

*SEEING WHAT
OTHERS ARE SEEING*

*Studies in
the regulation of
transparency for
social media
recommender systems*

Paddy Leerssen

DATA ACCESS OUTSIDE THE (BLACK) BOX

From algorithmic transparency to platform
observability in the Digital Services Act

Paddy Leerssen

THE UNEASY POLITICS OF TRANSPARENCY

Critical turn in transparency studies: an ideal past its prime? (e.g. Pozen, Flyverbom, Koivisto, Etzioni, Alloa)

Transparency \neq immediate access to truth

Transparency = contentious and mediated communicative practice

Platform governance: information access more relevant than ever?

Informational capitalism (Cohen)

Algorithmic governance and the 'black box' society (e.g. Pasquale; Yeung)

Rieder and Hoffman (2020): Toward **platform observability** as critical alternative

Synthesis of critical transparency studies and critical algorithm studies (e.g. Seaver, Gillespie, Ananny & Crawford)

Pragmatic and sociotechnical perspective

	Transparency	Observability
Denotes:	<p>Material property (diaphaneity)</p> <p>Capacity to see <i>through</i> and <i>inside</i></p>	<p>Practice (observing)</p> <p>Capacity to see</p>
Connotes:	<p>Capacity to inspect</p> <p>Objective, passive, static</p> <p>Accounting of (internal) reasons</p> <p>Algorithms (technical perspective)</p>	<p>Capacity to regard, locate</p> <p>Subjective, active, pragmatic</p> <p>Awareness of outcomes, effects, context</p> <p>Assemblages (sociotechnical perspective)</p>

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Algorithmic Transparency	Platform Observability
Algorithms	Sociotechnical systems
Parameters, specifications,	+ User interactions

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Reasons, Explanations ('why?')	+ Outcomes, Decisions ('what?')

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Algorithmic Transparency	Platform Observability
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Parameters, specifications,	+ User interactions
Reasons, Explanations ('why?')	+ Outcomes, Decisions ('what?')
Facts / Knowledge	+ Data / Knowledge Production
Reports	Infrastructures
Periodical disclosure	Real-time access

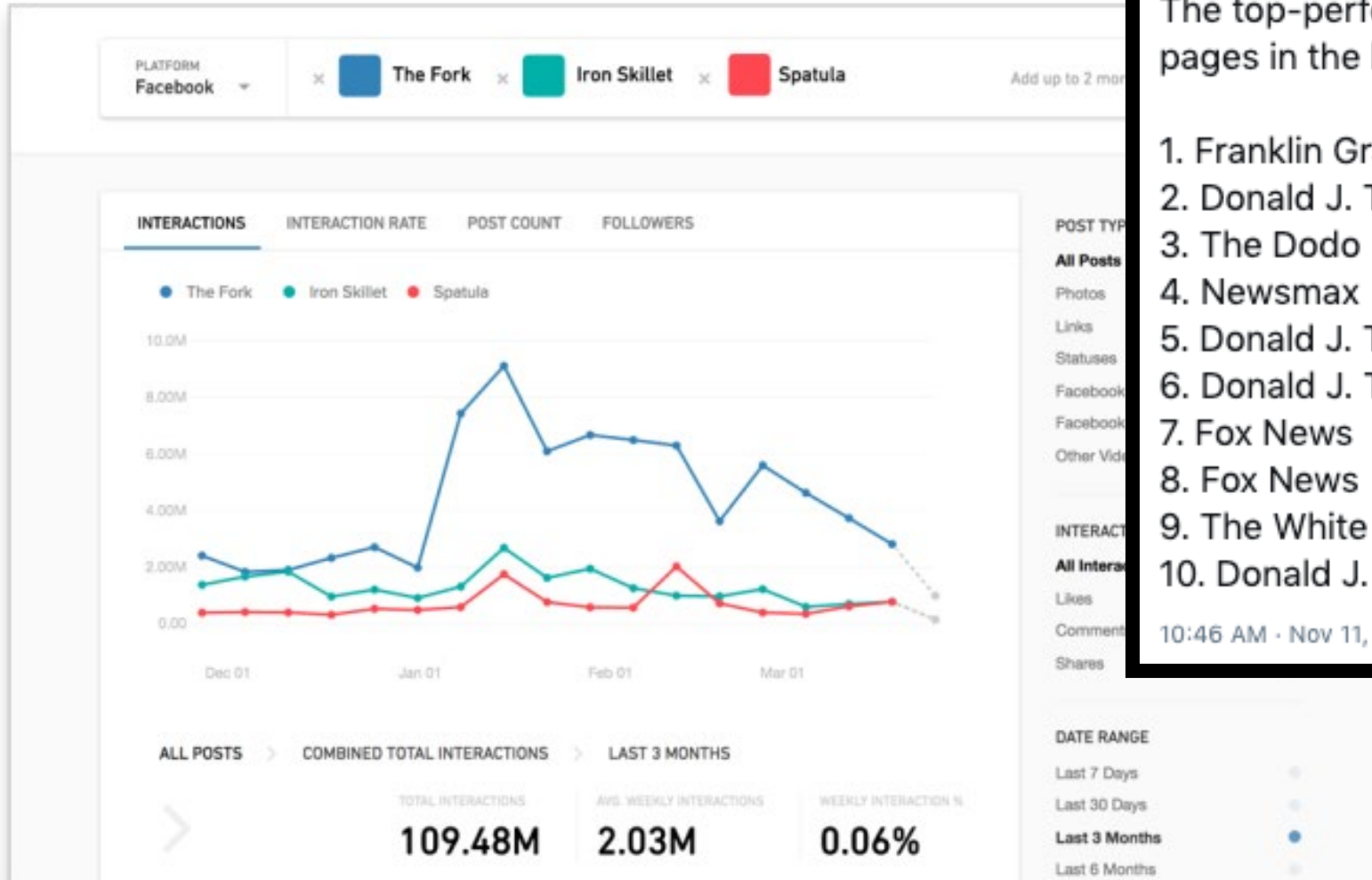
ALGORITHMIC EXPLANATIONS IN CONTENT CURATION

Article 27

Recommender system transparency

1. Providers of online platforms that use recommender systems shall set out in their terms and conditions, in plain and intelligible language, the main parameters used in their recommender systems, as well as any options for the recipients of the service to modify or influence those main parameters.
2. The main parameters referred to in paragraph 1 shall explain why certain information is suggested to the recipient of the service. They shall include, at least:
 - (a) the criteria which are most significant in determining the information suggested to the recipient of the service;
 - (b) the reasons for the relative importance of those parameters.

OBSERVABILITY IN CONTENT CURATION




Facebook's Top 10
@FacebooksTop10

...

The top-performing link posts by U.S. Facebook pages in the last 24 hours are from:

1. Franklin Graham
2. Donald J. Trump
3. The Dodo
4. Newsmax
5. Donald J. Trump
6. Donald J. Trump
7. Fox News
8. Fox News
9. The White House
10. Donald J. Trump

10:46 AM · Nov 11, 2020 · Twitter Web App

 Deze inhoud is nog niet beschikbaar in Dutch [Nederlands]

Startpagina → Research tools and datasets

Meta Content Library and API

BUGEWERKT AUG 24, 2023

Meta Content Library (Beta) and Content Library API (Beta) provide comprehensive access to the full public content archive from Facebook and Instagram. Researchers can explore detailed [documentation](#) to learn more about using these products.

ALGORITHMIC TRANSPARENCY IN AD TARGETING

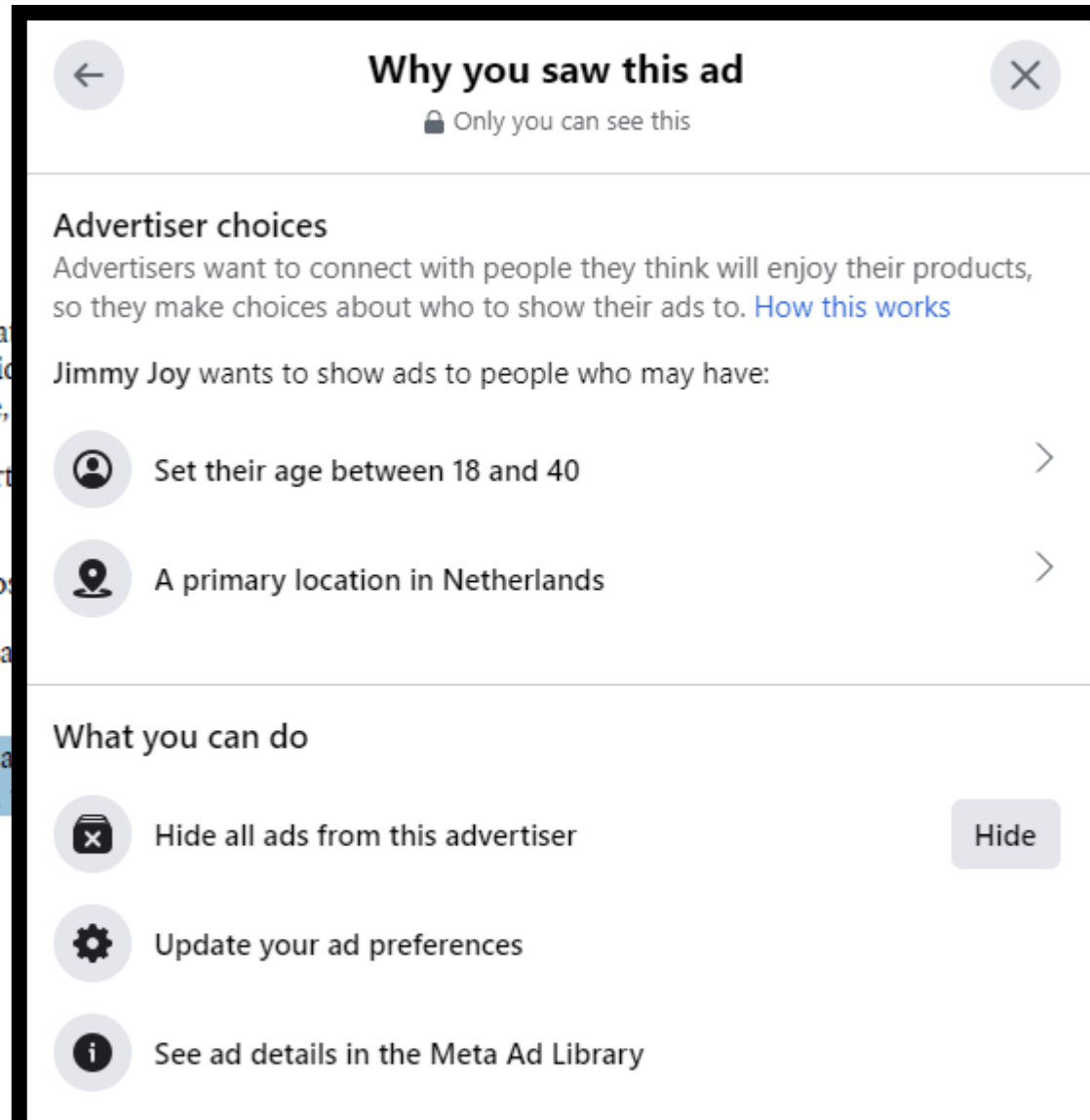
Article 26

Advertising on online platforms

1. Providers of online platforms that present advertisements on their online interfaces shall ensure that, for each specific advertisement presented to each individual recipient, the recipients of the service are able to identify, in a clear, concise and unambiguous manner and in real time, the following:
 - (a) that the information is an advertisement, including through prominent markings, which might follow standards pursuant to Article 44;
 - (b) the natural or legal person on whose behalf the advertisement is presented;
 - (c) the natural or legal person who paid for the advertisement if that person is different from the natural or legal person referred to in point (b);
 - (d) meaningful information directly and easily accessible from the advertisement about the main parameters used to determine the recipient to whom the advertisement is presented and, where applicable, about how to change those parameters.

TRANSPARENCY AND OBSERVABILITY IN AD TARGETING

1. Providers of online platforms that present an advertisement to each individual user in an unambiguous manner and in real time,
 - (a) that the information is an advertisement pursuant to Article 44;
 - (b) the natural or legal person on whose behalf the advertisement is presented;
 - (c) the natural or legal person who paid for the advertisement referred to in point (b);
 - (d) meaningful information directly or indirectly used to determine the recipient to whom the advertisement is targeted, including the parameters.



OBSERVABILITY IN AD TARGETING

Article 39

Additional online advertising transparency

1. Providers of very large online platforms or of very large online search engines that present advertisements on their online interfaces shall compile and make publicly available in a specific section of their online interface, through a searchable and reliable tool that allows multicriteria queries and through application programming interfaces, a repository containing the information referred to in paragraph 2, for the entire period during which they present an advertisement and until one year after the advertisement was presented for the last time on their online interfaces. They shall ensure that the repository does not contain any personal data of the recipients of the service to whom the advertisement was or could have been presented, and shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the information is accurate and complete.

2. The repository shall include at least all of the following information:

- (a) the content of the advertisement, including the name of the product, service or brand and the subject matter of the advertisement;
- (b) the natural or legal person on whose behalf the advertisement is presented;
- (c) the natural or legal person who paid for the advertisement, if that person is different from the person referred to in point (b);
- (d) the period during which the advertisement was presented;
- (e) whether the advertisement was intended to be presented specifically to one or more particular groups of recipients of the service and, if so, the main parameter used for that purpose, including, where applicable, the main parameter used

Jasper's Market



@JaspersMarket
Shopping & Retail • 773,245 likes




Page transparency See More

- Page created June 20, 2011
- Page changed its name four times
- Primary country location for people who manage this Page includes: Italy (2)

~9,200 results
Showing ads from the Page Jasper's Market. Learn more

Filter By: Italy

Launched March 2019

<p>Active Started running on March 15, 2019</p> <p>Jasper's Market Sponsored</p> <p>We offer the very best quality locally sourced products and we take great pride in our personal relationships with both our customers and our purveyors.</p>  <p>JASPERSMARKET.COM Shop Now</p> <p>See Ad Details</p>	<p>Active Started running on March 15, 2019</p> <p>Jasper's Market Sponsored</p> <p>We offer the very best quality locally sourced products and we take great pride in our personal relationships with both our customers and our purveyors.</p>  <p>JASPERSMARKET.COM Shop Now</p> <p>See Ad Details</p>	<p>Active Started running on March 15, 2019</p> <p>Jasper's Market Sponsored</p> <p>We offer the very best quality locally sourced products and we take great pride in our personal relationships with both our customers and our purveyors.</p>  <p>JASPERSMARKET.COM Shop Now</p> <p>See Ad Details</p>
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Elizabeth Rose



Elizabeth Rose
@ElizabethRose
Politician • 773,245 likes

Page transparency See More

- Page created June 20, 2011
- Page name changed 4 times
- Primary country location for people who manage this Page includes: Italy (2)

Total spent by Page on ads related to politics or issues of importance
Mar 2019 - Mar 16, 2019
Italy
€20,000
[See spend details](#)




Recently spent by Page on ads related to politics or issues of importance
7 days Mar 10, 2019 - Mar 16, 2019
Italy
€4,020
[See spend details](#)

~9,200 results
Search results include ads with text that matched your search term, as well as ads from Pages whose names matched your search. Learn more

View: All Ads Political or Issue Ads

Filter By: Italy Active and Inactive

Launched March 2019

<p>Active Started running on March 15, 2019</p> <p>Related to politics or issues of importance</p> <p>Elizabeth Rose Sponsored • Paid for by Elizabeth Rose</p> <p>Elizabeth Rose has a plan to help our communities grow and thrive.</p>  <p>Vote voice matters VOTEELIZABETHROSE.CO.IT Sign Up</p> <p>See Ad Details</p>	<p>Active Started running on March 15, 2019</p> <p>Related to politics or issues of importance</p> <p>Elizabeth Rose Sponsored • Paid for by Elizabeth Rose</p> <p>Elizabeth Rose will fight for this constituency as MP. Vote for Elizabeth to support our schools and our future.</p>  <p>See Ad Details</p>	<p>Active Started running on March 15, 2019</p> <p>Related to politics or issues of importance</p> <p>Elizabeth Rose Sponsored • Paid for by Elizabeth Rose</p> <p>Meet Elizabeth Rose! Come to our Friday rally and hear Elizabeth speak about the causes she cares about.</p>  <p>Come to our Friday fundraiser VOTEELIZABETHROSE.CO.IT Sign Up</p> <p>See Ad Details</p>
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Volume 26, 2023 - Issue 7

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Articles

News from the ad archive: how journalists use the Facebook Ad Library to hold online advertising accountable

Paddy Leerssen , Tom Dobber , Natali Helberger & Claes de Vreese 

Pages 1381-1400 | Received 15 Mar 2021, Accepted 02 Nov 2021, Published online: 26 Dec 2021

Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.2009002>

Full Article

Figures & data

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In this article

ABSTRACT

I. Introduction

II. Background

ABSTRACT

The Facebook Ad Library promises to improve transparency and accountability in online advertising by rendering personalised campaigns visible to the public. This article investigates whether and how journalists have made use of this tool in their reporting. Our content analysis of print journalism reveals several

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Algorithmic transparency

Platform observability

Content curation	Explanations for RecSys algorithms (Art 27)	Public content APIs & scraping (Art 40(12))	Data access for researchers (art 40)
Ad targeting	Explanations for advertising algorithms (Art 26)	Ad archives (Art 39)	

TRANSPARENCY AND OBSERVABILITY IN **CONTENT MODERATION**

Article 14: Terms and Conditions

Explain why platforms sanction content *in general*

Article 17: Statement of Reasons

Explain why for platforms to sanction content *in specific cases*

Article 23 (e.g.): Aggregated reporting

Report how many sanctions platforms have imposed

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Outline

Abstract

Keywords

1. Introduction

2. 'Shadow banning' as a function of visibility re...

3. Transparency rules for content moderation in t...

4. Ranking due process between moderation and...

5. Conclusion

Declaration of Competing Interest

Acknowledgements

Data availability

References

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Computer Law & Security Review

Volume 48, April 2023, 105790



Comment

An end to shadow banning? Transparency rights in the Digital Services Act between content moderation and curation

[Paddy Leerssen](#)

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Abstract

TRANSPARENCY.DSA.EC.EUROPA.EU

Statements of Reasons

Search and Filtering

Statements of Reasons Found: 4038644 [.csv](#) [↓](#)

Advanced Search

search

Platform	Restrictions	Category	Creation Date
TikTok	Visibility	Scope of platform service	2023-09-26
TikTok	Visibility	Scope of platform service	2023-09-26
TikTok	Visibility	Illegal or harmful speech	2023-09-26
TikTok	Visibility	Illegal or harmful speech	2023-09-26
TikTok	Visibility	Illegal or harmful speech	2023-09-26
TikTok	Visibility	Illegal or harmful speech	2023-09-26
TikTok	Visibility	Illegal or harmful speech	2023-09-26
TikTok	Visibility	Scope of platform service	2023-09-26
TikTok	Visibility	Pornography or sexualized content	2023-09-26

TRANSPARENCY.DSA.EC.EUROPA.EU

[Home](#) > [Statements of Reasons](#) > [Statement of reasons details: 2b09a94a-a3e4-4618-9bae-f0791ebf433b](#)

Statement of reason details: 2b09a94a-a3e4-4618-9bae-f0791ebf433b

Platform name	TikTok
Received	2023-09-26 18:17:01 UTC
Visibility restriction of specific items of information provided by the recipient of the service	Other restriction (please specify) Video not eligible for recommendation in the For You feed
Facts and circumstances relied on in taking the decision	The decision was taken pursuant to own-initiative investigations.
Ground for Decision	Content incompatible with terms and conditions
Reference to contractual ground	Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs
Explanation of why the content is considered as incompatible on that ground	While adults make personal choices about how they engage with alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, we recognize that there are risks connected to trading and using these substances. Content is ineligible for the For You feed and harder to find in search if it shows adults consuming excessive amounts of alcohol or tobacco products. We proactively enforce our Community Guidelines through a mix of technology and human moderation. We have detected this policy violation using automated measures. We have used automated measures in making this decision.
Is the content considered as illegal?	No
Territorial scope of the decision	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden
Content Type	Video

TRANSPARENCY AND OBSERVABILITY IN **CONTENT MODERATION**



Transparency:

Article 14: Transparency of Terms and Conditions

Article 17: Notice and explanation

Article 23 (e.g.): Aggregated reporting

Observability:

Content moderation archives?

Algorithmic transparency**Platform observability****Content curation**

Explanations for RecSys algorithms (Art 27)

Public content APIs & scraping (Art 40(12))

Ad targeting

Explanations for advertising algorithms (Art 26)

Ad archives (Art 39)

Content moderation

Explanations for content moderation policies (Art 14) and decisions (Art 17)

Aggregate reporting on content moderation (Art 23 a.o.)

Content moderation archives (Art 24(5))

Data access for researchers (art 40)

REGULATING SOCIAL MEDIA WITH OBSERVABILITY

Reframing the project of platform disclosure regulation:

From algorithms to sociotechnical systems

From logics and reasons to outcomes and interactions

From *why* to *what*

Relationship to specific users & content

From knowledge to knowledge production

From reports to infrastructures



QUESTIONS?

Paddy Leerssen

p.j.Leerssen@uva.nl