Short Description

Platform agnostic wrapper for video sharing sites, with community maintained database of mirrors and related channel recommendations.

Goals

I believe such a website could address a few issues:

1.   Seamless source/mirror switching for video content. Rather than mainly using YouTube and having to remember to switch to other more obscure platforms to check for particular content, this platform could offer the ability to manage subscriptions even to 'normal' content unlikely to be censored, with the added benefit that any extra content from other websites is available through the same exact interface.

2.   Allowing people to take advantage of all of the content of YouTube and other video hosting sites without having to depend on their algorithms for finding new content. Creators that maintain their own profiles on the site could explicitly recommend related channels, but where creator participation is lacking, users could essentially upvote recommended/related channels.

3.   A detailed historical log of just how much a particular video sharing website has censored a given creator. Personally one of the most insidious aspects of content removal or suppression is that there's often no indication that such content has been removed. YouTube in particular used to replace removed videos in playlists with "Deleted Video" and a link you could search to find out what it was, only to do away with even that. Now people don't even really know how much content has been removed.

4.   Minor point: Little features like the ability to sort videos by 'oldest' have slowly been removed from YouTube for some reason. It would be nice if this website could add these back. I'm sure there are plugins that do this already, but it'd be nice to have such functionality here too.

Course Outline of Site Structure

- Main page
  - One part contains unwatched videos from creators to which you are subscribed, listed in order of recentness, proportional score (likes to views, likes to dislikes, etc. depending on source website), or some weighted average of both. Maybe choose your own algorithm?
  - Another part may contain recommended creators or videos from creators to which you are not subscribed, but which the community has determined may be similar to content you watched recently.
  - I dunno what to put here if you're not logged in. The worst possibility would be to source directly from outsides sites' main pages, and run the risk of displaying content that could put people off signing up for the site. Maybe just a page describing what the site does?
  - Also some sort of interface for accessing your profile / messages? / subscriptions.

- Creator Profile
  - This is a profile describing someone who creates content on outside video platforms
  - These are the most important pages on the website
  - I can conceive of three main categories these pages will fall in:
    - Automatically generated stubs. Data might be dynamically requested somehow from outside sites APIs (however sites like socialblade do it) whenever someone attempts to view a profile that has no in-house data on it. These wouldn't be particularly useful in the sense that there would be no way of knowing if a certain profile on one video sharing website is owned by the same creator as a profile on another video sharing website, and so separate dynamically generated pages would exist for both. Censored content also would not appear. But these may or may not be included for completeness, so people do need feel the need to switch back and forth between this website and actual video hosting websites.
    - Creator maintained pages. This is the ideal scenario. Creators could claim a profile the same way you can claim a business on Google Maps. A creator could get a randomly generated code from this website, edit it into their channel descriptions on each video sharing website they wish to link, and then send a link of their channel(s) back to this website to check for the code. Stub pages on each of these channels would be removed. They would then have full and exclusive authority to update their own creator page and to update it with new videos as they post them to one or more of their channels on other sites. They could also make authoritative recommendations of other related channels.
    - Community maintained creator pages. Links to media and media recommendations are added by users (user profiles) and subject to community consensus. Essentially they are run in a Wiki spirit. But including some sort of upvote system for submissions may help clarify the veracity of a submission, and gameify the process so as to encourage further submissions.
  - Content: (If website falls into above categories 2 or 3)
    - List of associated channels on other websites with links
      - Who posted this recommendation
      - How many votes it has received (if not posted by creator)
    - Separate list of associated videos. Video here ideally means 'piece of content' in the sense that mirrors are listed under one video entry, not considered separate videos.
      - By default only the working link that comes from the most popular video sharing website will be displayed.
      - Cumulative stats (if possible) for data such as likes, dislikes, views, summed over all possible available mirrors.
      - A drop down arrow will allow you to see a complete list of sources/mirrors and their histories.
        - Each source will contain a few bits of information arranged in a table:
        - Name
        - Link
        - Date source created
        - Estimated date source removed from source website (if applicable)
        - Flags
          - Working link
          - Removed link
          - Unreliable link / may fail to load or cause excessive buffering
          - Abridged or censored version
          - Requires login or behind a paywall
        - Who added this information
        - How many votes it has received?

- User Profile
  - Info displayed to other users
    - Contains stats on how much info they have submitted, how many votes they have received for such contributions, and how many votes they have given others, when they were last online, when they registered, etc.
    - Possible normal website stuff like a profile description box or contact info you can voluntarily fill out to display to people that look at your profile
    - History of contributions to site database
  - Info displayed to the user themselves if they are logged in
    - Which channels you are subscribed to view
    - Which channels you are subscribed to edit data for if that ends up being a feature?
    - Watched videos history
    - Personal playlists?
    - Ability to edit profile info, and do other admin tasks like changing password

Design Philosophy

Total Drag and Drop replacement

 I've used dual booting Linux and Windows systems as well as used Google Chrome alongside Chromium, even though the latter doesn't seem to load videos outside of YT at all due to missing codecs. The reason I bring this up is because in both cases I had to switch back and forth for various edge cases and eventually if you have to do that, one or the other will pretty much win out. A lot of effort should be made to ensure that while you may ultimately have to go to the source websites to actually watch the videos in cases where embedding doesn't work, all other features should work seamlessly on all content across all major platforms. Getting people to actually use this website long-term requires minimizing the cases where it doesn't work and requires switching back.

Community Engagement

 I think there's a ton of people out there who really hate how one day they will log into YT only to find that today they removed the ability to (for example) sort a creator's videos by oldest for seemingly no reason. Or that they've made some other change which really just serves to make the platform worse. To say nothing of censorship. There are a lot of people who really *wish* there was an alternative. However creating an entirely new platform has been tried many times and even in the best cases, YT has not been threatened much at all. This means that the average person who isn't a content creator really has no way to help the world move away from YT's near monopoly. Giving people the ability to possibly spend a few minutes a day voting on related channel recommendations, or checking mirror links, or otherwise contributing to this website, will actually give the average person a way they could maybe help in an incremental way.

Other Notes (WIP)

- Users could add an email or some other means of contact (are RSS feeds still used) to get notified of new videos. They could even opt-in to get some sort of notification when videos they like are removed? Apparently computers have notifications too you can enable for webpages, cool.
- Users could subscribe to a creator profile separately from a 'watching subscription' just to remind them to check that creator for new content and check current links to see if they are still working. How many people are subscribed in this way (a 'contributor subscription') could be shown on this website separately from people subscribed to watch. That way people would know not to bother helping out in this manner if plenty of other people are already doing so for this particular creator. I guess they'd just be reminded on an infrequent basis to check in on a random channel they have a 'contributor subscription' to.