Dark Patterns of Online Targeted Diet and Weight-Loss Ads
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Abstract: Targeted advertising is a type of digital marketing that relies on a user’s unique characteristics, tastes, and preferences. Online targeted advertising potentially causes emotional harm due to the hyper-individualized, seemingly invasive nature of ad delivery. As it stands, the term diet ad is ambiguous and pushed on users who may not actively be trying to lose weight, in turn contributing to low-self esteem and acts as a sort of “slow-violence”. Employing python and data-analysis tools we will examine the trends and patterns in a dataset of commercials to create a proper definition of the otherwise ambiguous “fad diet-ads”.

Research Question: How do targeted ads/suggested profiles differ based on demonstrated interests?

Hashtags: Here are some findings of scrapped hashtags that show the contradictory nature of posts and may be harmful to the user. It goes against the interest areas of the user.

#healthtips
1,703,754 posts

Fat Flush Drinks Before Bed To Lose 10 Pounds In Just 1

#bodypositivity
8,486,480 posts

Future Work

using the outcomes of the research we can create another profile with another demographic, different interests, and a different gender to further study the trends and how instgram targets it’s users

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