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The Secret Playbook of Social Media Censors – The "Counter Reset"

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Theme: Police State & Civil Rights

Glenn Greenwald's piece on manipulation of the Internet by intelligence agencies gives examples – based upon documents leaked by Edward Snowden – of how governments disrupt social media websites.

Other whistleblowers have provided very specific information about how agents disrupt social media news sites.

This essay will focus one specific technique: the "Counter Reset".

To explain the Counter Reset technique, we have to understand the concepts of "momentum" and "social proof".

Specifically, the government spends a great deal of manpower and money to monitor which stories, memes and social movements are developing the momentum to actually pose a threat to the status quo. For example, the Federal Reserve, Pentagon, Department of Homeland Security, and other agencies all monitor social media for stories critical of their agencies … or the government in general. Other governments – and private corporations – do the same thing.

Why?

Because a story gaining momentum ranks high on social media sites. So it has a high probability of bursting into popular awareness, destroying the secrecy which allows corruption, and becoming a real challenge to the powers-that-be.

"Social proof" is a related concept. Social proof is the well-known principle stating that people will believe something if most other people believe it. And see this. In other words, most people have a herd instinct, so if a story ranks highly, more people are likely to believe it and be influenced by it.

That is why vested interests go to great lengths – using computer power and human resources – to monitor social media momentum. If a story critical of one of these powerful entities is gaining momentum, they will go to great lengths to kill its momentum, and destroy the social proof which comes with alot of upvotes, likes or recommendations in social media.

They may choose to flood social media with comments supporting the entities, using armies of sock puppets, i.e. fake social media identities. See this, this, this, this and this. Or

moderators at the social media sites themselves can just censor the stories.

Or they can be more sneaky … and do a Counter Reset to destroy momentum.

Giving specific examples will illustrate the technique. Reddit moderators have continuously reset the counter over the last couple of days on the new Greenwald/Snowden story, to destroy momentum which would otherwise have guaranteed that the story was *the top story*.

Similarly, the owners of popular Youtube channels have repeatedly reported that Counter Resets are done on their most controversial news stories.

The attractiveness of the Counter Reset from a moderator's perspective is that it destroys momentum, while leaving some plausible deniability.

If users point out that the story keeps getting spiked, the moderator can say that it hasn't been censored, but instead that the moderators have allowed it to stay up (with periodic Counter Resets along the way).

Alternatively – if the moderators have continuously deleted the story each time it is posted – the moderators can say that it has been posted "numerous times", and pretend that shows that they are letting the story gather momentum, when they are in fact deleting it again and again. For example, when hundreds of Redditors complained yesterday that the Greenwald/Snowden story kept getting deleted, moderators chimed in on every thread proclaiming that the story had run multiple times … without admitting that it had been *deleted* each time.

Now that you know about the Counter Reset, watch your favorite social media sites to see how this technique is used for the hardest-hitting stories and videos which directly challenge the legitimacy of the powers-that-be.

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