



Written by [James Murphy](#) on August 18, 2017

YouTube's Soft Censorship

Internet giant YouTube has been accused of discriminatory practices by two black American video bloggers. Lynette Hardaway and Rochelle Richardson, better known as "Diamond and Silk," accused the video-sharing service of demonetizing their videos because of their conservative positions and support of President Donald Trump.

Diamond and Silk became Internet sensations during the 2016 election cycle with their comical and insightful videos in support of Trump. Though their channel has more than 100,000 subscribers and over 16 million views, their content was deemed "not suitable" for advertisers. Ninety-five percent of the videos on their channel have been demonetized, meaning that Diamond and Silk, while still being able to produce and post videos, cannot be paid for them with advertising dollars.



This is, currently, the highest profile example of YouTube silencing conservative speech, but it's far from the only one. Conservative commentators Steven Crowder, Mark Dice, Paul Joseph Watson, all with over 800,000 subscribers, have had a high percentage of their videos demonetized by YouTube, supposedly, for controversial content.

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But what is "controversial" is, apparently, in the eye of the beholder. *The Young Turks*, for example, a progressive news commentary program fronted by former MSNBC personality, Cenk Uygur, has not been demonetized. But even a quick peek at this channel reveals that a good deal of the commentary on the show contains both vulgar language and dubious conclusions. And no subjects seem to be off limits for *The Young Turks*; they can talk about whatever they please without any retribution from YouTube.

So what seems to be happening is that YouTube is a targeting of conservative voices for engaging in, what they deem, "hate speech." While, generally, YouTube doesn't *remove* the conservative videos that are deemed hate speech or, more vaguely, "not suitable for all advertisers," they do flag them, in a way that stops ad revenue from flowing freely to the videos. In addition, these videos are often placed in what is called Restricted Mode, which, not only makes the videos unavailable for anyone in Restricted Mode, it also removes them from the home page, so that they cannot be seen there, no matter how popular they may be.

These latest accusations come on the heels of YouTube's parent company Google firing software engineer James Damore for his memo addressing diversity issues at the company. His opinion that "on average, men and women biologically differ" and that "differences in distributions of traits between men and women may in part explain why we don't have 50% representation in tech and leadership"



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proved highly controversial. But in the same memo, he offered “non-discriminatory ways to reduce the gender gap.” He was simply arguing against using a person’s race or gender in deciding who would receive promotion within the company.

He also argued that diversity of thought and opinion might be just as important as diversity of race and gender. In one portion of the memo, Damore states: “In highly progressive environments, conservatives are a minority that feel they need to stay in the closet to avoid open hostility.”

But politically correct Google cannot handle the type of diversity that includes diversity of thought, which made their press release on the subject very puzzling. A portion of the statement read, “Part of building an open, inclusive environment means fostering a culture in which those with alternative views, including different political viewpoints, feel safe sharing their opinions.” If that’s the case, why wasn’t Damore “safe” in offering his opinion?

Diamond and Silk are considering legal action against YouTube for, what they consider, discrimination. “Every business has a right to regulate but they do not have a right to discriminate, intimidate and manipulate in order to dominate,” claimed Richardson. As of yet, YouTube has made no public statement about the possible lawsuit.

Founded in 2005, YouTube quickly became the Internet’s prime location for anyone to be able to upload and share video content. Google purchased the company in October of 2006 for \$1.65 billion in Google stock. As the site has grown, it has become a haven for independent, citizen journalists, who were so important in the 2016 presidential election.

YouTube’s mission statement reads as follows: “YouTube’s mission is to provide fast and easy video access and the ability to share videos frequently.” Perhaps that statement should be amended to include the phrase, “But only for people and views that we agree with.”

Photo: Screenshot from “Diamond and Silk” [YouTube video](#)



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