

Case study 1: How moderation (doesn't) work

The prominent example of influencer Andrew Tate and his presence on social media shows the complexity of navigating the line between censorship and moderation and the potential for social media to impact young people's offline perspectives. Videos of Tate have been viewed more than 12.6 billion times.⁷⁹ Tate is a former kickboxer and reality TV show contestant who operated an online business that acted as a 'university' at its peak and had 127,000 members paying £39 a month to access the site.⁸⁰ He is currently based in Romania, having moved from the UK, stating that he made this move partly due to the criminal justice system, "I'm not a rapist, but I like the idea of just being able to do what I want. I like being free."⁸⁰ He was charged with rape and human trafficking in Romania in 2023.⁸¹ His content is aimed at young men, and broadly styled as self-help or motivational content. However, he consistently espouses views that are misogynistic and demeaning of women. While some of his content is broadly outside the mainstream, he has a large online following of young men.^{80,82,83} Social media platforms have taken some steps to moderate his content, with his accounts banned on TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) but recently reinstated his account. But despite his accounts being banned, videos of Tate still appear on all these platforms, with other accounts posting his content.⁸⁴ In New Zealand, there has been anecdotal evidence from teachers that many young men are watching Andrew Tate, and that the videos are influencing their views offline.⁸³ The moderation technique employed by social media platforms for Andrew Tate was to ban his accounts, but some of the content itself is still appearing on the platforms. Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok's algorithms have allowed his content, reaching many young people. Some of the content goes against their community guidelines but, despite this, hasn't been moderated. This highlights that there varying degrees of transparency on different platforms about what is and isn't moderated.⁸⁵

References

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