

Identity Policy Choices as Propagation of Structure

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Problem Statement: Decisions made around identity policy for online communities have direct and indirect effects on the societal and intra-community stance on identity formulations and the benefits or consequences in using them. In order to better understand these effects, we model how structures form from and give form to individual decisions in the decision arena of identity policy as well as society overall.

Motivation: The increasing virtualization of social interaction has given rise to a conflict about how identifying information is used within an online community. This conflict is acted out in, among other places, decisions about stringency of identity policy (anonymity vs. pseudonymity vs. "real name") and users' participation in such communities, and warrants closer inspection.

Norms of access, benefits, trust, and behavior associated with a particular identity form have direct impacts on group and individual decisions: these associations are treated as rules.

Industry uniformity or trends, while indirectly affecting users through the implementation of their networks, also influence users' decisions about what to commit to, disclose, or trust.

