

for the target audience of Frozen AT ALL. Elsa was often show pregnant, or she and Anna appeared with their clothes suggestively torn with Spiderman making an appearance to up-skirt the pair of them, and all this was accompanied by happy nursery rhymes incomprehensibly burbling in the background. It was a disaster, and no one knew where these videos were coming from.

The videos are usually animation or live action films , use unauthorised characters, are often able to get around the inbuilt child safety algorithms in YouTube kids, use keywords typically for a respectable search – education , nurse rhymes, learn numbers and the like. They are all over YouTube who in 2017 lost control of its moderation for children's content.

YouTube is such a behemoth that it has become impossible for it to moderate all its content and the result is this extremely strange stuff filtering through to your child YouTube viewing device. Public outcry about what children were seeing on YouTube in 2017 led to the start of YouTube attempting to address the Elsgate problems.

YouTube slowly swung into action, and in August 2017 they prohibited the practice of monetisation from any channels that “made inappropriate use of family friendly characters”. That was a start, limiting the wealth of money from advertisers these Elsgates could generate.

(They also extended this policy to the live action children shows often featuring children and their parent and filmed at home. This after many of the videos featuring minors were found to have been downloaded by paedophiles, and after a particular channel called Toy Freaks – run by an enthusiastic dad called Greg Chism was brought up on child abuse charges after it was discovered he was happily placing his two daughters in potentially abusive situations to generate more clicks and likes. The channel was pulled with 8.5 million subscribers.)

Not for kids at all.

The internet has connected groups of individuals known as fetishists who previous were fairly isolated in their pursuit of unusual pleasures. Another theory is that these are designed for the individuals with superhero fetishes, or those who enjoy pretending they are a child?

A prank

Well perhaps, but the sheer volume of numbers of these videos tends to dismiss the idea that this is just a big internet prank. And if it is, well it's still a nasty one.

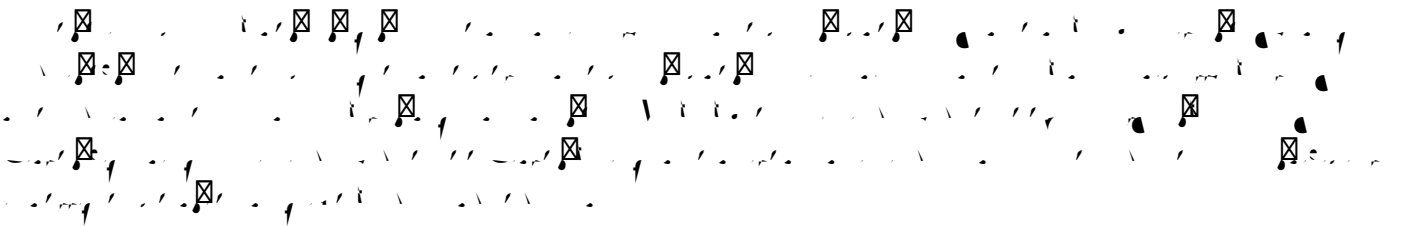
Money

As many of these clips garner millions of hits, this is a possibility. YouTube's moves in late 2017 to prevent the monetisation of these clips, may have limited this a little but the need to make as much money as possible does not explain why the content is so disturbing.

Algorithms and bots

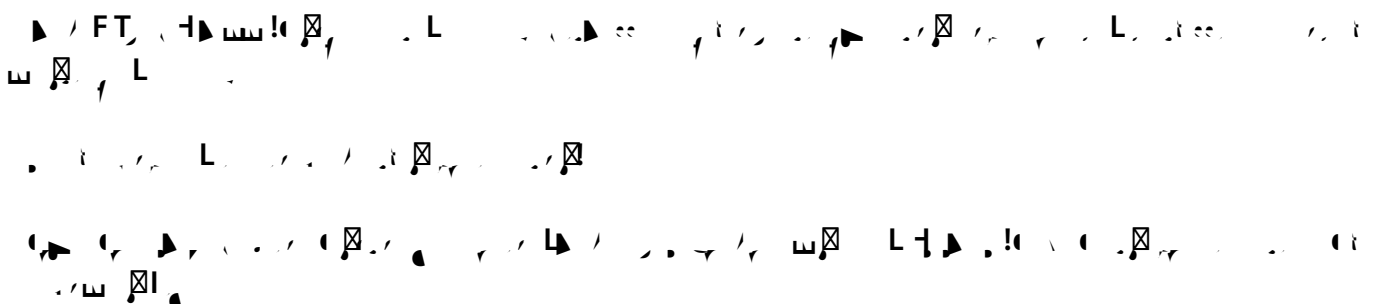
Maybe it's not the bogey man in the closet, maybe it's algorithms that correlate the likes and the clicks determining that there should be more of something that is popular? And that any old hodge podge will do. A popular children's animation star is going to be popular, even more if there are two together, and then on and on – adding violent content, inappropriate actions that garner more clicks because they were popular elsewhere and things have just spiralled.

Tim Pool a YouTuber with over 30 million subscribers offers an explanation of this scenario detailing how many Elsatage videos possess the same animations and stories, but with different characters that could easily be generated by computers.



Given that a young child is often unable to type the search parameters into Youtube, they will choose topics from what Youtube's search engine produces. Many of these videos feature high in the search listings with their collective weird wordings compiled from all popular keywords across the platform.

Titles of clips such as the ones below are indicative of how this might be possible, otherwise it's difficult to explain where such a title would come from.



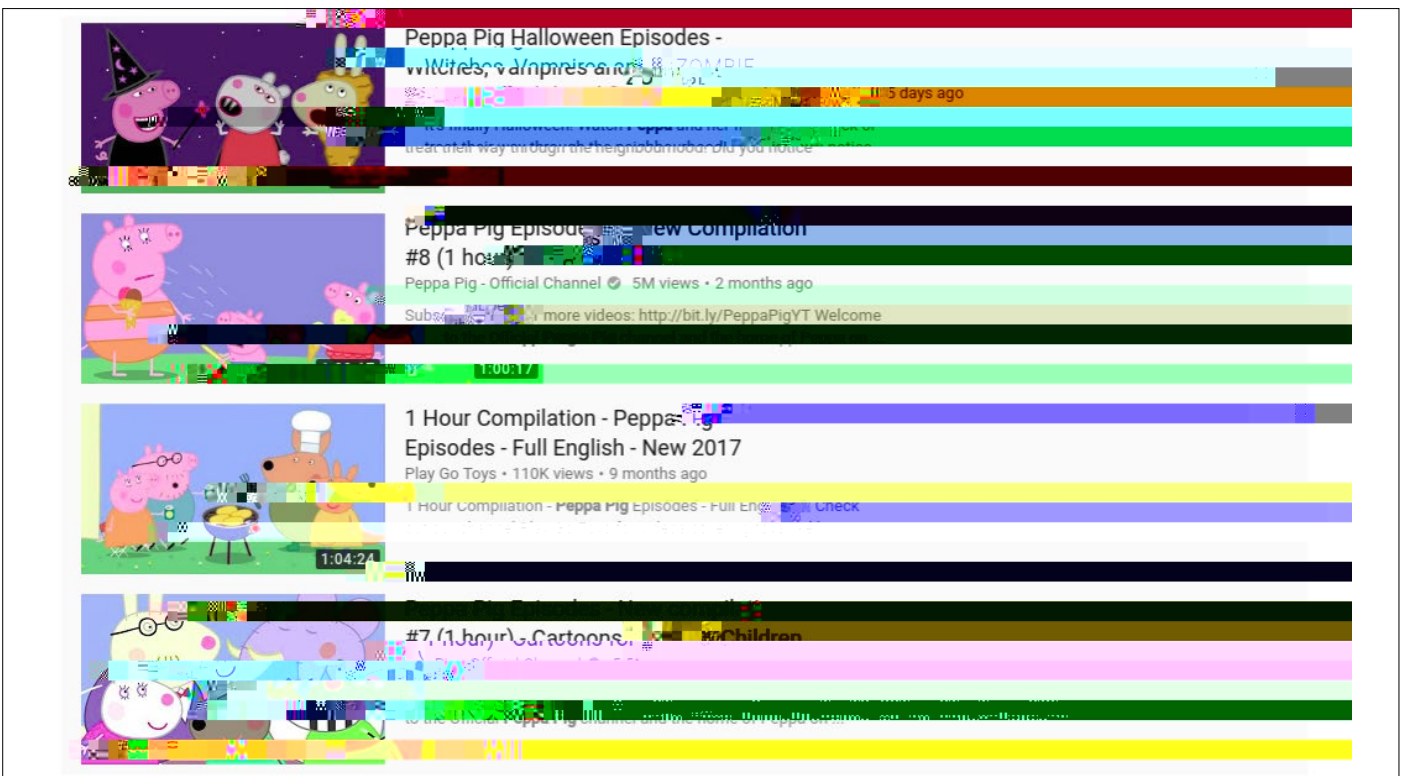


These make no sense, yet it is far from inconceivable that artificial intelligence is having a whoopsy here that needs to be stopped.

There are many possibilities but the most likely remains algorithms that, lacking any human input are frantically producing more and more content that is popular but weird violent and dubious and categorically inappropriate for the target audience.

Elsagates appear high in the YouTube search listings

In the search result show below, the third one is an Elsagate. An adult can see and read the origin channel but a child working their way through Youtube will not be so discriminatory.



Examples

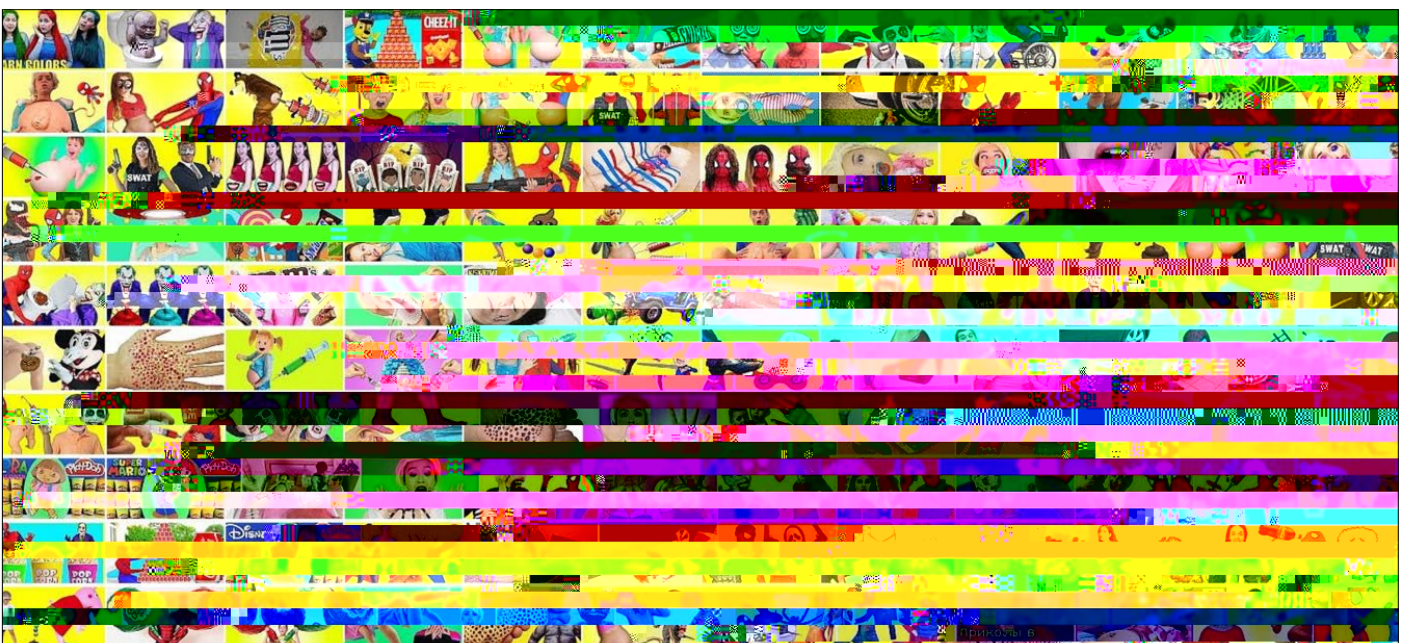
Peppa Pig

The popular pre-school character of Peppa Pig featured in "fake" videos that popped up in many lounge rooms where a child was watching. The original show is a gentle, appropriate character who surmounts situations with the loving help of her oinky family.

The image shown is from an Elsagate. In the original version Peppa is consoled and reassured about a trip to the dentist. In The YouTube Elsagate version, she is monstered by syringes, violence and gigantic medical instruments and disciplined for her distress.



A couple of compilation of Elsagate screen shots from Reddit



1. 2019-2020
2. 2020-2021