



ShareMeNot

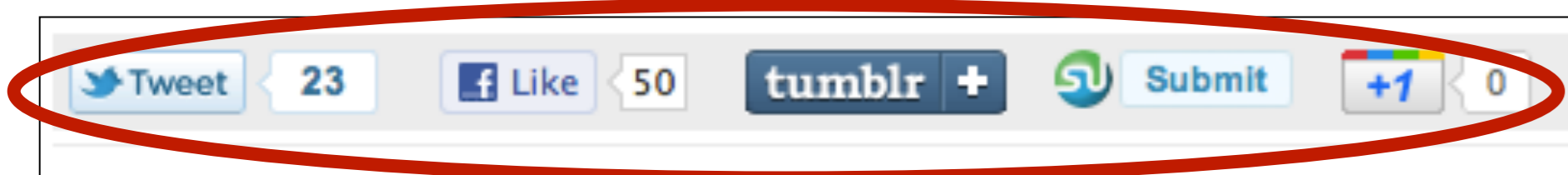
Protecting users against tracking from third-party social media buttons



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<http://sharemenot.cs.washington.edu/>

The Problem



SNL Continued Its Valiant Comeback On Saturday Night With Anna Faris

WRITTEN BY THE CAJUN BOY

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uproxx.com

- Social media widgets like these allow Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, etc. to track users on **every site** that includes one of these buttons.
- This tracking:
 - Happens **even if users don't click the buttons**.
 - Is **not anonymous**.
 - Often occurs even if the user has not logged into or logs out of the site.

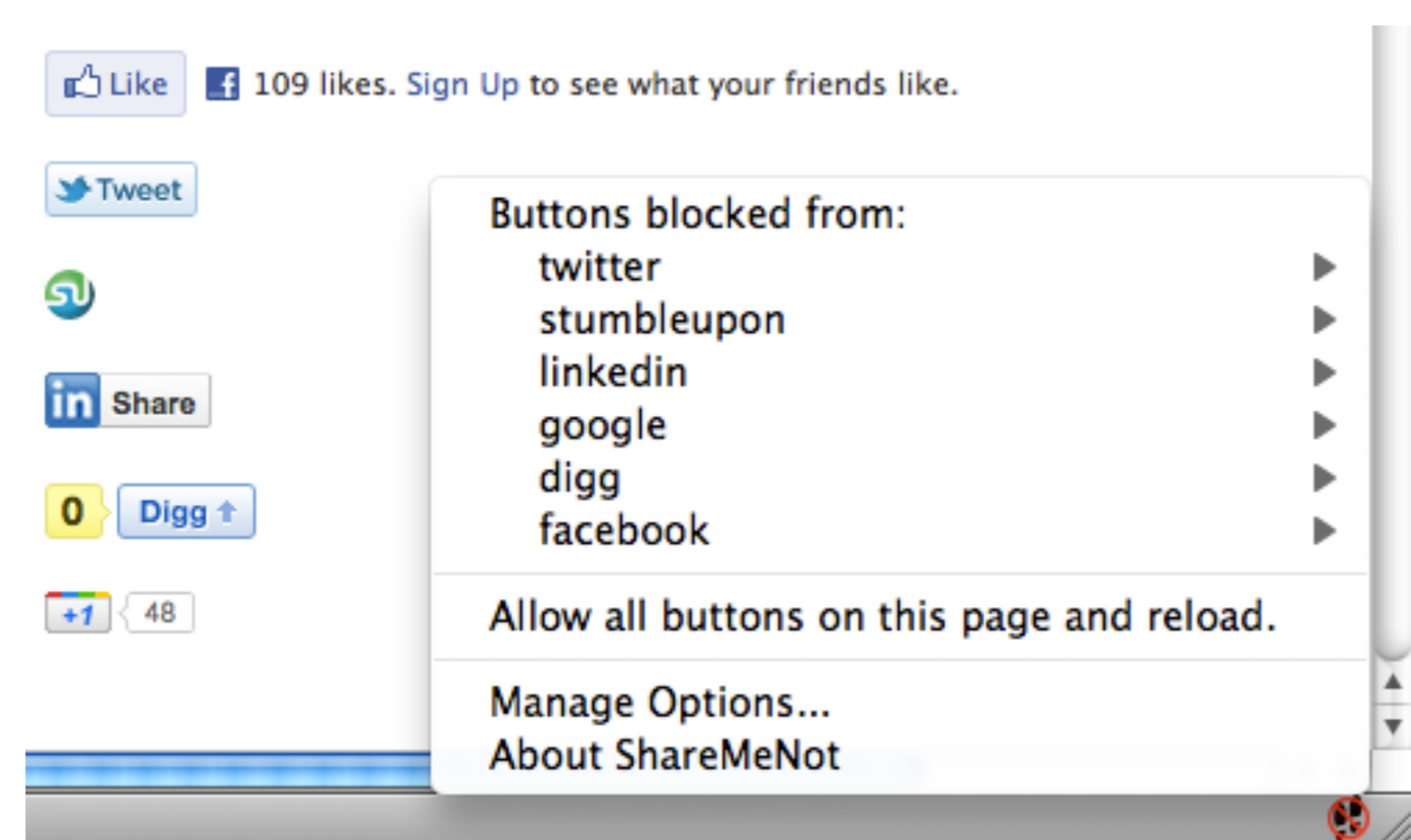
Potential Solutions

- Disabling third-party cookies **doesn't help**.
 - Firefox: buttons break
 - Others (Chrome, IE, Safari): cookies are still sent to third-party
- Browser add-ons like Disconnect, NoScript, Ghostery and others simply **remove the buttons from the web experience**.

*Our goal: prevent tracking until users click on a button, **without removing buttons from the web experience**.*

Our Approach

- ShareMeNot: a **Firefox add-on** that protects users against this type of tracking **while still allowing them to use the buttons**.
- How it works:
 - **Removes cookies** from requests that render the supported buttons.
 - **Detects clicks** on a button
 - Necessarily **stops removing cookies** once a click is detected



Effectiveness

- We performed an in-depth **measurement study of third-party tracking** on web today.
- We used these measurements to **iteratively refine** ShareMeNot.
- We find that ShareMeNot **dramatically reduces tracking** by third-party social widgets on the top 500 sites (according to Alexa rankings).

Tracker	Without ShareMeNot	With ShareMeNot
Facebook	154	9
Google	149	15
Twitter	93	0
AddThis	34	0
YouTube	30	0
LinkedIn	22	0
Digg	8	0
Stumbleupon	6	0

Download

<http://sharemenot.cs.washington.edu/>

- Over 20,000 downloads to date, in addition to 7,500 from the official Mozilla add-on site.

- **Currently supports** buttons from Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, Stumbleupon, Twitter (“tweet” and “follow”), AddThis, and embedded YouTube videos.