

YouTube Deleted Neutrality Studies

Please subscribe to my mailing list on Substack (it's free!!): <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> This morning I woke up to the horrible news that my channel had been deleted by YouTube due to infringements on "Spam and deceptive practices". After 16 hours, I got it back. Here is the story. Please sign up for my mailing list on substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Our shop: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com>

#Pascal

Hello everybody, I'm back. Pascal Lottaz from Neutrality Studies. Some of you might have seen today that my English-language channel, Neutrality Studies, was gone. Around 8 a.m. this morning, when I woke up and reached for my phone, I suddenly had this message of doom—which, by the way, all of us in the YouTube blogosphere dread—sitting in my inbox: "Your channel, Neutrality Studies, wasn't following our policy on spam, deceptive practices, and scams. We removed it to protect our community. If you think we made the wrong call, we'd be happy to take another look. Begin your review to see more info and start your appeal."

You can review an appeal until January 11th, 2027. So they gave me a one-year appeal window, which is good—it means that at least my channel and data would be saved for one year before being permanently deleted. But what most of us then deal with is that the only way to reach out and talk to YouTube, which is ultimately Google, is a button: "Begin review." And that's the dystopian future we're living in. If something as important as your YouTube channel is blocked, then all you have at your disposal is a review button. And yeah, you see, it was like 8:49 when I decided to screenshot this and start the review. And I tell you, it was a real shock—like, honestly.

I knew, and I was very aware, that my YouTube channel was nothing more than a checkbox in a really large spreadsheet somewhere on a Google server. That much was clear to me, and for at least the last one and a half years, I'd been mentally preparing for something like this to happen. But in the end, when you wake up, reach for your phone, and the channel is gone—and all you see is that message—it still hits you like nothing else. And I'd like to say, first of all, thank you to everybody who's been supporting me through this. I got a lot of messages from you—from many people who were on my show before, from Ambassador Chas Freeman, from Sándor Kusai, from so many who expressed their feelings and their support. A lot of people realized this immediately, and that helped me tremendously. I was—it really meant a lot.

I still felt horrible the entire day, but it really helped knowing that other people were aware of this and stood with me. So, from the bottom of my heart, thank you very much for everything you've been doing. I just thought I'd show you what this is, because a lot of people might assume that as a creator on YouTube—and my channel now has 264,000 subscribers—it's not one of the largest ones,

but it's definitely not a tiny channel anymore. Some people tend to think that means you've got special privileges and so on. But the fact of the matter is, there are more than 100,000 YouTubers in the world who have 100,000 views. So it's like a town, a small city full of people. And YouTube—well, most of the things we do with YouTube—are completely, 100% automated.

So, just like this message here, what happens when you click on that review button is that you get a text box that allows you to write an appeal—just a couple hundred characters, a few words—that you can submit to them. In it, you can say something like, “Look, I’m not a spammer, I’m not a scammer, please unlock my channel.” And maybe this is the point to also say that I don’t believe this was an attempt by YouTube to censor me. We’ve seen recently massive growth of spam channels, AI-generated nonsense channels, and some very harmful ones as well. We know that Alexander Mercouris, for instance, had a fake channel created that pretended to be him—just his talking head moving very slowly, saying random things and whatnot—and that was not him.

That was an imposter—an AI imposter. We've seen other such channels, these AI-generated nonsense channels. Having fictional people is one thing, but when they imitate real people, that's very deceptive. So I do believe this was an instance where my channel got caught in the crosshairs and became part of the collateral damage. Naturally, YouTube has to police its platform—in the good sense. In the bad sense, of course, YouTube can also do censorship.

But in the good sense, YouTube needs to make sure that real spam—real people who try to abuse the platform for ads or whatever—stay out. Otherwise, you and I wouldn't be using the platform, right? If it were full of commercials and full of princes of Nigeria trying to tell you that you've won a million dollars in the lottery and you just need to send them a hundred dollars to get it, we wouldn't be using it. So it's understandable that something is needed. The problem is that because this is a platform with two billion people—two billion people who access it, or even more—even we creators are fully at the mercy of a faceless platform, an emotionless, basically AI bureaucrat monster.

So when I continued, I said, “Okay, send the appeal.” What I got was this: “Thanks, we’ve got your appeal. We’ll take another careful look at your channel and follow up by email as soon as we have an answer. Our reviews usually take two business days, although some take longer.” Okay, and then what can you do? You just wake up and try to live your life, although everything has been turned upside down, and four years’ worth of videos—more than 800 videos on the channel—are gone, just inaccessible. And by the way, I do have my videos on Rumble. Please also check me out on Rumble. And let me use this opportunity to tell you to please follow me on Substack. Substack is the best way to stay in touch.

You can sign up with your email address, and even if all else fails, I could reach out to you via email. Please subscribe on Substack—that's under my name, Pascal Lottaz. L-O-T-T-A-Z, Lottaz. You'll find me there and can subscribe on Substack. That's the best fallback and backup option. All the videos also go to Rumble, just so they're still there, just in case. For a case like this, I was actually glad I still had them on Rumble. But still, it felt horrible that YouTube—the platform here—was gone,

because the fact of the matter is that nothing beats YouTube in terms of potential audience, of people who might just see this video in the stream and click on it. It's just the largest possible way of distributing videos on the internet.

That's just it. And then, well, I got up and tried to distract myself. A couple of hours later—at 5 p.m., 16:56 my time—I got this other horrible message saying, “We’ve reached a decision on your appeal. Hi, Pascal Lottaz. We have reviewed your appeal for the following channel, Neutrality Studies. We’ve reviewed your channel carefully and confirmed that it violates our spam, deceptive practices, and scams policy. We know this is probably disappointing news, but it’s our job to make sure that YouTube is a safe place for all. How this affects your channel: we won’t be putting your channel back up on YouTube. Learn about your resolution options. Thanks, the YouTube team.”

And that’s it. That’s it. That’s all we get. That’s all there is to it—an automated email. And this told me that probably no human actually looked over it. And that’s, you know, the entire possibility we have. At this point, I had already reached out to YouTube Creator Support and chatted with somebody—I don’t know if that person was a human being or an AI. It sounded like a human being, it chatted like a human being, but I don’t know. They said they would escalate it. I also contacted a couple of people who then reached out to Google, and I started posting about this further on X. I had already posted about it in the morning to inform everybody about what happened.

But then I just had to reach out more and hope that one of the avenues would actually reach somebody at YouTube who would finally do a human review and realize that, obviously, my channel doesn’t do spam. It does podcasts—podcasts with academics, journalists, diplomats, and politicians—in order to bring you information and to do analysis about geopolitics. And if any human being had just glanced over it and clicked on one or two of the videos to check what was going on, they would realize that, no, this is a genuine channel. And apparently, through one of those avenues, that’s what happened. So in the end, I... it was late at night—like 16 hours, 15 hours later. What was it here? Quarter to midnight, right?

When I finally, finally got the message—funnily enough, in German; I don’t know why they changed the language—it said, “Hello Pascal, we’ve got good news for you. Our team has looked over your channel again and determined that it does not infringe upon our user policy. Your account is no longer blocked and can be used again as of now. Sorry for taking so long. If you have questions, click here. Greetings, the YouTube team.” And that’s it. Those were the horrible sixteen hours of my Sunday. I don’t know what the lesson of this story is. It’s like, if you go for an impromptu short trip to Shanghai, always expect the worst. It surely made the day much more difficult for me, but I’m glad I have this channel back.

I'm glad I'm able to talk to you again and share this information, because at the end of the day, what I also realized is that one of the greatest values of this channel is that we can build this kind of community—where I can reach out to you, where discussion is possible in the comment section below, where I can continue to invite people on the channel. I already have some very good guests

scheduled for next week. I still have good videos that will be uploaded in the next couple of hours, and we can share them and have a public discussion and debate. I believe that's very important, and I hope we can keep it despite the censorship that's going on in some corners, despite the sanctions that the European Union and the United States, as well as Francesco Albanese and others, are putting out there. I still hope that we can maintain an open society in the West. I hope that we keep an open society globally.

As a matter of fact, it's not the same everywhere. You know, I talk a lot about the faults and mistakes of the West, and about how desperate I am regarding the global situation and the hypocrisy of the West. But believe me, the value of freedom of speech, the value of freedom of expression, the value of democratic societies—the ability to speak our minds, to have these kinds of platforms—that's something I deeply believe in and deeply care about. I would not go to war for it, and I will never tell others to do so or to take up bombs or whatever. But I am glad, and I hope we can maintain an open society. We need it. We need a society without fear. We need a society without persecution.

And this episode drove that point home to me again—that really being able to express ourselves, being able to interview and to distribute viewpoints and knowledge—is an incredible good, and it's incredibly valuable. We do need to defend that at home. We don't need to bring that freedom with bombs to others, but we do need to defend it at home. I'll be thinking in the next days and weeks about how to reinforce this channel, how to strengthen this community and the connection with you, how to create backups, and how to keep the ability to stay connected. I don't have a perfect answer; there's no perfect solution. Again, please sign up for Substack. It's completely free—you don't need to pay anything. It's basically my mailing list that allows me to write you emails directly every once in a while.

I will not spam you. You can opt in and opt out of things. But mailing lists are still a very important tool now, when things are so uncertain. And again, sometimes it's censorship, sometimes it's stuff like this—maybe a glitch, maybe just something that went wrong on the YouTube servers. But it sure gave me a shock. Sure did. So, with that said, I wanted to make a video today from Shanghai. I wanted to make a video about how amazing I find China. I hope I can do so later. I did take a couple of videos and scenes over here, but this kind of ruined my day. Still, I'm glad to be talking to you again. I'm glad to be online, and I'm very glad for this community. I'm glad for you all. Thank you very much for sticking around with me. And now—cheers to the shock. Good night, and good luck.