

Indigenized Leisure and Data Colonialist Systems: Addressing Invisible Presence Through the Visibility of Indigenous Identities Online

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Abstract

Social media sites and the opportunities they advertise are often promoted as facilitating community connection, creativity, and listening with others. Many facets and descriptors of social media opportunities can be related to First Nations' understanding of what comprises wellness and leisure. With this in mind, many Indigenous users may partake in social media with the expectation of a primarily leisurely online experience that would contribute to an individual's health and wellness. Couldry and Mejias' (2019) concept of 'data colonialism' frames the purpose of online spaces such as the social media platforms TikTok, Instagram, and X (Twitter) as having a very different goal, one removed from leisure or where leisure is nothing more than a symptom of data collection efforts. This digital auto-ethnographic project, assisted by discourse analysis, utilizes the researcher's Anishinaabe identity markers through site profiles to gather data which explores whether or not social media sites are truly a space of leisure for First Nation's users under 'data colonialism.' This project finds a clash in data collection functions and online community opportunities, which renders Indigenized leisure within the digital space a fallacy. In council with teachings from Velkova and Kaun's (2021) article Algorithmic Resistance: Media Practices and the Politics of Repair and Wemigwans' (2018) A Digital Bundle; Protecting and Promoting Indigenous Knowledge Online, this project looks to the future, discussing the manipulation of social media affordances towards a true online wellness space for Indigenous users.

Keywords

Anishinaabe, New Media, Social Media, Leisure, Data Colonialism, Third-Party, Visibility, Invisibility, User Experience, Identity, Data Appropriation

Documenting the Realizations of Anishinaabe Relevant Leisure on New Media Platforms

Introducing the Experience and Defining 'Leisure' Through World View

This project and critical media experience aims to illuminate the question: *Is it possible for the New Media or Platform Media experiences of First Nations Individuals to truly be a site of leisure in the face of expansive Data Colonialism?* This project aims to answer this question with a multistep approach that begins with defining 'leisure' as it applies to First Nation ideologies around relaxation and wellness

Entailing a digital autoethnography, this project captures the researcher's own experience as a First Nation's new/social media platform user on TikTok, Instagram, and X (Twitter). Therefore, it will be the researcher's actions and own identifying data that will be used to measure the extent to which data colonialism is interested in Indigenous identity markers and cultural data and how this contributes to the realization of these platforms as leisure sites. Small, in her (2007) article *Aboriginal Recreation, Leisure and the City of Calgary*, establishes this about the nature of 'leisure' as viewed within an Indigenous context.

"The misunderstanding of Aboriginal "recreation" and "leisure" by nonAboriginal individuals and organizations occurs when, for example, dancing and singing are seen as hobbies, culturally related activities, or occupation in some cases. This is not to say that people who pursue professional dance do not do so for some greater purpose; however, hoop dancing, pow wow dance, Métis jigging, pow wow singing and any other outward expression that one may see in Aboriginal communities have the by-product of fitness and skill building. In addition, in most cases there is also a huge spiritual component to the action, as well as a traditional handing down of ways of life, cultural messaging and lessons about how to act, such as values and ethics" (pp. 112-113).

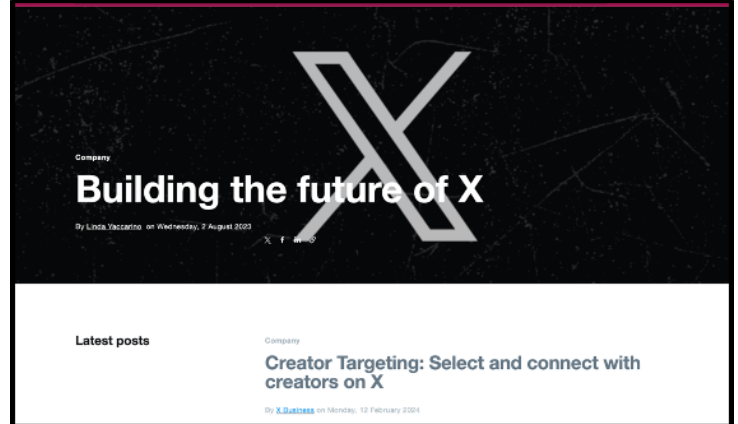
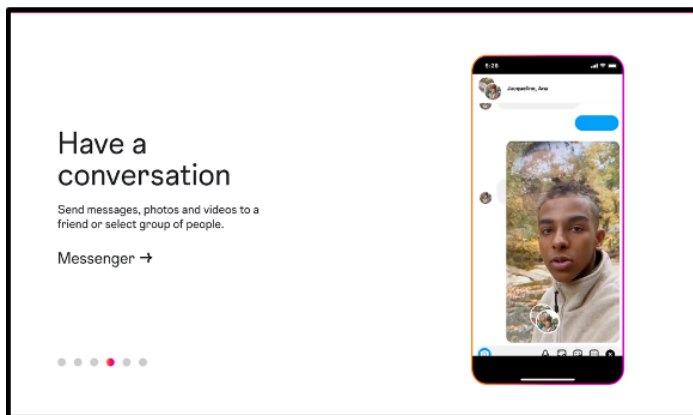
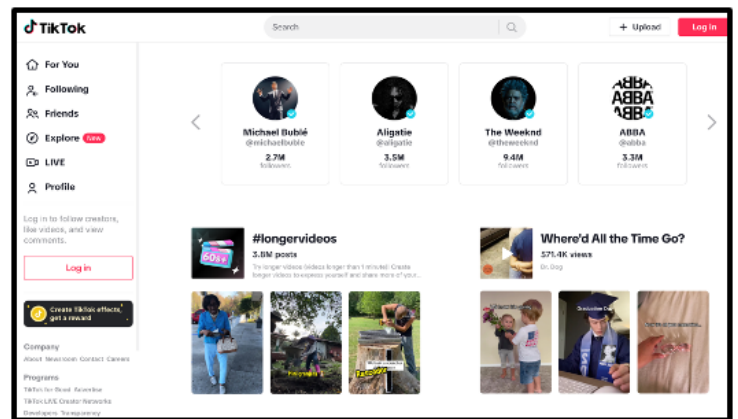
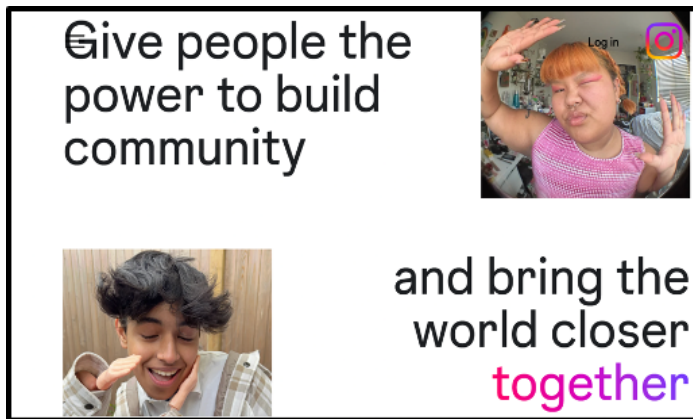
From this, we can establish that activities traditionally imagined as 'leisure' under Western standards are much more complex and serve more multifaceted purposes within Indigenous standards. It may make sense that 'leisure' viewed through Indigenous ideologies may be considered closer practices which evoke teachings, kinship maintenance, and land-based ideas of wellness and health. Small elaborates, "Leisure or recreation... is often not recognized as potentially contributing to positive communal or societal advancement. Where, then, would Aboriginal concepts and manifestations of recreation and leisure fit? For example, where would hoop dancing fit, with its physical, spiritual, and community demands? What of the elements of creative expression? Similarly,

beadwork has a physical dynamic, but it is essentially creative” (2007, p.112). These elements of creativity and spirituality align well with Indigenous notions of ‘leisure’ attached to elements of wellness and healing which are simultaneously decolonial, land-based, and exercise responsibility to self.

The definition of ‘leisure’ within an Indigenous context is shaped by an opportunity for creativity and meaningful spiritually forward practice. Often, activities of ‘leisure’ are categorized similarly to those of Indigenous concepts of wellness. Therefore, this project will use markers from wellness descriptions and those proposed in Small’s article to identify markers of ‘leisure’ as they are relevant to First Nations audiences of new/social media platforms.

New/Social Media Presenting as Aligned within ‘Leisure’ and Wellness

Fig 1. Fig 2. Fig 3. Fig 4., pre-signup ‘home’ and ‘about’ pages advertising elements of leisure.

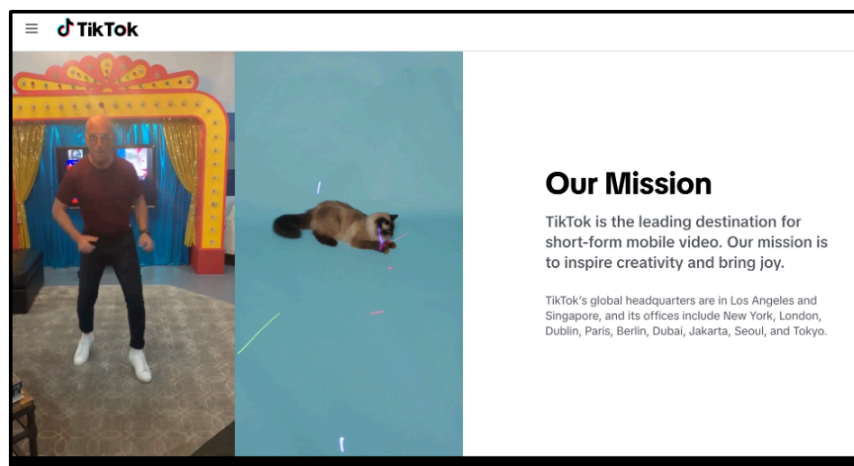


Referring to the ‘About’ or ‘Home’ pages of popular social media sites Instagram, X (Twitter), and TikTok, which are not forwardly established as business or professional networking sites, themes consistent with community, growth, creativity, passing of time, and connection to others are evoked through statements describing the platform’s capabilities for users. Gonzalez and Steinberg et al.’s article *Indigenous Elders' Conceptualization of Well-being: An Anishinaabe Worldview Perspective* categorizes key routes for realizing wellness in the Anishinaabe tradition;

- “• Helping others (e.g., relationships with our fellow Anishinaabe, helping our fellow Anishinaabe, helping at ceremonies, having unconditional love for one another)
- Engaging with nature (e.g., taking care of the earth and spending time in nature)
- Sustenance practices (e.g., working for our necessities, getting our food/medicines from the woods, cooking, making, walking)
- Spiritual practices (e.g., attending ceremonies, praying, using asemaa, using our pipes, smudging, fasting, feasting)
- Listening to our Elders (e.g., asking Elders for advice, help, knowledge)
- Speaking our language” (2023, p. 8).

In one way or another, the informational pages of social media sites appeal to all of these points except for spiritual practices. Engagement with nature is appealed to by featuring content that captures the natural world, listening to elders, and helping others, which are appealed to through the advertised ability to connect and directly communicate with others. In these ways, social/new media sites present themselves as spaces facilitating the capacity for wellness in an Anishinaabe context. Therefore, they align with ideas of ‘leisure’ and may be expected to be sites of leisure among Indigenous audiences.

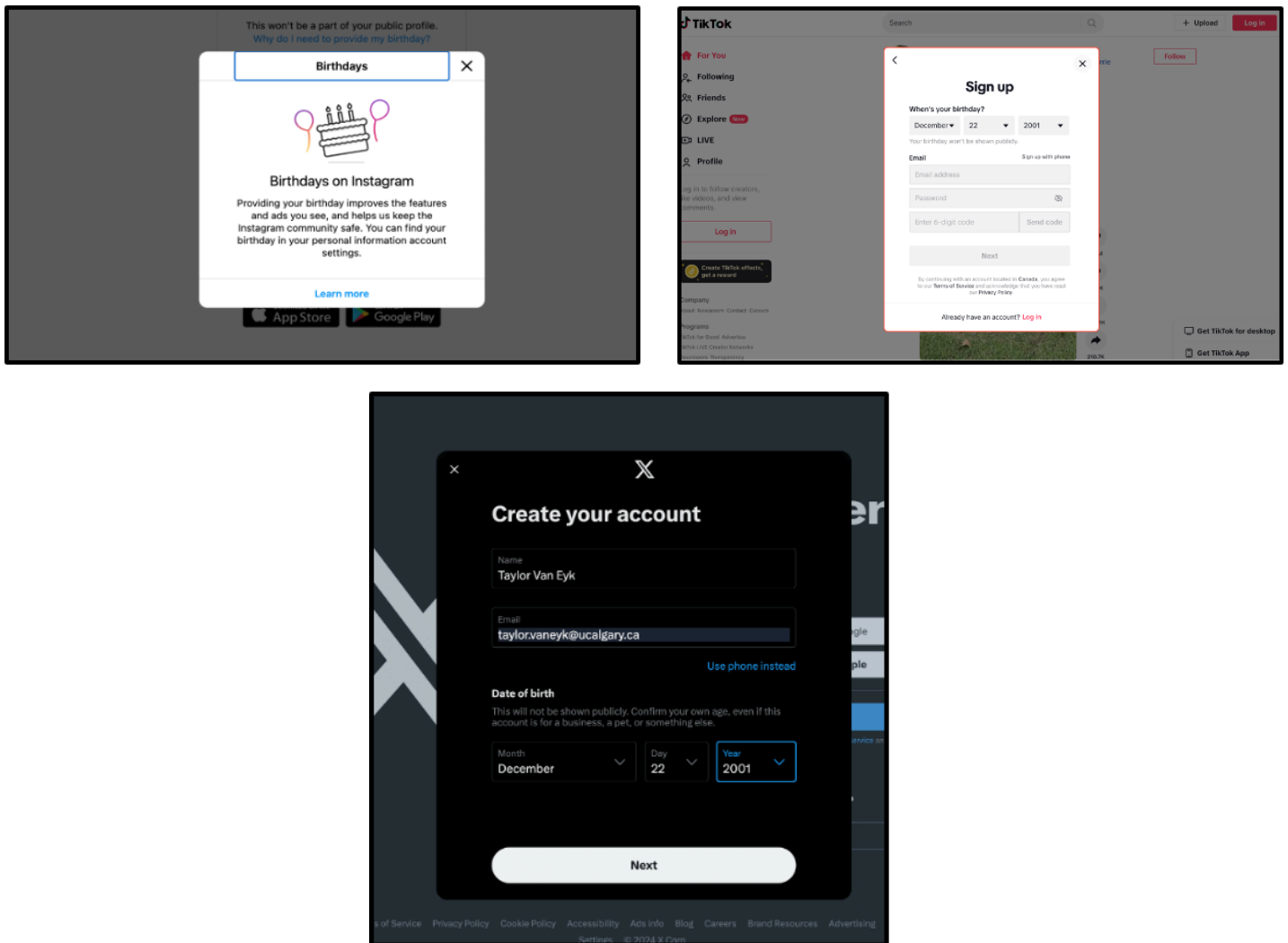
Fig 5., Tik Tok ‘about’ page advertising elements of leisure



Establishing Accounts; Searching for Leisure in the Sign-Up Experience

The new media platforms (Twitter [X], Instagram, and TikTok), which present as aligned with ‘leisure’ and wellness, all ask users to sign up and create accounts to participate in the facilities of ‘leisure’ advertised on the public-facing sites. These sign-up processes all require a standardized set of information all users must provide to create an account. This information includes email or phone number with verification, birthday, and password selection.

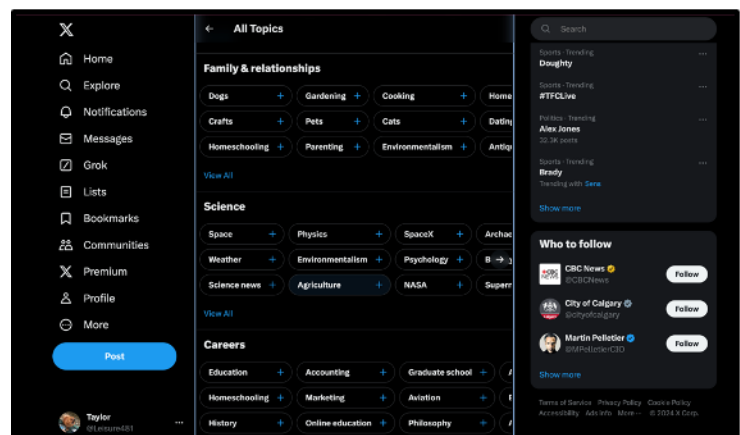
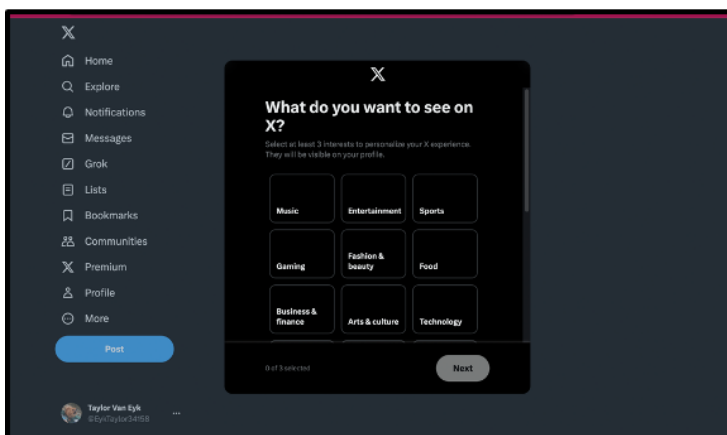
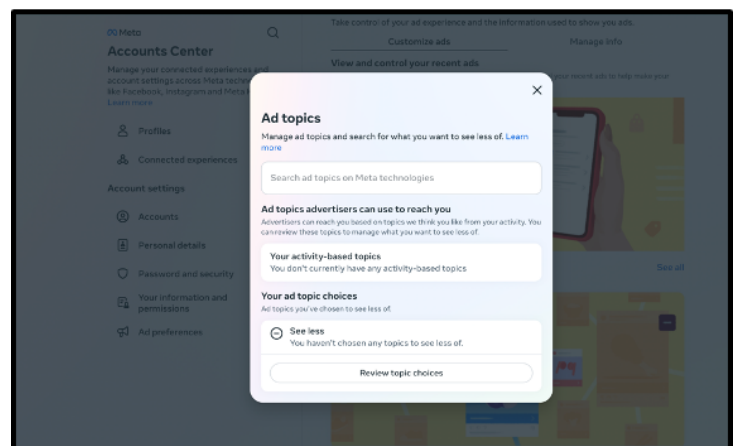
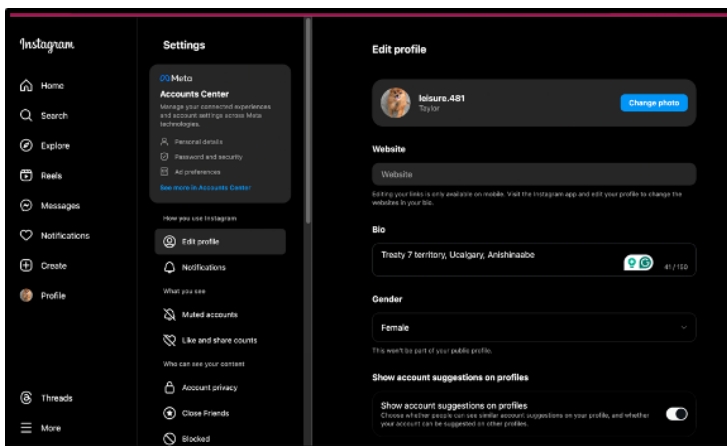
Fig 6. Fig 7. Fig 8., standardized account signup info pages



After the initial account setup, the information that the platform asks of users is then diversified according to the platform’s needs for data collection. These data collection fields ask for data concerning user preferences, which are arguably more personal and related to identity than the

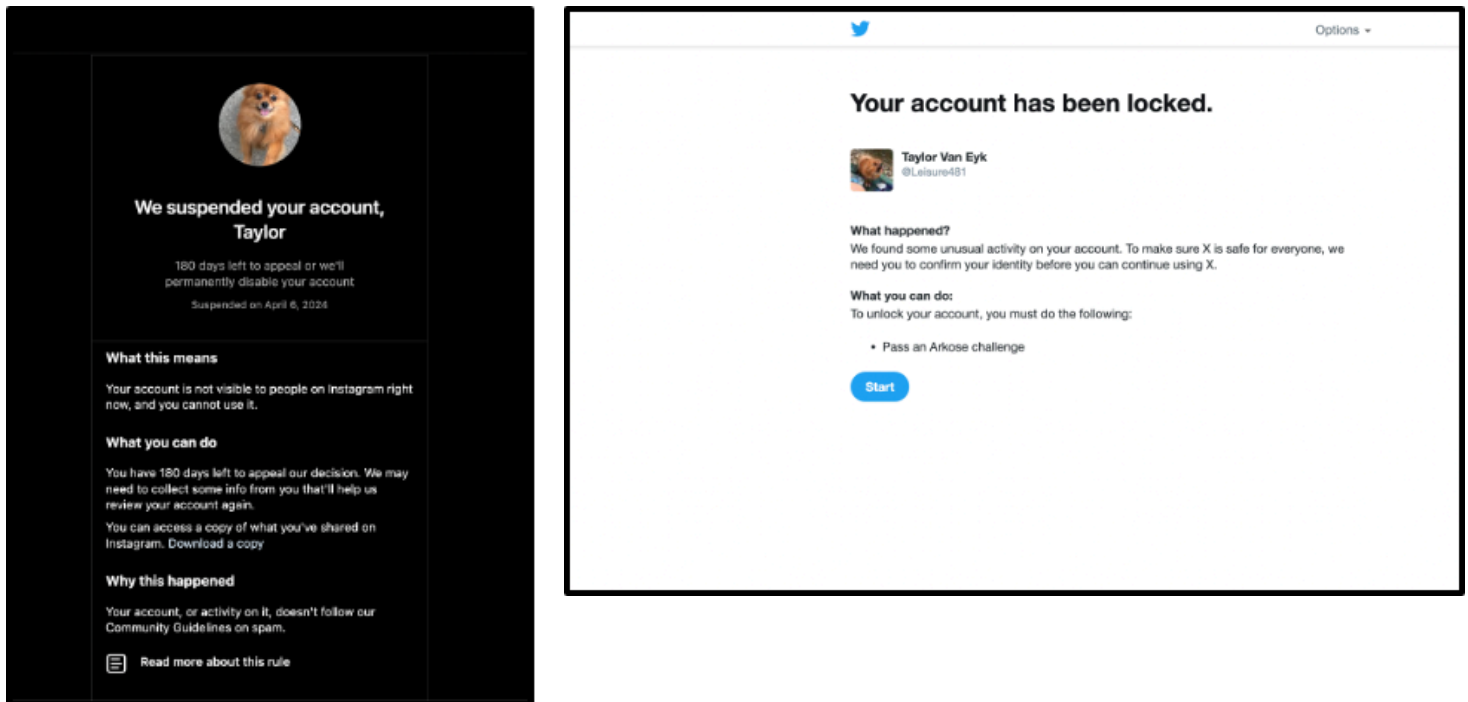
general profile-creating data. Both TikTok and X (Twitter) ask for the user's preference on which content they would like to be shown, effectively contributing to an identity profile of the user composed of interests, likes, and communities. All of the platforms also facilitate areas for users to add descriptive bios, usernames, profile pictures, and occasionally gender identifiers, as well as external links which are accessible to users and administrators viewing user profiles. At this stage in the user experience, ad preferences and data collection policies may be explored, though little meaningful information is usually initially revealed about them. Despite none of the sections here explicitly asking for user data on race, culture, or markers of marginality (apart from gender), there is plenty of opportunity for users to self-identify cultural marginality for data collectors, online communities, and administrators of the platforms. Users can include culturally relevant data and leave out others when content preferences are selected, and bios are added. This is precisely what the researcher has done with the project's accounts, utilizing these facilities to select preferences and include information relevant to their Anishinaabe identity. This contributes to an Indigenized user experience relevant to the project's primary question.

Fig 9. Fig 10. Fig 11. Fig 12., preference and preferred content selection pages



It is also worth noting that around the preference selection account-building stage, where the following lists and content shown are established, both Instagram and X (Twitter) banned the account which the researcher was creating. Both accounts were eventually successfully recovered so that the project’s data collection could continue as planned.

Fig 13. Fig 14., Account ban notifications

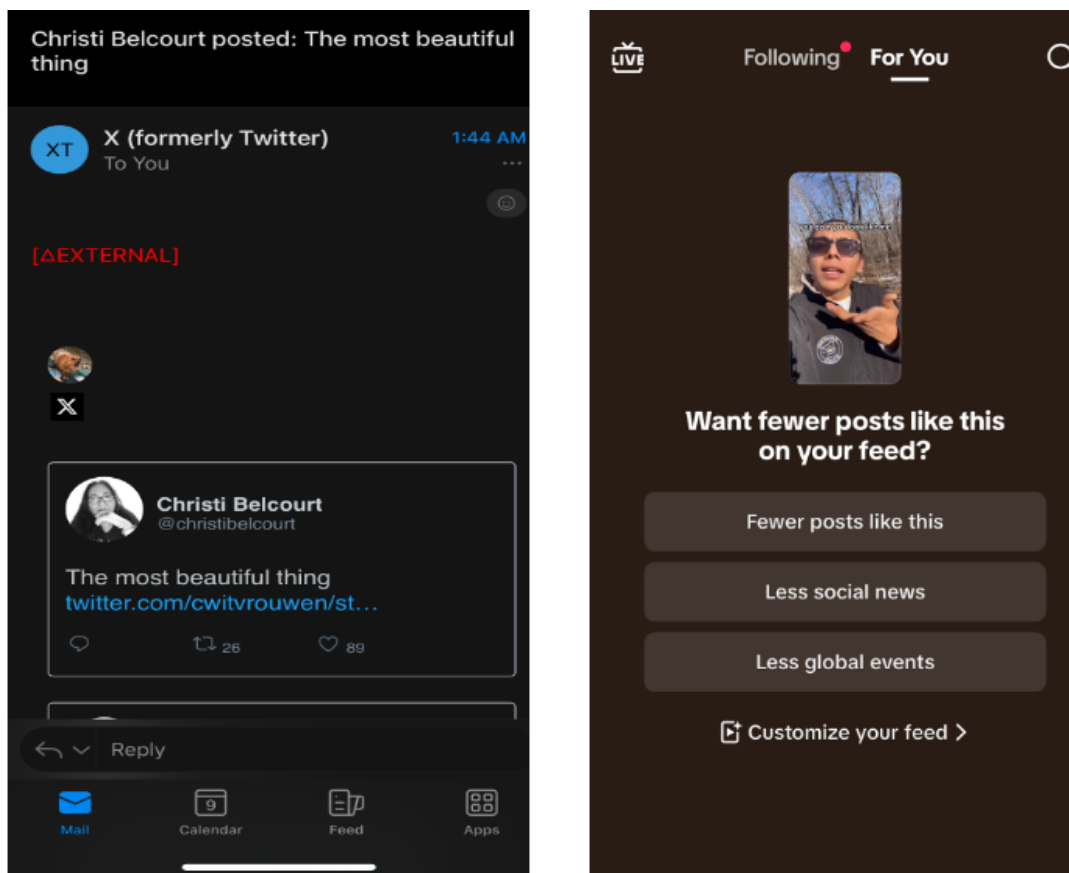


Findings: the Requests of Platform to User

After account creation, following lists on each platform were composed of Indigenous-identifying creators which informed the ‘following’ and ‘for you’ pages of the platforms to show culturally and politically relevant Indigenous content. Remaining in line with Bucher’s (2012) notion of ‘algorithmic power,’ daily interaction with the account in the form of community content engagement continually informed the algorithm and data collectors of the researcher’s content preferences, effectively contributing to the culturally informed data profile of the account. These actions also inform the types of notifications received from the platform which invited the researcher to interact with content that may be appealing based on recent interactions on the platform, effectively giving more information to the algorithms and data collectors so content which

is more likely to evoke a sense of online community connection aligned with 'leisure' can be suggested. These notifications, alongside the platform's requests for further identifying markers and preference information, will inform the final analysis portion of this project. Notifications were observed in the form of emails containing content relevant to the researcher's established preferences, as well as mobile notifications inviting the researcher's continued interaction with platform content. Notifications and information requests from platforms go beyond standardized algorithmically supported content interactions which rely on the functions of the platform (likes, comments, sharing among contacts), this reaching out by the platform asks for more thoughtful action from the user, which often works out of line with the definition of leisure established prior in this project.

Fig 15. Fig 16., platforms asking for content preference action



Methodology: Establishing the Analysis Course

This analysis aims to explore the data collected over 3 days in the form of a digital auto-ethnographic interaction with new/social media to answer the question: *To what extent is it possible for the New Media or Platform Media experiences of First Nations individuals to be a site of leisure in the face of expansive Data Colonialism?*

A search for New Media Platforms or sites constructing their public-facing presence with themes stemming from the definition of 'leisure' established earlier will be selected. The sign-up process and any data requests or marketing prompts related to the user's culture or identity will be captured via a screenshot. Data collection and experience documentation will take place over three days, platform attempts at cultural or identity-based data collection captured via screenshot will be used as data. This data will then be interrogated through the established definition of 'leisure,' Couldry and Mejias' (2019) concept of 'data colonialism,' and Bucher's (2012) idea of 'algorithmic power.' Additionally, Velkova and Kaun's (2021) 'politics of repair' alongside Wemigwans' teachings from the publication *A Digital Bundle; Protecting and Promoting Indigenous Knowledge Online* (2018) will be utilized to imagine reform and establish ways in which new/social media platform use can be better realized as decolonial and thus a space closer to 'leisure' for First Nation's users.

This experience set out by establishing an Indigenized definition of leisure which may be applied to the public-facing presentations of new/social media sites. This definition was deciphered from Small's (2007) notions of leisure in the article *Aboriginal Recreation, Leisure and the City of Calgary* as well as notions of wellness derived from Gonzalez and Steinberg et al.'s (2023) article *Indigenous Elders' Conceptualization of Well-being: An Anishinaabe Worldview Perspective*. This definition aligns Indigenous notions of 'leisure' very closely with community building, creativity, and spirituality as they are connected to land-based decolonial notions of responsibility to self and, thus wellness. The social/new media platforms selected as seemingly aligned with Indigenized 'leisure' are X (Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok. Presentation in this way may establish the expectation of leisure related to wellness to be the primary affordance of these platforms for Indigenous individuals looking to participate in the digital community and creativity which the platforms appear to offer. We can begin to dive into whether or not this expectation is realized by a qualitative content analysis of the account sign-up process and the account-building process through the lenses of Couldry and Mejias' (2019) concept of 'data colonialism' and Bucher's (2012) idea of 'algorithmic power.' Furthermore, activity and data requests by the platform in the form of notifications and preference updates will be analyzed through the definition of 'leisure' as well as the above-mentioned critical theories. These

analyses will be taken together to determine if new/social media platforms can serve as genuine sites of 'leisure' for Indigenous audiences.

Analysis of Experience

The Gateway to Visibility; Initial Sign Up

The account sign-up process is fairly standardized across new/social media platforms of the sample (X [Twitter], Instagram, and TikTok), they all require account creation to participate in the 'leisure' or 'wellness' features advertised in public-facing sites. The 'documentation of experience' portion of this project uncovered that standardized sets of information such as name, birthday, email or phone number, along with some variety of contact verification, were required to create a basic account largely removed from the cultural/personal identity of the user. Cloudry and Mejias establish 'data colonialism' as combining "the predatory extractive practices of historical colonialism with the abstract quantification methods of computing," exemplifying that "Understanding Big Data from the Global South means understanding capitalism's current dependence on this new type of appropriation that works at every point in space where people or things are attached to today's infrastructures of connection" (2019, p. 337). Here, it can be understood that the 'appropriation' that the authors discuss online are the identifying markers of personhood and identity aggregated through platform infrastructure because they are points of interest for data collectors (digital colonizers) to profit from. In the initial sign-up process of new/social media, the mandatory information (name, birthday, email or phone number) is not directly 'appropriated' by data collectors however, they do indirectly assist in the way data is handed over from user to platform. Metrics like birthdays, however, contribute to a user profile, which categorizes them by whether or not they are old enough to fully utilize the platform; it also determines which ads they encounter This is disclosed when the platform asks for date of birth at sign-up. This is perhaps the most clear example of 'data colonialism' in the mandatory sign-up process since birthdays are a primary way in which personhood in the form of online data is 'appropriated' for efficient ad delivery to the user.

Bucher's (2012) 'algorithmic power' describes platform infrastructure in which "there is not so much a 'threat of visibility' as there is a 'threat of invisibility' that seems to govern the actions of its subjects. The problem, as it appears, is not the possibility of constantly being observed but the possibility of constantly disappearing, of not being considered important enough. To appear, to become visible, one needs to follow a certain platform logic embedded in the architecture" (p. 1171).

The perceived 'leisure' functions of the new/social media platforms ask users to become visible under the platform's terms to participate in the perceived or expected 'leisurely' affordances. Handing over this data in the initial sign-up process does not necessarily threaten users with affectively-driven invisibility, so much as it threatens them with missing out on what the platform and the visible online community have to contribute within the social space. Bucher's 'visibility' in this step of the user experience is the user's visibility towards data collectors and platform administrators (rather than online audiences or communities) in exchange for basic access and the privilege to view user-generated content. In this way, a user's visibility is demanded in the form of basic verifiable data before access to the facilities of 'leisure' in the most basic forms is granted. Further account building, which consists of data 'appropriation' in the form of content preferences, ad preferences, self-identifying account information, and interactions within online communities such as 'likes' and 'follows' are then exchanged for a more tailored and fully realized abilities to participate in 'leisure' as advertised in public-facing communications.

Identity Markers in Exchange for a Comprehensive Experience of 'Leisure'; Further Account Building

Further account building is achieved through the inclusion of data within the user profile fields of bios, usernames, profile pictures, and often gender identifiers, as well as external links, which all allow the user to include markers of marginalized identity and/or culture which are visible to fellow online platform users as well as interested data collectors and invisible platform administrators. Less public-facing account builders, such as content and ad preferences, are asked of the user to showcase relevant content on feeds, but perhaps more importantly, this data profiles and categorizes users before the algorithm has the opportunity to collect user data through understanding which categories of content have the highest user interactivity. The steps required for account creation afford users greater participation with expected opportunities for creativity and community, resulting in 'leisure.' This portion of the experience requires significant effort and reflection of identity on the user's part, which is to be shared with invisible third parties. However, it is presented as an effort that primarily contributes to enhancing a user's 'leisure' experience; it is presented for the user's benefit. This portion of the user experience is extremely well tied to notions of 'data colonialism' as the user's efforts in this section are related to cultural identity; therefore, user-selected preferences act as the starting point for ad and profit-driven data to be collected. Imagine that the data collected from users' content preference declarations do not immediately

inform ads but purely inform a filter for what user-generated content is shown, user interactions with content may still be observed through algorithms, as elaborated by Bucher, in ways which afford power to data collectors who may ‘appropriate’ thus ‘colonizing’ and profiting from what data the user hands over. However, these findings suggest that preference declaration informs advertisement metrics and data-collecting algorithms. This step of the user experience, therefore, has the potential to colonize user data at several points.

“For personal data to be freely available for appropriation, it must first be treated as a natural resource, a resource that is just there. Extractive rationalities need to be naturalized or normalized, and, even more fundamentally, the flow of everyday life must be reconfigured and represented in a form that enables its capture as data.” “[A]vailability to capital” itself had to be constructed through elaborate means of marketization. So too with what we now call “personal data,” but which is the outcome, not the precondition or prior target, of a newly “computed sociality” (Alaimo and Kallinikos 2016). That is the underlying reason why there cannot be raw data (Gitelman 2013): because what is ‘given’ must first be configured for ‘capture’ (Kitchin and Dodge 2011). Natural resources were and are not cheap per se, but legal and philosophical frameworks were established to rationalize them as such” (Couldry & Mejias, 2019, p. 339).

Here ‘data colonialism’ is related to the historically established frameworks to justify and assign value to colonized resources. In the case of further user account building, similar frameworks and means of ‘resource’ capture are set in place for data collectors to benefit from visibility and appropriate personal data for eventual profit. It can be argued that these data-collecting frameworks manifest on platforms in the form of content preference declarations that, in the researcher’s experience, are presented as unavoidable if the user wishes to be aligned with routes of ‘leisure’ best suited to their individual and perhaps cultural identity.

Returning to Bucher’s lens, these sites or points of content declaration exercise power over users as they appear to demand certain points of data to be made visible. When a user complies and provides content preference data, they submit to the systems or of power enacted through the user’s visibility to the invisible ‘colonial’ parties. If a user does not comply with this visibility, they are disciplined by being unable to access the personalized routes of ‘leisure’ sought when joining the

platform. In many ways, these users are still punished through a form of invisibility, so much as their connection to culturally relevant online communities is difficult as they are not immediately afforded the visibility of this content as it requires a declaration of preference data. “Essentially, becoming visible is to be selected for by the algorithm. Inscribed into the algorithmic logic of the default News Feed is the idea that visibility functions as a reward, rather than as punishment... [S]tories without significant interaction seemed to be filtered out” (Bucher, 2012, p. 1174). In this instance, Bucher describes another example where user content preference data is exchanged for the visibility of certain content. With this example in mind, the refusal to provide preference data may be punished through two methods of invisibility. First, the user is punished by tailored data being made more ‘invisible’ to them than if they had provided preference selections, meaning accessibility is reduced. Secondly, creators of the platforms are punished as their content is missing out on further community visibility as it can no longer be algorithmically promoted by way of new user interactions from profiles with similar preferences. Though the initial declaration of content preference and self-identifying elements of the profile is extremely key to determining the user’s ability to access online spaces of ‘leisure’, they are not the only points where data must be made visible through preferential interactions which produce data for ‘appropriation’. The updating of content preferences is an evolving and active process on new/social media platforms. Whether it is done algorithmically, such as appears to be the case on Instagram, or it is achieved through the digital labour of users when requested by platforms.

The Evolving User Profile; Cyclical Systems for Requesting Data Divulgence

Notifications delivered off the platform through the means of contact information provided in the initial account set-up stage alongside on-platform requests for further and more detailed content preference data are both ways in which ‘data colonialism’ and ‘algorithmic power’ continue to challenge as well as grant opportunities for ‘leisure’ to be achieved on new/social media platforms well into the user experience. Notifications and further requests for preference data, outside of what is automatically determined by the algorithm through regular interactivity, interrupt what can be established as ‘leisurely’ activity within platforms as they request data-producing effort from the user, which in turn is made visible to third parties and appropriated under ‘colonialism.’ However, compliance with the requests of these notifications and in-app pop-ups allows users to eventually return to their algorithmically curated experience of ‘leisure’ through others’ visibility. These requests for further interaction or the sharing of preference data are often accompanied by content selected

through previous data divulged by the user. When these requests are accompanied by content that is being interacted with or the request is for user interaction with curated content, the platform asks for user visibility in the form of data-producing interaction. This can profile the user to suggest even more curated topics and collect data for third-party appropriation. When further content is suggested accompanied by the request of data divulging action, it establishes a system of power where the user's actions and preferences become visible so that data may be colonized and frameworks for its colonizations are perpetuated by the user's reward of relevant visible content under the idea of 'algorithmic power'. The opportunity to participate in curated 'leisure' entices users to volunteer their data within data colonialist platform frameworks. At the same time, this participation in platform-facilitated 'leisure' is also a route of profiling and data collection, which goes against the definition of leisure established for this project.

Since the definition of Indigenized 'leisure' or 'leisure' relevant to First Nations users is closely aligned with decolonial facets of wellness, contribution to systems of the colonization of personhood or profiling data cannot also be considered 'leisure' within a healing and decolonial context. On social media, the opportunity for connection with online communities, communication with others, the practice of creativity, and experience nature and culture through the posts of fellow users are all facilitated; these functions or opportunities fall in line with Indigenized 'leisure' as they can be described through traditional Anishinaabe facets of wellness. However, all of these functions require participation and a non-negotiable degree of submission to platform frameworks that demand control over users so their data or profile may be visible to invisible parties that can appropriate data in acts considered 'data colonialism.' Couldry and Mejias relate compliance with online monopolized systems of 'data colonialism,' like those found within platform use, to the function of historical colonial demands.

"The parallels between the fictions that operationalized the dispossessions of historical colonialism and those that work today to enable data colonialism are striking. Consider the Spanish empire's Requerimiento, whose absurdity was first recounted by Bartolomé de las Casas (1951, 58). The purpose of this proclamation, read in Spanish by conquistadors to a non-Spanish speaking audience, was to introduce the natives to the strange new world order they were about to be colonized under, and to demand their simple acceptance (or face extermination, which frequently arrived regardless of compliance). Today, in the era of data colonialism, we are accustomed to similarly incomprehensible

documents called Terms of Service, which contain outlandish appropriative claims by corporations. The force of the Requerimiento depended on an effective monopoly of physical force. Today's "muscle" lies in various forms of economic concentration, one of which is the digital platform. Whatever the form of force used, its effect now, as then, is through the discursive act that accompanies it to embed subjects inescapably into relations of colonization" (2019, pp. 340-341).

The continued push for compliance within these systems (like those established within 'Terms of Service') manifests through notifications and requests for user data updates. This signals that 'data colonialism' as achieved through data visibility is an ongoing cycle which effectively farms data from users seeking to participate in 'leisure.' For this reason, compliance with systems of 'data colonialism' which visibly align with Anishinaabe wellness cannot be truly considered 'leisure' in an Indigenous context. However, platform functions may be used in unexpected ways, and culturally relevant content may be dispersed in a pushback to 'data colonialism' and disguised as 'leisure'.

Conclusive Discussion: Paths for Reimagining Platforms as Spaces of the Decolonial

Both Bucher's 'algorithmic power' and Couldry and Mejias' 'data colonialism' work together to shine a light on the platform systems which both facilitate the potential for indigenized 'leisure' and destroy the possibility for true 'leisure' by way of user control and possible data appropriation. However, these frameworks and theories do not primarily focus on ways of potential resistance and reform to sites of online colonialism. This is where Velkova and Kaun's (2021) article *Algorithmic Resistance: Media Practices and the Politics of Repair* alongside Wemigwans' teachings from the publication *A Digital Bundle: Protecting and Promoting Indigenous Knowledge Online* (2018) are introduced to build on ways platforms may be realized as better fulfilling expectations for indigenized 'leisure.' Velkova and Kaun propose that

"algorithmic resistance evolves in conjunction with the properties and logics of technologies that channel media power (see Williams, 1974). It is a complicit form of resistance, one that does not deny the power of algorithms but operates within their framework, using them for different ends... The aftermath of algorithmic curation forces resistance to be articulated through 'repair' politics of acting upon the cultural politics of attention generated after data sets have been aggregated, computed and curated. The notion of 'repair' is a metaphor

that signifies the symbolic act of correction of a perceived ‘brokenness’ of an algorithmic system, through which the dominant meaning of algorithmic systems may also be challenged” (2021, pp. 535-536).

Relevant to this project, this essentially means that ‘data colonialism’ can be challenged through the controlling platform systems which support and perpetuate its data collection and appropriation. This could be made possible by spreading anti-data-colonialist narratives within user-generated content that was shared in compliance with data-colonialist systems. Despite theoretical posts of this kind still allowing data collectors to measure audience interaction and observe user data, posts now also carry an element of ‘callout,’ which puts a spotlight on the systems of ‘data colonialism,’ which traditionally finds power in invisibility. Systems of ‘algorithmic power’ and ‘data colonialism’ can still function the same regardless of the content’s ability to call them out. Therefore, this is a type of ‘compliant resistance’ since the realized ‘repair’ of systems is put in the hands of users who consume anti-data-colonialist narratives.

Wemigwans posits that it is Indigenous knowledge and the communicative capacity of online media that carry forth that knowledge, which acts as a powerful method of reinforcing digital spaces. “The notion of a digital bundle demonstrates that online spaces can be defined and validated through cultural protocols. Distinct from digital storytelling through its grounding in cultural protocols, Indigenous Knowledge online is a new kind of tool or resource—and hence a new opportunity to support the ways in which Indigenous communities are decolonizing the digital” (Wemigwans, 2018, p. 43). With this in mind, perhaps new/social media platforms could be better realized as indigenized leisure spaces by the user implementation of Indigenous knowledge and protocol within the content. It should not be the platforms and their systems that we look to for ‘leisure’ and ‘wellness’ online so much as it should be the decolonial knowledge of Indigenous creators on platforms which call out systems and utilize them in unexpected ways. This unexpected utilization of data-colonialist systems in tandem with the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge robs systems of their powerful invisibility and better adjusts the online ecosystems’ alignment with indigenized leisure. If Indigenous creators act as stewards to the content of online Indigenous communities, carrying forward protocols from more ‘traditional’ modes of knowledge communication, ecosystems of Indigenous knowledge transfer aligned with wellness may be possible. “The role of the cultural custodian frames responsibility and accountability to the wider Indigenous community regarding care and maintenance of the site, but it also acknowledges the deep commitment to interrelationships and relationality and how these relationships come into

being through the process of ceremony. The cultural transference of the site, then, becomes a very important responsibility that must be considered and attended to in the future because, as a bundle of knowledge, it must be transferred lovingly and with great care, according to cultural protocols” (Wemigwans, 2018, p. 45).

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