

**From:** manuel bronstein [REDACTED]@google.com]  
**Sent:** 3/22/2016 6:07:55 AM  
**To:** Cristos Goodrow [REDACTED]@google.com]  
**CC:** Thabet Alfshaw [REDACTED]@google.com]  
**Subject:** Re: Notification Policy



Will do tomorrow

On Monday, March 21, 2016, Cristos Goodrow <[REDACTED]@google.com> wrote:  
Manuel,

Feel free to send a message that you feel is appropriate to Rachel and Katherine. Or let me know if you would like me to send it. Either way is fine with me.

Cristos.

On Mon, Mar 21, 2016 at 10:13 AM, Cristos Goodrow <[REDACTED]@google.com> wrote:

- >i think that desired outcome is
- >1) subscription notifications are treated as either transactional or user requested -- we could even message in the app if needed
- >2) contextual notifications at Low vs Min per your suggestions

We aren't going to get (1). It's against their whole re-thinking of notifications. Did you guys see the UXpedition at [go/notifications-uxpedition](http://go/notifications-uxpedition)? Or [A New Design Ethics to Respect User's Attention](http://go/new-design-ethics)? They are using words like "ethics" and "addiction" (and the second one not in a good way).

My hope is that we can turn a concern about (1), from the Creator's perspective, into the change we want for (2). Maybe discussing competitive fan communication platforms isn't a good way to do this, but I think it might be O.K. because failure to do this across the board means that the user's are still addicted and the Creators feel that we failed them.

Cristos.

On Mon, Mar 21, 2016 at 10:01 AM, Thabet Alfshaw [REDACTED]@google.com> wrote:

This sounds great. What do you guys think about a contextual notification (ie Watch More) that the user acknowledges with a "Got it" from our mealbar? Does that continue to be contextual? Or does it cross over to user-requested?

-Fesh

On Sun, Mar 20, 2016 at 9:58 PM, manuel bronstein <[REDACTED]@google.com> wrote:  
thx Cristos -- we are almost on the same page. Few thoughts

i wouldn't lead the "classification of subs notifications" with the competitive/enforcing situation, this is a fight we won't control. I think we need to focus on the merits of these notifications not being deemed as contextual because they are the result of a user action to subscribe, expressing more interest in some creators than others. It should be up to the platform the contract that such action results into. Users are always able to unsubscribe as a way to stop receiving notifications. One thing to note: The notification bell drives ~300M notifications/day but only 12M DAVs, while the affinity ones drive 70M notifications/day with 8M DAVs.

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- 1) subscription notifications are treated as either transactional or user requested -- we could even message in the app if needed
- 2) contextual notifications at Low vs Min per your suggestions

On Sun, Mar 20, 2016 at 8:34 AM, Cristos Goodrow <[REDACTED]@google.com> wrote:

I've been thinking more about this, and I would imagine sending something like the following:

Rachel and Katherine,

Thanks for sharing your thoughts on notifications policy. We were impressed at how simple the statements were, and we appreciate your concerns about improving the over-attention problem for Android users.

I think we have two main concerns with the policy as presented:

1. Classification of "subscribe" or "follow" as contextual rather than transactional or user-requested is a tremendous change.

Actually, I think that you have come-up with a much better definition of both transactional ("needed to hold up social or other obligations") and user-requested ("explicitly asked to be notified"). And I understand the thinking behind this too, in order to improve the attention problem.

My concern is that you won't be able to hold the line here for other popular apps, and holding only Google apps to this standard won't make any dent in the attention problem. Other apps will argue that "following" or "liking" in their app comes with the expectation that the follower or liker will be notified of everything. And as I mentioned, the people followed - for instance, Creators on YouTube - have exactly this expectation. They feel that we are being an unfaithful communication platform when we fail to notify their subscribers of every single thing, and as a result they say that they can communicate with their fans better on FB &c.

We are trying to address this issue in two ways that we feel are best for viewers: i. provide explicit notification opt-in opportunities (ie. the "bell" to "super-subscribe"), and ii. use machine-learning to find the subscribers who most appreciate notifications and send to them when they are most likely to be delighted (ie. channel-affinity notifications).

2. Contextual as MIN doesn't seem necessary, especially when we separately stipulate no sound or buzzing.

We believe that in-context opt-out without interruption (ie. buzzing) at LOW is better. This will give the users an option to clean-up their notifications, which will quickly improve the attention problem in a meaningful way that is each user customizes for each notification type and app in a fine-grained way.

Also, when compounded with (1), our experiments demonstrate that MIN will result in much less good communication from Creators and their Fans on YouTube (where we define "good" as actually watching the video).

I think that both of these can be addressed in a good way by:

- a. holding all apps to these definitions, and
- b. allowing LOW-no-sound instead of MIN for contextual.

Cristos.

On Mar 18, 2016 6:31 PM, "Thabet Alfishawi" <[REDACTED]@google.com> wrote:

Thoughts inline  
-Fesh

On Mar 18, 2016 5:44 PM, "manuel bronstein" <[REDACTED]@google.com> wrote:

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> Note i'd like to send to Rachel and Katherine - lmk what you think?

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> Rachel, Katherine - thanks again for going over the policy with us and taken ownership of such a complex issue

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> From what we were able to cover here are the two things i'd like to further review/chat about

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> 1) Action of Subscribing on YouTube should be enough to consider those notifications user-requested. This is something both our creators and users are expecting. Today we have 2 types of subscription notifications (a) "The Bell" - which means the user opted in to receive all notifications from that creator (uploads and in the future other types of actions) and (b) affinity, which we only send to those users who (1) subscribe + (2) are active with the channel/creators. We are adding more intelligence to this last one to send to those who are likely to have a "good open". It is important that we don't treat either of these notifications and "contextual"

+1. Similarly, should we consider the 'got it' on mealbar an explicit action by user to continue receiving rec notifications and therefore appropriate to change the rwc notifications to that user from contextual to user-requested?

>

> 2) Setting priority to min vs low (we care more about visibility than sound or vibration). As mentioned the impact on open rate is material,

~30% of opens are lost/ no impact on optouts per clicks though.

and my concern is that we will miss people we could delight with these notifications. In addition since the notifications is only sent to those likely to experience a "good open", the more hidden the notification is, the less reliable the data we get. Lastly, for those who are annoyed by the notifications (minority of recipients) we are providing a very easy inline and in app way to opt out. Another alternative could be to set rules around contextual notifications if people don't interact with them

I'd try and stay away from these rules/heuristics of when to stop sending rec notifications and leave it to our models. I actually think it's better for our growth efforts to have 'unlimited' shots with min than limited shots with low.

I honestly think we should do a harder push her on low.

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> Getting to an agreeable position wrt these 2 items will be extremely helpful in balancing the needs of our creators (meaning of a subscription) and our business with having a high bar for notifications and avoiding fatigue

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> Pls let us know what the next steps are

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> thx!

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> manuel

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Thabet Alfishawi |

YouTube |

@google.com |