GIPHY   **NewsGuard**

NEWSGUARD SUCCESS STORY

- GIPHY's content moderation team uses NewsGuard's Reliability Ratings and Misinformation Fingerprints datasets to vet content on the platform.

- The Misinformation Fingerprint myth library helps GIPHY's team stay up to date on the latest misinformation claims circulating on the internet.

- NewsGuard's browser extension works as a seamless contextual tool that provides information without disrupting a content moderator's research process.

BACKGROUND

GIPHY, the online search engine and database of animated GIFs, has been using NewsGuard's Reliability Ratings and Misinformation Fingerprints to quickly identify and address content that risks spreading misinformation through its platform. With several integrations with the likes of Facebook, Instagram, Apple, TikTok, Twitter, and Snapchat, reaching more than 700 million people each day, GIPHY's trust and safety teams must balance maintaining the company's reputation for providing engaging visual animations used in communications, and mitigating the risk of proliferating false news to a significant online distribution network.

ISSUES

Despite serving more than 10 billion pieces of content to users each day, GIPHY still recognizes the importance of incorporating human moderation into its process of vetting accounts that have applied to post content on the platform. With such a high volume of content and rich distribution networks across the internet, it's important for GIPHY's teams to handle incoming account applications and general content vetting with trusted, scalable systems. Moderation teams don't have time to conduct manual research about every problem or misinformation threat they witness online, which is why partnering with independent, third-party specialists helps bolster their policies and streamline their approach to tackling the threat of misinformation.

COMPANY:

GIPHY

INTERVIEW WITH:

Marc Leone, Director of Trust & Safety at GIPHY

Jessica Gremmell, Moderation Manager at GIPHY

SOLUTIONS USED:

NewsGuard Reliability Ratings Browser Extension and Misinformation Fingerprints

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– Marc Leone, GIPHY

SOLUTION

GIPHY partnered with NewsGuard to become one of the first companies to use the Misinformation Fingerprints dataset, which is the leading catalog of all the top misinformation hoaxes online, in its content moderation efforts. GIPHY's team regularly consults the Fingerprints library to stay abreast of new false narratives spreading online across numerous digital platforms and the open internet, creating moderation policies crafted around the myth entries. The team then uses the keywords, hashtags, and search terms included in each Fingerprint to be able to locate and monitor GIFs advancing each falsehood on the platform.

GIPHY moderators have also incorporated NewsGuard's Reliability Ratings into the policies and guidelines they use to review account applications from news publishers. With NewsGuard's extension installed, moderators can review the trustworthiness of news and information websites quickly and factor in NewsGuard's Green- or Red-ratings to their evaluations.

OUTCOMES

With NewsGuard's constantly updated database of the latest false claims circulating on the internet, Marc and Jessica's team of content moderators are able to quickly get up to speed on misinformation claims that might surface on GIPHY's platform, identifying and addressing them at scale using NewsGuard's machine-readable data, and without having to manually conduct time-consuming research on their own. NewsGuard has freed them up to refine their internal processes and policies around trust and safety and to develop effective frameworks for addressing misinformation.

Content moderators using NewsGuard's browser extension enjoy a seamless, uninterrupted process that provides important trustworthiness indicators alongside their research, without needing to leave their workflow. With access to NewsGuard's rapid response monitoring team, GIPHY staffers are also able to use NewsGuard's editorial expertise as a sounding board to talk through complex, emerging issues and get a journalistic assessment on claims they've seen online.

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Q&A WITH MARC LEONE (ML) AND JESSICA GREMMELL (JG), GIPHY

How did you first learn about NewsGuard?
ML: It was during the period of time (COVID-19, elections) when misinformation was a growing concern with more and more content on GIPHY that we weren't sure about and didn't have time to look into, so we began looking online for authoritative partners who could help us address this. The main catalyst for developing stringent policies around misinformation was COVID-19. Once the pandemic came around, we started noticing a huge increase in problematic content, including a big bump in the number of overall uploads as everyone was stuck at home.

Our main concern was allowing content to go viral that would negatively impact public health or during crucial times of making decisions, and we didn't feel that we were the best informed to be making a lot of these decisions. There were some obvious ones, but we didn't always have the information to make a call. For us, the options were either to hire a company with experience addressing misinformation on behalf of companies, or try to do the research on our own, which would have led to content being misclassified and potentially more misinformation on our platform.

How does GIPHY use NewsGuard's Misinformation Fingerprints dataset?
JG: NewsGuard's Misinformation Fingerprints have helped us identify content that might appear acceptable on the surface, but upon revisiting it with the context of the myths, could be dangerous. There are so many myths emerging every day, and for us to stay on top of them is really difficult. Our team meets regularly to talk about popular myths and topics to be aware of so we can remove false claims and escalate questionable claims to NewsGuard if anyone is unsure. Having NewsGuard's database of myths helps content moderators associate what they are seeing with emerging falsehoods chronicled by NewsGuard. The Misinformation Fingerprints have also been helpful in keeping misinformation at bay as users upload content. There are so many things we have to stay on top of as moderators, so any time we can partner with industry experts like NewsGuard, it gives us back the time we would've spent doing research and allows us to focus on developing processes and policies to keep our platform safe.

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How does GIPHY use NewsGuard's Reliability Ratings?
ML: A lot of content on GIPHY is "official," meaning the GIFs, Clips, or Stickers you see are IP/content directly uploaded by the owners, who could be artists, creators, networks or studios. Applicants have to be vetted and reviewed as part of this process. Our moderators review those applications and check to make sure they are aligned with policies and guidelines, which now includes a NewsGuard check.

Our moderators have the NewsGuard browser extension installed and can quickly check NewsGuard's ratings and stay informed while vetting who is allowed on the platform. GIFs are meant for fun, but everyone is realizing the reach of the GIPHY library, how important content is, and how it can influence people on different platforms, so we want to be responsible for those exposed to GIPHY and make sure we're not spreading misinformation.

What are some examples of content that NewsGuard has helped the GIPHY team contextualize and vet?
ML: A lot of the COVID-19 vaccine content, for starters. The action we take there is typically to delete the content and inform the uploader. There's not a lot of pushback, as people recognize that there's an issue if we're taking it down. People don't realize how detailed GIFs can get, in terms of conveying a straightforward message using text. A lot of content that we've taken down is just paragraphs of questionable content that try to convince people not to take the vaccine or to take violent action, among others, such as the myth about Michigan registered voters (mail-in and absentee ballots in Michigan during the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election were falsely said to be a cover-up for voter fraud).

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What do you like best about using NewsGuard's data in your work?

ML: From a layout point of view, NewsGuard's format is easy to navigate and gives you the means to look into something yourself, such as reliable sources based on NewsGuard's nine criteria and ratings of different organizations. GIPHY also proactively looks for content post-moderation which NewsGuard helps with, as we strive for consistency amongst our decisions. In other situations, context may change: things uploaded two years ago, for example, could have been fine then, but not anymore based on current events. Having search terms, keywords and hashtags is really helpful, and we add these to our Quality Assurance processes and regular searches to make sure things haven't slipped through moderation.

NewsGuard's timeliness is also great. New claims pop up each day, and NewsGuard is usually where we find out about new myths in the first place, before we start to see evidence of it in our content. The way the facts are laid out in an unbiased manner makes it really easy to defend our moderation policy and to explain why we're taking certain actions.

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