Governance of Content Moderation, Content Moderation Requests of government:
Digital sexual violence over platforms and the South Korean governmental entities’ measures

Yoehan Oh | Ph.D. Student
Dept. of Science & Technology Studies, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
17-6-2020 | ‘Empirical Approaches to Platform Governance Research’
One key thing

Platform Governance over CoMo (as multi-stakeholderism)

- Platform companies
- Users & voluntary moderators
- Governments
- Researchers
- NGOs & Civil society
One key thing: one more framework

Platform Governance over CoMo (as multi-stakeholderism)

Gov’t Agencies Addressing the Content over Platforms

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- Authority over Domestic Platform Companies
- Internet Censorship
- Victim Support

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This talk …

• **Is the empirical observation (rather than a deep analysis)**
  • Of how two governmental entities play the roles in requesting content removal when it comes to digital sexual violence.

• Defines the digital sexual violence, over both major/minor platforms …

• Collected data from …

• Addresses five questions (3+2)
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• Defines the digital sexual violence, over both major/minor platforms ...
  • social media platforms (Tumblr, FB, Twitter, Instagram), & messenger apps (Telegram ...)
  • pornographic website,
  • P2P/torrent,
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• Collected data from ...
  • governmental press release,
  • government-funded research papers, and
  • newspaper articles.

• Addresses five questions (3+2)
Q1: the emergence of an entity

• Question 1: Why was a governmental entity mainly responsible for supporting the content removal of digital sexual violence created in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family?
• ☞ the victims’ difficulty in requesting content removal until 2018.
• Five ways to request the removal.
Q1: the necessity of an entity

• Question 1: Why was a governmental entity mainly responsible for supporting the content removal of digital sexual violence created in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family?
• ∴ the victims’ difficulty in requesting content removal until 2018.

• Five ways to request the removal.
  • Asking directly the companies – *It hurts*.
  • Commissioning the Internet censorship body – *It still hurts*.
  • Reporting to the police – *Victim blaming occurs*.
  • Commissioning “digital undertakers” – *It is expensive* (≈$1,600/mo (KRW 2 million/mo); *three to six months for continual monitoring*)
  • Commissioning NGOs – *They lack scale*. 
Q2: the launch of an entity

• Question 2: how is the governmental entity for removal support working as a gateway for victims?

• In April 2018, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family launched the “Digital Sex Crime Victim Support Center” (디지털 성범죄 피해자 지원센터).
  • The primary aim: to provide a free-charge support service for digital sexual crime victims to request content removal.

• The Center’s removal support activity is threefold.
• Follow-up monitoring.
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  • The primary aim: to provide a free-charge support service for digital sexual crime victims to request content removal.

• The Center’s removal support activity is threefold.
  • It collects the cases of content dissemination over various platforms and requests removal.
  • It is commissioned to screen capture the content, to report to police.
  • It commissions the Internet censorship body.

• Follow-up monitoring.
Q3: the current limitations of this entity

• Question 3: What are the current limitations of this governmental entity for removal support?

• Three problems
  • the timely countermeasure is not always available (i.e. 35 hrs/wk)
  • the limited number of officers
  • the center has no authority to demand the priority to the Internet censorship body or platform companies.
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<th>Year</th>
<th>#Officers</th>
<th>monthly removal support cases (in average)</th>
<th>daily removal support cases per officer (in average)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018 (8 months since May)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3,610</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8,213</td>
<td>21.9</td>
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  • the limited number of officers
  • the center has no authority to demand the priority to the Internet censorship body or platform companies.
    • It is developing a ‘hotline’ between the center and the Internet censorship body.
    • It has communicated with Twitter through an exclusive window since May 2019.
Q4: the emergence of another entity

• Question 4: **How did the entity come into being within the Internet Censorship body and how has it developed?**

• In April 2018, the Korea Communications Standards Commission launched the “Digital Sex Crime Response Team” with 6 officers.

• In September 2019, the team was expanded to “Digital Sex Crime Standard Review Support Group” with 30 officers.
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• In April 2018, the Korea Communications Standards Commission launched the “Digital Sex Crime Response Team” with 6 officers.
  • The team was dedicated to dealing with digital sex crime content.
    • looking for the original content,
    • screen-capturing fifty times, and
    • looking for the copied content over the various platforms and websites.
  • the time (upon request → counteraction): 10.9 days to 3.2 days.

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• In September 2019, the team was expanded to “Digital Sex Crime Standard Review Support Group” (30 officers).
  • the time (upon request → counteraction): 3.2 days to less than a day.
Q5: the effectiveness of the measures

• Question 5: how effective is Internet censorship body’s request for content removal?
• It seems only partially effective.
Q5: the effectiveness of the measures

#Cases corrective actions made by Digital Sex Crimes Standard Review Committee toward global platform companies (e.g. Google (Drive), Twitter, Telegram, Discord ...)

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<th>Before standard review</th>
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<td>#case of giving companies the “corrective advice” for self-regulation</td>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
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(Jan. 21, 2020) [https://www.hankookilbo.com/News/Read/202001201763048843](https://www.hankookilbo.com/News/Read/202001201763048843)
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Summary

• **Main observations have been**
  • how governmental entities responsible for requesting content moderation regarding digital sexual violence come to exist,
  • how these entities are working, and
  • what their limitations are.

• **Some good changes come to entities.**

• **The point again:**
  • how the framework from the perspective within government can benefit empirical research in platform governance.
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- how governmental entities responsible for requesting content moderation regarding digital sexual violence come to exist,
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