimes, the dismissive responses get pretty annoying although I realize that it's to quell the more avid conspiracy theorists. Still doesn't explain why all of this is happening. And yes, like I mentioned in another post, I don't believe this started as a pedophile thing, but it's not far-fetched to believe that predators have begun to notice that children are watching. Who knows if there are children who have fallen prey due to this?
123	Generate; generates; generated; generating; Keywords	Let's get real for a second	plythesyus			dq1g4p2	I think maybe the company who built the program to make animations is purchasing frequent keywords from fettish porn sites maybe? I mean, there's a huge amount of porn sites out there and odds are they'd be selling their ussage data pretty cheap as most porn sites exist soley to generate revenue and not for the distribution of pornography.
124	Generate; generates; generated; generating; Keywords	Let's get real for a second	scapestrat0	19-11-17	62	dq1nz7d	The explanation is just that for some reasons those inappropriate keywords generate more views, so those creators just keep pushing the line to make bank. I think theorizing any grand scheme other than making a few bucks is giving those guys brains too much credit lol
125	Generate; generates; generated; generating	Let's get real for a second	Probably athrowaway15	20-11-17	-1!!	dq2rkey	Money first.. THEN pedophelia... which generates more money.. nothing to see here.
126	Generate; generates; generated; generating; formula	Let's get real for a second	Spookthesunset	19-11-17	79	dq1xdmf	> Why do some videos teach children the wrong colors? Red = Blue, or feature an animation of a crying baby if the colors are correct? The videos don't have to make any sense. All that matters is they are viewed a lot. More views = more ad revenue = more money. Whatever algorithmically generated content fulfills that basic formula feeds directly into the next iteration of algorithmically generated content. It's evolution in action!
127	Generate; generates; generated; generating	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	19-11-17	32	dq1ip87	As for the practicality of it all, I stand by the belief that it's a combination of outsourcing, copycats, and automatically generated content.
128	Generate; generates; generated; generating	Let's get real for a second	aberjadoch	19-11-17	11	dq1hc6h	> These videos are playing on the same notes that clickbait videos and articles do for adults Yeah, or as OP said > Feces, urine, spiders, needles, sex, all things that are normally considered "bad" when you're a kid. This feeling of watching something that you're not supposed to watch is probably quite stimulating for kids, so they keep watching and the creators keep creating.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							Bait is still first and foremost bait. Yeah, don't take bait, but also, don't bait. That kind of comes first, because without baiting, the concept of taking bait would not even exist. > Believe it or not, the kid's willingness to watch is a big part of the issue, so pointing out that there's something attractive about these videos is not "victim blaming". Being physically even present in the location, not knowing kung-fu, all such things are also "a very big part" in any rape. However, here's the distinction: without the attacker that would be no problem. It's normal for kids to be interested in exciting things and stuff they don't understand, that's how they learn, after all. And that wouldn't be a problem if there weren't abusers exploiting it. Just like taking a stroll at night wouldn't be a problem without rapists. The main thing is to not mix up responsibilities. Yes, people should take care where they go at night, but just as importantly, people shouldn't rape. So when a rape was committed, that's the part one should deal with. Likewise, adults should watch their kids, and YouTube should clean up their act even though kids shouldn't be on on it unsupervised, but none of that gets the content creators off the hook. > Obviously this kind of content is universally and undeniably a hit amongst children, these videos are generating billions of views We haven't the faintest idea how many of those views are from bots or click farms, these views don't translate directly to actual views. Not that you're wrong, of course kids watch these videos. They're not getting forced. But that doesn't make it not victim blaming when OP talks about how it's really just mostly bizarre things kids dig, and how any actual abusive stuff is just a spin-off. That's just bullshit, every day a few posts get written to make the claim, and they never hold any water. If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it just might be a duck. Just because people also dig in comments and talk about pedophile rings and whatnot doesn't mean pretending that this isn't directed deliberate and systematic abuse isn't still wishful thinking.
129	Generate; generates; generated; generating	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	19-11-17	27	dq1g6g4	You're ignoring the fact that most of these videos are not gory. Although allot of them are gory, most of them are colourful, with goofy music and familiar characters, engaging in lewd acts that are at best confusing to children. It's clear what's wrong to us as adults, but not to a kid. These creators make it an easy pill to swallow. This isn't victim blaming in the slightest. These videos are playing on the same notes that clickbait videos and articles do for adults, but it's targeted towards children. Obviously this kind of content is universally and undeniably a hit amongst children, these videos are generating billions of views, I'm trying to give an explanation as to why that is. Believe it or not, the

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							kid's willingness to watch is a big part of the issue, so pointing out that there's something attractive about these videos is not "victim blaming".
130	Generate; generates; generated; generating; recom-mend	My YouTube account has been hacked	-kodoku-	10-11-17	17	dpm0won	If your YouTube account was hacked, couldn't you just reset your password? Most sites will send you an email with a link to set up a new password. To prevent this from happening in the future, I recommend using a password storage like KeePass. Use it to generate strong passwords and always use a different password for every site. Also, use 2 factor authentication when available.
131	Generate; generates; generated; generating	Post Malone and H3H3	Spookthe sunset	19-11-17	4	dq23ufz	> Wouldn't it be easier to make the characters interact in normal random ways? Like finding a lost cat? Why all the extra effort to make depraved shit? Because it is just as easy to make them interact in ways that apparently generate more ad revenue. Think of this as a giant A/B optimization test. Whatever gets more revenue is what gets generated more. Almost none of this content is generated by hand. It's all software slowly evolving to find the juiciest, most clickbaity videos your kid can possibly click on...
132	Generate; generates; generated; generating	What is Elsagate?	DarkSmarts	6-12-11	1	ds9zvb6	I'm wondering if most of the "____ _____ TV" channels aren't the same server of bots in one location all just mass producing and uploading randomly generated content. I know the other channels may not fall in line with this but those ones even all have descriptions typed in the same random way and they all use the same art style and sound effects. It all feels really inhuman which makes it feel even creepier to me for some reason.
133	Keyword; keywords; recom-mended	Let's get real for a second	Ta467812	20-11-17	4	dq3kmli	While I originally thought that it was just clickbaiting for views and money, after thinking about it a bit more and seeing more of these videos I'll have to disagree. 6 year olds don't know what abortions, forced slavery, strip clubs, drug abuse, hooking up drunk by accident, or any of that is. However, a lot of these videos are targeted towards kids that age. I'm talking the chibi looking ones that use stock sounds of babies laughing and no real dialogue other than sounds of kids gasping and cheering. A little kid wouldn't search for videos of that keyword, and would only view them when they're seen in the recommended bar. It's extremely easy for kids to get roped into it. There's also the matter of many profiles making playlists of these vids as another thread on here mentioned. They start with the weird kids videos and have very sexual videos later in the playlist. If the creators weren't trying to groom, this group of people definately is.
134	Keyword; keywords	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	19-11-17	82	dq1iagi	> Why are some of the videos clay animation? Surely that's too high effort for someone who just wants to make money. This is one of the things that got me thinking that these videos are being outsourced. The animation style is so different and so much better quality than the others, it makes sense that it would be a separate entity. They obviously had creative freedom

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							as to what style they could portray these stories, so they chose the style they knew best. That, and/or the creators thought it could still make a good resume piece later on, so they put lots of effort in to it. I don't doubt they're making enough money to create these videos, otherwise they wouldn't exist. Even a pedo's gotta eat. > Why do both the animated and IRL videos frequently tell kids, the color purple is the color green? Why do they then quiz the child, and when they get it correct, give them negative reinforcement? How come they try and enforce learned helplessness? Isn't this exactly what a pedophile what do? The consistant themes play well to my theory about outsourced content, still could be from multiple studios or information/keyword providers. Mismatched colours could easily be a translation mistake in scripts sent out. In terms of learned helplesness, negative reinforcement, other abusive "lessons" within the videos: There's no doubt that allot of this content is malicious, and almost all of it is damaging. That said, not all content from all creators carry these themes, some are definitely stronger on one channel than on anthoer channel. I believe it started for profit and has spun in to more abusive content through keyword changes and copycats. > See this: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZQLtRjSmFs Saw this video, definitely malicious and disturbing. It almost seems like a parody because it's so ridiculous, but as far as I know that channel is a "legitimate" elsagate channel.
135	Keyword; keywords	Let's get real for a second	Jiggles TheThird	19-11-17	0	dq2eptj	I disagree in regards to the paedophilia thing. With a few of the comments being coded - and decoded with paedophilic messages, all of the anti-adult sorta stuff, as well as anxiety-causation stuff all point towards putting a large divide between children and the adults they know. Look at the "It causes harm" post about how it actually caused harm and how the child struggled to talk about it. That's not even starting on the sexual themes, lots of them seem to contain fetishy stuff, like frequent things of pregnancy, urine, fecal matter, bondage, inflation, and ball-busting / crushing. That's not keyword abuse, and I can't believe that it's just a coincidence that they're all fetishes. Furthermore, the coded messages. While it's unlikely all of the gibberish is coded, there messages [with codes in them.] (https://www.reddit.com/r/ElsaGate/comments/7bmq40/codedgibberish_comments/dpj549e/?context=3) (Other examples too, can't be bothered to find them as well.) In addition, there're also outright paedophilic comments and accounts involved in this. [1] (https://imgur.com/a/1uMcG#mdkn0Ii)

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							[2] (https://i.gyazo.com/6af6de7745b1fefb8861da9e16c7c2b7.png) Again, there are more but it's late at night, I'm naked cold and can't be bothered right now
136	Keyword; keywords	Let's get real for a second	Offended Potato	7-12-17	1	dtvio2d	Did I say weird? Why do you think spiderman, elsa and the joker is in almost all of them? Because they are popular as hell and they know that. They exploit popular charachters as well as using keywords like "nursery rhyme" "finger family" "learn colors" "toy" ""superhero" "princess" etc etc. edit: after re-reading the comments, it doesn't really seem like you have seen any of these videos we are discussing
137	Keyword; Keywords; flagging	Post Malone and H3H3	tanamingo	5-12-17	7	ds7yj2r	Considering agencies would be too busy flagging keywords like "molest" and "pedophilia" to give them probably a billion individual comments and posts on the Internet through which to sift, if they even gave a shit, you could probably give the FBI a tip on https://fbi.gov
138	Machine; machines	Let's get real for a second	Hooper Aoapjm	20-11-17	5	dq2fqw0	What baffles me is the live action versions of these videos. That just seems to be... a bit more than weird machine learning with human intervention as it's pretty much 100% human (although not very humane)
139	Machine; machines	Post Malone and H3H3	Redwolf915	19-11-17	10	dq24nwl	The templates are made by hand. Like the wall with 2 faucets for urine... like no machine comes up with that stupid crap. Though the machines place random characters in it
140	Model; models	Let's get real for a second	Testaccount_2424	19-11-17	369	dq1kgr0	Have you considered that maybe some channels are hopping on the bandwagon just for money? [One channel that makes those hitler finger family. robably realised he can jump on the craze. You just need an animation, some models and that's it. There are sites that host 3d models of characters and people. Just google "character name 3d model download" and youll find stuff. then its just a matter of rigging it, rendering and uploading. Considering how basic the rendering is he could pump out the videos in next to no time. I even considered doing this kinda thing near the start of the craze. I knew about all these weird nursery rhyme videos way before anybody started talking about them and I even made a channel myself. If I actually bothered I could have easily thrown some basic stuff together and made some money.
141	Model; models; formula	Let's get real for a second	[deleted]	20-11-17	14	dq2fpor	Because this formula designed to get kids' eyes on your videos is the perfect model for real twisted souls to copy.
142	Model; models	Let's get real for a second	Testaccount_2424	29-11-17	18	dq26aid	Have you considered that maybe some channels are hopping on the bandwagon just for money? probably realised he can jump on the craze. You just need an animation, some models and that's it. There are sites that host 3d models of characters and people. Just google "character name 3d model download" and youll find stuff. then its just a matter of rigging it, rendering and uploading.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							Considering how basic the rendering is he could pump out the videos in next to no time. I even considered doing this kinda thing near the start of the craze. I knew about all these weird nursery rhyme videos way before anybody started talking about them and I even made a channel myself. If I actually bothered I could have easily thrown some basic stuff together and made some money.
143	Model; models	These videos are so similar	Largerpenis	21-10-17	82	dop1nca	I noticed that on other videos also. That's why the "it's just people trying to make money" makes no sense: sure, of course, i agree that the guys who upload (from literally all over the planet at once!!!) are just in for the money, and if they weren't doing that, they would be doing pranks, or reaction videos, or any other trending thing. But they take their templates from the same source (like the "red glowing objects" video people), some kind of consulting company, peharps, that tells hem what music, what colors, what kind of patterns (like stripes, or striped duct tape over a kid's body..), what kind of thumbnails (giant spiders, giant heads..) and what kind of narratives will bring the more views. Those patterns have been discovered through neuroscience (had anyone noticed how, about a year ago, recommendations on youtube got away from the usual content/creator model to a more "thumbnail" oriented model, with visuals of strange patterns, texture, colors, all the same: glowing red thing,usually red hot- like a ball or a knife- soft things versus contonding objects, squeezy thing being handled or cut, etc...). I guess those patterns are the ones that gets instinctive reactions. And i would bet a good dollar those consulting agency are government alphabet agencies.
144	Plat-form; platforms	It's time more people know about Elsagate	AcresWild	19-11-17	4	dq1f9bu	What you say makes a lot of sense and I think that you are right. These videos certainly give a platform for people with pedo inclinations to make contact with kids who have already crossed the line of taboo--many of these kids are probably very aware that these kinds of videos are not something adults would want them watching and thus would not want adults knowing about their interactions in the comment section, or worse, direct messaging.
145	Platform; platforms	It's time more people know about Elsagate	Forward aboveallelse	11-12-17	2	dr3y69x	This entire thing reads like a lead-up to try to get Russia firewall'd from certain social media platforms....
146	Process; processes	What is Elsagate?	boofbonzer81	28-11-17	1	dqgiysg	I mean if it was implemented and actually worked? No doubt at all especially the fact when he said the process was complete you can literally sit someone down and go through with them the facts of a subject and they'll still deny it no matter what.
147	Process; processes	What is Elsagate?	gtea00	28-11-17	2	dqfs3co	" review the characterizations of the type of abuse that occurred, and now you can clearly see an Elsagate tie-in. Think of it as an MK-Ultra style training video series, or normalization process for

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							those children to view that content and have it a part of their world-view"
148	Rank; ranks; ranked; ranking; formula	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	19-11-17	12	dq1grz5	This is where I think my theory falls a bit short, when it comes to the specific repetition of disturbing images. It's possible that these types of things ranked high in search results for fetishes, or possibly things kids are scared of, which in turn became a part of the formula for these videos? For whatever reason, someone or something decided that these images worked as reoccurring themes and brought in the views, and it seems to be working. I don't think they'd continue to make that type of content if it wasn't bringing in views, even if the intention was to indoctrinate rather than to just make money.
149	Rank; ranks; ranked; ranking;	Post Malone and H3H3	ThomasTVM	19-11-17	34	dq1rhg0	Agreed. It seems to be that there almost targeting certain channels to be demonetized. As Ethan said during the podcast, he thinks the lower ranks of youtube like him, but the higher executive positions dont. They don't see it as a threat to them, since youtube is essentially a monopoly, but they see it as a motive for others to to rise up against youtube and strike back in anger. I think they're making an example out of him, almost a warning for others to show what could happen if you stand up against them.
150	Recommend; Recommends; Recommended; recommending	It's time more people know about Elsagate	Ukhmn18_01	23-10-17	45	dorefsh	>Russian titles Checked it, and yes many are not animated. Stuffs like "????? ???" are animated. Just enter words such as "????", or "??????????", all are not animated*. Also, there are little boys too. This makes me wonder... if there's an Arabic vers- Oh, god. Arabic version exist. Search for "???? ", Elsa. I haven't seen them yet, just literally searched for it. There's also a Viet version in the recommended section. Haven't seen much, just knew about this stuff one day ago. *edit: Actually some are 3D animated.
151	Recommend; Recommends; Recommended; recommending	Let's get real for a second	Mbbmbbmm	7-12-17	1	dtuujmc	No problem. You're probably right. Why do these weird videos get recommended or queued in the first place though? I don't understand what's going on there.
152	Recommend; recommends; recommended; recommending	My YouTube account has been hacked	pigeones	29-12-17	6	dtebhjo	From when I used it there was a lot of anime and role playing type groups, Nowadays money is status and people have namecolors and effects and it's very much kind of a toxic place to be, there's only a few popular chats people go to and idk I wouldn't really recommend it as a social network but you can check it out, I joined when I was 11 and I'm 21 now so it definitely had value to me growing up and I enjoyed it,it's different now.
153	Recommend;	Well here are some	Dheeraj	21-11-17	55	dq5lywi	https://youtu.be/3_RTSHoK4pA looked up the vid you suggested and got this in this recommended, it's literally a picture of beastiality in the thumbnail!! Still

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
	recommends; recommended; recommending; suggested	kids smoking	bhatt18				vid didn't get demonetized or banned. Smh at YT. Also the comments are so fucking weird, cryptic coded messages.
154	Self-reinforcing	What is Elsagate?	relightit	15-12-17	1	dr9q2p9	i wonder if anyone ever managed to interview some creators of that content. i presume the shocking elements came by accident: one started to do it and it got views and other started to do the same even if the kids don't even click to see that kind of content, youtube just lead them there. The whole thing is like a self-reinforcing feed back loop: is this theory taken in consideration?
155	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	It's time more people know about Elsagate	Amanroth87	26-10-17	351	dowk9d5	I literally just spent the last hour reporting each and every elsagate channel I could find for child endangerment, and I suggest everyone do the same. Make Facebook posts and tweets. Tell your friends with kids. That's what I'm doing. If everyone that cares tells a few people they care about, word will spread.
156	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	It's time more people know about Elsagate	Juggalo Hustler	10-12-17	0	dr1sf6b	>In a post on 4chan's infamous /pol/, some anons suggested I downvoted then
157	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Joe Rogan Spreading Awareness	AcresWild	19-11-17	4	dq1ffs1	Joe Rogan has a huge audience by podcast standards, and he has a very inquisitive mind which leads to an extremely wide range of guests. I wouldn't be surprised if he had a guest on who had some sort of credentials that suggest they could give some valuable insight to this situation. I wonder who that guest could be though.
158	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	Rockman97	19-11-17	5	dq1uv24	I suggest everyone watch every video on the "investigating YouTube" channel. There's a video with a child psychologist discussing this content. She's spot on.
159	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	MrLoven Light	19-11-17	40	dq2dhx6	Not sure if you are being sarcastic or not but Disney has long been thought of by some as a front for MK Ultra type abuse specifically designed for children. Walt Disney has associations with Nazis who were researching this type of "science" during WWII. Given the fact that America imported thousands of Nazis under Operation Paperclip I don't think it's too far fetched to suggest an MK Ultra subculture within America. And given what we know about the program, why wouldn't they work to indoctrinate our children with perversions and mental abuse. Additionally, these videos are "technically" not doing anything wrong but those with the eyes and ears to see and hear can read the writing on the wall, we see the inherent messages being communicated within these videos. Things like this exist because most people simply refute to plausible deniability and go on with their day. Don't fall into complacency. Consider some of the imagery found within pizzagate/MK Ultra/pedophilia/satanism (ie satanism = the inversion of everything including your mind) and connect the dots. Evil people don't come out and say they are evil.
160	Suggest; suggests;	Let's get real for a second	Ian Phlegming	20-11-17	5	dq2o9d5	Who brought up satanism? That's a weird tangent to be steering this, like you're looking for a reason to make it seem ridiculous.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
	suggested; suggesting						As for "logic," you sound like another person who knows nothing about the entertainment industry and Disney. To suggest simple "incompetence" is what's going on here is absurd. In fact, that kind of suggestion is exactly the talking point given by CIA and other intelligence agencies to steer people away from talk of conspiracies! I'm sure you don't know that, but you should be aware, because TIP: It makes you seem like a fraud.
161	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	London Seoul	20-11-17	8	dq2ozx4	Lots of people have brought up Satanism. It is all over the discussion. To suggest incompetence is the cause is far more logical than to suggest it is a conspiracy to groom children for rape. And just because NASA accuses flat-earthers of being conspiracy theorists it does not mean they are part of a conspiracy to silence the truth. Same goes for this.
162	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	Mbbm bbmm	19-11-17	2	dq2da5c	Disney have consciously eased their copyright policy some years ago, coincidentally around the time Frozen came out. This article also suggests the rules about what content would stay up and what was taken down were left unclear. Disney know about this and don't want to take action.
163	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	ImCewl13	19-11-17	45	dq1j3lo	I agree with basically all you said, but some of the videos are a little over the top for YouTube to be suggesting this to kids. Like the weird slave, stripper and kidnap videos. No matter what, kids shouldn't be suggested that on a normal basis.
164	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	rmkelly1	20-11-17	1	q2tujw	OK if you're suggesting that that type of vigilante activity is what the #8 is cautioning against, that makes sense.
165	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	[deleted]	19-11-17	25	dq2atn9	Wait... are you suggesting that Disney are directly involved in some conspiracy to pervert America's youth? I mean first off.. why would they do that?
166	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	Ian Phlegming	19-11-17	28	dq2cgt1	I'm not suggesting anything, and it's not "first off." "First off," we need to recognize the FACTS. The FACTS are that both Warner Bros. and Disney have been hit with a barrage of emails and phone calls about what's been going on with YouTube and this sick shit for more than a year. The next FACT is that Warner Bros. obviously took effective action and Batman, Wonder Woman, Animaniacs and a bunch of other WB properties disappeared. Third FACT: The Disney stuff is still there. I don't know why they wouldn't be on this like a hungry lion on a slow gazelle. But it's disturbing as fuck that they weren't, isn't it? People have been telling Disney about this shit for MORE THAN A YEAR.
167	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	20-11-17	19	dq3ba58	Ha, look at all the people in the comments calling me a shill and a pedophile for suggesting an alternate scenario. Some people are even suggesting I'm lying about typing the post on mobile (Because apparently

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
							mobile phones don't have full keyboards and autocorrect these days) People believe what they want to, not what makes the most sense.
168	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	Internet_and_stuff	20-11-17	1	dq3xb5o	It does, if you have allot of money. Are you suggesting witchcraft?
169	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Let's get real for a second	killatofu88	19-11-17	3	dq1zh14	It's definitely different. As is young kids watching modern highly sexualised music videos from young ages. Not comparing the kids videos to sexualised music videos, but just suggesting that nowadays kids do things a lot younger than we did. If the opportunity is there to make money from the latest craze, people are going to take it.
170	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Post Malone and H3H3	Wowza Canned Spam	19-11-17	7	dq13bo3	I think most kids turn 15 in 9th grade unless you're born past July. Idk lol this got so off topic. The point is; I watched weird ass shit with my buddies back in the day so it's really not a stretch to suggest kids these days do the same. That does not make these videos right, they are fucking weird and frankly this entire conspiracy freaks me the fuck out but I'm just giving my 2 cents on what i personally did as a 13 year old dumb kid.
171	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Post Malone and H3H3	snowyham	26-11-17	13	dqcrb04	Whoever made this video seems to be referencing colour programming (allegedly performed by ritualistic cults) and how they develop DID alters (multiple personalities resulting from dissociative identity disorder) in children too. Not that colour programming is proven to exist, but I found it interesting breaking this message down: "Red repress the memory of trauma with drugs" - red referring to post-trauma alters, usually on the receiving end of sexual abuse. "Blue militaristic training and decimation of the ming" - blue referring to protective alters that are trained fighters, this comment suggests they're being trained to "decimate the ming". Not sure who the hell the ming is, a reference to China (ming dynasty)? O.o "Green denial of events and atrocities committed against the yellow" - green referring to family(cult)-central/loyal alters and yellow referring to spiritual alters that spread positive messages (usually Christian, biblical in nature). So alters loyal to the cult are denying the persecution of yellow alters?? "Pink core personality entirely destroyed" - pink referring to the pre-programming personality of a child (before trauma), pink is destroyed after a traumatic event (that is how red is developed) I just stumbled upon this elsagate shit and I haven't watched any videos, I read that spiderman, elsa, and the hulk are recurring characters tho? Spiderman is red, elsa blue and the hulk green. I wonder if roles they play correspond to these different alters in colour programming? Link: https://www.igdid.com/h84-color-coding
172	Suggest; suggests;	Post Malone and H3H3	Nimble9B	18-11-17	21	dq0t4wx	Because this subreddit, like many, is a circle-jerk, and even though I just merely suggested something, it does not fit everyone's agenda, so downvote!

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
	suggested; suggesting						
173	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Post Malone and H3H3	BloodSnail	19-11-17	4	dq1flxi	No, I am not suggesting that:
174	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	Post Malone and H3H3	c_o_r_b_a	19-11-17	54	dq1faam	Are you suggesting that all famous people are by default "Evil", with only a few exceptions? That's pretty ridiculous.
175	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	What is Elsagate?	pupomin	20-11-17	8	dq42c89	'Layers' suggests depth or planning. I'm not sure there is that much planning involved. The relationships all seem very opportunistic and organic to me.
176	Suggest; suggests; suggested; suggesting	What is Elsagate?	abnruby	22-11-17	2	q73uas	The thing is, these channels do have a long history and parents, to an extent, do trust them, because as much as their titles are weird word salad and their production values are shit, parents assume, oh, it's kids characters or families making videos, what's the harm? And so they don't pay as much attention. Unfortunately, there isn't a quick or easy fix. After investigating it myself, YouTube is just no longer a thing in my house for kids. Luckily I never let them watch unattended, but even if you're incredibly diligent, it's easy for them to be exposed to this stuff. Peppa pig is a big thing in my house, and there's an official channel that has it. If you click the first video (which is official) the suggested videos, literally the third one down is one of the disturbing ones. I was shocked.

Nr.	Keyword	Corpus file	Username	Date	Points	Comment ID	Comment
177	Variable; variables; flag	It's time more people know about Elsagate	TheLocal Gamer	15-10-17	100	Doeswlx	On the front page of this sub there's a post with titled something like "Down the Rabbithole: Finger Family Videos" This covers most of the basics. Like I said in the OP, /pol/ is finding new shit every time a thread gets uploaded, although they usually get moved to /bant/. The animated videos are the most common. Often using recycled content to produce quantity over quantity, they are the ones most people reading up on elsagate will think about first when the subject gets brought up. They usually feature elsa, hence the name "elsagate," among other popular characters such as * Ryder (from Paw Patrol, a tv show about dogs that act as police officers) * Elsa (from Frozen) * Spiderman * Fidget Spinners * Mickey Mouse and his relateds (Minnie, Goofy, Donald Duck, etc) However, while these animations fuck kids up, (which shouldn't be taken lightly at all), there is *much* worse. The non-animated ones are way worse. Some videos (please don't read past this point if you have a weak stomach) show kids getting injections straight into their ass cheeks. They're sucking on dildo substitutes (giant rubber worms) and being force fed very spicy peppers. These kids are 4 years old. The "prank" videos are the most degenerate. Most of them aren't pranks, but rather jailbait. Rumors are going around that there was a video where a little girl was getting force fed shit. But that's not the worst. **The absolute worst** ones are the ones with Russian titles. They are almost *never* animated and feature softcore child porn. Little girls getting fingered. They're traumatizing these little girls, and affecting millions of children world wide. I'm honestly having trouble typing this all out. It's just so sick, and the worst part is, there's not much we can do about it. Flag the videos? No, they'll make new channels. Arrest them? No, next to none of them can be traced back no matter how hard we try. There's just too many fucking variables. All we can hope for is that this hits mass media attention and youtube makes video uploading in Russia and central asia invite-only. And you can't even blame the parents. They don't know. The only way to stop this is to take this to your town's press. We can stop this, but it's gonna be one bumpy ride. Without the public knowing, there's nothing anyone can do.

Appendix I: Critical Discourse Analysis on the Corpus of Reddit Comments

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
1	Totally agree. To be clear, i believe there are many forces at work here, probably AI, youtubers scrambling for views, poor vietnamese animation workers, pedophiles, russian intel, etc. But all this will be taken advantage of by "those who pull the strings" behind government/corporations, to get the internet under control. In the end, theres always only one primitive goal. Control.	Elsagate is being used by the government and/or corporations to promote internet censorship and eventually to exert control over the internet users.	AI, which is a non-human component, is used in the same line with human components such as YouTubers, vietnamese animation workers, pedophiles and Russian intel, as if they have their own agency. Furthermore, 'forces', 'taken advantage' and 'pull the strings' is used as rhetoric elements to point towards the oppressed vs the oppressors.	The forces at work, which are seen as real agents, among which AI is mentioned, are all discussed in an oppressed manner, pointing to YouTubers 'scrambling for views' and 'poor' Vietnam. The argumentation is building up to one simple statement, and the most important word of the sentence, which could be both a verb and a noun: control.	The author is discussing with others on the specific Reddit post the possibility of the involvement of government in the meaning making of the Elsagate phenomenon. This comment is not the original comment suggesting this argument, but a reaction on the possible argument.
2	I think Youtube Kids should be system where videos have to be reviewed to be put on there, not just reviewed to be taken off. If a video is watched by a human, not an AI, before getting put on YT kids, it will remove these kinds of videos from the platform.	YouTube Kids should manually watch videos before they can be posted on the platform.	There is an opposition between humans and Artificial Intelligence, between humans and the system YouTube Kids, between 'them' and 'us'. 'Them' being unable to properly watch, select and possibly remove videos from the platform.	The first sentence is a passive sentence, where the subject doing the reviewing is missing. The second sentence offers a 'solution' for this gap.	This comment is a statement on the original 'it's time more people know-' post. It has no commenters, thus not started any discussion.
3	it's not just that they contain that content. south park is fairly vile but it's also got some sort of artistic quality to it. they make you think with their vileness the elsagate videos are just pure crap, like they were made by AI or something. if you bring up a kid on that as their media they are going to grow up intellectually retarded and i'm not using that word lightly	Original cartoon content contains artistic quality, while AI created Elsagate content is uncreative.	AI is negatively referred to here, putting it in the same sentence as 'crap'. Stating that watching content that is AI made could result in 'intellectually retarded' children.	AI is stated here as having its own active agency, as can be seen by the passive voice when talking about AI. It could also refer to ignorance about the workings of AI.	This is a reaction to a comment about the 'scary' content that is available online. This particular comment from Dontbuyanylogos started an intense discussion on online content selection. The authority of the author is shown by the high number of points granted by the Reddit community.
4	Many are made by AI, using libraries of 3d models and free libraries of motions to act out. The titles are all generated with machine intelligence.	Elsagate content is created by software programs.	Technology is here refered to with several words, such as 'AI', '3D models' and 'machine intelligence'.	The passive sentences suggest the hiding of agents, giving AI his own agency. Own could arguably state that this would also point	This is a reaction on a comment about the 'scary' content that is available online.The author is here showing his technological

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
				to technology oppressing humans.	knowledge, adding in to the discussion on the creation of the Elsagate content.
5	Sorry, really new here, but on the topic of YouTube doing something about this: From what I gather it seems one of the biggest likely reasons for these videos to exist is ad-revenue by manipulating children, right? Is it possible that the recent "ad-pocalypse" and YouTube's demonetization AI running literally amok on all videos *is* YouTube's response? IE could YouTube be aware of this and the demonetization AI is trying to demonetize these videos rapidly en-mass and other content creators being caught in the crossfire? If so it's kinda totally worth it IMO. I'm not sure but it seems like these two things could be linked.	Advertise-ment revenue is one of the biggest reasons for the existence of Elsagate. YouTube's reaction to the Elsagate phenomenon is the demoneti-zation of videos.	In order to understand the post, one has to obtain knowledge of YouTube's business model by offering companies the possibility to pay for advertisement space to a specific audience. The AI has now gained an adjective 'demonetization', as if there is one special 'AI' designed for the demonetization of videos.	Furthermore, YouTube is presented with metaphors as being one single subject, with agency, overseeing its whole program, as can be seen by 'YouTube doing something" and 'could YouTube be aware'. Programs and platforms not only gain agency, but they also become a subject, capable of thinking and handling.	This is a comment on the main post, resulting in a lengthy discussion on the role of advertisement revenue within the Elsagate phenomenon.
6	The AI got *really* aggressive with flagging recently, is all, and that could be linked.	The AI is flagging more intensively since Elsagate's large media attention.	The 'true' refers to agreeing with the previous author's statement, writing that YouTube already began flagging intensively, even before the large media coverage of the Elsagate phenomenon. It is used as a rhetoric device to politely contradict the previous comment and put forward the supposedly objective fact that flagging only became more intense after the media coverage of the Elsagate phenomenon.	The author is taking distance, as stating facts and figures by saying 'apparently' and '30 minutes'. By adding 'is all', the author conveys objectivity, statements and hard facts.	This is a reaction on a comment stating that advertisement revenue is one of the biggest reasons for the existence of Elsagate.
7	A few months ago YouTube rolled out an algorithm that started flagging many videos from different content creators as	After YouTube's algorithm change, it only started to demonetize more normal YouTube video content.	Refining it's progress points towards people's (and YouTube's) believes that the YouTube algorithm wasn't yet	The use of the words 'innocuous' and 'target' to metaphorically point towards someone being the victim and	This is a reaction on a comment stating that advertisement revenue is one of the biggest reasons for the existence of

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	not being eligible to receive revenue from advertisements. A lot of these videos seemed to be false positives, things from regular content creators making "normal" videos, while some of them were from channels that probably needed to be demonetized. A couple weeks ago YouTube mentioned they were updating the algorithm to refine it's process. A week or so ago, the algorithm or bot that handles this started going pretty overboard. Now a LOT of content creators are starting to report that their videos are seemingly automatically flagged as demonetized, and once they manually appeal the demonetization, their video is made available to have ads run on it again in about 24 hours. For example, something as innocuous as an attorney reading a public court legal briefing while petting his dogs gets flagged as demonetized, only to be appealed and overturned (confirming it as a false positive), and then for his very next video to be flagged immediately. So in the last week or so there are a lot of "normal" content creators being rapidly automatically targeted by YouTube's Demonetization AI, and I don't think they are the exception, it's seems likely that if the AI can flag normal content this easily, that it is likely flagging the harmful		perfect. The update however, wasn't received well, pointing to sentences such as "content creators being rapidly, automatically, targeted by YouTube's demonetization AI.	someone being the attacker. The use of the word 'normal' could be an indication of a polarization between 'normal', being human content creators making YouTube content, and 'abnormal', being the people behind Elsagate videos making 'harmful content'. Again, a them-vs-us polarization. There's also a polarization between technology and humans: AI demonetization VS human manual approval. Again the AI is gaining agency, this time by attacking YouTube creators, without questioning who is behind the creation of the AI.	Elsagate. It began a discussion on

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	content immediately as well now, which would require it's creators to try to appeal in order to get ad revenue, and their videos will not stand up to manual approval.				
8	>algorithm They keep saying that, but yet they're also paying people minimum wage to sift through videos and categorize them as friendly or unfriendly, then categorizing them even further by *why* they're unfriendly. I've personally seen and worked on some of them on mturk, and I've seen some on other similar websites as well. And this was *before* the adpocalypse happened. Strangely enough, some Youtubers never appeared on those HITs (tasks). Some appeared a suspiciously common amount of time. Currently there are a lot of middle eastern (not sure where, not familiar with the language) videos that get posted in HITs that are being worked on right now. But a lot of those HITs used to come through every single day. I'm talking tens of thousands of HITs daily, with the HITs paying less than minimum wage, and it basically pays people to flag videos as not being family friendly, or not being completely inoffensive, or not being for kids, etc. There was always some variation being made. And even now, there are channels where	Algorithms are not the same as automatic AI processes, but are always involved with human agency.	Using 'adpocalypse' to refer to the demonetization of a large number of YouTube videos. Algorithms are seen here as not being only automatic processes, but also seen as working together with human processes. Several words are being used interchangeably: AI, algorithm and automatic system.	Rhetorical repetition of the word "HIT" Rhetorical opposition of 'YouTubers' and 'Big Companies', thus the individual vs large companies.	A reaction on a comment stating that every YouTube video should be manually reviewed.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	videos are demonitzed before their videos are even published. Certain channels could have a video of them eating cereal and talking about the weather and it would get demonitized, while some really shit stuff would happen in certain other channels and they'd still be monetized. And the problem is that there's consistency in it, too. So they can talk about their algorithm all they want. They can say it's all automatic if they want. But I personally worked on those tasks. Any Youtuber being demonitized consistently understands that there's more going on that just "Oops, our automatic system is hurting your channel". Notice how it conveniently tends to be the Youtubers who criticize entire industries or big companies, or tend to have views that aren't super tame, or tend to have styles that aren't bland. There's a pattern to the demonitization. They've admitted there are whitelisted and blacklisted channels. So no matter how much they claim it's some automatic AI, there's proof that that's bullshit.				
9	Why is showing ads to children something they can sleep well with, anyway? Yeah I know, too radical, but in my very own lala land, they could simply have stayed decent people and none of this would ever had happened, or at the very least,	The demonetization of YouTube videos is no reaction by YouTube to the Elsagate phenomenon.	Using "la la land" to refer to an ideological world in which either the Elsagate phenomenon would not have happened, or it would not have happened because of money. At the same time indicating that money plays a big factor here.	A rhetorical theme in this comment is the use of imagination. The author is imagining an ideological world, fantasizing about an AI 'gone rogue with ad revenue' Uses a metaphor 'line' to state the	A reaction to a comment stating that YouTube actively flagging videos could not be a reaction to the Elsagate phenomenon.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	we couldn't have explained it away with "oh, they just do it for money, not to hurt children".		Interesting is how the author does not take the AI/algorithm for granted, but admits that there are a lot of factors at play at the creation of the algorithm and that it is not easy to say exactly what the line is that Elsagate crosses.	difference between family friendly content and non-family friendly content.	
	They could work towards it, and get a big chunk real quick because it's all very similar, all linked with each other, all tagged in similar ways. They could even be more useful by just SAYING more. So far they just said they would "deal with it" and since then hardly anything happened. That's kind of worse than saying nothing, since now people are getting comforted for no good reason (I'll believe it when I see it) about a problem they really should know about, before they can even muster the energy to learn about it.				
	And isn't visualizing information one of their strengths, why do we mostly have these cobbled together imgur things still? Why does this mostly spread through grass roots, while many who should be helping fantasize of AI gone rogue with ad revenue? I'm not saying they chose this, it's a big company with a lot of moving parts. And lawyers, we can't forget that. I don't want to be in the shoes of the person who needs to draw a line. It's easy to say ElsaGate crosses it, but they still would have to define one. That alone would explain the delay, as sad as it is.				
	But I still don't think the demotization of advertiser-unfriendly content, often individual videos of channel owners, not				

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	whole channels, has anything to do with ElsaGate. That'd be like preparing for fixing your house by breaking your garage, makes no sense to me.				
10	If it's an "AI" are the AI also making apps in the same vein under titles like "Girl Games"? My guess is no. Did an AI make Maffa.com and all the other creepy websites when you Google "Girl Games"? My guess is also probably not. If you want to call a tomato and orange knock yourself out. The videos are clearly grooming videos and very deliberately so.	An AI is not responsible for the existence of the Elsagate phenomenon.	This post alone is vague, for it is presumed that other reactions are read. The comment is a reaction to all other comments stating that AI is involved in the creation of the Elsagate phenomenon.	The author uses rhetorical repetition. He uses multiple question statements to strengthen his argument.	This comment is on itself and did not receive much attention, as can be seen by the lack of further discussion and low number of points.
11	I saw a thread with a screenshot of a guy explaining that these videos are made with the help of an AI, and honestly, it checks out. Explains why all the characters are all the same western cartoon characters, because these people buy pre-made assets and scenes and the AI generates these videos randomly. Explains the eerie similarity of the thumbnails, since it's probably using a template and changing it slightly. Also saw a thread where a guy claimed when you slow down a video's voice audio it's weird quotes - maybe the AI takes audios from audio databases, speeds them up and uses them so there's no need for manual recording.	The Elsagate videos are created with the help of an AI.	AI is here referred to foremost as 'an AI', indicating that only one artificial intelligence is at play here.	The author uses rhetorical repetition to strengthen his argument. He uses multiple times 'explains' and adding proof of his argument. The final statement is included independently, giving it additional attention.	This comment is on its own, it did not receive a lot of attention but was answered by the moderator of the post, thus granting some authority.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	I think the creepy pedophiles are just a side product, and these cartoon channels are just using shock values such as pee and poop because it applies to little kids, cause they find it funny, and there's people with weird fetishes and all that. Just a maximum revenue generator, I think.				
12	Maybe, just seems stupid that they would put their whole operation in jeopardy by putting all this trash in kid videos that would put their monetization at risk. Most of these videos are full of taboo sexual fetishes, and traumatizing imagery. I remember staying up late one night when I was around 5 or 6 and that old show Night Flight came on, it had messed up animations, one that freaked me out pretty bad that I can still remember cuz it had a decapitated Donald Duck's head bouncing down a staircase slowly, that is pretty tame compared to what our kids are seeing today. I couldn't imagine a kid actually enjoying this trash. They could probably get the same amount of clicks with animations kid's might actually enjoy. That's the main problem with this explanation, but shock value gets views I guess, just seems it would have a negative effect in the long run, and it is since people are just now finding out about it and flagging these channels left	Elsagate content is full of sexual fetishes and traumatizing imagery.	This post is somewhat vague but points towards the actual content of Elsagate videos, which the Reddit user is denoting as negative and shocking. What is apparent is that children are being thought of as being self-conscious, self-acting and powerful, while there is no mention of any parental involvement.	Using personal stories as a rhetoric element to get across their argument.	This comment did not receive authority, for it received zere points and was not commented on.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	and right. There are people who put razor blades on monkey bars at public parks just to be evil so I'm not gonna just say it's all an AI running on keywords, some people are just messed up. The claymation ones and adults dressing up are the worst but it's all messed up.				
13	It was these extreme things, which aren't even hard to find, that first brought attention to the whole horror show. Then, quickly, the category broadened to include less overtly transgressive stuff and things that were more easily explained by more innocuous rationales like buggy AI, click baiting and scripts to inflate comment counts.	The Elsagate content is created by random transgressive technological devices	There is a difference being made between innocuous rationales and transgressive rationales. AI, click bait and comment count algorithms are here seen as neutral devices, instead of negative devices.	Technology in general is here referred to as being negative by making lexical choices such as 'horror show' and 'transgressive stuff'. Although 'more innocuous', it is believed that it is still 'transgressive'.	
14	Definitely not discounting that theory, but it does leave out the slew of live-action videos that follow similar if not the same narratives as animated videos. I believe it's a combination of AI or an advanced keyword generator, with lots of human intervention. /u/Wayne_Skylar sums it up well: > You can't analyze the animations while ignoring the live-action videos that use a lot of the exact same tropes. Once you consider them both as having the same cause, you have to apply Ocams razor. Somehow these content creators have figured out a way to discover specific keywords that are profitable. As a software developer, watching these animations and their	The Elsagate videos are created by a combination of AI, keyword generator and human intervention.	'a procedurally generated fashion', pointing towards algorithmic process. 'The YouTube AI', pointing towards one AI that controls all YouTube videos.	After making his main statement, the author strengthen his argumentation by citing another Reddit user. The citation is in fact a large explanation of his previous statement. Using 'vicious' as indicating that the creation of content by algorithmic processes, or AI as is more often used here, is negatively denoted. Another polarization is human creativity and uncreative technological.	Reaction on a video stating that all videos are created with the help of an AI.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	simplicity has me seriously considering how difficult it would really be to produce animations of this simplicity in a procedurally generated fashion. This in no way makes me sleep easier. It is essentially vicious circle being created in which the YouTube AI can produce content to increase engagement with the help of human creativity to bridge the 'content gap' that it itself cannot (yet) create.				
15	You have no grasp on how AI works man. Current machine learning isn\x92t up to a level where whole episodes can be automatically generated with dozens of art styles across hundreds of channels with sound effects correctly placed. If that were the case then you\x92d see a ton of AI generated videos being cashed in on outside of the genre of \x93fucked up child videos\x94. If there were to be some sort of algorithm at play it would be something of a keyword tracker that tracks which words will generate the most views with the least amount of promotion and a high chance of being placed into suggested videos, which that process doesn\x92t have an AI involved in at all. It\x92s just analytics. If these guys actually had AI technology capable of generating hundreds of different types of episodic content then they would be making far more money selling that AI technology outside of YouTube	AI is not capable of automatically generating a variety of videos.	AI is explained by stating that it includes 'machine learning' and 'automatically generating'. AI is also explained as being in the same category as 'algorithm'. This algorithm would be a 'keyword tracker', 'tracking wich words will gain the most views' Thus, algorithms are seen as only working to optimize revenue. It is not taken in consideration that people are actually creating those algorithms. It is more asked which technology is responsible, than who is responsible.	The argumentation moves from technology to human forces at play. There is a frequent repetition of lexical words such as 'AI', 'technology', 'automatically' and 'algorithms'. Both explaining and confusing the concepts.	A reaction on a comment saying that all Elsagate content is created by AI.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	monetization schemes. These guys are either selling marketing packages to each other or posting these for free on underground forums which they would in turn use to outsource content creators to make these videos. I imagine everything from the story, to the keywords, to the audio, to the art style, to live actors, are all being outsourced from different parts of the world. They could have as much as 5+ people whom never met each other, creating each episode where the person who has the marketing package is the only one aware of where the episode is being uploaded. The content creators probably have no clue where these vids are ending up. They\x92re probably just being hired on Fiver, Upwork, Craigslist or some similar service, not knowing what their content is going to air on.				
16	hese content creators are real dudes. some often in front of the camera (e.g. ethan bradberry). also there's [this redditor] (https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/7d5in3/a_group_of_perverts_are_targeting_kids_on_youtube/)who worked for a company, that animated those clips. it's mostly the idea that is copied and not the whole image. an AI would not re-arange the whole setting in a picture (e.g. table left when all the other templates are right tabled) but the copycats do. also	The Elsagate content is created by humans, rather than by AI.	Humans (us) and technology (them) are again being opposed to each other. This time, AI is being thought of as being too comprehensive to be used for something as content creation.	An opposition is made between real and fake, whereas real are the content creators and fake (and non-creative) are AI's. An opposition between humans and algorithmic processes.	A reaction on a comment saying that all Elsagate content is created by AI.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	sometimes they switch the whole animation style and the perspective. why create such an advanced AI, when entry level animators can do the same for cheaper?				
17	**spook**thesunset' Username checks out. >LOL. "Shills". The cry of every nut ball everywhere. Get real dude. Oh sorry, I forgot, shills only exist in the eyes of "nut ball". Astroturfing, forum sliding, people being paid to spew certain narratives..totally doesn't exist!! Only in the eyes of a nutty conspiracy theorist! Machine generated? Would like to see some proof of that.. I have spoken to people who work in animation that say it is simply not possible for AI to create much of this disturbing content. But, go ahead, provide evidence of the particular AI/software/methods used. >What makes you think these people care if this crap affects kids. If they ONLY wanted to make money they wouldn't be creating content of urinating on each other, drinking out of toilets etc etc	Elsagate content is not created with AI. Elsagate content is not only created to make money by advertisement revenue.	Again, AI is being used to explain how certain content supposedly is created. Here, it is being contested that AI could create such content. Again, different technological aspects are being used interchangeably: 'AI', 'Software', 'machine generated'.	It is almost sarcastically offered that Elsagate content could never be machine generated content, and that the recipient of the message has less knowledge about the subject than the author.	This comment is part of a chain of reactions discussing whether the Elsagate videos are created with AI processes and if they are created with the sole purpose of money. The discussion is not only informal, but can also be seen as rude.
18	Yeah, that's actually more like it - it's definitely some labor work, but AI is playing a fairly big part in it too.	Elsagate content is created by combining AI and labor work.	Suggesting that AI, which again has gained agency, is working together with human labour forces to create Elsagate content.	An opposition is being made between labor work – which has more prominence due to the sentence construction – and AI processes, as if they are not created themselves with labour work.	Reaction on a comment stating that both AI processes and human intervention are responsible for generating Elsagate content.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
19	yeah as i said before AI probably isnt playing as big of a role as i said in my original post, but it definitely is playing a part in the whole fiasco also i hope you realize the /r/nosleep subreddit is for authors to share their written horror fiction, not real experiences	AI is, together with human forces, creating Elsagate content.	Author is renegotiating his own believes, stating that he believes that the content is not only AI generated. There is a constant struggle to determin what is technology made and what is human made. 'The whole fiasco' could be pointing towards the entire Elsagate phenomenon.	'AI' still has more prominence in this message, for it is placed at the beginning of the sentence, renegotiating the author's ideas about AI, rather than about the Elsagate phenomenon.	Reaction on a post stating that AI is not involved in the creation of Elsagate content.
20	I feel like this combination of factors is pretty close to how a thing like this comes about, tie it in with Youtube neither wanting to rock the revenue boat nor draw attention (and lawyer fees) until they absolutely have to move on it, and this is where we end up. Then once the thing gets rolling, all sorts of factors that feed in to the algorithms which track what kind of content attracts views could easily spiral into this type of a situation. If this thing had started off at least in part through AI or semi-automated processes, it's conceivable that the fuss stemming from dubious content (which may initially have been pulled from a list of terms and factors which seem to generate a lot of views) would just feed that by causing those controversial themes to be selected blindly, since an algorithm that games monetization doesn't know or care about the difference, just notes those terms cause a lot of views and comments "for some reason", and cause it to snowball.	Several factors, but mainly AI or semi-automated processes, contributed to the existence of the Elsagate phenomenon.	The main argumentation is that AI, semi-automated processes, a demonetization algorithm, bougth views and gibberish comments in an uncontrolled environment caused the Elsagate phenomenon to exist. Pointing towards the ranking and recommending YouTube algorithm is the sentce "Then once the thing gets rolling, all sorts of factors that feed in to the algorithms which track what kind of content attracts views could easily spiral into this type of a situation".	Again, even if the author believes it is not only AI creating the content, AI still has a certain prominence, as can be seen from the placing of the concept.	Reaction on a comment stating that AI could not only generate Elsagate videos, but that the scary genre suddenly became very popular and therefore was recreated over and over. The final statement suggests that this author is not a parent, for he or she is not invested personally.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	Then you have the bought views and gibberish comments, confusion over the strange and inappropriate content, and stream of extra views as people wander in wondering what the fuck is going on here providing an environment it's pretty easy to hide (and bask) in if you're some kind of sicko, easily imitated proven moneymill content for knock offs and imitators (our offbrands have offbrands!), so on and so forth. All the elements you've touched on certainly seem plausable as contributing factors, throw them together in what is pretty much an emergent environment/situation which isn't properly regulated or controlled yet and whee, we have a bizarre, disturbing and confusing shitshow on our hands. That's how it seems to me at least, but I just watch this thing like I'm rubbernecking at a car smash. I can't pretend to be either informed or invested personally.				
21	They seem auto generated just like what they used to do with those black/grey-SEO microsites. People used to make a lot of money with them (some even > 10 million $ a month): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsite and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_farm	The Elsagate videos are all auto generated with only the goal of making money.	Google is being depicted as a large company only looking for a high revenue, thus allowing certain 'evil' if they earn Google money. The most important topics here are data and money.	The author is using Wikipedia pages and articles pages as rhetorical devices to convey objectivity. He is furthermore using jargon and supposedly facts to further strengthen the idea of objectivity and credibility.	This comment is a reaction on the main post and resulted in a small discussion. It has authority as can be seen from the 189 comment points and the author's high Karma Points.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	Google turned a blind eye to the people that were among the first doing this and made the most money. The bigger ones even rented entire data center floors full of servers. I knew one of them because we had our servers in the same data center. Everyone else, the smaller ones, got banned by Google while the bigger ones could continue. Most of how this works can be found at (especially before 2010 when the microsite trick still worked for most): https://www.blackhatworld.com In the OPs case it looks like they have a lot of pieces, 2d sprites, that they re-use for their cutout-like 2d animations. If this is true it is mostly about the money and to get as much viewers as possible. Children are an easy target: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1ThqDahd7M&app=desktop (http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1337599/) > "the film focuses on the explosive growth of child marketing in the wake of deregulation, showing how youth marketers have used the latest advances in psychology, anthropology, and neuroscience to transform American children into one of the most powerful and profitable consumer demographics in the world." and teens as well:				

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/view/ These youtube videos are this disturbing because they know children do seek and want to test their boundaries. Also interesting: https://medium.com/@d1gi/faketube-ai-generated-news-on-youtube-233ad46849f9				
22	They're created entirely by ai's	Elsagate videos are only created by AI.	Pointing towards the creation of Elsagate videos, the reader has to interpret both what is created and how an AI possibly has done that.	This single statement hides all agents and nuance.	This comment is on its own reacting to the main post, but carries no authority or weight for it has only five points and did not spur further discussion.
23	The theory that these videos exists to make kidnapping easier doesn't seem that far stretched anymore... But yeah, I remember reading something a long time ago about how kids can easily associate colours with emotions and actions. The AI generated content to maximize profit is still the likely culprit. I hope. I really goddamn do.	Elsagate content could be used to manipulate children with colours.	AI is here referred to as generating the content, with a goal of maximizing the profit. Although AI is not the most important object of this comment, for the manipulating of children is.	Because of the sentence construction and the insertion of emotional feelings, the idea is that AI generated content is negative, but manipulating children is worse. However, it must be noted that AI is also negatively denoted.	Reaction on a comment stating a certain theory around the colour use in Elsagate videos, therefore adding into this particular discussion and further spurring a discussion.
24	Yeah. I've just been seeing people jump on the russian scare wagon about it. But this is a business, not propaganda. I'm pretty sure it's just AI generated content to maximize profits. Or maybe to make kids more receptive to kidnapping if we want to theorize more deeply. It's not a joke for sure. Too much went into it, there is indeed an agenda about it. Money? Sex? Trafficking? Hell if I know. Let's just not go all red scare about it before we	Elsagate content is created by AI to maximize profit, instead of created by Russia for propaganda.	AI created content is here opposed to propaganda. The latter is being deposed as 'russian scare wagon'. Metaphors for roads and traffic is more often used in this comment, as can be seen from 'russian scare wagon', 'trafficking', 'bridges' and 'countries'. Spatial references are more often used by Reddit users.	Several goals are here discussed as possible intentions of the Elsagate content, as can be seen from "Money? Sex? Trafficking?", but without adding the agents behind it.	Reaction to a comment stating that Elsagate content is modern day propaganda.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	burn the bridges between countries more than they already are.				
25	YouTube could still limit the number of videos with Spiderman/Elsa tags/titles to a handful per uploader per month, and it wouldn't have much impact on legit fan content. And it would give the #ElsaGate uploaders a lot less of a chance to experiment with how to break the algorithms, instead of it being a symmetrical arms race.	YouTube should be controlling the tags and titles of YouTube videos.	Censorship is a central topic in this comment, for it is suggested that YouTube could regulate titles. YouTube is again mentioned here as being one single agent, capable of making all decisions of the company. The creators of the Elsagate content however are here described as multiple human agents, describing them as 'uploaders'. Algorithms are thought of here as being 'breakable', 'hackable' and arguably as being 'imperfect'.	The metaphor 'arms race' is used here to point to the uploading and removing of Elsagate videos being a violent race against each other.	Reaction on a comment stating that Elsagate should not be a reason to censor the entire internet.
26	I always assumed that it was because of algorithms trying to milk every last cent of ad revenue money from kids who don't know any better. I always hated the almost pedophilic nature of the content, but now that I've heard rumor of the videos being used as code for finding CP and comments encrypted for info about child trafficking, I'm 100 percent invested in this. I'm usually never the one to buy into conspiracy theories, but I want to dig as deep as far as I can here to see if it might help someone.	Instead of believing the Elsagate phenomenon is all caused because of algorithms, it's all caused by pedophiles.	Algorithms are here used in a negative sense, where their goal is to get as much profit as possible, as if they have their own agency. The vagueness of 'it' at the beginning of the comment refers to the existence of the Elsagate phenomenon.	The final paragraph gives the concluding statement, saying Kids are here confronted with algorithms, and eventually believed to be confronted with pedophiles, but there is no mentioning of the parents who are responsible for them.	Reaction to the main post. It did not spur a discussion, but it did receive 42 comment points.
27	I'd like to think they realize something is wrong with it. And setting and forgetting a strict demonetization algorithm seems like the laziest way to try to "starve out" these	YouTube should act upon the Elsagate phenomenon.	Prior knowledge is needed when deciphering the first sentence. It states that YouTube should realize that their platform YouTube Kids does not work as	There is a difference between passivity and activity, as can be seen from the choice of verbs. All the verbs are in present tense, combining it with 'actively taking a role', pointing to an	A reaction on a sub-comment that states that demonetization algorithms are not necessarily a reaction of YouTube on the Elsagate phenomenon. This particular comment

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	videos instead of actively taking a role in fixing it.		they promised that it should. 'Algorithm' is in this case linked to demonetization, again algorithms are being closely linked to profit, ad revenue and money in general.	ordering of an active attitude from YouTube towards the phenomenon.	adds into the discussion, although it did not receive many comment points.
28	I would have agreed with most of your reasoning yesterday, before I saw these "eat shit", "forced slavery", "cosmetic surgery gone wrong" types of videos. These just don't seem like keywords the algorithm would easily reinforce and are also concepts that don't make sense to the very young children videos like this would target. Also the animation looks too sophisticated to be something completely randomly assembled like "5 little Hitlers jumping on the bed", which is insane but ultimately just a product of arbitrary keyword scrambling. I believe your explanation applies to a large chunk of what we're seeing, but there's still videos getting millions of views that are disturbing, hand-crafted and seem to be driven by some malicious or at least deranged intent, rather than only profit-optimization. (I don't believe in a real "conspiracy", it's just a vague sense of inexplicable fucked-upness being rampant here)	Elsagate content are mainly created by using manual labour.	The use of 'target' as the Elsagate phenomenon being Interesting, algorithms are here not necessarily being depicted as being intentionally bad, for the author uses words like 'randomly assembled' and 'arbitrary keyword scrambling'. Opposed to algorithms are human hand-crafted videos, which are seen as 'disturbing', 'malicious' and with a 'deranged intent'. But it must be noted that algorithms are here also noted that algorithms are being set opposed to 'sophisticated' and are still seen as having just one goal: profit-optimization. The question remains: for who is this profit?	The argument starts with an active sentence, giving the algorithms agency, but continues with passive sentences, hiding the agents that create the Elsagate videos and their titles, but at the same time ending with a statement that a human force mainly creates this content. There still exists vagueness in who is responsible for the phenomenon, as if there is only one party involved.	This is a reaction on the main post, creating a specific discussion and receiving a very high number of comment points, therefore receiving high credibility.
29	Yes, money and abusing the YouTube algorithm is an option, but not necessarily the correct one. Sure, a fair portion of these videos and channels are indeed bandwagoning the	The Elsagate videos are sinister and are psychological bad for children.	Again, money and algorithms are closely linked to each other, whereas money seems more important for 'money' and 'cash' are repeated more often and are prioritized at the	The YouTube webpage at the end of the comment is a rhetoric device to give credibility to the author's argumentation. Subjects of this argumentation are	This is a reaction on the main post, spurring only one comment and receiving only 21 comment points, thus it is not taken very heavily by the Reddit community.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	trend for some easy cash. The other portion are these sinister videos, both live action and animation. A toddler may not understand what is happening on their screens, but they associate those inappropriate behaviours with good things (e.g. tied up with tape = laugh). The 'pedophile ring' scenario is highly unlikely, yes. The 'mass grooming of children' scenario, not so unreal after all. I'll link you to a YT channel explaining the psychological effects these videos MIGHT have on children: https://www.youtube.com/c/investigatingyoutube		beginning of the comment. Yet again there is a good vs bad opposition, whereas good is 'good things' in life in general and bad is the 'inappropriate behaviours' as seen in Elsagate content.	money, YouTube algorithm and toddlers, but again no agency is actively handed to the parents that are involved.	
30	Can we also talk about the algorithm producing Occam's Razor posts?	The algorithm that created Occam's Razor posts could be linked to the Elsagate phenomenon.	This post refers to a specific form of machine learning, called Occam's razor, based on choosing an outcome that is simpler than all other choices. The author's algorithmic knowledge is in this way displayed, although not extensively explained.	The syntactic structure suggest that the author wanted to show his knowledge without actually giving information, inviting only people to the discussion who have previous knowledge of the subject.	Reaction on the main post, but it did only spur one other comment and was not highly rated by many people.
31	I\x92ve known it from the very start. The whole platform is full of users exploiting the algorithm Youtube has in place to favor good content over bad. People making 1 hour videos on nonsensical bullshit , just to be favored by the algorithm for having a longer run time. The people animating these videos are only after the money. H3H3 illuminated this problem when he analyzed how the MoeBradberry boys	YouTube users are actively exploiting the YouTube algorithm for money.	Not the algorithm, but people are given the most agency in this argumentation. It is again a polarization of 'us' as humans and 'them' as algorithms. YouTube is seen as one agent which is behind the steering of the algorithm. However in this case, the humans are negatively portrayed, while the algorithm is positively seen as working and actively being 'exploited'. And again, algorithms are closely linked to money, as can be	This argument is making general statements without substantiating or nuancing them. There is no extensive argumentation structure given or evidence presented, except for one vague reference to a YouTube video.	Reaction on the main post, did only spur two other comments and was not received well or read by many people, therefore received little authority. However, the author does have a high number of Karma Points, which is probably the reason that two people reacted on his comment.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	did their spider-man and Elsa channel.		seen in the last sentence.		
32	I agree, but at this point things have escalated to the point where content like that is related to other elsagate content based on keywords, I believe it's been a slow build to this point. A snowball effect of algorithm soup.	Elsagate content is related to each other via glorithmic processes.	The word 'snowball effect' and 'slow build' might point to algorithms being negative and out-of-control, YouTube users being overwhelmed and uncapable to do anything about the algorithmic processes which are central to the message, as seen in the macrostructure. Furthermore, many objects are implied or presupposed, but not explicitly asserted, such as the word 'things' which point towards the workings of the platform in general and its social consequences, but also 'content like that' which has a negative connotation pointing towards violent, sexually or fetish-included content on YouTube Kids.	The last sentence is the essence of the message, for it does not have a verb is formed as a statement.	A reaction on a comment stating that algorithms do have a part to play in the Elsagate content. The comment itself was created by the moderator of the entire post and therefore received a relatively large number of comment points, considering the length of the comment.
33	Plus, all it takes is for one pornographic term to go in the system by mistake before the algorithm will inevitable focus on that one as it brings more views.	When a certain title or tag term brings in more views, the YouTube algorithm will focus on that term at other videos.	The algorithm gains here a lot of agency in that it is able to automatically focus on a certain concept, even if it is 'pornographic'. It is believed here that these concepts are on YouTube Kids by mistake, thus being neutral about the algorithm.	The comment is written as a single statement, as if it should be believed without questioning. The pornographic term has been prioritized as being the most important aspect of this sentence, as can be seen from the placement of the nouns.	Reaction on a comment stating that companies creating Elsagate videos buy certain keywords from fettish porn sites. This comment did not receive a lot of attention and did not further spur a discussion.
34	Of course, most of the people profiting from this are regular people, desperate for money, who got lucky. But some videos just do not fit the mold of "weird, because the algorithm selects for that type of weird content". They just seem bizarre and gross in a specific, non-random way (for example, as I said, "forced slavery" is not a keyword the	The algorithm is not to blame for the creation and distribution of the Elsagate videos, for they are too specific.	Again, algorithms are negatively closely linked to money. Algorithms are also being described as being random, as opposed to specific, non-random videos which are created by another force, probably 'non-regular' people.	What is apparent here, is that the algorithm is seen as a self-acting object, capable of handling without any human involvement. This could be seen from sentences such as 'the algorithm selects' and 'the algorithm would boost'.	Reaction on main post. Because of the author's large Karma Points, the comment did receive a fairly high comment rating.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	algorithm would boost, I presume).				
35	That totally fits with the theory. It's an attempt to game the algorithm. Comments make the video look popular and legitimate which gets it shown to more people. Again, that's exactly what you'd expect them to do.	The Elsagate videos are popular because of the algorithm being gamed.	The first sentence is an indication that meanings are being negotiated and understandings are being formed. All kinds of algorithmic processes are mentioned here, without explicitly stating them. For example: ranking, recommending, filtering and personalization are all implicitly mentioned here.	The passive sentence construction in the second sentence states that the algorithm could be 'gamed', but without explicitly stating the agent. Accusations within this argumentation are again vague.	Comment on original post, although it spurred a discussion of six comments, it did not receive any points or was seen as controversial. The author does have a high number of Karma Points, indicating some authority.
36	Yes, the same amount of money. They could make videos about benign subjects (like something you'd see on SpongeBob), but they don't. The reason these videos catch the attention of children is because of the popular cartoon characters and superheroes they use, not because of their traumatizing subjects. There is no basis to believe the depraved subjects of these videos is the reason for their success. Kids watch these videos on autoplay and those videos are successful is because they were favored by the YouTube algorithm.	Elsagate videos are popular because of their popular characters, not because of the actions of the characters.	The explicit content of the Elsagate videos are discussed here. Several algorithmic processes are mentioned here, all are being blamed for the distribution of the content. Several algorithmic processes, such as recommending, automatically playing and ranking, are all mentioned in one sentence as if they are processed by one algorithm.	Because of the prioritizing of the word 'money' in the first sentence, the reader believes that the rest of the comment is part of a conversation about earning money.	Comment on original post. It did spur a small discussion, but all those comments either have zero or minus one points, pointing to a controversy.
37	Its mostly just gaming the youtube algorithm with popular searchwords so they show up in related videos everywhere. Try to watch one of them, then you'll see that they will show up in related videos, thus will get played when kids watch on autoplay.	The Elsagate videos are being shown because of several YouTube algorithmic processes.	The author recognizes that several algorithmic processes are involved, such as recommending videos in a related network and playing them automatically in order of their ranking. YouTube algorithms are seen as one unity, stating 'the YouTube algorithm'.	The passive sentences hide any agent that is responsible for the 'gaming' of algorithms, but also for the recommending (or 'related videos') of YouTube videos.	A comment on the original post, which did spur two reactions, but did not receive much attention or was seen as controversial.
38	I think that applies to an extent, but seeing how so many of these videos are so	The main goal of the existence of the Elsagate	All paragraphs links the Elsagate phenomenon, not the algorithms, to money	The author repetitively personalizes the comment by using a	Comment from moderator of the entire post who replies to a short

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	successful, and the rate they're being churned out, the amount of copycats we're seeing pop up, we can safely assume that they're making money hand over fist. Someone needs to pay for all this animation. Even if they were generated by an algorithm, someone needs to pay for all the assets to be created and artwork. Someone needs to pay for all these actors, editing time, camera equipment, costumes. There's no doubt that these videos are harmful, but to me it's clear that money is a key motivator. These videos don't make themselves, and they would have to be making a profit to be made at such scale by so many different sources	phenomenon is making money.	as being the main goal for its existence. Algorithms are not being seen as needing much labour, needing any work on, as needing much money to created, as opposed to more tactile and visible properties, which do need labour and money.	repetitive 'we' to including Reddit users and excluding non-Reddit users. The argumentation first gives the statement, then the argumentation and ends in a statement.	comment stating the Elsagate phenomenon exists because people just like to harm other people. It spur a large discussion.
39	How could you know that? Without speaking with the creators directly there's no way for sure to know what makes these videos so successful. Everyone on this sub is just speculating until we hear from an actual creator and curator of content. Also, I believe the more harmful content came later with copycats and further iterations of "algorithm soup" as it's been called.	All conversation on the Elsagate phenomenon on Reddit is just speculation..	The first sentence, in the form of a question, is a reaction on another Reddit user's post stating arguments that make Elsagate videos popular. This comment follows this argumentation up by stating that 'it's all speculating'. Furthermore, the author refers here to an earlier comment of himself in which he said that it is all caused by 'algorithm soup', see comment 32.	The first sentence shows a negotiation between meaning making of the Elsagate videos. However, the author throws away all argumentation by stating that only the speculations are being taken seriously when an actual creator or curator of the Elsagate content reacts. This comment could be seen as renegotiating all previous discussions, by putting into perspective all previous information shared. This could indicate an opposition between the less knowing (Reddit users) and the knowing (YouTube creators), between the powerless (Reddit	Comment from the moderator of the entire post on another comment stating what makes Elsagate videos popular.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
				users) and the powerful (content creators). For as Foucault believes, knowledge is power.	
40	> I just find it odd how every bottle in that video is from the same brand I bet that "jonnie walker" sounds like a kids name and something to do with walking. So the "order form" the bot sent to this content creator included that phrase and whoever created this particular video shrugged and got some jonnie walker liquor boxes... Is it a fucked up result? You betcha. But I doubt it is malicious (at least in the way you might think). It is just compute algorithms being computer algorithms. Same way the bots in /r/SubredditSimulator post some pretty crazy stuff every now and then...	YouTube Kids search results are not malicious, just automatically created by a computer algorithm.	Algorithms are being generalised here as doing exact the same things in several different situations and don't having any agency. Algorithms are mentioned neutral, as can be seen from 'compute algorithms being computer algorithms'. The question here remains who has a hand in the computer algorithms, and are they really not biased?	By using a rhetorical question, additional emphasis is being placed on the negative association with YouTube Kids search results.	Reaction on a comment discussing the actual content of the Elsagate videos. This particular comment spurred a very large discussion, although it only received 14 comment points. The author of the post does have a high number of Karma Points and thus has relative authority within the Reddit community.
41	You actually make a good point here about corrupting western children. It may be worth remembering that Russia interferes with American elections by manipulating Facebook to create discord in communities - paid ads to make people think aggressively. Would it be too far fetched to think that this is just another form or cyber warfare? A way to desensitise children to themes that would otherwise be considered abhorrent? Think about it; The money made from the high volume	The Elsagate phenomenon could be a form of cyber warfare.	Many words are being used that are thematically linked to war, such as 'corrupting', 'cyber warfare' and 'mechanism'. Again, algorithms are being linked to money by stating that it is a vicious circle in which YouTube creators can invest the money they make to buy views, comments and channels to be picked up by the algorithm and thus to earn more money. In the final paragraph, it is stated that 'YouTube' should address the issue as soon as possible, without mentioning any involvement of the parents who	When summing up what can be done with money, the passive sentence hides the active agent at play. It also is not clear who is performing this money circle and who is responsible for 'feeding into the mechanism'. One has to guess. Children are being stated as passive recipients of content, only furthering supposedly algorithmic processes.	This is a reaction within a chain of comments about YouTube knowing a long time about Elsagate and doing nothing because of the profit they made of it. This comment adds in and furthers the discussion.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	vids can be reinvested into - clickfarms for views - bots for comments - investment into hacked American YT accounts This therefore feeds into the mechanism, where more and more children will be exposed to disturbing content by giving the content an initial boost so that it gets picked up by the algorithms. Then again. It could all just be a coincidence. Either way, YouTube needs to address this as soon as possible, or it will find itself in the position of Facebook and Twitter where they are now being held into account for their lack of action.		made it possible for children to watch YouTube Kids.		
42	> not because of their traumatizing subjects Yup. But those came about as the result of algorithms, not because (((soros))) and the lizard people are in the back pocket of Disney. Jesus christ you people are insane.	Algorithms are the reason why the characters within the Elsagate videos have been chosen.	With 'you people', the author seems to make a separation between himself and other Reddit users who take part in the subdiscussion, indicating that the author has more knowledge of the subject than others.	The simple phrasing of 'Yup' seems a small indication of the author's agreeing with the previous discussion, while at the same time disagreeing with certain specific argumentation points.	This is a comment which is in the middle of a discussion on whether the Elsagate videos follow a certain formula to systematically traumatize children or not. It does not necessarily adds a new point of view or spurs a new discussion.
43	absolutely - wouldn't disagree with you there. i don't disagree either that it's damaging to kids to see it. i'm just saying that i can see how this kind of content makes it into the algorithms in the first place.	Children could actually watch Elsagate videos on themselves, which causes a high ranking by the YouTube algorithm.	The use of algorithm is here neutral, simply hinting at the algorithm's workings and what kind of factors would have certain kinds of outcomes for the YouTube algorithm.	The prioritizing and setting apart of 'absolutely' points to an agreeing with the previous discussion, a negotiation of existing knowledge, while some argumentation points are being further discussed.	This is a commend in the middle of a discussion on whether or not children actually like Elsagate content.
44	> yet you completely disregard the more human element behind this, in the trauma that is inflicted by children as a result of this, as well as inaccurately claiming that this content is created by bots, when it is also	The Elsagate phenomenon exists because of sophisticated computer algorithms and fraudulent activity.	A polarization of 'us' vs 'them' in the sense of 'us' being Reddit users who believe the Elsagate phenomenon is created because of fraudulent activity and algorithms, who are considered knowledgeable, and 'them' being Reddit	The author tries to state his authority by not immediately refuting other conversational points, but adding other viewpoints.	This comment is in the middle and adds to a lengthy discussion. Putting it in perspective to other comments in the discussion, it has a relatively high comment score.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	created by humans, with live actors I'm not questioning or debating that at all. I don't think a single person in this sub is questioning the harm this stuff can cause to kids who watch it. All I'm doing is countering all the people who think this is some kind of deep conspiracy involving the illuminati, the NFL and the saucer people. There is a *lot* of people going way off the deep and when this shit is quite simple to explain. It's just dudes trying to make a buck off kids watching youtube videos. (well, ...make that buck using rather sophisticated computer algorithms and a ton fraudulent activity). That it does harm to kids is not up for debate. Of course it does. Of course it needs to be stopped. But if you want to stop it, you need to understand it. And to understand it you need to stop thinking like a parent who cares about their kid or an honest, upstanding moral person who does everything above the board and put your mind into the modern world of internet fraud... ...which is a fucked up and fairly scary place considering the power of modern computing...		users who believe in conspiracy theories, who are considered as ignorant. Algorithms are specifically seen as being used for a goal, having no agency.		
45	I'm glad we can come to some sense of agreement. >All I'm doing is countering all the people who think this is some kind of deep conspiracy involving the illuminati, the NFL and the saucer	The algorithm, or the YouTube platform as a whole, has been gamed for profit.	The first sentence points towards a kind of agreement, an ending to a negotiation of viewpoints. The central point to this comment is 'gaming', for not only is the algorithm	By using passive sentences and words such as 'they', it is not clear who has an agency to 'game' the algorithms and the system. This comment shows some anti-capitalistic viewpoints.	Reaction within a comment chain about the why and how of the Elsagate content creation and specifically reacting to comment 44.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	people. There is a lot of people going way off the deep and when this shit is quite simple to explain. It's just dudes trying to make a buck off kids watching youtube videos. (well, ...make that buck using rather sophisticated computer algorithms and a ton fraudulent activity). The one thing here though, maybe this shit isn't as simple as you think it is. You understand the mechanics in the way they have been able to profit from this. But in order to profit they would have to make it more popular. So through clever use of SEO/keywords/bots and a host of other black hat techniques they gamed the algorithims to get them popular. But as a consequence of this, these videos are placed alongside more innocent content autoplayed/recomme nded. Now, the wider point I want to make is that these videos didn't have to be so disturbing in nature.. they could game the system with more innocent content if they wanted to, since the content doesn't matter so much when your gaming the system. You said it yourself "Kids--they'll binge watch anything you put in front of them." That is where you have to begin questioning the motives of those who make the content, in order to desensitize, traumatize and disturb children. I cannot accept an argument that stipulates "they did it because they weren't		gamed – not clearly by who-, but also the whole system – meaning YouTube as a platform and all its algorithms – is gamed. All kinds of technological processes have been used interchangeably, such as 'SEO', 'Keywords', 'bots', 'algortihms', 'autoplayed' and 'recommended' without giving any notice of their difference. This comment is specifically focussed on a certain audience who has previous knowledge, as can be seen from the last paragraph, stating 'I don't want to repeat the disturbing imagery that is conained within these videos, you already know most of it'.		

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	thinking about it", no, I think there was real malice involved. I don't want to repeat the disturbing imagery that is contained within these videos, you already know most of it, and thought has been put into making those videos.				
46	> Why do some videos teach children the wrong colors? Red = Blue, or feature an animation of a crying baby if the colors are correct? The videos don't have to make any sense. All that matters is they are viewed a lot. More views = more ad revenue = more money. Whatever algorithmically generated content fulfills that basic formula feeds directly into the next iteration of algorithmically generated content. It's evolution in action!	The Elsagate videos follow a certain formula to earn a lot of money.	The comment is clearly reacting on one part of the discussion, as can be seen from the repeating of a previous piece of the discussion. Again, algorithms are being linked to money. This time in a formula. Arguably, algorithms are a formula on its own, but that is not referred to here.	All kinds of inanimate objects or technology (views, ad revenue, money, algorithms and content) gain agency, as could be argued by the actor-network theory, but human involvement is omitted. With the last sentence and metaphor 'evolution in action', the author is pointing towards algorithms becoming more self-optimizing without any human supervision. As if the algorithm is evolving.	Reaction within a comment chain about the use of colours in Elsagate videos. This particular comment did further the discussion and gained a high comment score, therefore gaining authority (and arguably credibility).
47	Aren't they obviously bots to boost the comment count and tilt yt's suggestion algorithm?	Bots boost comment counts of Elsagate videos to be favoured by YouTube's algorithms.	Giving agency to technology, in this case 'bots' that in turn is picked up by another technological element, namely YouTube's suggestion algorithm. YouTube's suggestion algorithm is seen as a biased algorithm, favouring specific elements of videos. What actually is discussed within the Elsagate discussion, is what elements the YouTube algorithm involves in recommending and ranking videos.	A rhetorical question is in this case used to emphasize the seemingly 'logical' explanations of nonsensical comments. Humans again play no role in this algorithmic process, pointing to algorithms self-optimization.	Reaction within a comment chain about the nonsensical comments on Elsagate videos.
48	I don't think it's funny at all. Sadly, the "best" case scenario is that this is all only about money and manipulating the	The Elsagate phenomenon is shocking children, not only making money by manipulating the algorithm.	The algorithm is here seen as being able to be manipulated, as being less than perfect, as being able to be exploited for earning money. Indirectly, humans	A rhetorical repetition of "the 'best' case scenario" adds additional emphasis on the seriousness of the phenomenon.	Reaction on a comment stating the Elsagate phenomenon is funny. The high comment score indicates that many other Reddit users

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	algorithm to get ad revenue. Even if that's true, think about all the children seeing all this sexual content disguised as children's videos. Nothing funny at all about that. And that's the "best" case scenario.		have the agency to actively manipulate the algorithm that passively does its work.		agreed with this particular comment.
49	Lol dude it\x92s the algorithms which dictate what\x92s popular and hence what gets made. No government conspiracy. It\x92s just data and automation.	The Elsagate phenomenon	Algorithms are here referred to in general as having the ability to decide what is popular (by ranking and suggesting) and what's get made (indicating the watch-time algorithm). Including under 'algorithms' are 'data' and 'automatization'.	The government is not acknowledged as having anything to do with this. It is more seen as a 'individual vs automatization', and not a 'individual vs government'.	Anonymous reaction on a comment suggesting the government is involved within the Elsagate videos. This comment contradicting the statement has gained an extreme high number of comment points, considering the length and the anonymity of the comment.
50	It's far, far more likely that the content is also based on algorithms that track trends in popular videos, making the whole scheme a self-reinforcing mechanism, which is why there is a shitload of videos and "viewers".		The author makes sure other algorithmic processes are mentioned as well, such as 'trend tracking algorithms', and pointing to the self-optimization of algorithms, stating 'self-reinforcing mechanism'.	This time not by using a passive sentence, but by making 'the algorithm' the actor of the sentence, 'the algorithm' has gained its own agency. This is further reinforced by stating that it is a 'self-reinforcing mechanism'.	This comment is a reaction on comment 49. It also has gained a high comment score, although not as high as comment 49.
51	That's exactly the point of the white list. It would be a limited but ever growing library of curated and reviewed content. The bullshit wouldn't be able to abuse algorithms to get seen, because they haven't been whitrlisted	Whitelisting could be a solution to ensure the safety of YouTube Kids content.	Algorithms are again mentioned as being able to be abused, while it is not mentioned by who.	There is polarization between manual viewed content, which is curated and reviewed, and automatically added content, which is 'bullshit'.	Reaction on a comment stating that an easy solution would be to whitelist channels that can be trusted. Both that comment and this current comment did not receive high scores and this particular comment was not further reacted on.
52	While appropriate the toy manufacturers do the same... They algorithmically come up with new toys market them towards kids that was easily influenced towards them.. Overpriced of course.. And parents are guilted into buying the garbage for kids year after year because their	Toy manufacturers also influence children, the same as the Elsagate phenomenon.	Algorithms are here linked with marketing strategies and brainwashing children, thus are denoted negatively. The word 'algorithmically' seems to be placed here inappropriately, as if toys markets are being found algorithmically, and not manually.	The metaphor between toy manufacturers and Elsagate content creators is here presented. Parents are mentioned here as having no power over their children, and children are presented as active agents, having power in domestic life.	Comment on original post. It did not spur a reaction chain and only received one comment point, therefore not gaining much authority or credibility within the Reddit community.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	kids have been brainwashed into it.				
53	Ya but I would think Disney wouldn't want to be associated with this..... Or even to have kids associate this shit w/ their charterers in it. Fuck idk the longer I spend on here the more confused I get lol	Disney is not purposely associated with the Elsagate phenomenon.	When finding the one's responsible, Disney is being mentioned, even the kids are being mentioned, but no algorithms, YouTube or parents are being mentioned. Although Disney's characters are often used in the videos, they	First, the author gives a statement, followed by a doubt, followed by a total confusion. This indicates that knowledge about the Elsagate phenomenon is still negotiated.	A reaction within a reaction chain suggesting that Disney could be responsible for the creation of the Elsagate phenomenon. This particular comment did not receive a response or a high score.
54	> I also think it would be super-risky for a company to pay for this large of an advertisement in children's videos. In too a direct way, yeah. But that's not the only way, and any company consists of many people, including people higher ups can fire while feigning disgust at their actions, and the people who profit would in many cases rather be shareholders than those who work there. Around shit like this, blackmail is also possibility. And depending on what someone is blackmailed with, it could outweigh any sort of money, and any risk other than X getting out. Not saying that makes it likely, especially since all the brands in the videos are advertised everywhere already anyway. It's hard to say what stuff is aimed at what age, but at least for very young kids, a brand doesn't evoke as much familiarity or credibility (I mean, like Spiderman and Elsa etc. are used). So in my mind, the companies have more to gain than the video makers, because using actual	Elsagate content is aimed at making money via advertising and product placement. Elsagate content is not only created to make money.	A lot of company jargon is used in this reaction, for the main theme of the reaction is business and companies who are involved in the Elsagate phenomenon.	Children are here seen as the victims, unable to handle with the content they are provided with by the several YouTube algorithms and company's brand promotions.	A reaction on a post stating that earning money is not the main goal behind the Elsagate content. This particular comment reacts on that in doing so did not receive a high comment score and was only once reacted to.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	products right left and center might raise unwanted attention, be it from lawyers or parents. Kids associate colorful things that seem remotely edible with sweets anyway, no need to actually put M&M and Cola and Snickers there? And while showing Pepsi and Cola in the same video might seem like something neither company would like, it's still much better for them than showing kids generic fruit juice or something. > I am not saying we shouldn't think in all kinds of different directions but to me it seems like probably something more than simple greed is behind it. Oh, I absolutely agree, greed alone, be it ad money from content creators or companies wanting to get them while they can't even talk yet, doesn't even begin to explain the pervasive abusive patterns. Just because I don't consider it impossible for companies to have a hand in the product placement (it's not even placement, it's outright fetishism, though more of the objects than the brand) doesn't mean I consider that the sole explanation or necessarily part of the explanation. > And I don't really buy those easy explanations that blame the children and an automatic system, so any responsibility vanishes into thin air. Yeah, s**ame** here.				

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
55	The owner of the site trawls the deepweb for public private info dumps. If it says the email is pwned then that's because the email with an associated password is in a publicly released database.	Elsagate channels have been created from stolen with stolen e-mail addresses	Using language as if the emails can be bought in an illegal shop, as can be seen from "pawned" and "info dumps". The internet is portrayed as one open shop, where data privacy is relative.	No source is given, only statements.	Reaction on a comment stating that someone's e-mail address has been compromised. This particular comment has 31 points, assuming that it is believed by many.
56	I don't think it's particularly hard to believe. I couldn't quite make out the full implications of that link but it seemed like it was saying each child is brainwashed to think of them selves as a certain colour from a young age and they are taught to be a very specific role that they associate with that colour, rinse and repeat for other colours you want that person to have and eventually you can use colours to trigger a certain mindset in a person. In these videos the colours seem to be a bit differently organised I think, and it's a more insidious programming than the overwhelming use of colour described in the article but here's some possibilities that I can think of. * Blue. If you're in a blue room you should expect something bad to happen and you shouldn't put up a fight because Elsa is always blue and bad things happen to her and she doesn't usually try to stop them. * Yellow frequently seems to fix all the problems so if you're feeling unhappy, lost or scared and a person wearing hivis yellow approaches you, obviously that person will make	Elsagate phenomenon is brainwashing children with certain colour combinations	This comment is explaining theories and conspiracies on colour coding within Elsagate videos. It is portrayed as if children are dangered by content, as if content has certain power and is active, while the children are passive receivers of the content. As if the sender and receiver send and receive the same message. This passive consumption of content is further strengthen by words such as "needle", "implanted" and "trigger a mindset". There is again a strong "us-vs-them" feeling, as can be seen from mentioning "these people", which is meant to include only Elsagate content creators.	The sender-receiver idea (that sender sends a message and receiver also actually understands the same message) is further strengthened by the metaphor of the needle, now instead of curing diseases, inserting ideas in children.	This is a reaction on a comment asking if anyone believes in colour coding Elsagate content. This current comment, as a reaction on that question, received 126 points and spurred a large discussion, therefore it certainly has obtained authority by the Reddit community.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	everything better and you should go with them. * Black is scary and dangerous so if a person in a black suit (security) shows up you should be scared or run and hide. * Purple means something bad is happening that is meant to be funny. Probably happening to spiderman (red) so if you're in a purple costume it's actually ok to hurt other people, especially if they're dressed as spiderman. Conversely if you're dressed as spiderman or elsa you can't stop the Joker. * Red. Spiderman and red I find a bit harder to pin down, he changes from protector and saviour, to victim a lot. I'm not sure if this is meant to be someone to emotionally connect to like with Elsa but it seems to often involve the breaking of spiderman from thinking he's ok to being not ok anymore and being unable to help elsa in a lot of the videos I've seen. Along this same vein I'm bothered by the idea that a giant, painful, needle poking into the bottom is the cure-all for literally everything in so many videos. I've really only been properly reading about #elsagate since this morning and I'm horrified by what these people are willing to do to children and what this could potentially be doing to so many children who are watching these				

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	videos. Even if it isn't deliberate, these sorts of thoughts could still be being implanted.				
57	So does anyone know why Disney (and the other associated companies) don\x92t have the videos removed? This seems to be a pretty big negative story involving their licensed characters. They must have a legal team that should be on top of stuff like this.	Disney should have Elsagate content removed	With 'associated' it is asked who are responsible for the disappearing of the Elsagate phenomenon or the Elsagate phenomenon in general. Again, the parents are here not mentioned once as having any involvement. Vagueness is included in this comment in the sense of what are 'the other associated companies' and what does 'this stuff' mean.	Large companies are here considered as the main concern, as be seen from topicalization, but there is no mentioning of the direct domestic life, in which the phenomenon did occur.	Comment on the original post. This particular question spurred a large discussion and received 306 points, therefore gaining it much importance by the Reddit community.
58	Thankfully unlisted videos still get auto-scanned and flagged. Source: My streaming software defaulted to using my PC speaker out as an audio input, flagging every single one of my live stream videos for copyright infringement.	Unlisted videos cannot contain disturbing content without consequences.	The first sentence points to a direct contradiction of the previous comment, in a way as if he knows more about the particular subject. Flagging is here closely linked with auto-scanning, while flagging also could be human's labour in YouTube's case.	By stating a certain source, the author does not only gain empathy, but also credibility.	Reaction on a comment stating that YouTube could be a platform where thousands of pedophiles trade illegal content via the 'unlisted option'.
59	Yeah, which is why channels that encourage skepticism or at least *don't* encourage mindless consumption of content tend to get hit harder than the ones that *do* encourage that sort of behavior. But the thing is, it's not that they're worthless to advertise to. I don't care how informed someone is, if something seems worth it, they'll be more interested in buying it. Advertisements typically aren't meant to bring in new customers, but are instead meant to retain an existing customer pool. They want to keep bringing	Advertisements are not in line with family friendly content on YouTube and YouTube Kids.	It is seen as family vs advertisers, as customers vs advertisers, in which customers are passive and advertisers are active. Capitalistic ideology is at play here.	The author gives a statement, argumentation and ends in a conclusion, in which he also repeats the statement.	This comment is part of a discussion chain about ad revenue being one of the biggest reasons for the Elsagate phenomenon to exist. This current comment did only receive one point and was not commented on.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	people back, so they remind them that Pepsi still exists, that Doritos taste good, that a Ford truck is a vehicle, etc. Advertisements serve as reminders more than anything. And most of the commercials on Youtube are just general "Hey remember, our product/service exists" commercials. But the biggest reason why the "advertiser friendly" thing tends to be bullshit is that content that's considered "family friendly" or "advertiser friendly" or whatever the next bullshit phrase is ends up having ads that will in no way appeal to children. Car commercials? Auto insurance? Some hardware? Tools? Old Spice? Families aren't sitting down and watching Youtube videos. They're not sitting there after dinner watching their favorite family friendly Youtubers. People in general are watching them alone, so anything that's "family friendly" is going to have advertising that won't work on anyone who "family friendly" standards applies to, because the advertising isn't meant for them.				
60	Frankly, the comments look identical to when my kids use my phone to type. Lots of gibberish and then a few words of auto-correct and then gibberish.	Comments on Elsagate videos could be produced simply by children typing random words	A reaction, without actually being a reactional comment, on comments about conspiracies an the comments of Elsagate videos. It is indirectly referred here that the comments are not necessarily algorithmic produced	The first sentence is a statement saying that the comments do not necessarily have to mean anything, while the second sentence is an explanation of the first one.	This comment is on its own, for it did not receive any reaction and is not directly linked to another comment, but it still received 18 points, giving it some credibility.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
			or created by pedophiles messaging each other, but could be a product of children typing.		
61	>Create a tool that generates animations based on keywords Lol, if someone had a tool capable of auto-generating sophisticated, 10+ minute long 3D animations with coherent plotlines, character interaction, post production, SFX, scoring and voiceovers, then YouTube ad revenue would be the least of their concerns. They could sell the tech to Disney or the like for a billion fucking dollars. You guys are clueless about multimedia production. This stuff is hand made. Source: working in multimedia and post for over a decade.	Elsagate content is not created with automated processes	This comment is following a conversation on AI created content, repeating all mentioned elements in previous comments while adding additional elements which are necessary to create such an AI. Algorithms are here described as being sophisticated, needing lots of work and involving human labour. There is an us-vs-them opposition, as shown in the 'you guys' statement: 'us' being knowledgeable internet users on the field of AI and algorithms, 'them' being unknowledgeable internet users in that sense.	The author uses technical jargon and states a source, which is the gaining over knowledge over a period of years, which grants him credibility and authority.	This is a direct response to the main post, but it did not receive many points (only 2) and was not reacted on.
62	> parents decided to share your videos That isn't how these are getting watched. These are little kids binge watching youtube videos. Think "four year old" + iPad + "auto play" + "infinite depth of suggested content". I doubt there is a parent there watching these videos with Kiddo.... > If it's only about money, why are they taking the unnecessary risk of getting their accounts banned? Accounts for posting on youtube are almost as cheap and easy to create as reddit accounts. Banning accounts isn't gonna stop this at all. Stopping this is	Children watch the Elsagate videos on their own, without help of their parents. Money is the main reason for the existence and survival of the Elsagate phenomenon.	What can be seen from this comment, is the parental dilemma: parents feel guilty about leaving their children with a platform that promised to be safe. However, the parental dilemma it is not explicitly stated here, for it is not recognised that parents open the devices and the platform on which the children watch YouTube Kids. The algorithm is furthermore again linked to money, as seen in the paragraph about how cheap it is to set up a(n Elsagate) account.	Capitalistic urges can be seen from the last paragraph.	Comment in a reaction chain about the sharing of Elsagate videos, conspiracy of colour coding within Elsagate videos and money being the main goal for the existence of the Elsagate phenomenon.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	significantly harder and is gonna take some dedicated engineering effort on Google's part.... People make a ton of money gaming Google (or anything with $$$ attached to it) and they have gotten really, really good at it.				
63	> I don't see anything being done about this It does sound like Google has at least recognized the problem. This shit is a *hard* (read "expensive even for google and very time consuming") problem to solve in a way that doesn't negatively impact legitimate users ^(or Google's revenue). It took Google many years to really crack down on bullshit search results. I dunno if you remember, but there was a few years a while ago where a lot of your search results were for really weird auto-generated sites and link-farms. People would game the fuck out of google by plastering wordpress sites with bullshit comments that linked back to whatever they wanted to gather traffic.... These days, it seems like that is mostly a thing of the past....	Google will solve the Elsagate phenomenon.	Companies and money are the main themes within this comment as can be seen from frequent use of words such as 'expensive', 'consuming', and 'revenue'. Algorithmic processes, such as involved in 'search results' and 'auto-generated sites', are being linked to 'people gaming the system' and 'bullshit'. Also, the whole phenomenon, and arguably the algorithmic processes within them, are seen as 'a problem' which needs to be solved, the hope is that a large company such as Google will solve it.	Google is been prioritized in the syntax structure, indicating that the company has the main responsibility of the Elsagate phenomenon.	Comment within a comment chain that also spurred again a large comment chain on the solutions for the Elsagate content. It received only 18 points but the author has a high Karma Point score and the comment was also mentioned again a lot, thus the comment receives some authority and credibility from the Reddit community.
64	Don't forget that the YTK app auto plays. Kids would be forced to watch like it or not	YouTube Kids auto-play option could be a reason why the children watch certain Elsagate videos	By using the word 'force' it is implied here that algorithmic processes, such as recommending and auto playing those recommendations, have a certain power or agency: the power to force content upon the users, without the users having any agency to deny such content.	This comment could be seen as a simple statement, without any explanation. As if the author expects agreement and authority.	A reaction within a reaction chain on whether or not the children actually like to watch the Elsagate content.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
65	this is reminiscent of the whole "finger family" phenomenon, where videos are auto-generated with the same song and general style but with different characters featured as the finger puppets.	The Elsagate phenomenon resembles the Finger Family phenomenon	It is assumed that one knows what the 'finger family phenomenon' is.	Comparison is being made between	Direct comment on the original post. Received only 6 points and wasn't mentioned or reacted to.
66	> who's parents are being lazy and just give a kid an ipad to watch these videos all day so they don't have to actually do any parenting That's a very unfair statement. Although I'm sure it happens, a lot of parents' intentions are to find educational videos for their kids to watch. But due to auto play (and actually not supervising your children), these "ad revenue" videos get put in que and end up going down the rabbit hole automatically. My advice to parents is to turn off the "auto play next video" function.	Parents are not responsible for the non-educational content that is exposed to their children because of the auto play function of YouTube Kids.	The parental dilemma and a potential solution for this dilemma is being discussed here. Algorithms are here portrayed as bad influencers: 'auto-play' and 'going down the rabbit hole automatically'. Also, algorithms are being linked directly to money, in the form of ad revenue.	Direct opposition to one particular issue of the previous comment. Algorithms are mentioned as having their own agency, being able to force content upon children. There is an opposition between education and non-educational content, between 'normal' and Elsagate content.	Within a small comment chain discussing the size of the Elsagate phenomenon.
67	Nah, i think the problem is more with the parents, who leave the kids alone, so the unsupervised kid is atracted by the bright colored character he likes, like elsa, hulk or superman. My solution is to not only turn off auto play, but to be around your child and maybe even make a "safe videos" playlist for them.	Parents should not leave their children unsupervised when watching YouTube Kids.	The parental dilemma and a potential solution for this dilemma is being discussed here. Algorithmic processes are here not only seen as having agency, but parent also has agency in protecting their children.	Domestic rules are discussed here: who is responsible for who, who has agency and who has final power.	This comment is a direct reaction on comment 66. It forms the end of a comment chain and received 13 comment points.
68	. believe there could be other explanations, I even believe you are honest, but you could introduce your alternative without dismissing the main one, I will show you how: "maybe A low life programmer and video designer is gaming youtube by	Explanations of the Elsagate content should be introduced without dismissing previous statements.	The entire comment should not be taken serious, for it is just an example of how to convey a certain message to other Reddit users. It repeats previously often stated statements, with the only exception of the sentence after 'Edit:'.	The first sentence indicates a negotiation of knowledge. The entire comment is correcting the previous comment.	Reacting to comments about the possibility of the involvement of pedophiles.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	using an automated creator of edgy content cause it gets the views, this checks cause the key words are so obvious and the quality so low" Edit: THe pedophiles are there, but in much much much much much higher numbers and more wealthy that people claim				
69	> I forgot, shills only exist in the eyes of "nut ball". Calling people who have the most logical, simplest explanation "shills" is exactly what an astroturfing, forum sliding nut job does. Actual "shills" behave exactly like you do--spreading misinformation and instilling fear, uncertainty and doubt. > If they ONLY wanted to make money they wouldn't be creating content of urinating on each other, decapitations with babies crying, drinking out of toilets, anal injections... etc. Not true because they *very clearly* **are** posting those things using automated bots. Clearly videos featuring spiderman pissing on decapitated babies with needles in their butt makes more ad revenue than those without or they wouldn't be posting them. The fact that these videos are bizarre, highly disturbing, and outright fucked up does *not* automatically that there is some deep dark conspiracy involving disney, the NFL and the illuminati. It is	Algorithmic processes are the cause for the Elsagate content with money as their only goal.	'Automated bots', without explaining what those are, are seen as the causes for posting Elsagate content. These bots are considered to have just one goal: making money with ad revenue. Certain other algorithmic processes are also mentioned, such as ranking, but are also immediately linked to money. It can be argued that algorithms are often seen as furthering, helping and conveying capitalistic ideology.	Using certain syntax structures, the first part of the comment is a personal attack on the previous comment's author.	Reaction on a comment who in turn reacts to an older comment from this current author. It was given 29 comment points and further spurred a discussion.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	easily explained by the fact that those fucked up attributes make more money than videos that don't have those attributes. There is a very simple explanation to this. Higher Ranking == More Clicks == More Ad Revenue. Period. Full stop. Arguing anything else requires some pretty beefy proof.				
70	Well said. I think machine learning could explain the peculiar nature of these videos. r/subredditsimulator is not a trained model. Hence it\x92s incoherency. What disturbs me is these videos apparently are coherent and posses ideation. They are intentionally wrong with colors, intentionally frightening, intentionally follow a plot from previously made content, etc. I\x92m very suspicious of YouTube\x92s blatant disregard for the removal of this content. I\x92ve had completely innocuous videos removed saying it violated *some* portion of the ToS. Wholly ambiguous. It also said my account would be restricted **unless I immediately appealed the decision (2-3 days IIRC).** So obviously I appealed it without having any clue as to what they thought I did. I had to write explanations defending myself when I was never told the accusation. I never found out what triggered it. I	Autonomous machine learning processes are a solution to the Elsagate phenomenon, but mainly are a problem to standard YouTube creators.	The first short sentence indicates an agreement with previous statements and building on these. Automation is seen here as both a problem and a solution. There is an opposition here between humans ('interact with a support member') and algorithmic processes ('autonomous'). What is not considered, is the option that human labour is involved with algorithmic processes. Also, the autonomous algorithmic processes are seen as having more agency, more power, than humans, who have to subdue themselves to the rules of the algorithm.	The personalisation of the argumentation by using personal nouns, gives the author more empathy. The author substantiates his argument with a personal story in which supports the statement at the beginning of the comment.	Reaction on a lengthy comment discussing the role of bots within the Elsagate phenomenon. This current comment has received 16 points and further spurred a discussion.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	only received a brief email saying it was an error and my video would be restored and I wouldn\x92t be penalized. The whole process was autonomous. I never was given the option to interact with a support member. My point is, if it\x92s automated and that simple to remove content from my decade old, YT Partner program account, why is it so hard for these horrible videos? It\x92s perplexing.				
71	Look, The amount of views and the fact that it looks super automated points to the fact that is profit motivated, I understand that kids may go to adult swim or these videos just because they are odd and stimulating, but the way I see it the videos are too low quality to be aimed for 10+. this is not 10+ material, this is 7 years or less, look at them, they dont even talk on the videos, is retarded, nobody can be watching this if they can form a real sentence, I think that part is obvious for everybody, adults dont go there to interact with babbling kids, they are there for eachother, the fact that all the fetish categories are represented + the age thing makes me believe the goal is to instigate/induce/embolden the specific fetishes on random kids, creating sociologically more individuals of young age with a secret crooked sexual drive = grooming... I do believe reddir management deleted pizagate cause media matters and sharia blue are threatened	The Elsagate phenomenon is created to groom children for certain fetishes.	Automation and money (in this case 'profit') are again closely linked to each other. Again there is a distinction being made between the knowledgeable and the ignorant, as is indicated by 'obvious for everybody'. Both adults and children are mentioned here, as if they have the same amount of agency and power to regulate what they watch.	Paranoia is not only explained here but can also be seen from the sentence structures. Towards the end, the author seems to have written everything in one large sentence without an end.	Reaction on a few comments about the involvement of automated bots in the Elsagate phenomenon. This particular reaction did not receive any reaction and only gained 1 point.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	by powerful pedos being outed, they have censored reddit to protect the adrenochrome addicts, EVERYBODY knows this now in the conspiracy forums, there is no stopping it and censorship doesnt help, if you seem to be attempting to helping them you will get called a paid bot, if your account is old you'll be suspected of selling it, the paranoia is justified				
72	This post is shilly as fuck. Bots are up in here. "TL:DR; its for the money" - is such a horseshit theory. Drinking out of toilets, anal injections, decapitations with babies crying. Kids don't go seeking this shit out. Many kids who are being traumatized by this shit aren't even old enough to read or write, they are given the iPad or phone as a way to keep them quiet. These videos are keyworded and tagged to appear alongside innocent content. Kids are content with more innocent content, but this shit comes up on autoplay alongside innocent content. No nefarious purpose? No intent to cause trauma or condition kids with fucked up content? LMAO you think they simply think "It won't effect the kids, I'll make my money".. Do you know this kind of explanation allows it to become normalized and for people to escape punishment?	The Elsagate phenomenon is not just for money, but is created by bots	'TL;DR' means too long, didn't read, followed by an explanation of the reaction that is not read. Bots, or arguably automated processes in general, are involved in the creation of the entire "Let's get real for a second"- post. Parental dilemma is again pointed to in the sentence ''[kids] are given the iPad or iPhone as a way to keep them quiet". Automated processes are believed to include tagging, keywording and auto-playing.	First a statement is made and then it is substantiated with personal ideas. Kids are seen as having no agency, as being the powerless, while parents are in control to the point where automated processes take over, for they seemingly have more power. As if tower of control/power goes like this: - Algorithm - Parent - Children	This comment is a reaction on the original post. It obtained a high comment score of 117 and spurred a fairly large reaction chain.
73	Hey I know this is two months ago but I couldn't help myself. I	Autoplay is the reason that children	This is reaction that is building on several other comments	What is remarkable is that the autoplay here has his own	This comment is part of a reaction chain on the possibility of

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	don't think the kids actually go looking for this, its more like they start watching stuff like toy channels on autoplay which will send you to all the depraved shit. A lot of it comes through the kids app even, so most of the views are just toddlers plopped in front of an ipad with autoplay.	are exposed to Elsagate content.	stating that children themselves are looking for Elsagate content. The parental dilemma is shown here, as can be seen from 'just toddlers plopped in front of an iPad with autoplay'.	agency, while parents are not mentioned in the passive sentence construction. The autoplay, and later in the comment the YouTube Kids app as a whole, is seen as the powerful agent.	children actually liking the content. Many people reacted on this current comment, although it only was given 2 comment points. The author's high Karma Point score could be an explanation for this.
74	I said in my comment that it's probably nothing and I think it's really far fetched, I'm just repeating what I saw and what other Redditors figured out. They literally plugged it into a translator, or some kind of decoding program that looks for patterns and out came weird creepy messages. Do I think it's pedophiles using some code to talk to each other? No, you're right that doesn't make any sense. But none of this does. Most likely it's bots trying to punch up the comment sections to make the video more visible. The fact this gibberish is showing up on all these videos adds credibility to the bot theory. But I'm not gonna rule anything out it's discovered where these videos come from, who makes them, and why these bizarre themes seem to repeat across all these channels.	Comments from Elsagate videos are most likely created by bots.	Bots are here seen as not as negative as pedophiles, but only working for one goal: creating more visibility.	The first sentence shows a negotiation of knowledge that is shown in previous comments. Using rhetorical questioning the author is refuting some conspiracies. Bots and pedophiles both are given the same agency, as can be seen from the active sentence constructions.	A comment within a reaction chain about conspiracy theories. This comment obtained 7 points and did spur a short discussion.
75	To me, these weird videos do make sense. They've been proven to generate an insane load of views and revenue. So upstart tech firms in Tiger countries try to cash in on this gold rush with very cheap, low effort, recycled animations and sound. I've also	Elsagate videos have as goals to gain as much views as possible and earn money.	Views, money and bots are all mentioned in several ways her, but are closely connected to each other. Infants are portrayed here as passive agents, subdued to the goals of automated processes.	Views and revenue are mentioned as the main goal of the creation of the Elsagate phenomenon, for the sentence in which they appear is mentioned as the first statement. The final statements make clear that bots are furthering the	Reaction in a comment chain about conspiracy theories. In this case, the reaction is on comment 74.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	noticed white, western looking families all partake in Elsa/spiderman videos with their children. I'm guessing they're also participating in the gold rush. The massive amounts of views? First you buy a load of bots to get the ball rolling. Infants will do the rest. Same for the comments.			process of gaining views and earning money.	
76	I personally believe the gibberish in the comments is just kids just typing random shit, because they found this "cool button than does things". Their channels look way too legit and diverse to be bots, they have real account names and profile pictures, sometimes they even have foreign names like in Arabic and speak other languages. Either they are insanely good at creating Bots or they are just confused kids.	Elsagate channels are not created by bots.	Children are portrayed here as passive and ignorant 'kids', not capable of making their own decisions, as seen from 'typic random shit'. Bots are seen the same as children, not capable of creating complex structures. Following, both children and bots are opposed to grown ups who created Elsagate videos that are 'way too legit and diverse'.	NOG NIKS	Comment on the general post. This current comment did not receive any reaction and only obtained ten comment points.
77	I sincerely think that bots are upping the view counts so they're more visible in the searches. But I honestly think people are doing this because the enjoy the idea of causing children mental distress. Even if it's not pedophiles per se, I definitely think it's a trolling/humour thing. It's like people who like stealing candy from babies or crushing kids stuff. They like the idea of ruining a child's innocence.	Bots are causing Elsagate videos to be more visible on YouTube Kids.	Bots are considered to have agency and power and to be able to 'game the system' by upping the viewcount, making the video more visible and lifting its ranking.	Multiple statements are given in one small argument, confusing both the author and the audience. Bots have their own agency, as can be seen from the active sentence construction, but it is not mentioned who is exactly creating those bots.	Comment on the general post. This current comment did not receive any reaction and only obtained five comment points.
78	Because the worst that can happen is that you get a copyright strike, if you get 3 they close your channel. Not a big deal for those vietnamese	Copyright Infringement could cause the closing of any YouTube channel. Bots do not have to think about copyright infringements when	Knowledge about YouTube and their legal rights is necessary to understand that the author means that when channels use certain Disney, Marvel or	The first sentence is constructed as a simple statement, the second sentence is more a personal attack on bots and their creators.	This is a reaction on a comment asking about copyright infringements.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	spammers with account-farming bots.	creating Elsagate content.	Nickelodeon characters, their channels could be banned from the platform. Bots are here negatively portrayed, not as having any agency, but as being controlled by evil people.		
79	> This post is shilly as fuck. Bots are up in here. > > LOL. "Shills". The cry of every nut ball everywhere. Get real dude. > It won't effect the kids, I'll make my money What makes you think these people care if this crap affects kids. The simplest, easiest explanation is this is machine generated garbage controlled by people trying to exploit YouTube to make a buck. If you understand how these kind of fraudsters operate and the technology available to them you'd see how this makes 100% sense (which to be fair, many people do *not* understand the scale and magnitude of modern internet fraud). Period. End of story. Anything beyond that requires some pretty extraordinary evidence...	The Elsagate phenomenon is an internet fraud created to make money.	Automated processes are directly linked to making money, as can be seen from 'machine generated carbage controlled by people trying to exploit YouTube to make a buck'. It is stated here that algorithms don't have their own agency but are controlled by humans. Algorithms, technology and internet at large are mainly neutral described, although the context is negative, which is the Elsagate phenomenon.	This argumentation is mainly pointing negative emotions towards people, not towards algorithms, technology and the internet in general.	A reaction on a comment stating that
80	> What bots? People like him are such incredible narcissists that they think the only way somebody could disagree with their supreme ideas is if they're being paid by	Personal attack on people who believe that this entire post is created by bots.	Personal attack on people who believe that this entire post is created by bots	This comment is a personal attack on another author and does not reveal much about current's research.	Reaction within a reaction chain. This comment is mainly a personal attack on a previous reaction's author, but still got 23 points and was highly reacted on.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	a Satanic deep state shadow government.				
81	That theory falls apart with all of the bots that are being utilized by these channels. These channels use scripts to comment on each others' videos, which is why they have comments that follow the exact same template. I have seen channels that have few videos and few views but thousands and thousands of subscribers. It is not as simple as different unconnected groups of people copying each other. There is a large concerted effort going on.	All Elsagate channels are connected.	Bots do not have an agency, but instead are considered as being utilized by channels. So channels gain an agency in this comment. What is described here is a self-maintaining or self-regulating system, what could point to Uricchio's argument on self-optimizing algorithms.	The main theme in this comment is 'connection'. It is made clear what is connect to what, Elsagate channels are connected to other Elsagate channels and content to content and thus people to people.	Comment within a reaction chain about creating Elsagate videos following a certain formula.
82	> Calling people who have the most logical, simplest explanation "shills" is exactly what an astroturfing, forum sliding nut job does. Actual "shills" behave exactly like you do--spreading misinformation and instilling fear, uncertainty and doubt. You got me! Despite arguing that we should not normalize this content and those who created it should be punished. Thats what Youtube pays me to think. >"most logical, simplest explanation" Far from it. It's always amazing when people will invent the most absurd shit in order to maintain their image of themselves being rational. "It's all bots man, just bots making this shit. When its not bots, its just people man, just people wanting to make money and obviously they are completely innocent in their intentions."	There still is popular innocent content on YouTube Kids.	The first part of the comment is mocking other Reddit users who previously stated their ideas on the subject of bots being included in the Elsagate phenomenon. The final paragraph indicates certain algorithmic processes: such as ranking ('popular') , recommending and filtering ('buried').	The arguments in the final paragraph of the comment are all written as simple statements without explanation or evidence, therefore lacking credibility. Also, no examples are given, hiding the agents.	This comment is part of comment chain that both argues about bots and insults each other.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	> Clearly videos featuring spiderman pissing on decapitated babies with needles in their butt makes more ad revenue than those without or they wouldn't be posting them >It is easily explained by the fact that those fucked up attributes make more money than videos that don't have those attributes. There is a very simple explanation to this. Higher Ranking == More Clicks == More Ad Revenue. Period. Full stop. Arguing anything else requires some pretty beefy proof. False. There is much more popular innocent content for kids than those videos, created by mainstream kids TV production companies. These videos are buried amongst that content.				
83	> Unless you're telling me there's 852 propaganda spreading elsagate video making pedophiles on here. Nope. But there are a ton of bots unleashed on Reddit every day. It's what's killed a lot of subreddits already, suffocated conversation, encouraged groupthink. "Tin foil hats" also a loaded term, created to shut down debate and conversation. Pretty funny, too, considering it was originally a phrase created to mock people who believed in stuff like this: http://www.cnn.com /2017/10/13/politics/ cuba-us-diplomats-	There are a lot of bots on Reddit, just as there are bots included in the creation of the Elsagate phenomenon.	Bots are 'unleashed' on Reddit, meaning they are controlled by an anonymous agent.	A swarm-metaphor is used to explain bots. They are 'unleashed' by an anonymous source, then they 'kill' by 'suffocating' the good and 'encouraging' the bad.	This comment is part of a reaction chain about propaganda on Reddit about Elsagate. This comment did further the discussion and gained 44 points.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	acoustic-weapons/index.html				
84	> These videos are playing on the same notes that clickbait videos and articles do for adults Yeah, or as OP said > Feces, urine, spiders, needles, sex, all things that are normally considered "bad" when you're a kid. This feeling of watching something that you're not supposed to watch is probably quite stimulating for kids, so they keep watching and the creators keep creating. Bait is still first and foremost bait. Yeah, don't take bait, but also, don't bait. That kind of comes first, because without baiting, the concept of taking bait would not even exist. > Believe it or not, the kid's willingness to watch is a big part of the issue, so pointing out that there's something attractive about these videos is not "victim blaming". Being physically even present in the location, not knowing kung-fu, all such things are also "a very big part" in any rape. However, here's the distinction: without the attacker that would be no problem. It's normal for kids to be interested in exciting things and stuff they don't understand, that's how they learn, after all. And that wouldn't be a problem if there weren't abusers exploiting it. Just like taking a stroll at night wouldn't be a	Both parents, children and YouTube Kids should be careful with Elsagate content.	What is displayed throughout the comment is a discussion about power: who has the power to do what to whom. First, bait is only beat if a) someone takes the bait and b)someone sets out the bait. The same goes for the rape, according to the author. The parent dilemma is here considered as well, in favour of the children: "adults should watch their children".	Repetitive use of bait is used to both confuse and enlighten the reader. The metaphor of the bait can be applied to the Elsagate phenomenon, whereas the bait is the Elsagate videos, children take the bait, creators are making the bait, parents should be watching their children not take the bait and YouTube should watch their creators not creating the bait. The metaphor implies that there are multiple people to blame but there is always a victim.	Comment in a reaction chain on the reason why the Elsagate phenomenon became popular.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	problem without rapists. The main thing is to not mix up responsibilities. Yes, people should take care where they go at night, but just as importantly, people shouldn't rape. So when a rape was committed, that's the part one should deal with. Likewise, adults should watch their kids, and YouTube should clean up their act even though kids shouldn't be on on it unsupervised, but none of that gets the content creators off the hook. > Obviously this kind of content is universally and undeniably a hit amongst children, these videos are generating billions of views We haven't the faintest idea how many of those views are from bots or click farms, these views don't translate directly to actual views. Not that you're wrong, of course kids watch these videos. They're not getting forced. But that doesn't make it not victim blaming when OP talks about how it's really just mostly bizarre things kids dig, and how any actual abusive stuff is just a spin-off. That's just bullshit, every day a few posts get written to make the claim, and they never hold any water. If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it just might be a duck. Just because people also dig in comments and talk about pedophile rings and whatnot doesn't mean pretending that				

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	this isn't directed deliberate and systematic abuse isn't still wishful thinking.				
85	I never said there wasn't a connection, I just explained how the connection and spam can be explained in another way. I also never claimed that your explanation is implausible, I simply supported the claim that it is not the *only* plausible explanation. In particular I'm trying to explain how the theory does not "fall apart" and in fact predicts this exact phenomenon. If you think this is the only instance of wide-scale botting you are the one who is naive. Have you never heard of e.g. spam bots and like-farming before? Most of the internet is filled with this stuff. Bots sharing/liking/commenting on content in order to make it appear more popular (to encourage the platform to present it to more real users) is standard operating procedure. If this were *not* happening then *that* is what would make OP's theory fall apart. You have it backwards.	Bots are actively sharing, liking and commenting on YouTube videos to make them more popular.	With 'the theory', the author implies the idea that bots are being used to comment on other Elsagate's channels, create the high view number and thus to up the Elsagate content's ranking. What the author is indirectly acknowledging here is that bots work with the algorithm's preference's to create a certain outcome: the higher ranking of certain Elsagate videos. It is seen as if bots and algorithms work together, not to 'game the algorithm', but to 'game humans.'	The active sentence structure in the last paragraph points towards the acknowledging of bots as having their own agency. They seem to have the power to 'share/like/ comment' on their own.	Reaction in a comment chain on the use of bots within the Elsagate discussion. This comment did not receive any points and was only once reacted to.
86	There's a difference between using bots and [this](https://image.prntscr.com/image/iQ5pb1ybTgCWr1J6hCXJcQ.png).	Elsagate content is not created by bots.	Bots are being opposed to humans. Automated work vs human labour.	The sentence is formulated as a statement, as a simple fact. It is as if the author expects authority, but – as seen from the comment score – it did not receive it.	This is the final comment on a comment chain which discussed the use of bots to create Elsagate content. This comment was not reacted on, nor was it given any points.
87	I think you are focusing too much on the SEO/money making side of things. You have a fairly accurate idea of how this machinery	A human element is involved in the creation of the Elsagate phenomenon.	Algorithms are here seen as machinery. It is seen as if machinery are opposed to humans. Bots are being opposed to live	This comment is directly assaulting the previous author. The theme of this comment is opposing machines to humans.	This comment is part of a comment chain on the possible goals that Elsagate content (and their creators) could have. This comment furthered

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	operates, yet you completely disregard the more human element behind this, in the trauma that is inflicted by children as a result of this, as well as inaccurately claiming that this content is created by bots, when it is also created by humans, with live actors. You forgot to talk about the anal injections, the drinking from toilets, the urinating on each other, the disgusting imagery that causes trauma to children. Why do you disregard this reality? You only see the machinery.		actors, but also reality in general is being opposed to imagination, knowledge opposed to ignorance. Money is again automatically linked to automated processes, while traumatizing is linked to humans.		the discussion, but did only received six comment points.
88	So the question turns into, why do videos made professionally still have bot comments if they don't need them? I agree wholeheartedly with your assessment I just need an explanation on this https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pf0TLdxJzZc	Bots are possibly both at work within the Elsagate phenomenon and with professional content.	Oppositions are made here between amateur content (Elsagate content) and professional content (other YouTube content), while this opposition is not necessarily true. See also comment 89. There is a vagueness about the bots and their goals and purposes.	A source is stated to give the author's reaction more strength, but also to possibly give an answer to the author's own questions.	A reaction on the main post. It did not spur a discussion and only received one comment point.
89	let's be glad the robots are still churning out content in the uncanny valley stage. because soon the bot videos will be indistinguishable from human ones.	Up until now, bots produce less quality content on YouTube.	The opposition is made between amateur bot content and professional human content. A more general opposition is made here between them (bots) and us (human), however, this line is disappearing.	Using a sentence construction and by using words to denote a negative emotion to bots.	A reaction within a comment chain on the use of algorithms, keywords and bots. It was reaction on once and did receive ten comment points.
90	I remember hearing how 4chan discovered one of these channels was just a bot that made and uploaded videos based on comments so they just spammed the comments with Hitler and shrek. One of them is even called "5 little CJ GTA jumping on the bed". I agree with op to a degree, it's definitely not one huge	Bots are not the only ones creating Elsagate content.	This reaction hints at human involvement at the creation of Elsagate content. By using 'these channels', the author separates Elsagate content from 'normal' content.	Bots are used in as nouns in active sentence construction, therefore it seems as if they have gained agency, as if they have a power, namely to 'upload and spam'.	Reaction within a large comment chain on all kinds of theories about the Elsagate's existence. This particular comment received 65 comment points, but was only once directly reacted on.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	conspiracy, and i remember being a kid and watching shit like "ELMO KILLS BARNEY" and feeling edgy, but some of this shit is too fucking deranged to be innocent.				
91	I think a lot of people haven't been exposed to what bots can do and worse, the very sophisticated manner fraudsters operate on the internet these days. Modern internet fraud is quite sophisticated. It's a real, big-money business. Just one that happens to be largely illegal and completely immoral. Under the cover of these content "creators" is a whole shady underworld of scams and scammers. You've got people who try to compromise people's google accounts and sell them to these folks for use in posting videos & comments. You've got folks who do nothing but try to take data breaches (equifax, yahoo, linkedin, adobe, sony, etc...) and extract every last username / password and then go around and sell that list. These "creators" pay money for those lists and use them to try to get into google accounts. You've got people who run spearfishing scams to try to target popular youtube video posters in order to take their established channel over. Those channels probably have made it past a lot of Google's filtering and already have a high ranking--why try to build up reputation with a new channel when you can just	Any electronic digital device can be hacked to be used by scammers for the use of modern internet fraud.	Bots are (again) as having a certain agency, but this agency could come from a misunderstanding or ignorance about the exact workings of a bot, for very few comments actually explain 'bots'. As Foucault says: knowledge is power. There is no knowledge here about bots, therefore bots have gained a certain mystical power. Bots and fraudsters are linked to each other. Bots and modern internet fraud are linked to each other and together they are linked to having just one goal: making money. Creators are also being opposed to bots. This author imagines bots to not be creative, not as capable of diverse thinking as humans. There is a vagueness around the use of the word 'folks', this could refer to humans trading in stolen data. Google and its algorithms are seen as if they can be hacked, as if they are weak and passive, and as if companies (in this case Google) is doing nothing about it. Algorithms have gained a certain power.	There appears to be a metaphor in this comment, and that is one of the open market, in which data is sold and traded, but is also stolen by thiefst. Google is seen as being able to be overthrown: power is given to individual human beings, more specifically 'scammers', as being able to overthrow or overcome large companies. This could point towards an anti-capitalistic ideology. In this case, knowledge on bots and algorithms, is power to overthrow Google's algorithms. Another theme in this comment is the lack of privacy and power of regular internet users to control and secure their privacy, as can be seen from words such as 'hacked iPhones' and 'compromised internet of things'.	This comment reacted on other comments being careful about the use of theories and conspiracies to explain Elsagate. This, fairly large, reaction received 63 points and spur a small discussion.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	take over an existing one? There is also the botnets these folks rent time on. You know that computer your parents have that keeps getting viruses? That computer could be posting these youtube comments right now. Let's not even start with all the compromised "internet of things" devices connected to the internet like webcams, DVD players, etc. Even hacked Android phones can do this stuff. Anything that is connected to the internet can be harnessed for breaking into accounts, posting comments on youtube, etc. People need to go look at /r/SubredditSimulator for a while. That is 100% bot traffic posting machine generated stories and comments based on high-ranking posts in real subreddits. Granted those bots post almost coherent sentences and stuff, but that is by design-- nobody would upvote a subreddit full of gibberish. The gibberish comments in these youtube videos aren't meant for humans to read. Making bots that post semi-coherent comments isn't cheap or easy, so they don't bother. They exist only to try to fool YouTube into a higher page rank. If Google's algorithms change such that comments must be somewhat coherent in order to count against ranking, you better believe these bot owners will update their bots.				

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	You'll start seeing something that looks closer to /r/SubredditSimulator ... This shit is deep, but not in the way some people here think it is. It isn't a conspiracy. It is just one aspect of the shady underworld of modern internet fraud.				
92	Good bot. Too bad it didn't reply to the guy who fucked up.	Bots are included both in the Elsagate content as in Reddit discussions.	Supposedly a bot reacted on a reaction about the inclusion of bots in Elsagate and Reddit content. The comment is seen as faulty, for it gave a nonsensical reaction to the discussion.	The author is using sarcasm to state that the bot that reac	This is a direct reaction on a comment created by a bot after one Reddit user stated that bots are included both in the Elsagate phenomenon as in all kinds of Reddit conversations.
93	If someone is making them and not a bot they might just swap around he colours for shits and giggles if it doesn't have much effect on the videos success.	Elsagate content is created by bots.	Indirectly are some of YouTube's algorithmic processes mentioned here: for ranking and recommending videos with a lot of views will decide a video's success.	Bots have, according to the Reddit user, gained an agency to create and recreate certain videos.	Reaction in a comment chain on the use of colour coding within the Elsagate content. This comment has three direct reactions and obtained seven comment points.
94	Some more proof into the idea that a lot of these are run by bots https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ek_QT UBN2BU this was posted on a elsa channel. A common key-phrase they use to connect all the fucked up shit is "bad baby" and they just posted this song by a band called bad baby, or is called bad baby idk.	Elsagate channels are run by bots who are connected to each other.	This comment is explaining connections between Elsa channels.	By stating a certain source, the author is given credibility and it seems as if he is explaining what 'bots' are. Bots are again given full agency and power.	Comment on original post. Did not receive any reactions and only obtained 2 points.
95	There is no "coded comments". It is just garbage posted by bots in an attempt to boost the ranking of the video. Go visit /r/SubredditSimulator--that subreddit is all bots doing nothing but chatting with eachother....	Comments are created by bots to boost the ranking.	'Coded comments' refers to a conspiracy that believes that pedophiles communicate with each other via the comment section of Elsagate videos. It is as if bots are working together with algorithmic processes. As if algorithmic processes have become self-sustaining.	Bots have gained the agency and power to change something, without any human involvement.	Direct reaction on a comment stating that under Elsagate videos are coded comments. The comment did receive 19 points and was heavily reacted on.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
96	In addition to what others have said, a major indicator that 12-13 year olds are likely not the ones watching this shit is the fact that for the most part the channel names and video titles and descriptions don't really make much sense at all or have much of a logical structure to them. For the most part, the titles of these videos read more like the tags for a video than they do titles. By 12-13 (honestly, probably much earlier than that now), kids are already fans of specific youtube channels and series, in addition to your standard films and television shows. I'm not going to say that they all understand everything they watch as well as adults (though I honestly believe a large portion of them do), or that they can't be entertained by some utterly nonsensical stupid shit, but there's also no way they're going to look at one of these videos, its title, and the channel that uploaded it and not think it's some kind of bot-generated scam or something. These videos aren't designed to generate real fans, or be found by kids consciously browsing through youtube in a manner similar to how an adult would. They're designed to be picked up by youtube's algorithm in such a way that they come up one or two videos after some 4 year old's parent opens up Youtube Kids on their iPad, presses turns on auto-play, and walks	12-13 year olds do not watch Elsagate content	Children are described as having agency, as having the power in domestic life to choose what they do and, more specifically here, what they watch. Furthermore, algorithms are neutrally described, as if they just work for Google, without mentioning any bias or intent.	The parental dilemma can be found at the final paragraph. It is stated as if the parents are to blame for their children that watch Elsagate content. Power in domestic life is negotiated here: both children and their parents have a certain power, although children are seen as more actively displaying this power in the Elsagate context.	Comment in a large comment chain on the involvement of older children who actively watch Elsagate content because they actually like it. This comment was highly reacted to but only obtained 6 points.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	away to try to get some chores done.				
97	> Occam's razor, dude Yup. Simplest explanation is called bots dude. More comments == higher pagerank. Same as it is on facebook, instagram, reddit... anything really.... For fuck sake a search for "youtube comment bot" returns some kind of open source youtube comment generator: https://www.supagrowth.com/youtube-comment-bot. There are probably more sophisticated ones you can pay money for.... Go look at /r/SubredditSimulator if you don't believe me. That is all bots doing nothing but having semi-coherant conversations with each other....	Bots are responsible for popular Elsagate content.	The author is stating a formula s if it is a fact that more comments directly mean a higher ranking score. The author makes it seem as if the algorithms can be gamed, but this time not by humans, but by bots. Bots gaming algorithms.	This comment first states an agreement with the previous comment. It is as if bots have gained agency, as can be seen from the active sentence construction in which 'bots' is the noun. By giving sources, the author gains credibility.	The final comment of a comment chain discussing the comments on Elsagate content. This particular comment was not reacted on, but still obtained 5 points.
98	Fascinating analysis, would you consider linking to time offsets in some example videos where these color mappings hold? I'm curious if videos could be classified by whether they adhere to some or all of those rules. That would be a good way to group them by intent, and maybe by producer (assuming that visual style and channel alts vary).	Videos could possibly be classified by rules.	'Classified' indicates the automatically filtering, grouping and/or recommending of videos in a network.	No agent is stated for this classifying of content, for this is done automatically. The agent which is given here is algorithms.	A comment in a comment chain on the use of colours within Elsagate content. This particular comment did further the discussion and gained 14 comment points.
99	It seems to me that a lot of disparate stuff is getting lumped together under the broader "Elsagate" title. From the perspective of parents with children who might end up watching this stuff, that makes sense. But in terms of trying to figure out what in the fuck is behind all this, it probably doesn't. Somebody ought to	One must be critical of content before categorising it as 'Elsagate' content.	Data analysis is seen here as the solution for the Elsagate problem. The theme of this comment is difference: - Difference between videos - Difference between audiences	First: A statement is made, namely 'a lot falls under Elsagate', followed by an explanation. The parental dilemma is also indicated here: parents are not active agents, but are seen as victims, who 'end up with' children who watch Elsagate content.	This is the final comment in a comment chain on the involvement of pedophiles within the Elsagate phenomenon.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	do some data crunching and analysis on the differences between different kinds of videos (real children, live actors playing characters, finger family and related weirdness, animated characters engaging in cartoon violence). I would think each of these things might have different audiences and different creators with different motives. Even the assertion below about putting terms like "suicide" and "piss" into titles-- that's not something I've seen as much as people in this thread seem to be claiming happens, so it may also be its own genre.		- Difference s between creators There is a repetitive use of the word 'difference'.		
100	> What I'm arguing is that the initial purpose was for profit, and has spun in to abusive content. It's not as black and white as some people would like to believe. I too think it's mixed. Being a contrarian and some business experience myself, my initial hypothesis is pretty similar to yours. But you are also making this "black and white" with a title saying it's Not for pedophilia. I agree with most of your point, but what makes you so confident to say that only "a very small portion" of viewers are pedo. I have heard psychologists claiming it's more prevalent than public believed, so I am on the fence on this point until I see more data shown/cited. Sellers don't necessarily have to be a pedo themselves to sell stuff to pedo. The primary motive often is profit. The	Elsagate's goal is both profit and abusing children.	Data is here believed to indicated a form 'evidence', or facts. However, this is not always the case.	The main theme her is trade: trading views, trading data (as evidence) and trading content. This could point towards the capitalistic ideologies of a free market and the goal of profit.	Comment on original post. It did not receive much attention for it gained only gained one point.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	question is how much morality(varying amount of harm done to kids) would they be willing to trade for some amount of money.				
101	According to haveibeenpwned my email has been revealed in a data breach of the site DLH.net I never signed up on DLH, wtf The site has also let me know that my email was placed in a text file full of emails for hackers to use or whatever Luckily it was breached ages ago and since then I have been constantly changing my security details, and my account is good to go. Certainly scary that I didn't even know.	Data breaches reveal e-mails.	Data breaches are used as indication that Elsagate channels are created from hacked e-mail accounts.	Fear is a main theme here. Human vs technology, as if there is a race for privacy protection. The use of passive sentences point towards a vagueness of agents that are actively are able to obtain e-mails.	Comment on main post, which did not further spur a discussion, and only gained one point.
102	It tells me details about all the compromises that my email has been in. I type in my email and it lists 10 compromises, here's one of the compromises for example: >BTC-E: In October 2014, the Bitcoin exchange BTC-E was hacked and 568k accounts were exposed. The data included email and IP addresses, wallet balances and hashed passwords. >Compromised data: Account balances, Email addresses, IP addresses, Passwords, Usernames, Website activity What more information do you want?	Information has been compromised.	Data and information are seen as the same, whereas it is here referred to as include emails, passwords and other account information.	Individual internet users are seen as incapable of escaping the power that either technology or hackers have.	Comment is stated in a comment chain on the hacking of email accounts for Elsagate content. It gained 37 points.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
103	Alright. This is the first time I've logged on Reddit in about a week, because I haven't found time for Reddit. Just got a lot of replies very recently for some reason. The surprising thing isn't the porn. Or even child porn. We've all been to *that* side of YouTube where we've probably seen something that isn't all that legal. It's that this shit isn't being taken down. It's that this shit gets right past the suggestive filter. Viewbots get placed on the videos, and whadd'ya know, the video is skyrocketing to the top of the youtube kids app.	The most concerning thing of the Elsagate content is not taking responsibility for content.	There is an opposition here between 'legal' and 'illegal' content. The author is blaming no one in particular but does point out the YouTube filters, thus indirectly blaming YouTube's algorithms for continuing the existence of the Elsagate phenomenon.	No agent is stated, see for instance the last sentence, as if the content has an agency on its own.	This comment is a direct reaction on a comment asking the creator of the post to give some explanation. The author of this current comment is the actual post moderator, and received 82 comment points, therefore has a certain authority.
104	Though apparently this public stuff is getting past the filters, so maybe the private stuff has ways to too.	The unlisting of videos is not a safety guarantee for content on YouTube Kids.	The Reddit user mentions 'the filters' as if there is one set of filters who do all the work.	Filters are seen as self-acting mechanisms, not in need of any human involvement and being able to make decisions on their own.	Reaction on a comment stating that unlisted videos still get auto-scanned and flagged.
105	> Also, why isn't Disney doing anything about this? What makes you think they aren't? I'm sure they are pestering the fuck out of Google to get them to better filter out this kind of garbage. What they aren't gonna do is go after the creators because a) they are very hard to find, b) they probably live in regions that don't give a fuck about intellectual property and c) for every one they squish another three will pop up. It is far more effective to get Google to do a better job of filtering this stuff out. ...which trust me, is *not at all easy* The black-hat	Media companies, such as Google and Disney, are responsible for handling the Elsagate phenomenon.	The first sentence and paragraph are about who is to blame, who has responsibility, to solve the Elsagate phenomenon. This is also part of the parent dilemma: the parents don't want to be blamed, so Google is blamed here. It is stated here as if there is a company vs company attitude, Disney vs Google, without any mention of individuals. This gives these companies more power and takes it from the individual. Just at the end of the comment, by stating that there are 'ways to route around anything Google does', it is mentioned that Google, or arguably their	There is a them-vs-us attitude included in this comment, for the big companies are seen as responsible and having power which are opposed to us, the individuals, who are seen as the victims.	This is a comment within a comment chain, discussing the solutions for the Elsagate phenomenon. It spurred a discussion on Google's responsibility and obtained 24 points.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	people who do this stuff are very smart, highly motivated by money and will almost certainly invent new ways to route around anything Google does.		algorithms, could be gamed by individuals. Filtering, which is an algorithmic process, is given as the solution to the Elsagate 'problem'. But it is not stated by who that content should be filtered.		
106	Sorry to hear that. Wouldn`t be easier to just entirely remove Youtube from your daughter phone at least till they sort out their kids content filters?	Don't let kids watch YouTube Kids.	A solution is given here for the parental dilemma: parents should delete YouTube Kids.	'they' is here referring to YouTube at large. There is still some vagueness about who is responsible for handling with the Elsagate content.	Final reaction on a comment stating a personal encounter with the Elsagate phenomenon. This current comment did not receive a reaction, no answer to its question and only gained 3 points.
107	> You betting on something that makes not a lick of sense certainly elevates it. It only doesn't make sense because many people outside of the anti-fraud industry do not truly grasp how sophisticated modern internet fraud has gotten. That shit is completely whack! This stuff is just cut & dry black-hat SEO garbage. Same as it was on wordpress forums, same as it was with all the weird shit you used to find in google search results.... Not a single bit of this content has to make any sense at all. The only thing that matters is people (kids) watch it and they get ad revenue from google. Everything else is the content generators trying to get past google's filters and get ahead of all the other competing content generators....	Modern internet fraud is sophisticated.	A formula is suggested here, one to which all YouTube Kids content adheres to, that is: content is created, children watch this content and eventually ad revenue is obtained. The ultimate goal of this formula is yet again: money. The final paragraph indicates that algorithms or technology work together with other algorithms, or technology, in a self-sustaining circle.	The theme here is not only money, but also vagueness. For the author says 'not a single bit of this content has to make any sense at all", for the author himself is clueless.	Comment within a comment chain on theories behind the Elsagate content. This comment was a direct reaction in the previous comment, received 19 comment points and spurred a fairly large discussion.
108	> Why wouldn't they be afraid of copyright lawsuits for the characters they're using?	Elsagate creators are not affected by copyright infringements.	There is a them-vs-us polarization. 'These folks' are considered to be Elsagate content creators and	The theme here is company and their power, but the question remains which company has	This is a direct reaction to a previous comment, stating that copyright infringements should

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	Consider: * these folks are most likely not in any place that enforces intellectual property violations. * the content channels they pop up are a dime a dozen and if you squish one, another two will pop up in its place. * these folks take some steps to cover their tracks * they probably aren't yet a juicy enough target to go after. That is not to say that Disney and what not isn't going to Google's door and asking *them* to do a better job filtering this garbage out....		are seen as 'them', whether victims of the Elsagate phenomenon are seen as 'us'. Filtering, an algorithmic process, is seen as the solution to the Elsagate phenomenon.	the power and control over what company. Besides this, the parental dilemma is again indirectly referred to: companies are being blamed, while no parent or individual is mentioned.	be taken serious by content creators. This current comment received 12 points and was not reacted to.
109	> I mean first off.. why would they do that? Because there is apparently a huge set of people in this subreddit who are more interested in entertaining whack-job conspiracy theories than dealing with the boring old facts like the fact that this is no different than every other case of black-hat SEO bullshit that existed since the dawn of SEO. The fact Disney hasn't addressed their Micky Mouse issue is almost certainly just run of the mill corporate incompetence. It is shitty, fucked up content? Yes. Should kids be watching it? Hell No. Should Google allocate more resources to filtering it? Yes. Should Disney take more action? Yes. Is it the secret work of (((soros))), the NSA and the lizard people? No.	Elsagate still exists because of big companies incompetence.	The first sentence refers to a previous asked question, asking why Disney would be involved in a conspiracy to 'pervert America'. The author of this current comment refuses to believe the conspiracy. First, the author indicates that only large companies, such as Google and Disney are responsible for the Elsagate content. But second, in the last sentence, the author writes 'people with kids' need to know about the Elsagate phenomenon, indicating that parents are not only responsible, but also have the power to do something against their children watching Elsagate content.	The theme here is responsibility. The author is blaming several authorities for having responsibility over the existence of the Elsagate phenomenon, while excluding others from responsibility. While children and their parents are being mentioned, they are stated as not having any responsibility over the phenomenon or their children watching Elsagate content.	Comment in a comment chain on the involvement of big companies in the Elsagate phenomenon.

Nr.	Comment	Macro-structure(s)	Local meaning(s)	Pragmatic properties	Local context
	This sub is well on its way to pizzagate / boston bomber / reddit witch hunt du jour. Just look at how many of the wackos are getting upvotes. Which is a shame since this is actually a thing that people with kids need to know about.				