Harassment Theories

- Context Collapse

Context Collapse

Description

Context collapse (or context-collapse) is a term coined by "Christina □□" (@chhopsky on twitter) on November 21st, 2022. It has proven to be a useful analysis of the kinds of harassment favored by groups like the "PAWG Patrol", who use similar tactics to disorient and confuse an issue, overloading perspectives on a platform ill-equipped to properly contextualize discussions, leading to an eventual conflict where no one can be sure where the battle lines are, or the exact timeline.

Origin

The original thread can be found here and full credit to @chhopsky, but the text has been extracted and posted in long-form below:

> a context-collapse attack is one in which an attacker misrepresents a post containing keywords as bigotry, and uses the resulting fallout to drive traffic out of context. successful context-collapser attackers usually hide behind identity or account size to avoid criticism
>
> context-collapsers rely on that people don't dig for original sources, they get angry, take away that the target is bad, and go about their days. the defence side of the context-collapse attack is that the victim is prevented from talking about it without 'attacking a [blank]'
>
> common identities for this include neurodivergence, queerness, or disability, as "[victim] is attacking a [marginalized person]" reinforces the original attack that labelled the victim as Bad. and if the victim ever talks about it, they are "punching down"
>
> now, any context collapse attack can fail if people could easily search back to the original source or find what happened for themselves, but it's much easier to pop off with righteous anger than it is to do the work.
>
> the reality is more like this



i once got context-collapse attacked because i said that ADHD writing traits can make technical and copywriting difficult to pick up and do well at immediately. they did for me. i posted that because i am one of those people, and i have trained others, and i'm a damn good writer

so there i am explaining how to do good copywriting and technical writing, and why my ADHD traits made that hard to be good at, but sure, "she's ableist" yes i see that you recognized some words. good job

someone got a lot of good traffic out of me that day

to recap:

- attacker misrepresents victim's (w/keywords) as bigoted
- attacker drives traffic to own pages
- victim prevented from talking about it because they're "punching down" to the marginalized identity that "called them out"
- relies on people skimming & not researching

it's also ripe for multiple re-use because once the original victim is labelled bad its easier to reinforce a narrative

this thread will piss people off, but you need to understand that people know how to weaponize your righteous anger and short attention span for their benefit

to summarize: a context-collapse attack depends on creating a separation between the accusation and the incident. by using screenshots and new posts, the chain can be broken and 99.99% of people never have original context, and blame the victim as designed

Legacy

In large part, this site was inspired by the attacks typifying context collapses, and its existence is largely to combat the separation of incident and context these types of attacks aim to achieve. By shining a light and documenting incidents with as much detail and evidence as possible, we can point to a clear, concise source for anyone truly engaging in good faith to see the context and background of any incident.