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Algorithmic experience: action and data practice on Instagram platform

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Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the relationship between data practice and algorithmic actions on digital platforms. For this purpose, we do a descriptive analysis of Instagram documents that are addressed to its users, identifying what suggests action and practical consequence of digital materialities in terms of production, sharing and collection. Through them we identify the centrality of experience in this kind of informational construct developed in relation to datafication processes – which we call algorithmic experience. From a pragmatist and neo-materialist perspective, we suggest following this experience to understand the practical differences produced in the use of digital platforms and identifying relevant interactions in situated practices.

Keywords

Experience; Algorithms; Instagram.

Introduction: Welcome to Instagram!

What really exists is not things made but things in the making (James, 1987, p. 751).

In previous researches, we analyzed aspects of sociability involving the practice of photography on the Instagram platform (Lemos & Pastor, 2018a) and described, from a non-anthropocentric perspective, photographic experiences involving algorithmic actions in communicational environments (Lemos & Pastor, 2018b)¹. Taking as a starting point the discussions already developed about the conversational data practice (photographic experiences, in digital environments, which are configured as constant production of data), here we propose to follow the experience built in the relationship with different algorithmic actions in the middle of a dynamic production of data on Instagram. For this purpose, at this moment, we take as an empirical corpus the documents made available by the platform to its users: Instagram Data Policy; Terms of use; Community Guidelines and About Cookies.

The study developed here dialogues with perspectives commonly called neo-materialists (Alldred & Fox, 2017; Lemos, 2020a) which, when claiming a material turn, reject a bifurcation between nature and culture, are concerned with material effects and expand the capacity of agency for non-human entities. Our investigation argues that research on digital media must understand experience as a process (James, 1912, 2000a). An algorithmic experience is always constituted by material and discursive entanglements (Barad, 2007). Taking as a starting point this set of neo-materialist research, and relating it to the studies of digital platforms (D'Andréa, 2018; Gillespie, 2010; Dijck & Poell, 2016; Waal, 2018), we propose a pragmatic posture based on ongoing experiences.

We present and test a way to follow the experience shared between users and algorithms during the daily photographic production, using as a guide the action of digital data production indicated in the Instagram documents. We identified² in these texts the details referring to what suggests action and practical consequence of the materialities of the data in terms of production, collection and sharing. With that, we can perceive the relationship between usages and practices projected through these algorithmic constructions.

As suggested by Bucher (2018) and Introna (2016), we do not seek to identify an “essence of the algorithm”, but to investigate it based on localized events, that is, “the different ways in which algorithms come to matter in specific situations” (Bucher, 2018, p. 63). The analysis of the documents, functioning as an initial stage of this process, helps us understand certain specificities of the algorithmic conformations based on experience. This analysis is a way of looking at the actions of the algorithms, since the documents are the letters of intent that guide their concrete performances. As Bucher (2018, p. 60) explains, “While we cannot ask the algorithm in the same way we may ask humans about their beliefs and values, we may indeed attempt to find other ways of making it ‘speak’”.

In the midst of a photographic practice of constant production of digital data, this is one of the ways we found to “make speak” the algorithms that help to shape this practice. We therefore try to follow this algorithmic experience. For this purpose, our attention is turned to the documents produced by the platform. This is part of a broader research stage that must take into account other materialities and descriptions (interface, subtitles, hashtags, interviews). The documents analyzed here indicate how the platform builds a set of parameters that, at the same time, are based on the user experience and guide everyday photographic practices so that they become algorithmically traceable. We call this interaction with machine performance, acting on the platform modeled by algorithms, algorithmic experience. It

¹ Other studies developed at the Digital Media, Networks and Space Research Lab (Lab404) point to this same research perspective. See: <http://www.lab404.ufba.br/>.

² The entire analysis was carried out with the support of the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti.

indicates relevant moments and practices in constructing the way Instagram is used³.

What do we understand when we are talking about experience?

The concept of experience is used here to emphasize the procedural and always situated ways in which practices are developed. It is one of the dimensions of the neo-materialist approach (Alldred & Fox, 2017), affirming the need to analyze the local, material, non-anthropocentric and pragmatic experience (Lemos, 2020a). To understand the algorithmic experience on Instagram (or any type of digital platform), we must investigate the ways in which the materiality of the platform (whose engine is the algorithmic performance) is revealed.

When we talk about experience, we are not referring to a single form of experience defined by human perceptions or consciences, but as what is presented “in all possible forms of interactions”⁴ (Debaise, 2007, p. 12). Nor do we refer to experience as the way in which algorithms determine human experiences. As we are analyzing a communicational experience, understanding the construction of the human in this process is fundamental, since the “mode COM” places it as a mandatory passage (Lemos, 2020b)⁵. Investigating algorithmic performance is necessary to understand the composition of the human in this process. As Latour (2018, p. 85) points out about politics: “Obviously there is no politics other than that of humans, and for the benefit! This has never been in question. The question has Always been about the form and the composition of this human”. We understand, therefore, experience as a process (James, 2000b) that is built in a shared way in an environment of humans and non-humans.

Approaching the algorithmic experience in this way helps us to reveal different materialities without falling into an anthropocentric perspective that would inhibit the visibility of other agencies. The algorithmic performance (Lemos, 2016; Lemos & Bitencourt, 2017) on digital platforms causes practical consequences that will guide, in our example, the daily practice of photography. The idea of experience sustained here implies reconfiguring the look to perceive the articulations in the world (Latour, 2012) – including, in addition to humans, the infrastructure of the platforms, the algorithms, the images, the databases, the documents, the patents, the procedures, codes and diverse materialities in their practical consequences. It is precisely these articulations that form the experience. As Savransky (2016, p. 16) states, the experience must “include not just isolated facts or things but also the experienced relations between them; not only human or subjective experiences, but also other-than-human experiences”. It is, therefore, what emerges from a connective genesis, guided by relations, by a radical empiricism. As James explains:

To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any elements that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced. For such a philosophy, the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as ‘real’ as anything else in the system. (James, 1912, p. 28)

The algorithmic experience is not only developed by the user, but in relation to a set of algorithmic performances and other materialities that, at the same time, help to shape and learn from the photographic practice. Thus, they matter in the construction of their own practice. As we pointed out above, to treat

³ This thesis can be tested in the analysis of any other digital platform.

⁴ In the original: “L’expérience se dit à présent de toutes les formes d’interaction possibles”.

⁵ What Lemos (2020b) proposes as “mode COM” is a mode of existence that characterizes the moderns and which has the human as its mandatory crossing point. Communication takes place in a process of “radical mediation” (between humans and non-humans), which presupposes the use of artifacts, the circulation of the word and the intersubjective construction. The mode COM then calls for specific modes of existence that Latour (2012) calls Technique (TEC), Politics (POL) and Metamorphosis (MET). The analysis of Instagram's algorithmic experience as a communicational process means placing it under the umbrella of mode COM, not excluding the human from the process.

the algorithmic experience in this way means to link it to a pragmatic sense, abandoning the search for what would be the “essence” of the algorithmic agency. In this sense, we maintain a “permanent experimentation” (Savransky, 2019), avoiding essentialist prepositions (what is the algorithm?) or determinants (what is the impact of the algorithm?) to think in terms of multiplicity and difference⁶. Thus, we search not exactly for what the algorithm is, or to know its exact codes and instructions, but to understand the differences produced in practice, taking the official documents of the platform as a starting point.

To paraphrase⁷ William James, we could say that what exists is not the algorithm, but the algorithm in the making. There is no stabilized algorithm that controls the access and use of the Instagram platform, but algorithms that produce and activate themselves in practice⁸. We search for a way of looking at communicational phenomena that is attentive to connections, operating not by closed principles, but by the constitution of the world in experiences. This is the way we take to understand communicational practices on Instagram: tracking the connections that are formed in the Instagram usage experience, investigating not what the algorithm is, but the quality of what we call an algorithmic experience.

We decided to follow this experience from the analysis of platform documents, observing the projected actions, data practices (datafication) (Mayer-Schönberg & Cukier, 2013) organized by the system, and the ways in which each type of action becomes relevant to maintain an experience of production and interaction based on images. Here we refer to datafication as a process of capturing traces of any form of action (intentional or not), transformed into quantifiable digital data, qualified and operable by technologies and processes (digital platforms, machine learning, Big Data). A paper book transformed into a digital book refers to the digitization process. Readers' marks, data on reading time, which chapter the readings are abandoned in, the words most used in certain contexts etc., they are datafication processes.

For the descriptive analysis developed here, we selected all the documents⁹ made available by Instagram to its users that demonstrate aspects of the datafication processes: Data policy, Terms of Use, Community Guidelines and About cookies. In this investigation, therefore, we use documents that relate to the practices developed by users. This certainly reveals only part of the experience on Instagram, but it can help produce (with other research in this direction) a greater understanding of how certain aspects of this and another platforms work¹⁰.

We must process information about you

To start mapping the ways in which the algorithmic experience is produced and operates in the midst of a digital system of sharing and interactions involving images and texts, as is the case with Instagram, we chose to take the document Data Policy from Instagram as a basis for analysis, presented

⁶ Similarly, Annemarie Mol (2002) refers to a multiple body from the investigation of a disease as part of what is produced in practice, avoiding essentialist perspectives of the body.

⁷ In the original: “What really exists is not things made but things in the making” (James, 1987, p. 751).

⁸ According to David Lapoujade (2007, p. 11), in James' philosophy “the term ‘practice’ does not necessarily refer to the domain of action, as opposed to the field of theoretical reflection; he designates first of all a point of view: ‘practice’ means that we consider reality, thought, knowledge (and also action) at the moment when they take place”. In the original: “(...) le terme « pratique » ne renvoie pas nécessairement au domaine de l'action, par opposition au champ de la réflexion théorique ; il désigne avant tout un point de vue : « pratique » signifie que l'on considère la réalité, la pensée, la connaissance (et aussi l'action) en tant qu'elles se font”.

⁹ We used the documents available in the Instagram Help Center at the time of analysis in 2019 – with the latest updates dated April 9, 2018.

¹⁰ Rob Kitchin (2017), for example, suggests some possible approaches to research algorithms, such as analyzing pseudocodes, using reverse engineering, interviews, ethnography, etc. However, to understand some of these strategies used in empirical works – and aimed more at social and / or communicational issues – we suggest the great researches of Elias Bitencourt (2019) and Taina Bucher (2012, 2018).

in the platform's help center (Data, 2018a). It describes the data collection, processing and management policy involving the entire set of platforms of the company Facebook – exactly because they all operate together in the intelligence of this data. It is important to analyze Instagram not only as a digital social media, but as a platform within a mega platform that aggregates different services, in an economy developed and guided by data and through the algorithmic organization of experience (Bitencourt, 2019; D'Andréa, 2018; Dijck et al., 2018; Gillespie, 2010, 2015; Lemos, 2020b, 2020; Montardo, 2019; Dijck & Poell, 2016; Waal, 2016).

In this initial stage, the investigation of what data and procedures the platform claims to carry out, based on the user's own experience, helps to understand some of the aspects of the algorithmic actions involved in the daily use of Instagram. The document warns that: “we must process information about you”, explaining the wide collection and processing of data. It also indicates that information is necessarily produced from use, that is, from the experience that involves people, images and algorithms. Facebook's document (Data, 2018) explains that “the types of information we collect depend on how you use our Products”.

Image 1 – Generated from excerpts extracted from the Data Policy document, which indicates data collected on Facebook platforms

communications; share; content; message; communicate; metadata; location; date; what you see; camera; people; Pages; accounts; hashtags; groups; **how you interact**; people; groups; contact; information; address book; call log; SMS log; how you use; types of content; features; **actions**; people; accounts; time; **frequency**; duration; posts; videos; **content you view**; **how you use**; camera; financial transactions; purchase in a game; donation; payment information; credit or debit card; number; account and authentication information; billing, shipping and contact details; **share or comment**; send a message; contact information; computers; phones; TVs; web-connected devices; phone; laptop; tablet; operating system; hardware and software versions; battery level; signal strength; available storage space; browser type; app and file names and types; plugins; **operations and behaviors performed on the device**; **mouse movements**; device IDs; unique identifiers; games, apps or accounts **you use**; Family Device IDs; Bluetooth signals; nearby Wi-Fi access points; beacons; cell towers; GPS location; camera; photos; language; time zone; mobile phone number; IP address; connection speed; information about other devices that are nearby or on your network; data from cookies stored on your device; cookie IDs and settings; device; websites you visit; **purchases you make**; **ads you see**; purchase you made; **games you play**; **online and offline actions** and purchases; people; places; things; phone number; location-related information; current location; where you live; **places you like to go**; precise device location; IP addresses; face recognition; interests; **actions**; connections; **websites you visit**; ads you see; **actions**; Instagram username; **information you share**; **content you share**; comment; active status; whether you are active on our; Products; post or share; **activities** in the game; name; Instagram username and bio; profile photo; email address; Pages, videos and other content; general demographic and interest information; shipping; contact details; information about you across the Facebook Companies; search; reliability of your account; financial transaction data; content, **communications**; create or share content; content and communications; **how you use features**

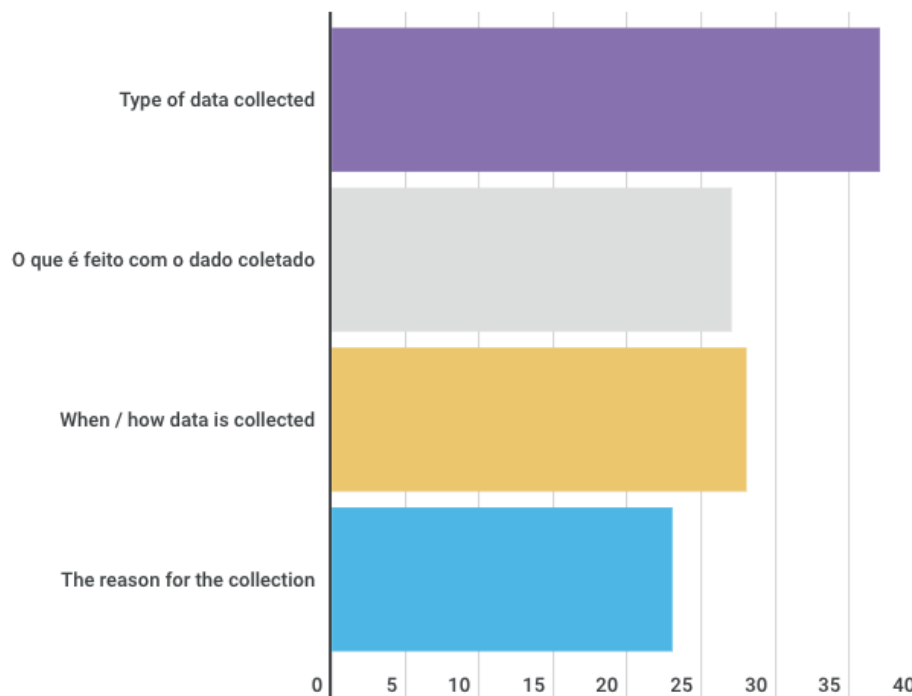
Source: Produced by the authors

The Instagram Data Policy document clarifies that any type of information produced by the user, directly or indirectly, can be collected and processed by the platform. In Image 1, we present a list of all the data that, throughout the document, Facebook says it collects in any of its services, including Instagram. As these are platforms that work in an aggregate way, any information processed in one of them can transform the usage experience in another – such as, for example, photos viewed on Instagram generating specific advertising on Facebook's feed. In general, different data are collected, from the frequency of use, the shared contents, the movements of the mouse, the written messages, the IP address, the location, the connected devices, the battery level or the operating system. Everything that is directly operated by the user is also produced or revealed automatically by the network or device. In Image 1, we draw attention, in

bold, to the data collected based on action, that is, everything you do inside and outside¹¹ the company's platforms, being algorithmically linked to them: actions, how you use, content you share, websites you visit etc.

For this first analysis, the following actions were identified in relation to the data collected: a) its type; b) what is done with it; c) when / how it is collected; d) the reason for collection. These variables, built from the reading of the document itself, help us understand how the company presents to users what is collected based on their actions; when, how and what is produced from this information; in addition to the objectives or the expected return for the user for the collection and processing of each action linked to the specific use of the platforms.

Graph 1 - Variables analyzed in relation to the total number of identified citations that directly deal with some datafication process¹²



Source: Produced by the authors

The document's emphasis is on reporting and guidance on the type of data that may be collected when using any company platform. The main topics are divided in terms of data extraction, use and sharing, namely: "What types of information do we collect?", "How do we use this information?" and "How is this information shared?" Observing the paragraphs in which there is some explanation about data collection or processing, we identified a priority in describing the type of data collected, but less recurrences of information about the destination, form and purpose of this collection (Graph 1).

In the excerpt below, it is possible to see that there are details about the type of data collected, but not about its use – such as sharing content, communicating with other people, metadata, finding

¹¹ Through navigation tracking with the use of cookies. For more details, see the document About cookies, specific to the Instagram platform (About, 2019a).

¹² The counting parameter is based on the total number of paragraphs (48) of the document, in which there is reference to some datafication process. Among these citations, 37 present the "type of data collected", 27 "what is done with the data", 28 "when / how the data is collected" and 23 "the reason for collection". The variables can coincide in the same paragraph.

files, etc. There is information about the type of data in conjunction with a specific purpose – such as viewing on the camera and suggesting masks and filters. In other passages, as in the case of information about geographic space (current location, place of residence, frequented places and people or companies nearby), the information on the use of these data becomes less specific.

We collect the content, communications and other information you provide when you use our Products, including when you sign up for an account, create or share content, and message or communicate with others. This can include information in or about the content you provide (like metadata), such as the location of a photo or the date a file was created. It can also include what you see through features we provide, such as our camera, so we can do things like suggest masks and filters that you might like, or give you tips on using camera formats (Data, 2018a).

There is often an emphasis on user action that will positively serve to feed and improve the system itself and, therefore, transform it in a way that adapts itself more and more to that same user. In broad terms, it is possible to perceive how there is a datafication of all actions produced on the platforms, in order to make them dynamic and personalized for each person:

We use the information we have to deliver our Products, including to personalize features and content (including your News Feed, Instagram Feed, Instagram Stories and ads) and make suggestions for you (such as groups or events you may be interested in or topics you may want to follow) on and off our Products. To create personalized Products that are unique and relevant to you, we use your connections, preferences, interests and activities based on the data we collect and learn from you and others (including any data with special protections you choose to provide); how you use and interact with our Products; and the people, places, or things you're connected to and interested in on and off our Products (Data, 2018a).

As the document demonstrates, there is an importance directed to the functioning of networks in terms of platforms that cross information, develop and personalize themselves based on the data relationship of different devices, products and actions. "For example, we can suggest that you join a group on Facebook that includes people you follow on Instagram or communicate with using Messenger", explains the company. In addition, there is a necessity to collect data to keep the network secure ("conduct and support research and innovation on topics of general social welfare, technological advancement, public interest, health and well-being"), or to produce detailed behavior analysis to be made available to advertisers and / or business partners, including the ability to "select and personalize ads, offers and other sponsored content that we show you". Similarly, to allow tracking of browsing beyond Facebook's own services, the cookies policy is justified by the logic of enhancing the Instagram experience: "We use cookies, pixels, local storage, and similar technologies to show you relevant content, improve your experience, and help protect Instagram and our users" (About, 2019a).

Despite this strong datafication of user actions (personalization), the company says it does not share personally identifiable information with third parties, limiting itself to a set of data generated in profile format. Even so, in addition to the services managed by Facebook, always based and reorganized on actions transformed into data, there is an intense sharing of information with business partners. To function effectively, produce information and share it, Instagram, for example, needs data to be collected constantly (whether it be metadata from a photo, images viewed, interactions with other people, or a temporary published story). Datafication is therefore thought of as a primary need of the platform: "We must process information about you".

People and things you love

In addition to informing the types of data that are extracted and some ways to process or share

them within the data practice of the platforms, Facebook has two specific documents for Instagram users: Terms of Use and Community Guidelines (Terms, 2018b; Community, 2019b). In these documents, the emphasis is on expected behaviors, possible or prohibited actions and what is accepted by the user when using the platform, including agreement with the following: “Providing our Service requires collecting and using your information”, detailed in the data policy document presented in the previous topic. By agreeing to the terms of use, that is, with the datafication of its actions on the platform, the company commits itself to what it calls “Instagram’s mission”: “To bring you closer to the people and things you love” (Terms, 2018b). The discourse is about offering “opportunities” for sharing, creating and communicating. It says:

People are different. We want to strengthen your relationships through shared experiences you actually care about. So we build systems that try to understand who and what you and others care about, and use that information to help you create, find, join, and share in experiences that matter to you. Part of that is highlighting content, features, offers, and accounts you might be interested in, and offering ways for you to experience Instagram, based on things you and others do on and off Instagram (Terms, 2018b).

The agreement with the user is, therefore, related to the different actions developed by each person (communications, images or texts) in the cluster of information already produced automatically by the devices with the functioning of data intelligence that will guide the experience. The idea of “offering ways for you to experience Instagram, based on things you and others do on and off Instagram” creates this algorithmic experience of viewing, sharing and commenting on photographs. This is also coupled with the display of “ads, offers, and other sponsored content that we believe will be meaningful to you”. The algorithmic experience is produced using “technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning”, allowing “to apply complex processes across our Service”.

To keep the service running smoothly based on this data, Instagram needs to not only encourage immersion in the platform, but also plan and guide different actions, building the experience. It is thought, designed and interpreted by the joint action of users and the platform in a digital environment of data extraction and algorithmic performance. For this reason, the platform suggests sharing only “photos and videos that you’ve taken or have the right to share” (Community, 2019b), modeled on the experience with the production of new, personal and authorial content.

All content produced in this experience, despite being initially the property of the publisher, when incorporated into the platform becomes licensed for extraction, modification and distribution. Therefore, the logic of extensive collection and processing of everything carried out in the company environment is maintained, as seen in the data policy.

Nothing is changing about your rights in your content. We do not claim ownership of your content that you post on or through the Service. Instead, when you share, post, or upload content that is covered by intellectual property rights (like photos or videos) on or in connection with our Service, you hereby grant to us a non-exclusive, royalty-free, transferable, sub-licensable, worldwide license to host, use, distribute, modify, run, copy, publicly perform or display, translate, and create derivative works of your content (consistent with your privacy and application settings) (Terms, 2018b).

Also in the production of imagery content, the user is expected to “promote sincere and meaningful interactions”. They are important precisely to maintain a more efficient data intelligence, avoiding “artificially collecting likes, followers, or shares”. For this reason, there is an emphasis on the need for authenticity to create an environment capable of functioning as a conducive place for the development of experiences that can be datafied: “We want Instagram to continue to be an authentic and safe place for inspiration and expression”, writes the company in the community guidelines document. The rules regarding what can or cannot be accomplished, including, for example, sharing what the platform considers

nudity¹³, suggest how the company designs the action to be able to sustain an algorithmically produced data collection.

Concluding remarks

The algorithmic experience induced in the documents and materialized on the platform is the result of procedural logic (Dourish, 2016; Gillespie, 2014), encompassing a diverse set of algorithmic instructions that will process, analyze and learn from Instagram's own experience. It is a set of rules for data collection that predicts actions, learn to distinguish them, classify them, and are constantly restructured from the experiences developed on the platform. The way the data policy is presented and the induction of actions designed by the platform attest to the creation of what we call an algorithmic experience, in the specific case of a data practice on Instagram. We can see in this experience what Dourish (2017, p. 11) calls "material arrangements of information", specific materialities of the digital that agency actions, behaviors, data extraction, in short, the datafication of the experience on digital platforms.

As the analyzed documents repeatedly announce, the way you use Instagram, information you share, images you produce; in short, all your actions make up this experience. As Bitencourt (2019, p. 288) points out, in a study on wearables, "within these algorithmic ecosystems, services are either built on the basis of users' behavior data patterns and applied as computational tools for learning about their consumption modes"¹⁴. Wide experiences are formed, managed by the production, sharing and interaction through images, developed together with a procedural and algorithmic performance projected from the data practice itself. This is the case on Instagram, but we can certainly expand to other digital platforms.

The documents guide the actions on the platforms and point out some mechanisms of induction in the action of the users. The algorithmic experience is, therefore, a hybrid construct in which the documents pay attention to functions and indicate forms of behavior appropriate to the performative sensitivity (Bitencourt, 2019; Lemos, 2016; Bitencourt, 2017) of the application. Consequently, in the neo-materialist and pragmatic position adopted here, the algorithms are not just shown as a set of logical instructions organized to solve a problem. To understand its public relevance (Gillespie, 2014) and its experiences, we must seek to apprehend its effects and recognize them as an important part in the constitution of the experience on this platform, as suggested by Introna (2016) and Bucher (2018).

We present the results of our observation of the Instagram's documents directed to users to reveal their algorithmic experience as a datafication logic typical of the mechanical performance of this platform. As we have seen, action is projected and behaviors are planned to make data collection feasible. All of the platform's logic works in the informational construction of interactions and images, reorganizing and searching new projections of action based on what is daily experienced by users. The algorithmic experience is exactly that: events in which photographic practice develops from informational construction.

Thus, our proposal to follow algorithmic experience involves investigating their practical consequences and identifying how and in what degree this experience come to matter in a specific

¹³ In the Community Guidelines document, the company writes the following about sharing nudity on Instagram: "We know that there are times when people might want to share nude images that are artistic or creative in nature, but for a variety of reasons, we don't allow nudity on Instagram. This includes photos, videos, and some digitally-created content that show sexual intercourse, genitals, and close-ups of fully-nude buttocks. It also includes some photos of female nipples, but photos of post-mastectomy scarring and women actively breastfeeding are allowed. Nudity in photos of paintings and sculptures is OK, too" (Community, 2019b).

¹⁴ In the original: "nesses ecossistemas algorítmicos, os serviços são tanto construídos em função dos padrões de comportamento quanto aplicados na qualidade de ferramentas de aprendizagem sobre os modos de consumir".

situation¹⁵. There is certainly no unique methodological procedure for analyzes involving platforms and algorithms. Specific situations and practices require particular methodological arrangements. We chose a gateway (the documents as action cards) to point out the characteristics of the experience created on the platform. But locating the question in terms of algorithmic experience, asking ourselves at every moment what practical differences are produced in the use of platforms, seems to us an unavoidable way to understand digital platforms today.

The empirical analysis of the documents made available by Instagram was a concrete way to enter the network and start following this experience. It is what Barad (2007) considers a phenomenon, with practical consequences produced by an entanglement of real agencies (documents, users, business strategies, codes and data). If we cannot know exactly how the codes of these algorithms are configured, or the secret strategies of these companies, we were able to probe their documents pragmatically to understand the algorithmic experience proposed and in progress in the device in question.

The possibilities for generalizing the findings of this research are found precisely in the realization that one should take into account material agencies in understanding the current phenomena of digital culture in the midst of a platform society (Van Dijck et al, 2018) and search ways to follow the experience from the pragmatic effects of algorithmic performance. However, it is also important to highlight the limits of this specific research: in spite of elucidating certain particularities of the algorithmic experience on Instagram, we observe documents that reflect the company's choices about ways to, in text, exemplify some of its datafication processes. Thus, we limit ourselves at this moment to what is made visible by the platform through texts addressed to its users. Therefore, document analysis is only part of the task. New research must be done to continue to follow the algorithmic experience, investigating the interfaces, impressions and strategies of users, business logic, the legal and political environment, among other aspects..

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¹⁵ Here we are inspired by Savransky, from his discussion of relevance in the social sciences, in which he refutes general validation criteria, as well as criticizing a view of relevance that would be associated only with the way science publicize its findings; relevance, therefore, would not be confined to the mind, but to the world. In this sense, it proposes a different way of investigation, based on experience. In the original: "how, in what degree and in what manner, things come to matter within specific situations" (Savransky, 2016, p. 35).

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