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Abstract

To connect with youth online, a non-profit organization in Finland is organizing a youth center on a server on the gaming-adjacent social platform, Discord. We focus on the infrastructuralized platform and study ethnographically how the labor of moderation and technical competencies that platforms require on the part of the youth workers. We want to better understand the technical conditions by which youth workers have to navigate equity in platformized communities. How does the platform and connected infrastructure determine what forms of communication and interaction are and are not permitted and when and to whom? The results indicate that the employment of opening hours and the presence of youth workers who actively moderate the server during those opening hours, seem to create a safe space for a diversity of youth. The moderation, largely invisible and frictionless, becomes an intricate part of the infrastructuralized platform and the socialization on the platform. This infrastructuralized moderation requires technical, pedagogical and psychological knowledge, competence and resources.

Keywords

Discord; ethnography; platformization; moderation; infrastructure

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Networked social platforms and their communities construct their own, both implicit and explicit, norms and values that they adhere to. When networked communities are moderated, it is usually done by volunteers or understaffed and underpaid labor (Gillespie, 2019), since auto-moderation is not reliable enough and seldom understands the contextual setting well enough to be able to take that into consideration. Therefore, the effect that moderation has is, at best, moderate, and several forms of harassment and bullying are present on most social platforms and in most communities because moderation is both time-consuming and challenging

(Gillespie, 2019; Jiang, et al., 2019; Kerr & Kelleher, 2015). The norms of technomasculinity (N Taylor & Voorhees, 2018; Witkowski, 2018), especially regarding gaming-adjacent communities, maintain that those who are not young, white, able-bodied, heterosexual and cis-men are continuously excluded from the gaming communities. Creating safe, actively moderated, networked communities for everyone to enjoy is, therefore, challenging and involve similar pitfalls to how including games and gaming in educational contexts do (Rusk & Ståhl, 2024). Many of the technomasculine norms and values that gaming communities implicitly and explicitly bring into the contexts are in stark contrast to educational ideologies and values. Nevertheless, through a critical awareness and an understanding of networked communities and gaming, as well as online youth culture, there may be a way for educators and youth workers to connect with youth that spend much time online. This is the starting point of this article, which investigates a very specific networked community: a Discord server. The server is maintained and organized as an online youth center, and our ethnographic study involves how youth workers navigate equity within the technical conditions of the infrastructuralized platform.

Digitization has changed conditions for participation and social relations. For youth, the digital dualism between being on- or offline is no longer relevant. The spaces that they inhabit are rather on a continuum between on- and offline than in a strict binary (Nelson, et al., 2020). Because of an omnipresent internet connection through mobile devices and/or stationary devices (PCs) that are available to most Western global north youth (which the participants of this study belong to) the socialization that they are involved in happens both on- and offline, not either or. Therefore, digital platforms have become the de facto curators of the social interaction online for these populations. Discord is only one of many so-called platforms that are part of this development. Discord's history, since its launch in 2015, is in being a gaming-adjacent social platform that is still mostly used by players to communicate effortlessly while gaming, as well as in between gaming sessions. Nevertheless, as of today, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, Discord is also actively used by all kinds of different participants for diverse social and community needs. Part of the appeal may be its privacy-minded approach and focus on anonymity, and that it provides a lot of control of how the communities (Discord servers) can be moderated, structured and organized by the administrators of the servers. In other words, server administrators are free to create much of the server's policy with regards to who and what is permissible so long as it does not violate Discord's policies. Administrators have a lot of power with regards to who is included and, also, excluded. They can set the groundwork for what kind of server they are setting up. It can be inclusive and well-mannered, but it can also be set up to, explicitly, be as toxic as Discord's policies allow. Many servers may be accessible only to those that have been invited by a server administrator. The interaction is organized like a less formal Slack, or MS Teams, where Discord connects users through, for example, features such as VoIP (Voice over IP), text chat, emoji/gif responses, file distribution, and live streaming organized into threaded topic channels or user groups. Although Discord's user base has grown since 2015, it is still small compared to the bigger social

platforms out there and the feeds are not algorithm-driven, instead they are chronological feeds divided into different servers and channels. That is, posts are presented to the user in chronological order within the channels (Gillespie, 2019). Discord is also severely under-researched as a social online platform and consists mostly of how the platform could function as an alternative to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Danjou, 2020; Wiles & Simmons, 2022). Additionally, Johnson and Salter (2022) have critically reviewed the implications of using a gaming-adjacent platform in an educational context. Discord's background in gaming culture brought a risk of toxic elements from that culture creeping into the teaching environment. This is exemplified in Johnson and Salter's (2022) study when one of the authors themselves taught a course held on Discord during the pandemic. Connected to unwanted elements creeping into the environment, Jiang, et al. (2019) discuss the problems of auto-moderating and moderating voice channels.

In our study, a non-profit organization in Finland has organized a youth center on Discord to connect with youth online. The server, with six full time youth workers (2–3 of which are online and active on the server each day), functions as a Swedish-speaking online youth center for 13–20-year-olds, where they can find new friends from all over Swedish-speaking Finland. Besides Finnish, Swedish is an official language in Finland and 5.2% of the Finnish population report Swedish as their first language. We have done digital ethnography (Ståhl & Rusk, 2022) on this specific server to better understand the "platformization" of communities, such as the youth center, focusing on how participants shape the platform, as well as how the platform shapes the participation. That is, we want to better understand how the infrastructuralized platform forms and sets the conditions for the youth workers' labor of moderation, as well as demands on their technical competencies. In other words, how do youth workers navigate the technical conditions of the platform as they strive for equity in the platformized community?

Infrastructuralized platforms

The term platform may be understood as having several different meanings and connotations with the most intuitively thought of being an actual platform on which individuals or collectives can stand and possibly use to be elevated from the 'crowd'. Gillespie (2010) makes a strong case for understanding the complexity of the term platform by displaying the discursive uses of the term and dividing them into four categories; (1) computational, (2) architectural, (3) figurative, and (4) political. Lack of space hinders us from delving deeper into these, but for our argumentation we lean on the category that Gillespie calls 'computational'. This is a way for us to understand and analyze platforms in a more technological sense: "an infrastructure that supports the design and use of particular applications" (Gillespie, 2010, p. 349). In this sense, platforms can be viewed as sets of computational rules that determine what forms of social interaction are and are not permitted and when and to whom at which time and in which space. The rise and domination of the internet by platforms

is part of what some call the emergence of a "platform economy" (Srnicek, 2017) and a "platformization" (Nieborg & Poell, 2018) of our (social) lives. The use of Discord as a youth center should be understood against this background. By using theories and perspectives that problematize platform economic tendencies, we want to focus on how the use of said infrastructuralized platforms in many ways creates and shapes the conditions by which participants interact and communicate; that is, how platforms are infrastructures for interaction (Plantin et al., 2018). We mean that this perspective is important to incorporate in studies on online communities in order to contribute with an understanding of the platform as infrastructural to the socialization that happens.

Infrastructures, such as water and electricity, are often both visible and invisible. As long as the infrastructure works as it should and without creating friction between users or between the users and the infrastructure, it remains hidden in plain sight. This leads to the users of the infrastructure to use it without actively registering the usage or impact on their lives. However, as soon as some friction emerges, the infrastructure becomes visible to the users, but from their own perspective (Larkin, 2013; Star, 1999). Plantin et al. (2018, 295) present a compelling case for understanding platforms as infrastructures and vice versa: "Digital technologies have made possible a "platformization" of infrastructure and an "infrastructuralization" of platforms." If we apply this to a Discord server, then it has achieved infrastructural characteristics as being omnipresent and invisible as long as there is no friction. By focusing our attention on "invisible" data infrastructures, we can analyze how social interaction and the flow of data depend on everyday but crucial material systems (e.g., wireless internet and participants' devices and peripherals) and how the data flow is controlled by processes and practices directly linked to what is possible in-and-through the platform. That is, what are the technical and infrastructural conditions on the platform with regards to youth workers creating safe and moderated networked spaces? Moderation is an integral part of the social interaction on platforms and it is dependent on the computational rules of the platfrom. Therefore, moderation can also be considered as infrastructure; invisible until there is friction, social or technical. The infrastructuralized platforms appear to create conditions for both inclusion and exclusion (Caetano & Blanco 2022; Rusk & Ståhl, 2024), and their use is contingent on how the platform decides to provide computational tools to be used for moderation. That is, from an infrastructuralized platform perspective, the social interaction and participation is contingent on how and when the platforms provide which moderation tools for communities to employ. These decisions, however, will most probably not be taken from a perspective on equity and moderation, but from a perspective on economic profit (Srnicek, 2017). Social justice movements are, in essence, at the mercy of platforms' design decisions (Caetano & Blanco, 2022).

Ethnography

To explore the platformization of a youth center, we study how youth workers on an online youth center moderate participation on a gaming-adjacent platform. We use diverse digital ethnographic methods (see e.g. Brown, 2015; Taylor et al, 2013) to inquire into how the infrastructuralized platform determines what forms of communication and interaction are and are not permitted and when and to whom, as well as how participants navigate these conditions. This connects to what norms and values that are embedded in the platform and how they are shaped in-and-through youth workers' labor of moderation.

While this text is informed by infrastructure and platform studies, we wanted to understand this case from the participants' perspectives. Accordingly, the research design is not exploring the Discord server from a bird's eye view; on the contrary, we wanted to engage the participants in the research project and learn how the infrastructuralized platform shapes their participation by taking part in their everyday online activities. In other words, we want to approach the Discord server from a perspective that can highlight what is done but is not actively made visible or made aware in studies with predetermined categories of analysis (Star, 1999). The paper integrates several complementary sources of data to assemble a complex digital ethnography: (1) digital ethnographic field work (observations and field notes) conducted by all three co-authors (August 2022 to September 2023), (2) online semi-structured interviews with five youth workers (June 2023), (3) a two-day seminar with three youth workers (August 2023), and (4) a digital walk-along interview (October 2023) where the youth worker responsible for setting up the Discord server's rules and permissions is asked to guide the researcher through different parts of the server as a way to understand the reasoning behind the rules on the server (Møller & Robards, 2019). Hence, the data is in several ways parallel and overlapping, both temporally and in terms of method. This multifarious approach—in its focus, methods, contexts, and technologies—has yielded a thorough collection of data, together triangulating the explored phenomena.

To be able to understand 'a full cycle' of a work shift as a youth worker we were present from the pre-brief throughout an entire shift to the end of the shift and the debrief. During these briefings they update each other on the happenings during the day and what has happened the day before, as well as what the plan for the day is and how they will organize the work. These briefings are often viewed as important, so that the youth workers who are working that day know what is going on and can prepare themselves for the day. They also worked as perfect situations for us, as researchers, to pose questions about recent events and activities that have taken place while we have not been present and prepare ourselves for the coming field work. Three researchers were involved in the digital ethnographic field work (August 2022 – October 2023) that was done in shifts. Two of the co-authors (Rusk and Ståhl) both visited the server once a month from August 2022–May 2023, although not concurrently. Additionally, one of the co-authors (Nyman) visited the

server twice a month from January–March 2023. All visits were between 3–7 hours long, depending on the opening hours that day. The online interviews (June 2023) were conducted by one researcher (Ståhl) and the digital walk-along (October 2023) by another (Rusk). Through this data, we can gain a better understanding of an online youth community that is still moderated by an adult presence, as well as acquire insight into the social organization of a gaming-adjacent setting (a Discord-server) from a participant's perspective; that is, youth workers' perspective.

Results

The youth workers, themselves, describe the Discord server as a physical youth center in digital form and, although online communities are expected to be open 24/7, they have migrated opening hours from physical into digital form. Outside opening hours, the server is accessible to young people, but they cannot post anything. That is, they can read what has been written and posted in text channels, but they cannot post anything or join any voice channels. These opening hours are an integral part of the labor of moderation and are created by manipulating the parameters that Discord allows servers to modify, providing different server roles to different users with different permissions. The opening hours are, with some minor seasonal exceptions, Monday 14:00–17:00, Tuesday 14:00–17:00, Wednesday 14:00–20:00, Thursday 14:00–20:00 and Friday 14:00–21:00. Friday is usually the most crowded day during the week. In other words, the purpose and idea of a physical youth center in Finland has been re-established in digital form. To continue the analogy, although it does falter in some respects, we can see that the common, directly shared, physical spaces and rooms in a youth center can be re-integrated, to a degree, on an online platform. The different channels can be understood as different rooms with distinct purposes (see Figure 1). The channels consist of either text channels or voice channels. In text channels, users can send messages consisting of text and attach links, files, images and gifs. In voice channels, users can talk to each other in real time through microphones that are either integrated or connected to their devices. Users who are in a voice channel can also share their webcam and/or share their screen with the other users in the channel to, for example, let the other participants watch when playing a game.
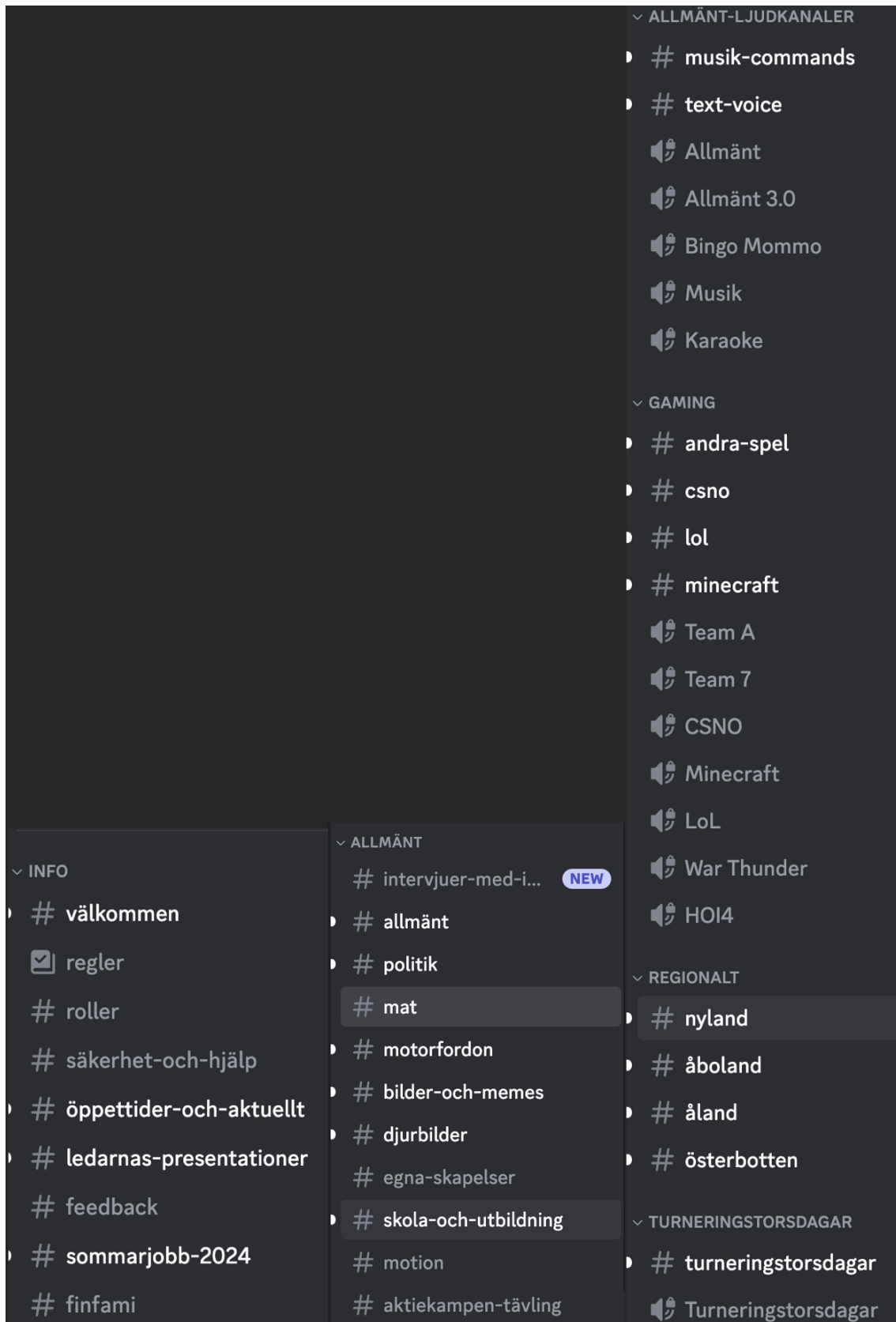
Figure 1. List of channels on the youth center.

Text channels are used sporadically and mostly the interaction is focused on a diverse array of voice channels. The youth workers try to monitor what is going on in all text channels and spread out onto the voice channels so that there is always one adult in each populated voice channel. There are usually 2–3 youth workers online during opening hours. The idea is that young people can join the server and feel that they have agency with regards to the activities on the server, as well as with regards to topics that are discussed. But sometimes youth workers have planned activities. An example is invited guests, such as a teacher streaming and explaining how to bake a chocolate cake or a discussion with an expert on sexual health. But most of the time there is nothing planned and young people can either just hang out and talk in the group, suggest activities or ask for a one-on-one with a youth worker. Young people initiate talking about diverse topics (talking about their day, life, etc.), gaming (e.g. streaming their own single game or playing multiplayer games with friends and/or youth workers) and/or streaming something via their webcam or their screen. Youth workers actively moderate and try to intervene when they determine that the talk (or text, images, gifs, videos) becomes uncomfortable or abusive. Otherwise, youth are permitted to stream and share gaming that is not rated K18 (Act on Audiovisual Programmes, National Audiovisual Institute, Finland) through the tools provided by the infrastructuralized platform. These tools are in active use as youth share their gaming with several users and even simultaneously stream entirely different games, and gameplay, and interact with others watching the streams or play something for themselves while they talk to others in the voice channel.

The infrastructuralized platform determines the forms of communication

The youth center's channels are named with an intention to steer discussions or activities towards what that name entails, like rooms in physical youth centers are named by activity or intended activity. For example, the karaoke voice channel on the server functions as a place where you listen to and sing karaoke and the different channels with game titles function as spaces for meeting in and around specific multiplayer games (see Fig 1). There is also a channel for listening to music by connecting to a music streaming platform. The most popular channel is a voice channel dubbed 'allmänt' (eng. general/common). This channel functions as a common room for a multitude of activities that are not preplanned. This may be why the 'allmänt' channel is the most popular one where most young people stay to talk about whatever is the topic at the time or share a game with others by streaming it to the channel. There are often streams of everything from gaming to painting to snowboarding to young people traveling home from school. These streams may sometimes be parallel, which means that two or more young people stream their gaming or other activities at the same time for the participants of the voice channel to comment on and discuss. Therefore, the channel can feel chaotic from time to time, as noted in Author 1's field notes from (September 2022) "How do they know who they are talking to? Because they were simultaneously talking about two parallel discussions in the same voice chat - bed bugs and cooking stream. It's like sitting in a large living room."

Hence, gaming, talking and socializing is not always a non-problematic combo with regards to how the infrastructuralized platform shapes the interaction and, sometimes, in need of moderation by youth workers by asking them to consider that there are several people overlapping and sometimes actively distribute turns to talk. Additionally, not knowing if someone is simultaneously gaming and discussing may shape the interaction in, for example, this way: Author 1 noted (February 2023) a young person playing Fortnite while in the 'allmänt' voice channel, which can explain why the young person is not consistently engaging in the conversation but: "he doesn't stream it so you don't know what's going on there either. The conversation becomes choppy and a lot of silence." Another example is from the researcher's own perspective noted in Author 3's field notes (January 2023) after he has finished playing two matches of Valorant with some youth:

> The playing went well, I didn't communicate much with the youth as I was trying to learn the game and identify the jargon that existed between them. (...) The young people talked a lot and there was an incredible amount that I didn't understand or join in with.

Pseudonymity and community online
The large online community that entails the youth center brings with it issues that connect to, for a youth worker, to youth's anonymity and to knowing who is who on the server. It also connects to the work of moderation in that, for example, youth workers need to know if a participant who changed their nickname is the same that they previously banned. There is a policy that young people do not have to state their names, just something that they want to be called. However, if young people return, or even during their first day on the server, the real name often comes up eventually. In the interview, one youth worker noted that when a new person joins the server, they "usually ask something like 'hey, how are you, what's your name' and so on, then if they don't want to say their name, they say, you know, can you call me, my name tag or something like that, then you're just 'okay'." (YW1, interview June 2023), highlighting that pseudonymity is an option. However, the networked nature with Discord nicknames that can be changed creates difficulties for new youth workers, or those who only work sporadically, to remember names, nicknames, and knowing who is who. According to one youth worker who is in this position, it leads her towards hanging out more with the young people whose names she knows. Not knowing a young person or knowing who knows who, and how, in some situations can be troublesome for the youth workers. Nevertheless, the server appears to attract an eclectic group of young people from all over Swedish-speaking Finland, according to the youth workers:

> We have very different kinds of people - both those who are more lonely, or have social problems, and those who have a lot of friends and hobbies, like (...) that actually it's a bit difficult to know, why someone actually comes to us, or something like that (YW2, interview June 2023)

However, the youth workers express that because the center is networked and organized on Discord this does determine, in some way, who attends the center. It means that, according to the youth workers, the center is attended by a diversity of young people that are grouped by the fact that they would probably not be the ones attending a physical youth center: "there are those who (...) can talk online a lot, but then when you see them in real life then they sort of (...) don't want to be there where everyone else is" (YW2, interview June 2023). They also add that the youth attending the online youth center seem somewhat comfortable with online environments and have knowledge about networked communities and online sociality. Youth workers wanted the server to not be focused on gaming, but Discord as a gaming-adjacent platform makes it hard and they have to work actively to keep the server from becoming a 'gaming youth center' at the expense of those who want to do other activities on the server. One of the youth workers that founded the server notes that he wants to make sure non-players also get space and so far, he thinks the center has been successful: "our young people are for the most part, even though they may be gamers, they don't come there to only play games." (YW3, interview, June 2023).

Individual devices and internet connections
The main aspect for why the analogy to a physical youth center falters is the fundamental fact that the digital youth center is networked on a digital platform with everything it entails with regards to platforms and data infrastructure. The interaction and community is framed, shaped and controlled by the infrastructuralized platform. Participants do not meet or see each other (they hardly ever stream themselves through a webcam) and they are constrained by both the technical conditions of the platform, the youth center on the platform, the devices youth and youth workers employ to be part of the center, as well as the online and offline communities they are part of. The server currently has approximately 500 members. According to the server's own statistics that they collect from Discord using statbot, there are approximately 20 young people that are active on the server daily, and they have had approximately 80-100 active unique users per month on voice chats. This entails a much larger, more shared, community than a physical youth center. In other words, every participant's online interaction is both individual and shared in a very different way than in a physical youth center. Individual, in that participants encounter different content in-and-through their individual screens, audio devices and microphones on their individual devices. These devices can be very different from participant to participant and the experience of the youth center is wholly different for someone using a tablet with simple earpod headphones or a full-fledged gaming PC with two monitors and hifi audio equipment. At the same time as the interaction is shaped very individually in-and-through their devices, the interaction is also shared with tens, or hundreds, of other users who interact in-and-through their individual devices. Nevertheless, the infrastructuralized platform provides a sense, for participants, that everyone is experiencing the platform and the interaction in the same

way as them. That is, they do not necessarily take into consideration that everyone is experiencing it differently, technically, but, therefore, also socially.

The networked platform as infrastructural to the social interaction on the youth center is especially palpable when there are technical issues and/or if the young person does not have a strong enough internet connection or device to be able to participate on the same level as others. There is a clear difference with regards to if youth have a PC or phone (and/or tablet) and what kind of microphone they have. Sometimes, young people solve their problems with devices by using several devices at the same time (e.g., streaming from PC, but talking through phone because of faulty microphone on PC). For example, as Author 3 noted in his field notes (January 2023) and commented that it was "a smart solution" upon which the young person responded "Yes, but I need two accounts on Discord to be able to do it". The capability of their internet connections and PCs come into play when young people play multiplayer games or stream their playing to the voice channels. There is also the fact that most multiplayer games need to be updated often, which may also be a hindrance to joining a game straight away. For youth workers, the networked setting brings an added responsibility; having a stable connection: "Although in principle you can be wherever and some of our leaders are also working from anywhere, but, I feel (…) responsible and so that you don't want to risk something." (YW2, interview, June 2023). This is also connected to the moderation as infrastructural for the social interaction, because if the youth worker is experiencing a bad connection, they cannot moderate as effectively and actively as when their connection is stable. The responsibility of being there and being present during the opening hours requires a stable and fast enough internet connection, including good enough headphones with a decent microphone. These issues are omnipresent in all kinds of networked interaction and hints at the platform being infrastructural to the socialization, and the young people on the server are quick to point out if something technological is not working for someone. They are especially observant with regards to how well one can hear others and quickly point this out if it is not working optimally. Additionally, the platform lets them mute users, so that they cannot hear them. They cannot mute them for everyone, but for themselves. This may result in them unknowingly overlapping each other in voice chat.

The structures set in place by the youth workers

Next, we will present how the youth workers set up the server and infrastructuralize the moderation in-and-through rules, guidelines, and permissions. The socialization is, in other words, infrastructuralized not only by devices and internet connections, but also by both Discord as a platform, generally, and by the rules and permissions on the specific Discord server that the administrations, the youth workers, have put in place. When young people attempt to join the youth center, they have to accept the rules that can be found on the 'rules' text channel. These rules have been composed by the youth workers and include broad codes of conduct (Respect, No toxicity, No trolling, Don't share prohibited or personal material, No spamming, Listen

to the youth workers, and Ask permission for marketing). The rules and guidelines, although very broad, are still usable for youth workers to point to if they ban or kick a user. No member can say that they have not seen the rules, since everyone who joins the server must accept them. Also, the verification level needed to be able to apply for membership is set to "low". The youth workers have "thought about raising it, but want to keep it easy to join", according to YW3. However, he adds, that if they would organize a center for a more "vulnerable group (e.g. a center for girl gamers), this should be the first thing you should change to the highest." (Interview, October 2023).

New members also need to go to the 'roles' text channel where they need to choose a role for the Discord server's Dynobot that handles the permissions for each role on the server. They only get one choice: 'Ungdom' (eng. Youth). If they do not choose the role and do not have any role, then they cannot do anything on the server, but they can see the channels. In the beginning of the server, there was a problem with youth not having any permissions and they could not even choose a role, so according to YW3 it was a work of trial and error. The role 'Ungdom' (Youth) entails that they have, during opening hours, enough permissions to interact on the server. The reason for choosing a small set of permissions was also a work of trial and error. They did not want to restrain the youth too much, but some functions are just not needed to be able to participate fully in the activities in the youth center. For example, functions like soundboard, text-to-speech and voice messages have been turned off, since they were used to spam the voice channels with sound (or noise). However, youth can still mute each other, so that they do not hear what the other is saying. The opening hours are governed by how and when the permissions are provided and taken away from users with specific server roles. For a long time, they did this manually. That is, a youth worker went into the settings of the server and clicked 'on' for the chosen permissions for the role 'Ungdom'. This could cause uncertainty regarding whether they succeeded in clicking the correct permissions, as noted in Author 1's field notes (December 2022) "YW5 opens, but no one came to 'allmänt' voice so she is unsure if she opened or not. YW2 says 'I know the feeling'." Three people soon joined the voice channel, but the uncertainty was there for a couple of minutes. Now they use a bot that one of the 'regular' youths, together with a youth worker, have coded, so that the opening of the server is easier and faster. The bot's hosting costs approximately 2,50 USD / month and is covered by the non-profit organization. The bot relieves the youth workers from having to click and remember what they had clicked with regards to the permissions when opening and closing the youth center.

The rules and guidelines, as well as permissions, are connected to the moderation on the server, and especially auto-moderation. This is also a possibility in Discord and the youth center makes use of it. According to YW3, both auto-moderation and manual moderation is easy to do with regards to text posts (links, etc.) in text channels. The auto-moderation feature can ban words that the youth workers have

listed. This list is continuously revised and reconsidered; for example, to avoid homophobic rhetoric on the server, the word 'gay' was banned. However, as the youth workers later realized, in their interaction with young people on the server, that this could also limit young people from expressing their sexual identity, the word is no longer banned. This example showcases how moderation is a moment-to-moment labor that is contextual and not always able to be automated on a server like the youth center. Although the function is called 'auto'-moderation, it still entails a lot of manual editorial and design work, testing and sensitivity to what the auto-moderation bans and when and how. This process involves technical knowledge because, apparently, it is not that transparent. The youth workers must go into the log of the Dynobot to see what and who was banned, and according to YW3, it is not always that clear from the log what has happened. Additionally, the word has also been deleted and one cannot see it in its context. The auto-moderation, when detecting a violation, deletes the word, and warns and mutes the user by assigning it the role 'Muted'. This means that they can only read channels and cannot join voice channels. This is what all users can do when the center is closed. The 'Muted' role provides youth workers a chance to react to someone using, for example, offensive language and have a conversation with that user with regards to how they expect them to behave and if the user still wants to participate in the center. During her first visit (fieldnotes from September 2022), Author 2 noted: "YW3 was careful to point out that it is not just any youth leader who should 'unban' the participant, but the person who banned the user in the first place. The reasoning was that that person knows best what happened and what type of action is required for the participant to mark that they regretted their behavior/will make amends." Context is important in the labor of moderation when trying to find the balance between inclusion, a safe space, and consequences for breaking rules and guidelines. The youth workers want to include all youth, however within some given parameters and rules, which are connected to all participating youth respecting each other as human beings and being considerate. The labor of the youth workers, moderation, becomes infrastructuralized to the participants interacting and socializing.

The auto-moderation also works for nicknames, so that users with nicknames that include banned words or phrases are unable to join before changing their nickname. It can also detect when users post Discord server invites to other servers. The youth workers implement a blanket ban on that, since they do not know what the servers are that young people are inviting each other to and they implement a policy that they will not join youths' own Discord servers and that they are not allowed to share their servers on the youth center, since they have not, necessarily, been vetted by any adults. So, the youth center's policy is that they do not endorse these servers. The auto-moderation deletes the invite link and warns the user who posted it. The auto-moderation works well enough on text for the youth workers to employ it. However, images, files, links to external websites, voice, streams and/or videos are a completely different story and need youth workers to be there to be able to know when lines have been crossed or not. This is the reason why the opening hours and an omnipresence of adults who moderate the social interaction is so important for

the server to work as a safe space. For example, as noted in Author 1's field notes (October 2022), one youth starts streaming with the webcam and shows pets, different rooms and the yard. But as he shows the sibling's room it is noted that "YW5 asks if it is OK for the sister to show it to us. YP says that it is and then says that next he will show his room. This spurs lots of questions about him and his life and his home and family." In this specific example the connectedness and the use of a webcam creates a situation that is not possible to moderate with auto-moderation and therefore demands an adult youth worker's presence to be able to solve and deal with.

Discussion

This study, by applying an infrastructure perspective, provides a route to understanding how Discord servers, as infrastructuralized platforms, contain several paradoxes (Larkin, 2013). These connect to which norms and values are embedded in the platform. Discord is connected to the idea of networked social platforms being easy to use for everyone (Gillespie, 2010). However, our investigation clearly shows that there are both technical obstacles and boundaries connected to norms enacted and expected on the server. Not least the fact that stable internet connections and well-functioning devices are a fundamental prerequisite for participation. The social platform is also imagined as providing endless possibilities for social and technological connections and networks, and this is true in some sense (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Plantin et al., 2018). But the platform is also very rigid in that the plasticity, modularity and modifiability of servers only work within specific set parameters that the platform allows for users to manipulate. The youth workers at this specific center use the parameters for moderation in an innovative way to create opening hours for the center, which is something that the networked revolution tried to get away from in its pursuit for 24/7 connection (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). Nevertheless, the fact that the youth center is so integrally a part of a social platform creates a situation where the youth workers do not have the final say with regards to how the platform at large is constructed, framed and formed (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Srnicek, 2017). The worst-case scenario would be that Discord could be taken down or make a business or design decision that critically and negatively impacts the youth center and its way of structuring the server for moderation. Not to mention all the games that are played in connection to the youth center and the platforms and game launchers connected to those.

There seems to be a place for a youth center like this that creates a regulated and safe space among all the unregulated spaces on the internet (Caetano & Blanco, 2022; Gillespie, 2019). The labor of the youth workers, the infrastructuralized moderation, is what makes the center what it is. The labor of moderation can itself be seen as a simple task that can be automated, which involves regulating, suspending and giving warnings to users who do not behave according to set rules and principles of the community that have been decided, chosen and designed by humans

(although it is called "auto", but the automation is probably in the sanctioning action itself). But at the youth center, the active and situated part of the moderation work becomes imperative and part of a holistic approach with regards to building relationships and trust between moderator (youth worker) and server participants (youth). It is also imperative to be able to be able to moderate the voice channels (Jiang, et al., 2019). Through the moderation work, the youth leaders can nurture and educate the young people and through informal conversations where they use a moderation perspective as well as a youth leader perspective, help and support young people in their everyday struggles. The technological conditions, especially the innovative use of opening hours, provide for a way to control the interactions and apply active moderation and an adult presence to help create a space where youth can share their life (in different social and technological forms) with safe adults, in a regulated and safe environment. This seems to be the reason for why youth attend the center.

The fact that the center is online and on Discord, a gaming-adjacent platform, impacts who is comfortable using the platform and joining the server. The youth center is not an activity or operation that is as low threshold as one would think. It requires both youth workers and the youth attending the server to have more than basic technological knowledge, competence and resources to be able to effectively participate. Further, video games in general, and competitive multiplayer games in particular, have a history of being seen as an activity primarily for white, presumably heterosexual, competitive cis-men (Rusk & Ståhl, 2024; Witkowski, 2018). By being facilitated on a gaming-adjacent platform, there is a risk that values and norms associated with gaming as a gendered activity influences the youth center (Johnson & Salter, 2022). However, the infrastructuralized nature of moderation through, for example, the employment of opening hours and the presence of youth workers during those opening hours, seem to create a safe space where there is both freedom to discuss various topics and do various activities, as well as active moderation by safe adults to include a diversity of young people and not restrict the center to only encompass those that are part of the online norms, but instead attempt to broaden those norms, at least on the youth center server. In conclusion, we see strong indications that running a youth center online, as a Discord server, is no easy and low threshold feat. In our study, we see that for the center to work, there is a need for an active, and reflective, adult presence, combined with clear guidelines and expectations of civility, mutual respect and consideration for others as human beings behind the screens. This can be summed up in that moderation appears to be infrastructural for the socialization on the center. However, it involves a holistic approach to moderation from modifying parameters to create opening hours to enough adults being present when youth are present. This requires both technical, pedagogical and psychological knowledge, competence and resources, which the youth center that we studied appears to be able to amass.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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