



On Odysee: The Role of Blockchain Technology for Monetisation in the Far-Right Online Milieu

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Contents

Glossary	4
Key findings	5
Introduction	7
Literature analysis	8
Monetisation of far-right content on social media	8
Affordances of social media platforms	8
Monetisation affordances	8
Case study: Odysee	10
Methodology	10
Background	10
Affordances on Odysee	11
Monetisation affordances	12
Intervention affordances	16
Qualitative analysis of the contents of video channels on Odysee	18
Methodology	18
Findings	18
Financial analysis	20
Methodology	20
Findings	20
Discussions and potential courses of action	22
Crypto regulation & the action plan to counter far-right extremism	22
Content-based regulation of decentralised platforms	22
Systematic regulation of “incentivised” platforms	23
Outlook	24
Endnotes	26

Glossary

Blockchain technology, which was developed especially for alternative currencies, stands out from other technologies due to its unique data structure, that – due to the transparency it offers and its decentralised design, in which data is stored at lots of different locations and regularly compared – is regarded as particularly tamper proof. Blockchain technology enables (pseudo-)anonymous transactions and communication – a feature that also makes the technology attractive for criminals and extremists.

Cryptocurrencies are digital currencies whose transactions are protected through cryptographic signatures and documented in a blockchain. When cryptocurrencies are sent, these transactions are validated through a process of code comparison. Cryptocurrencies enable pseudonymous transactions and usually have a decentralised structure. There are no central authorities that define and stabilise the value of cryptocurrencies, for example. Therefore, according to the German Federal Financial Supervisory Authority (BaFin), cryptocurrencies are not actually currencies, but rather financial instruments. The ability to make pseudonymised payments also makes cryptocurrencies attractive to criminals, who use such methods of payment to conduct illegal business.

A (crypto) wallet is a physical storage medium or software that is used to store cryptocurrencies. The accounts have a specific private key and are usually protected by means of encryption. Depending on the cryptocurrency, wallets provide different levels of access to information about users and transactions associated with the account for third parties.

“Incentivised” social media platforms reward users for their activity on the platforms using financial instruments (e.g. in the form of cryptocurrency payments). This creates a financial incentive for users to engage with their platform.

Key findings

“Incentivised” functionality

- Some alternative social media platforms use blockchain technology to provide monetisation opportunities on their platform in the form of functionalities that offer financial incentives. These “incentivised” platforms are structured in such a way that users are rewarded for their activity on the platform – e.g. for publishing, liking and sharing posts – through cryptocurrency payments.
- In this context, the use of decentralised blockchain technology often goes hand in hand with the promise of unmoderated discussion and of anonymity. These promises, along with the monetisation opportunity, are interesting for far-right extremists, the Querdenken (lateral thinking) movement and conspiracy theorists, whose content is frequently deleted from established platforms and who rely on their supporters for financial support.

Ideology and platform architecture

- The platform Odysee is frequented by both apolitical users and by supporters of different political opinions. Despite this heterogeneous audience and the fact that the platform operators are not far-right extremists themselves, an analysis of the platform contributes to the research into the far-right online milieu, as the platform is also used by these actors.
- The platform hosts a range of extreme-right content, including videos that promote Holocaust denial, videos that show the livestream of the Buffalo shooter, videos which deny that the terrorist attack on 14 May 2022 actually took place, or that attempt to present the shooting in a “humorous” way, and videos that spread other forms of disinformation about the attack.
- The geoblocking used by Odysee, which is intended to block illegal content from being accessed in Germany, is applied to some channels in such a way that the entire channels are blocked, rather than just blocking individual problematic videos. In addition, some illegal content is overlooked and remains accessible.
- The leadership team of LBRY, the company that created Odysee, is inspired by libertarian ideas, which is likely to be a factor influencing the very limited moderation and regulation on the platform.
- The libertarian ideology is also consistent with Odysee’s platform architecture: The integration of its own cryptocurrency, LBRY Credits (LBC), allows video producers to monetise their videos. The volatility of the LBC price is a tolerated consequence of its decentralised structure. The amount of LBC a user has when they upload a video also affects the search algorithm (the higher the amount, the higher up the video will appear in the search results when a relevant search is performed).

Monetisation

- In a qualitative content analysis, 55 videos were investigated. In total, these videos received support amounting to 36,120.88 Credits (approximately 536.76 USD, 13/05/2022; exchange rate: 1 LBC = 0.01486 USD).
 - Of the eleven channels investigated, three channels received more than 1000 Credits from support and tips on individual videos (on 13/05/2022, 1000 credits was equal to around 14.86 USD).
 - The most successful channels belong to those creators who were already known in the extreme-right and conspiracy theorist online milieu before the creation of Odysee and who use the video service as part of a multi-platform strategy or as a back-up option.
 - The video formats chosen most frequently by the channel operators were news and commentary (38 of 55).
 - Content focused on “classic” extreme-right topics such as content promoting a revisionist view of history in relation to the First or Second World War tend to receive less support than videos about current political issues.

- Using a LBRY Blockchain Explorer (LBRY Block Explorer) a financial analysis was carried out based on 53 Odysee users from the conspiracy theorist and radical right to extreme-right spectrum, each of which had more than 500 followers.
 - In total, the 53 accounts had received 1,652,786.96 LBRY Credits since the creation of their wallets. When converted to USD using the average closing price for LBC over the last 16 months (0.074 USD), this corresponds to total earnings of approximately 122,306 USD.
 - The earning potential on the platform is heavily dependent on the price of LBC. At the time of the analysis, the investigated accounts had a balance of 258,376.64 LBRY Credits. When converted to USD, this was equal to 3,839.48 USD overall (13/05/2022, exchange rate: 1 LBC = 0.01486 USD). Four weeks prior, however, the exchange rate was significantly higher (1 LBC = 0.02933 USD on 13/04/2022), which means that the Credits were worth almost twice as much, with a value of 7,578.19 USD. Thus, the price of LBC is a decisive factor in the earnings potential of the scene.
 - The number of Credits earned appears to only be partly linked to the number of uploads, but clearly correlates with the number of followers on Odysee.
- The action plan to combat far-right extremism introduced by the Federal Minister of the Interior and Community Nancy Faeser in March 2022 proposes a “significant expansion of the investigation and analysis of right-wing extremist financial activities”. In addition to the financial opportunities listed in the action plan, such as “concerts, festivals, music products, martial arts events and e-commerce/retail stores”, monetisation affordances, like those that platforms such as Odysee offer far-right political actors, should also be included.
- In contrast to Odysee’s self-presentation as “censorship-resistant”, the content analysis demonstrated that the platform operators actually frequently make certain types of content or complete accounts unavailable for a large amount of visitors to the platform through delisting or geoblocking. Thus, platforms that market themselves as decentralised should not be viewed as immune to content-based regulation.
- For (planned) regulations, such as the EU Digital Services Act or the British Online Safety Bill, which provide for a risk-based approach to platform regulation, the case study of Odysee offers two particular insights:
 - Societal risks do not just arise from advertising-funded business models, such as those used by the social media platforms that have dominated the market up to this point. Risk assessments should also more closely examine the particular risks associated with “incentivised” platforms and their gamification strategies, which reward users for interacting with the platform.
 - The affordance analysis that underpins this study is a potential risk assessment tool for future regulatory authorities and their external auditors. By looking through the lens of affordance theory, they can better assess which societal risks are associated with new platforms and their architecture/technologies, and in doing so, complement the content-based type of regulation that has prevailed in this context to date.

Possible actions

- Regardless of whether Odysee has a sufficient number of German users to trigger removal and reporting requirements in accordance with the Network Enforcement Act (Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz, NetzDG), as a social network provider in Germany, Odysee Inc. would act in violation of the NetzDG, if the company fails to name a legal representative in Germany. In such a case, the company would run the risk of facing regulatory fine proceedings. The responsible administrative authority, the Federal Office of Justice (Bundesamt für Justiz), could investigate the matter and ensure that legal representatives are named.

Introduction

Some of the so-called alternative platforms identified by ISD researchers as part of the project “Countering Radicalisation in Right-Wing Extremist Online Subcultures” are based on blockchain technology.¹ In this context, the use of decentralised blockchains usually goes hand in hand with a promise of unmoderated discussion and anonymity. In addition, this technology offers special monetisation opportunities through “incentivised” platforms. These “incentivised” platforms are structured in such a way that users are rewarded for their activity on the platform – e.g. for publishing, liking and sharing posts – through cryptocurrency payments. These functions and attributes are particularly interesting for far-right extremists, the Querdenken (lateral thinking) movement and conspiracy theorists, whose content is frequently deleted from established platforms and who rely on their supporters for financial support. In fact, far-right extremists and criminals have been using decentralised digital currencies from early on to fund their political agendas or trade in illegal goods, respectively. For example, in 2011, the darknet site ‘Silkroad’ was used to facilitate the purchase and sale of illegal goods using Bitcoin.

There is also an ideological component. Within the crypto scene, which has grown significantly over the years, blockchain and applications such as cryptocurrencies based on this technology are seen as a promise of salvation for economic, ecological and political problems. The use of this technology is both ideological and political: the lack of government regulation is interpreted as a guarantee of free discussion. The decentralised structure of the currencies with no involvement from centralised banks is also welcomed within the extreme-right spectrum due to a resentment of banks, which is driven by antisemitism. There has also been a shift towards anti-vaccine activism amongst followers of the crypto scene.² In addition to tapping into a new group of customers, the other motive behind this shift is the common ideological denominator shared by these groups, namely, a deep-seated mistrust of classic societal institutions.

In order to be able to better assess future platform migrations, it is useful to investigate the importance of blockchain technologies for monetisation in the far-right online milieu. This involves examining how far-right political actors use blockchain-based platforms for monetisation and what other functions these

technologies offer users. Another important question to investigate is which content from these users is particularly successful from a financial perspective and the earning potential on these platforms. This is achieved in this study using various methodological approaches.

First, a literature analysis was carried out to review the current state of research concerning monetisation affordances and to develop the concept further. On this basis, an inductive affordance analysis was carried out as part of a case study, which uses the example of the social media platform Odysee to demonstrate which affordances are offered to content creators and other users on blockchain-based platforms. Odysee is neither run by far-right extremists, nor are all of its users part of the extreme-right or conspiracy theorist online milieu.

However, during the research carried out as part of the project “Countering Radicalisation in Right-Wing Extremist Online Subcultures”, Odysee appeared as a platform to which political actors from this milieu linked strategically. Therefore, as part of this study, a qualitative content analysis of financially successful videos from the extreme-right and conspiracy theorist online milieu was carried out. The channels these videos belonged to were also taken into account during the analysis. The analysis was carried out to determine what types of content and which channels in particular benefited from the monetisation affordances offered by the platform. Following this, a financial analysis was completed to classify the actual earning potential of the platform.

The report concludes with a discussion of possible measures to counter the monetisation strategies of far-right extremists. A secondary goal of this study is to demonstrate how affordance analysis can be used as a potential tool for regulatory authorities and external auditors to better assess which societal risks are associated with new platforms and their architecture/technologies. Risk assessments are a key component of legislative proposals concerning digital politics in the EU, as well as national policies in the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Here, the interfaces to current legislative proposals, such as the EU Digital Services Act, the EU regulatory proposals for crypto markets and action plan to counter far-right extremism introduced by the Federal Minister of the Interior and Community Nancy Faeser are examined.

Literature analysis

Monetisation of extreme-right content on social media

So far, only very few studies have investigated how the extreme right uses social media and online payment service providers to acquire money.³ In two such studies, the monetisation of right-wing content within the context of blockchain-based platforms is examined.⁴

Affordances of social media platforms

The concept of affordances was developed in the field of ecology to describe the extent to which the properties of an environment influence the possible actions that can be taken in this environment.⁵ This basic concept was later transferred into the area of product design. In this area, the concept of affordances was used to describe the perceived possibilities resulting from the design features of objects and the abilities of users.⁶ Norman's concept of affordances was particularly influential in the design sector, but was also used in many other sectors, such as human-computer interaction (HCI) or sociology.⁷ In communication research and particularly in the analysis of social media, the concept is used to describe the various affordances of social media.⁸

Due to its ambiguity and the fact that the term is used differently by different authors, the concept of affordances is a controversial one.⁹ Despite these conceptual weaknesses, an analysis of affordances was utilized productively in this study to delineate the technical functions and features of social media from the possibilities that are offered by these functions and features.¹⁰ The term affordances provides added analytical value when it is comprehensibly and clearly defined. In order to clarify the term, taxonomies for affordances were developed by several researchers in the context of certain dynamics in social media, including the use of social media in organisations,¹¹ for self-presentation¹² or for group formation.¹³ The affordances concepts in the area of networked publics developed by researcher danah boyd¹⁴ are often used as a basis for this: "Persistence, Replicability, Scalability and Searchability".¹⁵ In her later work, these were reformulated as "Persistence, Visibility, Spreadability and Searchability".¹⁶ This uncommented change has been the subject of criticism aimed at boyd's work.¹⁷ However,

boyd's work remains a fundamental contribution in the area of social media affordance analysis.

In recent years, methods have been developed to make the concept of affordances usable for empirical analyses. An approach that was developed for a cross-platform analysis of political campaigns, as part of the presidential elections in the USA in 2016, researched platform architectures whose properties supported certain affordances and in turn indirectly shaped user behaviour.¹⁸ The study investigated the platform architectures of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat in terms of their network structure, functionality, algorithms and datafication, as well as the resulting affordances based on the terminology developed by other researchers.¹⁹

Monetisation affordances

Up until now, no taxonomy has been developed that specifically covers monetisation affordances.

Firstly, it is important to note that monetisation itself should be viewed as an affordance, as the platforms offer users the opportunity to earn money with content. The monetisation options are different depending on which platform is used. For instance, on many platforms money can be earned by including sponsors or advertisements within published content. Platform-specific monetisation opportunities are becoming increasingly common, such as the Super Chat feature on YouTube, Twitter Blue or the opportunity to subscribe to and help fund a creator's content on Patreon.

Furthermore, some elements of the taxonomies developed by boyd and those developed by Van Raemdonck and Pierson are already relevant in the context of monetisation on social media platforms, especially for those that use blockchain technology. Affordance categories that outline the conditions on social media platforms in an abstract way also describe important cross-contextual elements.

The affordance of persistence – which was described by boyd in 2010 and describes the persistence of published content – is particularly relevant here, as information about transactions carried out using blockchain technology are very difficult to delete.²⁰ There is also

the affordance of transparency, which is offered by many blockchain-supported platforms, as transactions of pseudo-anonymous cryptocurrencies can often be viewed by anyone. The affordance of scalability – which was described by boyd in her work as the potential reach of content within networked publics – is also important in the context of monetisation through “incentivised” social media platforms as a means of describing the high earning potential.²¹ In her later work, the term used for this affordance was changed to spreadability, which is less applicable for the present context.²²

While boyd drew up the affordances she described based on the features of the platforms, the affordance categories described by Van Raemdonck and Pierson were investigated based on functionality. Two of these categories are particularly applicable in the context of monetisation. The network interaction affordances described by Van Raemdonck and Pierson relate to the spread of content within the context of different group dynamics.²³ Various monetisation affordances also include communicative elements, thereby enabling users to network with one another. Another category described by Van Raemdonck and Pierson are intervention affordances, which are used to determine and regulate who can be part of and participate in the network.²⁴ Intervention affordances are particularly important when users with extremist content are being funded and are networking with other users.

Based on the literature analysis, the following affordances were identified in the context of monetisation:

- **Monetisation affordances:**

Functions on platforms that make it possible to earn money.

- *Permanence*: Describes how long information about transactions can be traced.
- *Transparency*: Describes the extent to which transactions can be traced.
- *Scalability*: Describes how high the earning potential on the platform can be.
- *Network Interaction*: Describes how monetisation affordances can be used to make new contacts and influence the dynamics between users.

- **Intervention affordances:**

Functions on platforms that make it possible to prevent certain users from making money and to ban users from platforms.

As a next step, the monetisation affordances of the blockchain-supported platform Odysee will be investigated based on this taxonomy.

Case study: Odysee

Methodology

This study follows the basic assumption that the affordances of a platform are based on the platform's own architecture. Research into monetisation affordances on social media platforms is still in its infancy. Therefore, a methodology including inductive and deductive elements was chosen for this research. As an inductive approach to the research, the architecture of Odysee, a platform that uses blockchain technology for monetisation, was investigated, whereby technical features for monetisation and the affordances resulting from these features were recorded.

Background

Odysee is a video hosting platform that is marketed as a YouTube alternative and provides a similar functionality. Furthermore, users can utilize the service to upload, access and download other file formats, including audio files and PDF files. However, Odysee is primarily used to share videos. The video service is frequented by various different users. It contains a wide range of content, including cooking videos, vlogs, travel videos and videos that discuss computer games. The users subscribe to different political beliefs or are apolitical. By no means are all users part of the conspiracy ideologue or extreme-right spectrum. However, this particular milieu does use the platform and strategically links to Odysee from other platforms, as the research team at ISD has identified. For this reason, the platform was selected as a subject for analyses as part of the project "Countering radicalisation in right-wing extremist online subcultures".

The platform is built on the LBRY protocol, a decentralised filesharing network that incorporates blockchain and BitTorrent technologies and enables streaming and file downloads.²⁵ Just like the LBRY network, the platform is connected to a company of the same name, LBRY Inc. The former parent company of Odysee is based in the US state of New Hampshire, while Odysee Inc. lists a contact address in Nevada.²⁶ In October 2021, it was stated on the website of Odysee that the platform would be run separately from LBRY as an independent company with its own CEO.²⁷ Despite this, the message stated that the platform would continue to use the LBRY protocol. Summarising the message on the website, LBRY CEO Jeremy Kauffman commented that LBRY serves as a "safety valve" to ensure that the platform would never

turn into YouTube.²⁸ This comment indicates that, by using the LBRY protocol, Odysee is incorporating both the technical and ideological aspects of the protocol. LBRY is closely linked to the political tendency of libertarianism.²⁹ This is not only shown by the role of the LBRY CEO as a candidate for the Libertarian Party of New Hampshire in the 2022 United States Senate election. Libertarian beliefs also underpin the founding and structure of the LBRY protocol. In one interview, Kauffman stressed that LBRY was inspired by an aversion to the mistreatment of users by government bodies and industrial players and by a love of markets and an appreciation for how they facilitate human flourishing.³⁰

The aversion to state interference and dissociation from big companies, which are grouped under the term "Big Corporate" and portrayed as the enemy, is a classic component of libertarian ideology. Here, corporations are viewed as all-powerful entities that do not follow the authentic logic of the market, but rather prevent competition through political cronyism and obstruct a genuinely free market with their manipulative behaviour. Libertarian companies define themselves as different from big companies and complain about the supposed tyranny of "Big Tech" and state regulatory agencies. On the LBRY website, Kauffman lists examples of unfair behaviour from large technology companies towards their customers and writes that this behaviour is the result of a lack of competition.³¹ According to Kauffman, the solution to this problem is to build protocols that are able to offer users alternatives to existing companies.

LBRY highlights the benefits of decentralised structures in different areas. For example, the company's representatives emphasize the decentralised structure of LBRY as a core function of the protocol that makes censorship and control of shared content more difficult, which in turn is intended to make content less reliant on any single instance.³² Through the LBRY protocol, content is encrypted and stored in a distributed structure on various hosts and can be accessed using a decryption key.³³ While LBRY does not have any influence over what is published on the blockchain of the protocol, Odysee does regulate content as part of the platform's own community guidelines.³⁴ For example, these guidelines prohibit pornographic content or content that glorifies violence. At the same time, the

platform operators have a very broad interpretation of freedom of speech, which is in accordance with their libertarian philosophy.

In a similar fashion as on YouTube, Odysee users can create a profile on the platform and upload videos which can then be accessed via the profile. When it comes to the sharing of content on the platform, the libertarian basic ideals of the operators are apparent, as Odysee is modelled after a marketplace. As an “incentivised platform”, Odysee offers users financial incentives for certain interactions. Specifically, Odysee users receive the digital currency LBRY Credits as a form of virtual tips and through various rewards, based on metrics such as the number of views their videos get or for inviting other users to join the platform. LBRY Credits can also be converted into other currencies, such as US Dollar or Euro, on crypto trading platforms. They can also be used to claim a specific video title. The greater the amount of LBRY Credits that the creators and viewers stake when uploading a video, the higher the relevant video is ranked in the platform’s own search results. In this case, it appears as though the libertarian belief that property rights play a crucial role in the concept of freedom has been written into the search algorithm. As a consequence, this algorithm sometimes places search results that are less relevant but have brought in more money higher than more relevant results, thereby making the search function more difficult to use.

Currently (as of July 2022), the status of LBRY Credits is the subject of a lawsuit filed by The United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) against LBRY Inc. The regulator alleges that LBRY Inc. issued LBRY Credits to investors in such a way that these credits took on the function of securities. The complaint alleges that, as a result of this, LBRY Inc. engaged in the unregistered offering and selling of securities. According to the SEC, LBRY’s actions violated the Securities Act³⁵ – an act that was intended to make securities trading more transparent after the global financial crisis of 1929. LBRY refutes this assertion, and, on its own campaign website dedicated to countering the SEC’s complaint, points out the functions that LBRY Credits serve for the networks connected to LBRY:

“The LBRY Credit serves an integral function in our network. It allows individuals to create an identity, tip

creators, and publish, purchase, and boost content in a decentralised way.”³⁶

Here, LBRY is arguing the case on the basis of the affordances offered by the currency of the same name.

Affordances on Odysee

Odysee offers users several functions that make it possible to earn LBRY Credits. In general, these functions allow users to monetise their content and the use of the platform. This option is particularly attractive for actors from the conspiracy theorist and far-right sphere, as such individuals have in recent years more frequently been demonetised or had their accounts deleted by bigger platforms such as YouTube. Nevertheless, on Odysee, according to the community guidelines, there are also limitations on content, despite the fact that the platform operators have frequently spoken out against the regulation of content³⁷ and also do not seem to apply the guidelines consistently.³⁸ According to the platform’s community guidelines, content that promotes terrorism, illegal activities or incites violence will not be tolerated on the platform.³⁹ However, such content can still be found on the platform, such as recordings of the livestream published by the Buffalo shooter during the attack on 14 May 2022.⁴⁰ Some of these videos feature commentary in which the authenticity of the video or the far-right beliefs of the perpetrator are questioned. Some videos cynically framed the attack in a “humorous” way by replaying individual sections of the video or by adding racist commentary and amplifying the first-person view of the livestream. Despite this clear glorification of a right-wing terrorist attack that claimed ten lives, the videos on Odysee were easily accessible at the time of the analysis. Here, Odysee failed to implement its own guidelines. Furthermore, several videos denying the Holocaust could be found and accessed from a German IP address (as of 01/06/2022).

Meanwhile, Odysee practises rigorous geoblocking in other areas, in order to avoid violating the laws of states in which videos are accessed. To test this, videos hosted by the channel of a right-wing rock music label were accessed with and without a proxy. While all videos could be accessed using the proxy, the entire channel could not be accessed from IP addresses in Germany. Instead, a notice appeared stating that the channel contained illegal content. The blocking of the channel in this case also

affected videos that did not violate German law in ways obvious to the researchers. In some cases, this led to a scenario in which videos that were blocked on Odysee were freely available on YouTube - a rather paradoxical situation given the fact that LBRY CEO Jeremy Kauffman criticised YouTube's moderation rules, stating that they were "far too strict".⁴¹ Furthermore, according to a report from the Guardian, Odysee CEO Julian Chandra resolutely spoke out against the removal of extreme-right content, unless it dehumanises other races.⁴²

The described form of geoblocking was also observed in the context of channels that promote a revisionist view of history. It is noteworthy that the comprehensive blocking off channels directly contradicts how Odysee presents itself – as a platform with very few restrictions when it comes to freedom of expression. According to Odysee, the livestream of the German-language Russian state-controlled TV network RT DE was blocked by Odysee at the request of RT DE itself. A notification with this information appears when a user attempts to click on the livestream and is likely a reaction to the EU-wide broadcasting ban on the channel.⁴³ This notice on the screen stating that the livestream of RT was blocked at the request of the channel itself and the comparatively laborious process for reporting content that violates the community guidelines (compare with the "Intervention affordances" section in this study) serve as indications that Odysee only takes action after it receives notification of such violations and is not actively searching for content that violates the community guidelines. The guidelines themselves contain a note stating that Odysee reserves the right to request the removal of content that violates the guidelines or to delete such content itself.⁴⁴

Despite this practice, extreme-right actors use Odysee in an effort to prevent their statements from being regulated like it occurs on YouTube. These actors also look to monetise their content without facing too many obstacles, and are therefore drawn to Odysee. In its communications, the platform actively presents itself as an alternative to YouTube and enables users to connect to a YouTube account so that the videos they upload to YouTube are also uploaded to Odysee automatically. According to the platform operators, the naming process

for individual videos is organised in a similar way to an auction⁴⁵. Video uploaders "bid" on a specific name with LBRY Credits. Those videos uploaded by the channel owners that bid the highest amount for the relevant name will appear higher up in the search results when this name is searched for. This persists until the users withdraw the credits they deposited for the name. In addition, videos that receive more in tips appear higher up in the "Trending" and "Top" rankings. This incentivises users to hold LBRY Credits and to reinvest them on the platform. The incentive to give videos a higher ranking position through investments reflects the libertarian idea of shaping interactions via market transactions wherever possible. This fundamental concept is reflected in the auction model that is embedded in the platform architecture. As mentioned above, this sometimes results in videos that are less relevant appearing higher in the rankings because the uploaders have bid more credits. This mechanism makes it more difficult to find relevant videos.

However, the platform's native currency is not just used to claim video titles and secure a higher ranking in search results on the platform. The platform's own monetisation affordances also enable users to build social or parasocial relationships. The monetisation affordances offered by Odysee and potential secondary affordances will be described in more detail in the following section.

Monetisation affordances

On Odysee, users have the opportunity to earn LBRY Credits for using the platform through "Rewards". The rewards are displayed on the profile of the users and are intended to motivate users to use the platform. The credits for these rewards are generated by Odysee through a process known as mining⁴⁶ and paid to the users. The amount of the rewards can be adjusted by the platform operators at any time. **Users can earn LBRY Credits for creating a channel, uploading videos, accessing content, following channels, watching videos and increasing their number of followers.** Rewards paid out for watching videos, following other channels and increasing one's own number of followers are made up of multiple levels (see Figure 1). The Rewards functionality, the opportunity to reach certain levels and the design exhibit elements of a gamification

strategy, which can be used to increase users' motivation to use a product or application by means of a design that has similar features to that of a game.⁴⁷

Users can receive bonuses for inviting other users and for their own first registration on the platform.

The design of this functionality also indicates the platform's gamification strategy. In addition, this function gives the user sending the invitation the image

of an early adopter, and thereby a higher status.⁴⁸ At the same time, the invitation function can reinforce the mutual bond between the inviter and the invitee and can give the invitee a feeling of belonging to a group.

A function that is also offered on other platforms, especially video platforms, is the opportunity to pay tips to content publishers in the form of US dollars, euro or LBC. In addition to the financial aspect of the support, the tips also have a positive effect on

Welcome to Odysee!
A welcome bonus and thank you for your contribution to our special universe.
Claim 0.1

Go for a Stream
Just press play on something. Anything at all. Yep, even that one. Everybody's doing it.
Claim 0.05

Channel Surfing
Claim your channel! Create an identity used to securely publish content.
Claim 0.1

First Upload
Launch your own channel by sharing a video.
Claim 0.1

Welcome Back
Return to the app 24-48 hours following your first use of the app. This reward will self destruct after that time span.
Claim 0.1

View Master L1: N00b
Watch content and earn more Credits for each level unlocked! 10 views required for level 1 (Current Score: 0). Only up to 10 views per day count.
Claim 0.01

Invites
Earn 1 for inviting a friend, an enemy, a frenemy, or an enefriend. Everyone needs content freedom.
Go To Invites

Weekly Watch Reward
Earn a random reward of at least 0.1 for watching cool stuff at least 3 days during the week.
Claim 0.1-25

Inviter Bonus
Some extra Credits for you and the person that brought you to us.
Change Inviter

Email Verified
A small amount of Credits to get you started.
Claim 0.1

Coveted Creator L1: Loneliest Number
Gain a following to earn this reward. 1 validated followers needed for level 1 (Current Score: 0). This amount may not match your total followers.
Claim 0.01

Custom Code
Are you a supermodel or rockstar that received a custom reward code? Claim it here.
Enter Code

Figure 1: Overview of rewards on an Odysee profile. Screenshot from 13/05/2022.

the public perception of the channel operators. This is not simply a financial investment for the viewers, but also an emotional investment that connects them to the channel owners.⁴⁹ For the viewers giving tips, this goes hand in hand with a boost in status as a supporter of content creators. In some cases, users who support content creators are thanked personally, as is common on other video platforms (such as Twitch).

Another type of support is the Boost support function. This is a form of public support which increases the visibility of the supported video. Supporting channels are linked to the video and also benefit from increased visibility. This type of support can be withdrawn at any time, whereby the deposited credits go back to the supporting users.

One type of monetisation on Odysee that is not used frequently is the option to offer paid content. In this case, users can set the price they charge for their content.

An indirect form of monetisation is to hold on to one's own credits rather than paying them out to other users and hope that the price of LBC increases. If that happens, then the funds of the users increase accordingly. This is generally a common practice among cryptocurrency investors. Because the value of cryptocurrencies is not defined by central institutions, and because they are not backed by any other asset (such as gold), with the exception of so-called "stable coins", cryptocurrencies are very susceptible to fluctuations in value. Their value is highly dependent

on finding people who want to buy the respective cryptocurrency. Every time a cryptocurrency is cashed out in euro, for instance, this decreases the number of stakeholders and can have a negative impact on the price of the currency. This is one of the reasons why cryptocurrencies are frequently equated to pyramid schemes or "Ponzi schemes"⁵⁰. The value of the "coins" is increased by attracting as many new investors as possible to purchase the relevant cryptocurrency. According to critics, this resembles the process key to pyramid schemes, in which more and more new investors are always needed to ultimately pay the earlier investors.

Another monetisation opportunity that has been announced by Odysee but has not yet been implemented is the Creator Membership function. Through this function, creators can be supported by means of monthly subscriptions. These subscriptions are planned to have different levels of support based on the amount paid each month (Helping Hand, \$5; Big-Time Supporter, \$10; Community MVP, \$20). In return, the supporters receive exclusive content via this subscription, in addition to a certain profile label. This payment model is similar to the various support levels that content providers can set on the platform Patreon⁵¹. Users of the platform can access a varying amount of paid content from certain content providers depending on the level of support they provide. In this way, supporters of illustrators, for example, receive additional digital images or can specify custom images that are drawn for them. An overview of the monetisation affordances offered by Odysee is provided in Figure 2.

Monetisation affordances on Odysee	Secondary affordances	
	Content Creators	Followers
Rewards An additional payment for activities such as creating a channel, uploading videos, accessing content, following other profiles, watching videos and the number of followers.	Enables entertainment through content and gamification; addictive factors	Enables entertainment through content and gamification; addictive factors
Invitation bonus A special payment in the form of invitation links through which the inviter and invitee receive Credits. Some influencers can receive voucher codes for special rewards as an incentive.	Enables the image of being an <i>early adopter</i>	Enables <i>in-group</i> Status
Tips A voluntary donation from users to accounts in the form of LBRY Credits, US dollars and euro.	Enables status as a publicly successful creator	Enables status as a supporter
Boost support A form of public support which increases the visibility of the supported video. Supporting channels are linked to the video and also benefit from increased visibility. This support can be withdrawn at any time.	Enables higher reach and status as a publicly successful creator	Enables status as a public supporter; increases visibility by linking accounts
Paid content A function provided by Odysee that allows users to set the price they charge for their content themselves.	Enables <i>exclusivity</i> (not used in practice)	Enables access to exclusive content
LBC price increase An increase in the value of already received LBRY Credits held by users in their crypto wallets as a result of the exchange rate increasing.	Enables the appearance of being an <i>early adopter</i> ; comparable dynamics to those of a pyramid scheme	Enables gains and the image of being a successful investor; increased community building
Creator Memberships An announced but not yet implemented function, which is intended to make it possible for users to provide various levels of support for video channels in the form of monthly subscriptions, and in turn, to get access to exclusive content and a profile badge that identifies users as supporters. This function is planned to include various levels of support (Helping Hand, \$5; Big-Time Supporter, \$10; Community MVP, \$20)	Enables personalisation and status as a professional creator	Enables status as a supporter

Figure 2: Monetisation affordances on Odysee.

Intervention affordances

In the context of norm building and group configuration on social media, Van Raemdonck and Pierson describe various intervention opportunities that differ depending on the platform. Many of these affordances are closely linked to the platform architecture and the functionalities offered, such as the option to comment openly on content, and in doing so, to represent certain standards and values, or the option to restrict the number of recipients of a post in advance. In addition, decisions made by the platform operators can influence the effectiveness of these intervention affordances.

For example, one experiment showed that displaying community guidelines on Reddit increased new users' compliance with these rules by 8% and increased the rate of participation in discussions by 70%.⁵² Another study showed that the probability of future content removals on Reddit would be reduced by 20.8% if it was required to provide an explanation for every instance of content removal.⁵³

Odysee only offers few intervention affordances. The platform does feature community guidelines, however these can only be accessed from the homepage by clicking on the menu button and scrolling in the sidebar that opens. There is no link to the community guidelines in the steps involved in posting videos, blog entries and livestreams. The section on "tags" also contains the following social norm-building notice: "If your content is best suited for mature audiences, ensure it is tagged 'mature'."

Content creators are also offered some opportunities to moderate their channels. For example, they can enable or disable the comment feature under their videos, they can set the speed with which users can comment and they can set a minimum tip amount for the use of the comment and chat functions. Furthermore, certain users can be designated as moderators, which enables them to block other users and delete comments.

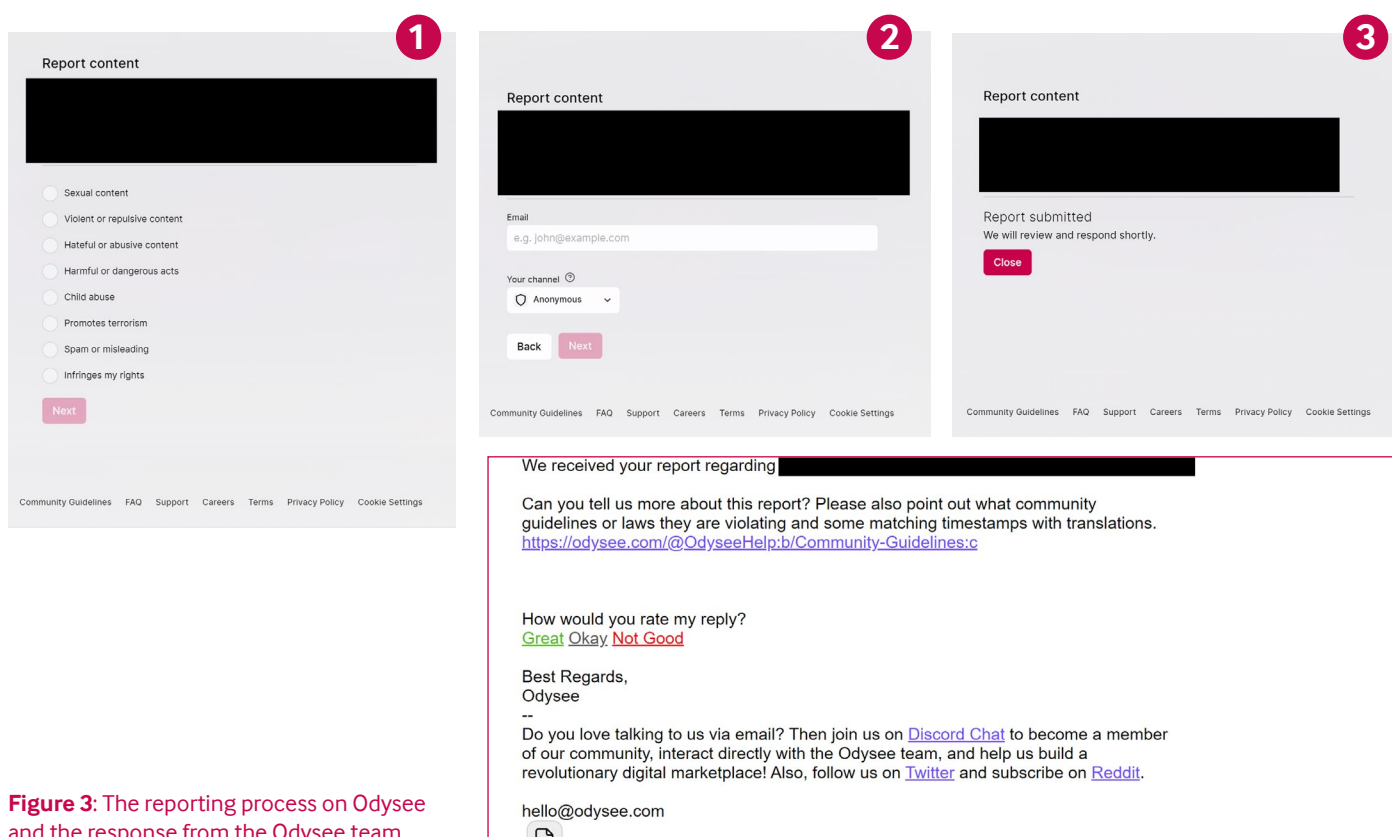


Figure 3: The reporting process on Odysee and the response from the Odysee team.

Channel owners can also automatically block comments and live chat messages that contain certain pre-defined words.

Content that violates the community guidelines or laws can be reported. The reporting function is not directly accessible. Instead, it is accessed by clicking on the three dots underneath a video. Users are then prompted to choose from a list of reasons why they are reporting the content, and to provide additional details and a timestamp. In order to complete the reporting process, users must also provide an email address and must select whether they would like to use an existing channel, create a new channel or submit the complaint anonymously. A question mark is shown next to the “Your channel” element, but no further information is provided as to why it is necessary for the user to select their own channel.

To get a more detailed insight into the reporting process on Odysee, a video with a discriminating name and discriminating content posted by a well-known far-right content creator was reported (see Figure 3). The next

day, a message from the Odysee team – which is likely to have been automatically generated – was sent to the email address provided by the researchers in the report form. The message included a request for more details about the reported content. The email also asked the user reporting the content to point out exactly which community guidelines or laws the video had violated. Timestamps and translations of the relevant violations were also requested. It is unclear whether Odysee investigates reports before these follow-up questions are answered. If the company does not, then this would mean that the responsibility for ensuring compliance with the community guidelines is largely being outsourced to the users. In any case, the request for users who report content to identify specific laws represents a challenge for non-lawyers that could intimidate them. No response was sent to the follow-up questions from the Odysee team and the video reported by the researchers is still online (as of 05/07/2022).

Odysee has not provided any information about whether the LBRY Wallet associated with an account can still be accessed after an account is blocked.

Qualitative analysis of the contents of video channels on Odysee

Methodology

In order to determine which content posted by far-right content creators on blockchain-based platforms is particularly financially successful, a qualitative content analysis of profitable profiles was carried out. At the beginning of the investigation, a collection of Odysee channels was compiled. This was based on link analyses carried out on other platforms by ISD researchers.⁵⁴ The collection was added to through manual research using the search function. Researchers searched for terms that are typically used within the far-right scene and thereby identified accounts from the far-right and conspiracy theory online milieu to add to the collection. The channels were sorted using an already existing set of categories⁵⁵ as well as according to their number of followers. The collection compiled in this way served as a basis for the qualitative content analysis and for the financial analysis described further below. For the qualitative content analysis, a total of eleven particularly successful channels were selected from the collection. During the selection of channels, care was taken to ensure that a broad range of ideological views was covered.

The final sample consists of channels of conspiracy theorists, anti-lockdown advocates and sovereigntists as well as far-right extremists. In comparison to other investigated platforms, it was determined that the selected profitable channels on Odysee were all linked to individuals and groups that are already successful on other platforms. No accounts that had become successful just through their activity on Odysee were identified. On each of the eleven selected profiles, the five videos that had received the most support were analysed. This process involved recording the type of video, the content of the video, how many credits it earned, how often the video was shared and how often the video was interacted with using the “Fire” or “Slime” buttons. The “Fire” and “Slime” buttons can be used to publicly express agreement or disagreement with a video on the platform.

Findings

During the analysis, 55 videos that had received a total of 36,120.88 Credits (536.76 USD as of 13/05/2022) were analysed. Out of the eleven channels investigated, three had received more than 1000 Credits in support and tips with individual videos.

The most successful channel included in the analysis was an anti-lockdown channel. This channel hosts talkshow formats with a length of three to five hours in which international guests engage in discussion. The five most successful videos on this channel were included in the dataset and investigated. In addition to the political measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, current topics such as the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine or regional elections are discussed in the videos. The channel also promotes conspiracy narratives about vaccinations, a “Deep State” and the “Great Reset”.⁵⁶ The investigated videos further contain antisemitic statements, historical revisionism and climate change denial.

The second most successful channel in this dataset was the channel of a far-right extremist who was “deplatformed” by YouTube and regularly posts live formats on Odysee, in which he discusses day-to-day political developments. In his most supported videos, he voices scepticism about the existence of climate change, among other things. The channel owner uses racist arguments and propagates Malthusian⁵⁷ ideas, which attribute poverty and famine to overpopulation. The third channel belongs to a conspiracy theorist who comments on daily political issues in the USA and conspiracy theories with a focus on QAnon content.

The video formats chosen most frequently were news and commentary (38 of 55). This is also reflected in the content, as most of the videos cover daily political issues. It is noteworthy that content focused on “classic” extreme-right topics, such as content promoting a revisionist view of history in relation to the First World

War or Second World War tend to receive less support than videos about current political issues. In addition, four videos cover the subject of deplatforming in the extreme-right and conspiracy theorist scenes. A correlation between user engagement and the amount of financial support was also identified. Across all topics, channels with a high level of user engagement and a high number of followers receive significantly more support and tips than channels with low levels of user engagement and lower numbers of followers.

In some live and commentary videos, the content creators interact with each other or with the audience. Including the audience in the content that is created suggests a social setting which the viewers actively participate in and encourages the building and reinforcement of parasocial relationships. In addition to the core themes of the videos, this format could also be a reason why commentary videos and live recordings are frequently among the most financially successful content.

The most profitable channels in the investigated sample belong to content creators that were already well known in the far-right and conspiracy theorist online milieu before Odysee came into existence. Within this milieu, Odysee offers individual content

creators the opportunity to become more well-known and to continue to spread and monetise their content. However, the users that dominate the platform are big players from the scene that have already established themselves outside of Odysee and are using the video hosting service as part of a multi-platform strategy or as a back-up option.

In addition to the systematic qualitative analysis, a targeted search for antisemitic content was carried out using the platform's own search function. For this search, three words commonly used in antisemitic circles were entered in the platform's search engine individually. This search provided evidence that videos involving Holocaust denial are shared on Odysee. Such videos are not found in the German-language sample that forms the basis of the qualitative analysis. Nevertheless, some of the pseudo-documentaries, most of which are in English, can still be accessed in Germany, as Odysee has not geoblocked these videos. Unlike the videos selected for the qualitative analysis, these clips are not profitable videos with a wide reach. Nevertheless, their existence indicates another function of Odysee that the far-right online milieu is taking advantage of outside of financing and community building, namely, the dissemination of illegal, hateful propaganda.

Financial analysis

Methodology

A financial analysis was carried out using the LBRY Blockchain Explorer. The explorer makes it possible to view and trace transactions on the LBRY blockchain. For the financial analysis, 53 Odysee users from the conspiracy theorist and far right spectrum with more than 500 followers were selected and their digital incomes were investigated. To do this, the individual Odysee profiles were accessed and the claim IDs of the most recently posted videos were used to assign a wallet to each profile. Using the assigned wallet IDs, it was possible to record the current balance in the wallets and the amount of LBRY Credits each wallet had received since it was created (as of 09/05/2022).

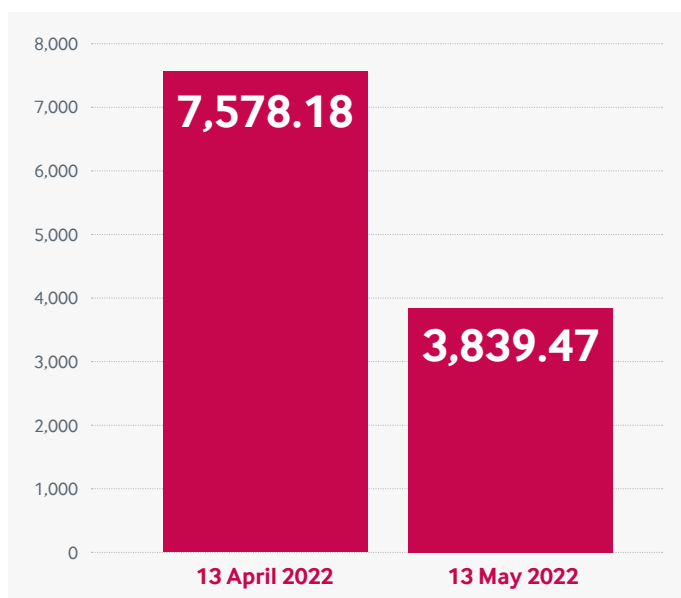


Figure 4: The available balance of the investigated accounts in USD at the time of the analysis (right) and four weeks prior (left).

This analysis took place within the technical limits set by the transaction system. For example, Credits that users in this dataset have sent to one another to the collected wallet addresses could have been counted twice. Users can also use several wallet addresses. As part of the data collection method used, only one address was collected for each user. If users use multiple wallets, then the data collection method used would only record a fraction of their total balance.

Findings

Overall, the 53 accounts have received 1,652,786.96 LBRY Credits since the creation of their wallets. At the time of the investigation, 258,376.64 LBRY Credits were still available as a balance in the digital wallets.

The earning potential on the platform is heavily dependent on the price of LBC. Users can adjust the amount of their donations in Credits in accordance with the current exchange rate. However, the value of a user's balance still depends on the development of the price of LBC. To clarify: If users receive LBC that is worth 25 USD, then this could be worth much less than 25 USD or much more than 25 USD in a month's time depending on how the price of LBC develops. At the time of the analysis, the 53 accounts had a balance of 258,376.64 LBRY Credits. When converted to USD using the current exchange rate (13/05/2022; exchange rate: 1 LBC = 0.01486 USD), this would equal a total value of 3,839.48 USD. One month before, however, the exchange rate was significantly higher (1 LBC = 0.02933 USD on 13/04/2022), and therefore the credits would have been worth almost twice as much at this time with a value of 7,578.19 USD (Figure 4). The price of LBC is a decisive factor in the earning potential for the scene.

Therefore, due to the high volatility of LBC, it was not possible to precisely record the total amounts of US dollars earned by the accounts to date based on the data collected for the financial analysis. However, it was possible to calculate an approximate value based on the average age of the wallets and the average closing price over this period. At the time of the analysis, the wallets had an average age of 16 months and received a total of 1,652,786.96 LBRY Credits during this period. When converted to USD using the average closing price for LBC over the last 16 months (0.074 USD), this corresponds to total earnings of approximately 122,306 USD. Two of the investigated channels in particular stood out because of their high earnings. One conspiracy theorist channel had received a total of 453,873.08 Credits over the investigated period, which was equal to 33,587 USD when converted using the method described above. The second channel was a sovereignist's channel that had received 354,241.70, equal to around 26,214 USD.

According to a report from US-based civil rights organisation Southern Poverty Law Center far-right extremists in the United States use millions of dollars in cryptocurrencies.⁵⁸ When compared to this figure, the six-figure amount that the investigated accounts earned in LBRY Credits seems relatively small. However, in view of the fact that the two channels with the highest earnings received around 59,801 USD during the investigation period, the earning potential on the platform is also significant for the German-speaking scene. Depending

on the general development of the crypto market, this form of monetisation has the potential to be used to fund extreme-right groups and individuals. Using “incentivised” platforms, these actors can build structures that allow users to disguise their donations more effectively than has previously been possible.

The number of Credits earned appears to only be partly linked to the number of uploads, but is correlated to the number of followers (Figure 5).

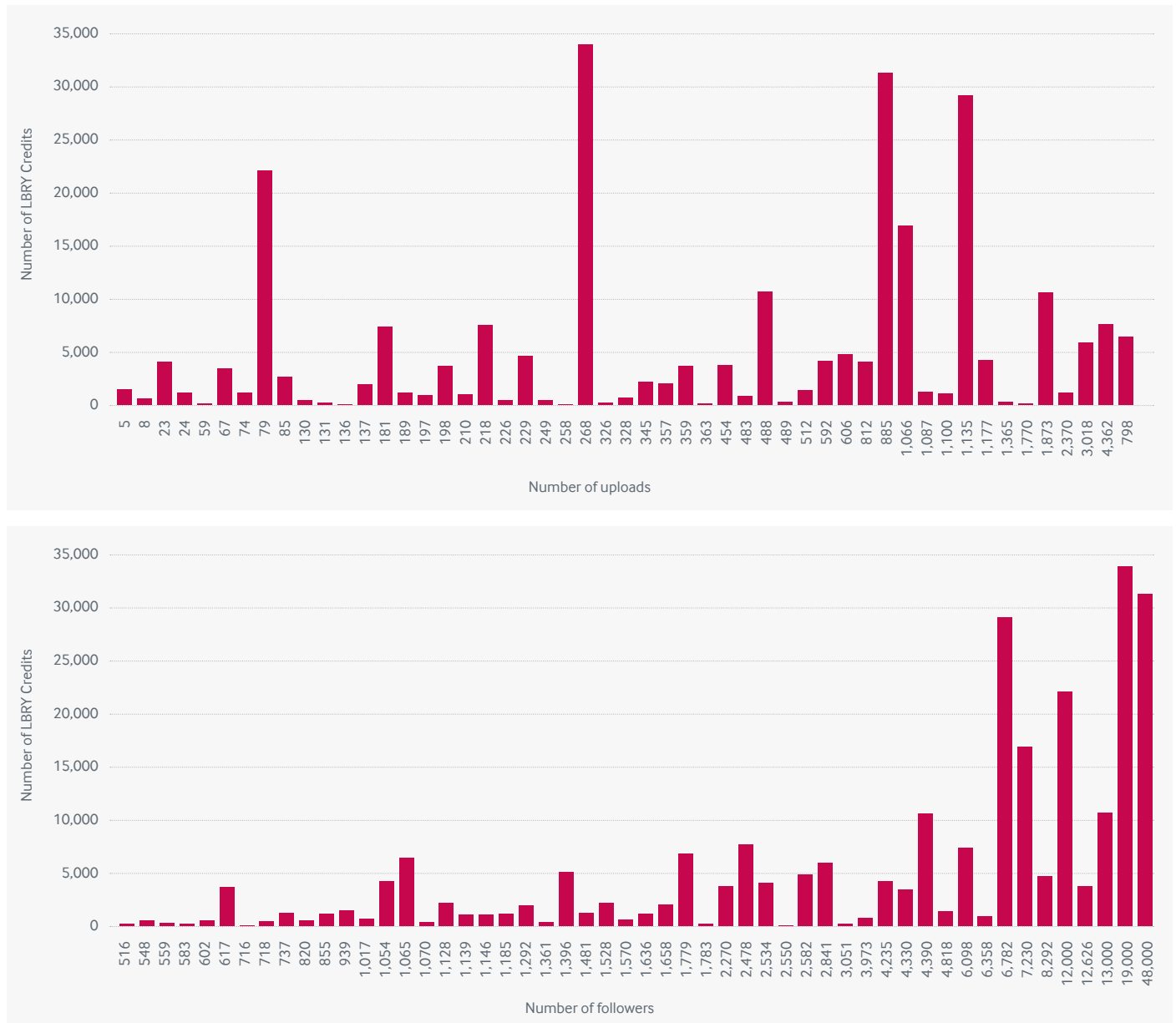


Figure 5: The credits earned by the individual accounts in relation to the number of uploads (above) and the number of followers (below).

Discussion and Potential Courses of Action

The previous analysis of monetisation affordances on Odysee shows that, as of now, not only are conspiracy theorists and far-right extremists still able to share hateful, and in some cases, illegal content via the Internet and go largely unchallenged while doing so, they are also able to earn money in the process. In the previous studies carried out as part of this research project, Odysee has emerged as one of the most popular alternatives to established platforms such as YouTube for this milieu. Even though the reach on Odysee in Germany is still comparably small, the blockchain technology used by the platform provides this milieu with a potential source of income that is not insignificant and that has not yet been fully exploited, to finance further political activities.

Crypto regulation & the action plan to counter far-right extremism

At the EU level, various legislative proposals are currently being negotiated to give member states the power to regulate the crypto market. For example, a regulation for crypto trading platforms is being discussed. An amendment to the EU's Anti-Money Laundering Directives aimed at preventing money laundering and the financing of terrorism is also on the way. This amendment will introduce stricter regulations for trading with cryptocurrencies. In the USA, the ongoing legal dispute between the SEC and LBRY Inc. serves as an indicator of the future when it comes to reporting requirements for cryptocurrency trading. The preceding financial analysis demonstrated that increased requirements regarding transparency are essential for trading in cryptocurrency, in order to trace the flow of money into the extreme-right milieu and the monetisation of illegal content, and where possible, prevent it. **However, even without a change in legislation, thanks to publicly accessible analysis programmes, such as the LBRY Blockchain Explorer, authorities already have the opportunity to examine public transaction data on the relevant blockchain and identify unlawful content.**

The action plan to combat far-right extremism introduced by Interior Minister Nancy Faeser in March 2022 proposes a "significant expansion of the investigation and analysis of right-wing extremist financial activities".⁵⁹ In addition to the financial opportunities listed in the action plan, such as "concerts, festivals, music products, martial arts events and

e-commerce/retail stores", monetisation affordances, similar to those that platforms such as Odysee offer far-right political actors, should also be included. **In general, the use of cryptocurrency as a means of financing extremist movements should be a higher priority in terms of analysis and regulation.**

Content-based regulation of decentralised platforms

From the perspective of platform regulation, so-called alternative platforms, which present themselves as decentralised alternatives to the established platforms, come across as especially challenging cases. Part of the way they market themselves is by stating that the platform operators are unable to take action against illegal content as, for instance, required for larger platforms under the Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG). The term "decentralised" suggests that there is not a single node through which content can be filtered. Platforms that are based on blockchain technology are frequently presented as being "censorship-resistant". However, in the case of Odysee, this is a fallacy. Even though Odysee partially utilises decentralised blockchain technology, ultimately, individual content is only visible to the wider, less technologically adept public through a central point of access, the Odysee website.⁶⁰ The previous content analysis demonstrated that the operators of Odysee are able to make certain content or entire channels unavailable for visitors to the website at their own discretion through delisting, or to block these for certain regions by means of geoblocking. **From a technical perspective, platforms that market themselves as decentralised are often well suited to perform content-based regulation and should therefore not be viewed as untouchable or immune.**

The platform is also subject to the provisions of the Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG). As a social network provider in Germany, Odysee Inc. would act in violation of the NetzDG, if the company failed to name a legal representative in Germany. During its research, ISD team was unable to find a legal representative in Germany (as at 18/07/2022). **Regardless of whether Odysee has a sufficient number of German users to trigger removal and reporting requirements in accordance with the Network Enforcement Act, Odysee is obligated to name a legal representative in the Federal Republic of Germany.**

Systematic regulation of “incentivised” platforms

The analysis provides important information in relation to systemic regulatory approaches, such as those in the EU Digital Services Act (DSA) or in the British Online Safety Bill (OSB). Therefore, future-proof legislation aimed at combating hate speech and disinformation online should take into account both the risks that arise from advertisement-funded business models and those that arise from “incentivised” platforms. It is important to highlight the gamification strategy of Odysee in this context. As the analysis of affordances demonstrated, the platform offers various opportunities for users to collect rewards in the form of cryptocurrency, for instance by interacting with or uploading content.

When viewed in combination with the volatility of cryptocurrency, this business model should also be critically examined from the perspective of the risk of gambling addiction, especially for young people.

Furthermore, the conducted analysis of the specific affordances of the Odysee platform serves as a blueprint for the risk assessment of other online platforms.

The assessment of societal risks, based not only on the contents of a platform, but also on its underlying technology, architecture and business model, is a key component of the latest approaches to digital policy. **With regard to the individual platforms, affordance analyses can help with internal risk assessments. Regulatory authorities and external auditors, on the other hand, can carry out such analyses in the context of checking compliance with future legislation, for instance as part of prescribed compliance monitoring to verify whether the platforms are complying with their duty of care.**

Outlook

For the extreme-right online milieu, Odysee serves as a safe haven and as a component of their multi-platform strategy. In the investigated sample group, no accounts were identified whose owners became well-known in the scene through Odysee. Instead, the most successful account belonged to individuals that were already popular in the scene before launching their accounts on the platform. In general, the number of user interactions is low on most accounts, which indicates that Odysee has not yet reached the wider public and still has a comparatively small number of users. Nevertheless, Odysee still has a clear function for the extreme right, which is to serve as a largely regulation-free safe haven that they can make money on. The platform is not strictly far right, but it tolerates extremist users, partly against the background of libertarian beliefs and partly against the background of financial profitability.

Whether it can be successful over the long term will depend on the outcome of the legal dispute with the SEC and also on the future of cryptocurrencies in general. On the one hand, continuously fluctuating prices of cryptocurrencies would pose a challenge for “incentivised” platforms that use such methods of payment as an integral component, as they would have to reorganise their monetisation structures. At the same time, Odysee already has an advantage over other

alternative platforms due to its position as one of the first incentivised platforms. Another important factor is the behaviour of users that have lost money due to a drop in the value of cryptocurrencies or due to cases of fraud. A section of the crypto scene is favouring a move towards more centralisation as a reaction to the various cases of fraud and currency devaluation. Other investors may search for new crypto investments to recoup lost funds. Crypto investors that have lost money through their investments are also a very interesting target group for extremist movements. In this context, Odysee could become relevant in a whole other respect. This is because, as a crypto-related space, the platform could serve as an ideal recruitment space for far-right extremists looking to convince disappointed investors to follow their ideological beliefs.

As a so-called alternative platform that relies on decentralisation, Odysee is a safe haven for extreme-right online subcultures. Along with other decentralised platforms and protocols, such as PeerTube, Odysee is a platform that is more difficult to regulate based on its structure alone. The analysis of such decentralised platforms will thus continue to be a focus of the project “Countering radicalisation in right-wing extremist online subcultures”.

Endnotes

- 1 The publications that have been published so far as part of the project, including "Escape Routes", "Signposts", "Telegram as a Buttress", "Detours and Diversions" and the project conference report "In the blind spot", can be accessed using this website: <https://isdgermany.org/projekt-bmj/>
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- 10 Massey, B. (2018). Living Links: Examining Immigrant Teens' Experiences in Communication Technology Enhanced Transnational Spaces, 24.
- 11 Treem, J. W., & Leonardi, P. M. (2013). Social media use in organizations: Exploring the affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. Annals of the International Communication Association, 36(1), 143-189.
- 12 DeVito, M. A., Birnholtz, J., & Hancock, J. T. (2017, February). Platforms, people, and perception: Using affordances to understand self-presentation on social media. In Proceedings of the 2017 ACM conference on computer supported cooperative work and social computing (pp. 740-754).
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- 17 Massey, B. (2018). Living Links: Examining Immigrant Teens' Experiences in Communication Technology Enhanced Transnational Spaces, 24.
- 18 Bossetta, M. (2018). The digital architectures of social media: Comparing political campaigning on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat in the 2016 US election. Journalism & mass communication quarterly, 95(2), 471-496, 473.
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- 21 Ibid.
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- 23 Van Raemdonck, N., & Pierson, J. (2021, November). Taxonomy of Social Network Platform Affordances for Group Interactions. In 2021 14th CMI International Conference-Critical ICT Infrastructures and Platforms (CMI) (pp. 1-8). IEEE.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 See also LBRY (undated). @lbry. (2021). What is LBRY exactly? Is it a protocol, an app, a website or a company? Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://lbry.com/faq/what-is-lbry?https://lbry.com/faq/what-is-lbry>.

- 26 Cf. Odysee (2021). Privacy Policy. Accessed on 18/07/2022 at: [https://odysee.com/\\$/privacypolicy](https://odysee.com/$/privacypolicy).
- 27 Cf. @lbry. (2021). Two Is Better Than One: LBRY and Odysee are Evolving. Accessed on 12/07/2022 at: <https://odysee.com/@lbry:3f/lbryandodyseeevolving:7>.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Libertarianism is a form of liberalism that is predominantly followed in the USA and decidedly rejects collective interventions that affect personal freedom. As a result, followers of this philosophy want to either minimise or completely eliminate government structures. According to libertarian beliefs, the relationships between individuals should be governed primarily by free and voluntary exchange. Due to their rejection of government regulation, libertarians are often enthusiastic advocates for decentralised technologies and cryptocurrencies. For libertarians, the central importance of individual freedom does not necessarily result in the rejection of authoritarian systems of government. For example, there are libertarians who are admirers of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. Furthermore, the phenomenon of a “libertarian to alt-right pipeline” has been seen again and again in recent years (cf. Ganz, J. [2017]). Libertarians have more in common with the alt-right than they want you to think. The Washington Post. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/09/19/libertarians-have-more-in-common-with-the-alt-right-than-they-want-you-to-think/>. In this case, ideological commonalities include the rejection of a democratic government, which is interpreted by certain libertarian groups as collectivist tyranny, and – depending on the political context – is viewed by supporters of the far right as part of an anti-white conspiracy (for overlaps between libertarians and the alt-right, cf. Hermansson, P. (2018): Libertarianism and the Alternative Right. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://hopenothate.org.uk/2018/03/05/libertarianism-alternative-right/>. While the tendency towards adopting extreme-right positions in the libertarian spectrum may be limited and some libertarians staunchly oppose racism as a form of collectivism, this spectrum advocates for a basic premise that is very useful for the extreme-right milieu: namely, that government regulation is to be avoided. This has the consequence that platform operators with libertarian beliefs provide platforms for supporters of the far right due to the principles they represented and their broad definition of freedom of expression. This makes libertarian platform operators a pillar of the alt-tech infrastructure.
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- 31 Cf. Kauffman, J. (2018). Why Do Tech Giants Abuse Their Users?. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://lbry.com/news/why-do-tech-giants-abuse-their-users>.
- 32 Cf. for example: LBRY. (Undated). Art in the Internet Age: An Introduction to LBRY. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://lbry.com/what>.
- 33 Cf. Ibid.
- 34 See Ha, A. (2020). Odysee aims to build a more freewheeling, independent video platform. TechCrunch. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://techcrunch.com/2020/12/07/odysee-launch/>.
- 35 Cf. United States District Court. District of New Hampshire (2021). Complaint filed by SEC against LBRY Inc. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://www.sec.gov/litigation/complaints/2021/comp25060.pdf>.
- 36 In the original English source: “The LBRY Credit serves an integral function in our network. It allows individuals to create an identity, tip creators, and publish, purchase, and boost content in a decentralized way.” Source: LBRY, THE SEC, & THE FUTURE OF CRYPTO. (Undated). Case Guide and FAQ. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://helplbrysavencrypto.com/faq>.
- 37 See e.g. Odysee (2022): “We’ve been asked to remove RT from Odysee. We don’t care about politics, and being a platform means we have to be a platform. Whether it’s CNN, Fox, RT, etc. It all has its place on Odysee.” Accessed on 12/07/2022 at <https://twitter.com/OdyseeTeam/status/1498353815736573952>, Twitter; Ha, A. (2020). “Odysee aims to build a more freewheeling, independent video platform.”. TechCrunch. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://techcrunch.com/2020/12/07/odysee-launch/>; Cuffe, D. (2022) Alt-tech continues to host Russian state media accounts, despite EU sanctions. Accessed on 12/07/2022 at: <https://www.mediamatters.org/russias-invasion-ukraine/alt-tech-continues-host-russian-state-media-accounts-despite-eu-sanctions>. (2022): .
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- 39 Cf. Odysee Help (2022) Community Guidelines. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://odysee.com/@OdyseeHelp:b/Community-Guidelines:c>.

- 40 For information about this attack, see Sheets, C. Nelson, L. J., Jany, L., & Mays, M. (2022). Buffalo shooting that killed 10 investigated as 'racially motivated violent extremism'. Accessed on 12/07/2022 at: <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-05-15/buffalo-shooting-that-killed-10-investigated-as-racially-motivated-violent-extremism>.
 - 41 See Ha, A. (2020). Odysee aims to build a more freewheeling, independent video platform. TechCrunch. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://techcrunch.com/2020/12/07/odysee-launch/>.
 - 42 Vgl. Wilson, Jason (2021). Video platform chief says Nazi posts on white superiority do not merit removal. The Guardian. Accessed on 12/07/2022 at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/14/odysee-video-platform-nazi-content-not-grounds-for-removal>.
 - 43 See also Bundtzen, S. & Dorn, M. (2022): Banning RT and Sputnik Across Europe: What Does it Hold for the Future of Platform Regulation? Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: https://www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/banning-rt-and-sputnik-across-europe-what-does-it-hold-for-the-future-of-platform-regulation/.
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 - 45 Cf. Odysee Help (2021) Trending, Discovery, and Naming. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: <https://odysee.com/@OdyseeHelp:b/trending:50>.
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 - 49 Cf. e.g. Jasser, G. (2019) Great Little Men: Why the Alt-Right Beggars for Money. Fair Observer. Accessed on 05/07/2022 at: https://www.fairobserver.com/region/north_america/great-little-men-device-alt-right-crowdfunding-financing-news-16661/.
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- 57 Malthusian ideas are based on the theories of the economist and Anglican cleric Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834). Malthus wrote “An Essay on the Principle of Population”, which claimed that the population would increase so significantly that this would inevitably lead to food shortages. The book asserted that, with increased wealth, the reproduction rate of the lower strata of society would increase, making any efforts to feed everyone futile. To prevent the recurring famines predicted by Malthus, the economist recommended birth control, for example, in the form of moral restraint and abstinence. In Malthus’ quantitative argumentation, qualitative judgements about the various social classes and their value are also apparent. Malthusian thinking was one of the socio-historical strands that inspired ideas such as the eugenics movement. The idea of overpopulation always implies that there are people who are not “necessary” and is incompatible with the principles of inherent human dignity. The shortage of resources predicted by Malthus is also not empirically supported. Despite this, Malthusian ideas persist beyond the political fringes and this type of rhetoric is used to frame the population growth in poorer nations as the reason for their social problems.
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- 60 References and metadata for the individual content are stored permanently on the blockchain and cannot be deleted. However, this data can only be accessed via specific blockchain addresses or transaction IDs. The majority of users will not see this content if it is not visible on the Odysee website itself.



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