

Reddit bans r/watchpeopledie in the wake of the New Zealand mosque massacres

The subreddit violated site policy on 'glorifying violence'



Illustration by Alex Castro / The Verge

Reddit has banned r/watchpeopledie, an infamous subreddit that hosted videos of people dying gruesomely. The ban comes after the subreddit re-hosted videos of the recent mosque massacres in New Zealand. According to the new landing page, the subreddit was banned for violating Reddit's content policy about glorifying or encouraging violence.

A Reddit spokesperson provided this statement: "We are very clear in our site terms of service that posting content that incites or glorifies violence will get users and communities banned from Reddit. Subreddits that fail to adhere to

those site-wide rules will be banned.”

A source at the company agreed with that assessment, confirming that when communities encourage posting either the shooter’s manifesto or the video, they will be banned. The site’s approach is more contextual; it depends on the conversation around the offensive material. The manifesto and video of the shooting in particular have been banned from Reddit entirely, and are being removed across the site. However, r/watchpeopledie’s ban had to do with their handling of both materials. “These communities are not abiding by those rules and are in fact tipping over to the glorification of violence or celebrating violence,” the source said. “That is when the ban hammer comes down.”

The new ban falls in line with Reddit’s recent change to its content policy, which made the site’s moderation guidelines much more explicit. It used to be that just about everything that wasn’t illegal was allowed on the site, and now, that’s not the case. Even so, the subreddit had been active since 2012, and it had been quarantined — Reddit’s way of describing communities that are explicitly hidden from the public — before the site’s content policy had changed.

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By Andrew Liptak@AndrewLiptak

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