

A conversation: Queer digital media resources and research

by Mia Fischer, Oliver L. Haimson, Carmen Rios, Adrienne Shaw, Mitali Thakor, Jen Jack Giesecking, and Daniel Cockayne

Abstract

The following is a panel discussion from QIS2 that in which five experts shared their research on queer media and technology. The panellists discuss a wide range of topics including trans people and surveillance online; trans identity and social media; online communities and feminist politics; the LGBT games archive; and digital vigilantism and sex trafficking. Uniting these diverse themes were a shared attention to the politics of queer visibility online that two of the editors of this special issue explore further in their opening comments.

Editor's introduction

The opening panel of QIS2 was a series of talks around different approaches toward queer research online. The speakers were asked to be in conversation for their eclecticism and for the variety of topics that they were likely to cover. Perhaps inevitably, however, a series of commonalities emerged through their conversation. The theme of queer visibility became a persistent theme, both as an opportunity and as a challenge. Visibility might mean exposure, suspicion, the forced outing of certain bodies. But it can also be a rallying point, it may afford solidarity and community between individuals who did not know that there were others like them. Each of these different accounts also gives a kind of introduction to the wide range of methods through which a queer Internet studies might be pursued. We present them here together, rather than as separate papers, because we hope to highlight the difference endemic in and between these approaches, that we see as also central to queer approaches in general. The introductory remarks by Jen Jack Giesecking and Daniel Cockayne were written to accompany this special issue.

The politics of visibility

by Jen Jack Giesecking and Daniel Cockayne

As the moderator for this panel (Giesecking) at the second Queer Internet Studies (QIS2) symposium, I then remarked that the most striking theme across these papers is very much the politics of visibility. The LGBTQ movement has long been defined by politics of visibility; however, the exact meaning and what is at stake in that visibility has been less interrogated,

especially in the production of LGBTQ online visibility. In order to make sense of our queer Internet presents, we must recall the other networks of the past and their deployment of visibility.

A LGBTQ person's out-ness is presumed to feed into a "politics of visibility." In that the lesbian and gay movement in the 1970s developed in response to what historian John D'Emilio describes as the painful and pervasive "silence, invisibility, and isolation" they experienced [1]. Lesbian and gay organizations have consistently used spatialized rallying cries such as "Whose streets? Our streets!" in the first Christopher Street March (renamed Pride march) in June of 1970. Visibility defined the 1970s gay and lesbian movement's cry of "Gay is good!," "Come out!," and "Out of the bars, into the streets!"; the last of these was coined by Harvey Milk himself. In the 1980s and 1990s, the movement spoke of LGBTQ "in-your-face" activism, which can be seen in ACT-UP's circa 1987 rallying cry, "Out of the closet, and into the streets!" The 1990s extended these statements with "We're everywhere!" by the Lesbian Avengers, circa 1992, and "We're here, we're queer!" by Queer Nation, circa 1995. Lesbian and gay people have framed their agenda and strategies of resistance through a politics of visibility that was idealized as the path toward recognition, justice, and liberation (see Darsey, 1991). The politics of visibility marked visible LGBTQ spaces such as neighborhoods, places like bars, and the city itself as the hallmarks of LGBTQ liberation. Appearances — stereotypical and generalized — have played and continue to play a key role within the LGBTQ politics of visibility, particularly in the practices of forming a mobile, legible LGBTQ public sphere (see Chauncey, 1994; Valentine, 1996).

Most importantly, a politics of visibility was never sufficient for *all* LGBTQ people, namely women, people of color, the poor, the disabled, and the young and the old (Clare, 2015; Cohen, 1999, 1997; Hanhardt, 2016; Johnson and Henderson, 2005; Johnson, 2016; Spade, 2015). All of the claims to public space claimed by activists above developed from a position of white privilege that could occupy public space, one that the Black Lives Matter movement has revealed can take place without the expectation of police retribution (Hanhardt, 2016). White, neoliberal, ableist American society is "dominated by the realm of the visible," per feminist philosopher Linda Martín Alcoff [2]. She adds that the practices and politics of visibility "are indeed revealing of significant facts about our cultural ideology, but that what the visible reveals is not the ultimate truth; rather, it often reveals self-projection, identity anxieties, and the material inscription of social violence" [3].

All of the panelists touched on the topic of visibility with renewed importance in the online context. Fischer expressed the need for caution since queer visibility online has led to a distinct cultural backlash. Rios too emphasized these dangers that she associated with a "visceral biopolitics of sexuality" since for a population to be subject to (at worst) death and disappearance, they first had to be visible. Thakor discussed these dangers in relation to digital outing and vigilantism, techniques used to discipline queer subjects online. Haimson discussed opportunity for the development of trans identity online as well as challenges in terms of discrimination and harassment that Shaw also emphasized in her discussion of queer representation in video games. What emerged from scholars sharing their expertise in queer media is that rather than thinking of the Internet in the singular, we can think of it in the plural, as heterogeneous assemblages of desire and play, as well as surveillance and danger.

A politics of visibility is then not only the ability to be seen but a practice of queer radical refusal of a system that refuses to recognize LGBTQ people, that denies their voices, their participation, and their citizenship. Upon further reflection, the papers in this session also returned often to themes of recognition, understanding, and what a purpose of all online community looks like. How we know and do not know, as Haimson pointed it out, is part of the opportunities and challenges of queer life online. Instead of artificial intelligence, we may be putting forward a form of QI or queer intelligence to make community online, to make sense of ourselves online, and to make a place, in the words of Rios, where you can read the comments.

Visibility then cannot stand alone. Visibility, at its best, requires recognition and radical practice alongside it. When taken together, the politics of visibility, recognition, and participation in

constellations evokes queer theorist Sara Ahmed's [4] "politics of hope":

... a queer politics would have hope ... but because the lines that accumulate through repeated gestures, the lines that gather on skin, already take surprising forms. We have hope because what is behind us is also what allows other ways of gathering in time and space, of making lines that do not reproduce what we follow, but instead create new textures on the ground.

We believe a queer Internet also has hope, in practice, form, and all of its possibilities.

“Catch him with his encryption down”: Counter-encryption techniques in child exploitation investigations
by Mitali Thakor

I'm going to open by sharing three scenes from my research that I hope will launch a series of questions. Something I've been interested in lately is questions of digital vigilantism, what policing looks by non-police actors. My field work is based in the U.S. as well as the Netherlands and parts of Southeast Asia, specifically the United Nation and Bangkok and several different agencies in the Philippines. I'm thinking in a global context. Of course, we are in the U.S. and I'm American, so it always comes back to a U.S. context for me. Let me present these three scenes, and then I'll start a discussion.

Scene one. “Catch him with his encryption down.”

At a police training I attended in Dallas, two law enforcement investigators delivered a presentation with this title: “Catching him with his encryption down, counter-encryption techniques, and child-exploitation investigations.” Seated in the audience were representatives from the Australian Federal Police, Dutch National Police, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police, as well as myself. One of the men presenting was an investigator for the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. The other from the U.S. Department of Justice's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, called CEOS.

Their training session was designed to educate investigators on the strategies for encryption that are used by distributors of child sexual abuse content — child pornography photos, videos, etc. This presentation began with photos of Julius Caesar and Leonardo da Vinci, with the suggestion that encryption has been used throughout history, especially in military communications.

The presenters said that today, defendants in child pornography cases are increasingly using free-of-charge basic digital encryption programs such as TrueCrypt or PGP. By encrypting illicit material, the defendants hoped to evade prosecutors gathering evidence. The presenters' argument was that the best way to handle an offender's use of encryption is to address it early on. They were using case work that they've been conducting in Southern California with a regional team, out of an investigative unit. They described how investigators could obtain the child pornography collection of various defendants before encryption could be activated.

They argued that investigators could literally “bust down the door,” in their own words, “while the guy's encryption is down.” They clearly referenced finding this man with his pants down as a metaphor for a vulnerable moment. The presenters detailed that the investigators could perform this act of exposure by entering a suspect's residence while he is actively using his computer and has encryption disabled.

One way to do so, the presenter from the U.S. Department of Justice suggested, was to execute search warrants for 6:30 AM or a similar hour, or perhaps late at night. He added that the prosecutor might consider strategic deceit to cause the offender to leave his house quickly, before he had any

chance of re-encrypting. He offered the ruse of having a tow truck parked outside pretending to tow the person's car.

Scene two. A light is switched on and a child speaks.

Her face looks directly into the camera. "My name is Sweetie. I'm 10 years old. I live in the Philippines," she says. "Every day I have to sit in front of a webcam and talk to men, just like tens of thousands of other kids." The video shows a cascade of photos of young Filipinx children. The children's heads are cropped out of the images. The video also shows a stream of photos of adult men holding up panties and other articles of clothing. Sweetie continues, "The men ask me to take off my clothes. They ask me to play with myself. They want me to play with myself. As soon as I go online, they come to me. Ten, a hundred, every hour. So many."

At this point, with synthesized rush audio, Sweetie's smooth brown face fades into an electric blue digital mesh of the CGI architecture beneath. "What they don't know," she explains, "I'm not real. I'm a computer model built piece by piece to track down men who do this." The video continues with a different voice — an adult male, describing in an American accent how "webcam sex tourism" is a dangerous new form of exploitation, spreading like an epidemic as children in places like the Philippines are paid to undress on livestream video in chat-room Web sites. The narrator continues: "while tens of thousands of children were forced to perform for men from rich countries, only six people had ever been charged globally."

The narrator explained that his team decided to take matters into their own hands and monitor the Web sites where adults might solicit children for explicit photos and videos. They posed as a 10 year-old designed as a life-like Filipina girl. On the chat, Sweetie would try to convince people to share their e-mail addresses, names, and identifying information, in order for her to share nude photos and videos of herself. Over the course of 10 weeks, the Sweetie team collected 1,000 names and other identifying data of people from 71 countries, including the U.K., Australia, Germany, and India. In November of 2013, they submitted this list to the Office of Europol as well as the Dutch National Police. The narrator of the video concludes by saying that, "Project Sweetie was an example of the power of technology to draw attention to the webcam sex tourism issue, through which children could be saved."

The team that produced Project Sweetie is actually a Netherlands-based NGO, called Terre des Hommes, which works as an advertising firm also based in the Netherlands. They regard their work as "pro-active policing," with the caveat I will add that no law enforcement were actually involved in any part of this campaign.

Scene three. A message from Anonymous.

"Hello, citizens of the world. We are Anonymous. Dear brothers and sisters, now is the time to open your eyes and expose the truth. Recently, it has come to our attention that there has been a surge of Web sites dedicated for pedophiles for chat and picture sharing. These pedophiles openly advocate concepts like man-boy love, stating that an eight-year-old boy enjoys it and prey on their attention. This is not limited to boys. Boards for little girls exist and operate with impunity."

"Child pornography is frequently traded. Even innocent pictures of random children at the beach, on the playground, in their homes are publicly fantasized about. Anonymous aim to diminish, if not eradicate, this plague from the Internet. For the good of our followers, for the good of mankind and for our own enjoyment, we shall expel from the Internet and systematically destroy any such

boards that continue to operate. Anonymous recognizes this is a serious undertaking and do not expect it to be completed in a short period of time.”

“Factions of Anonymous from all over the globe are participating in sub-operations. Information on pedophiles is being gathered and released. Anonymous must expose this pedophile sites for who and what they really are. The 99 per cent will spread word of this disgusting pedophile practices. We are Anonymous. We are legion. We do not forgive. We do not forget. Expect us.”

These three scenes, one in Dallas, Texas, one in Amsterdam, and one in uncited virtual space, are in a dance with each other. They share a politics of exposure. What is behind this impulse to out, to make visible, to shame? These moments of digital vigilantism signal to me the expansion of policing power — or, more accurately, the practice of policing by non-police actors, moving from international law enforcement officers, such as those who suggest to catch a man with his encryption down, to more dispersed and informal policing actors. Vigilante campaigns reproduce shared notions of insecurity and securitization of digital space.

‘Securitization’ refers to the institutions that people, as well as the ideologies that produce a regime of security culture, where we are constantly thinking about security and what it means to be insecure. A security regime produces an affective economy of fear through images of crisis, and techniques of risk awareness to save children, to create a state of constant preparedness for threats, specifically to children online. Police investigators working on child exploitation cases spend a lot of time thinking about security-and how to break it down. Non-police actors, who also take part in policing work, continue by strengthening the carceral state by reaffirming this production of insecurity as an exposing practice. They shame people who are labeled as criminals, and also out people who might be potential offenders. Potentiality should be of concern to us as well. Further still, this exposing practice gets recoded as a form of technical knowledge and the moral obligation. I want to add that there is a perverse pleasure in shaming. Anonymous says that they enjoy doing this. There’s an almost carnal rivalry in the revelation of incriminating data.

We, as a viewing audience — and I want to include myself and those of us in the room here, and specify viewing especially, because all of these campaigns were always intended for public visual access — gain pleasure in sharing these moments of signaling out offenders or potential offenders. Beyond this obvious metaphor of ‘outing,’ I question what practices of digital vigilantism mean for us as activists and researchers aiming to expose wrongs and to right wrongs.

How do we sit with the knowledge of the vast majority of sexual offenses go on unreported and occur between family members, not strangers online? How do we sit with the knowledge that the majority of arrest conducted through the Department of Justice, and Immigrations, and Customs Enforcement, and Interpol Sting Operation are of black and brown men? How do we sit with the knowledge that the incarceration and civil commitments of child sex offenders do very little to actually rehabilitate violent behavior?

The public rallies around the preservation of this sort of imagined, docile, and innocent child, this symbolic child figure that actually performs quite disciplining work through the mechanisms that are needed to ensure the preservation of that innocent child. We bring child protection close to us as an issue and disperse all of ourselves as vigilantes in this sort of digital network. This encourages computer scientists, humanitarian professionals, and the general public to also engage in exposing practices.

How do we sit with the knowledge of these and these symbolic children, which are coded often as heterosexual, innocent, perhaps white, for whom such techniques are deployed might actually, to paraphrase Lee Edelman (2004), be fucking us all over. How do we sit with the knowledge of the

digital techniques being designed for solving child abuse cases are easily, fluidly transferable to cases of border control, immigration's enforcement, counter-terrorism and global surveillance? What kind of future are we building when we use digital means to such ends?

The LGBT game archive
by *Adrienne Shaw*

The project I've been working on for the last two years is the LGBTQ game archive, which is focused on video games but we are open to expanding to non-digital platforms. I should mention that this project is being funded by Refiguring Innovation in Games from York University in Canada.

I've been doing LGBTQ games studies since the early 2000s. Most of my work is focused on game industry, designers, and players. One of the questions people always come back to is, "Well, can you tell us more about the history of LGBTQ content in games?" And the answer was always, "No, I can't. I haven't done that research yet." I was waiting 10 years for somebody else to do it. Nobody did, so I started. One of the goals of the project is that a lot of the existing information about LGBTQ content in video games that is available online is inadequate. There are Wikipedia articles. Most of them are not verified or cited. There's not a lot of detailed information. There's not a good collated amount of research on LGBTQ content in games outside and focuses on various specific games that game studies people are very invested in.

There are a lot of ongoing articles about the top 20, top 25 LGBTQ characters in games. Those tend to be recycled examples over and over again. They tend to focus specifically on same-sex relationship options or explicitly LGBTQ characters. What I started doing two years ago is going through all of the massive lists I could find of any references to LGBTQ people, or themes, narratives, actions in games, and then researching each one individually. Every game takes between five to 80 hours to research. I and my assistants or volunteers go through every single piece of information we can find online, from walkthroughs, which are explanations of how to get through the game, gameplay videos people post to YouTube on a regular basis, any reviews of the game, any fan wiki sites where they upload information about different characters, plot lines, etc.

Part of the goal for that was to ensure that we could account for the fact that some of these character's sexualities are being read differently by different players. Rather than relying on the single person who posted to Wikipedia about this game, we could actually investigate to see what this content looks like to different players. By LGBTQ content I mean everything from homophobic and transphobic jokes, to explicitly or implicitly-coded queer characters to relationship options. Cross-dressing missions, which are not always indicative of transness but are often brought up on histories of queer content in games as examples of queerness in games, even when they weren't meant as such, are also included.

One of the difficulties of the project is that we're reliant on existing lists of LGBTQ games. There are absences in those histories. Indie games from the 1980s and 1970s are often lost to history. There also isn't necessarily much written about more obscure indie games from today. Part of the archival process of this is digging through message boards. Trying to find that one time somebody talks about this one queer character that existed in one game from 20 years ago.

We also have had a lot of trouble with the ephemerality of digital content. We tend to think of what's online as permanent and all-encompassing. We have the way back machine now, so we should be able to find everything. Yet gaygamer.net which was a source for a lot of our information, that spent a lot of time collating information about queer content in games, went dark last May. Nobody can access their content anymore. Some of the site is archived through the Internet archive, but not all of it. A lot of it is gone.

As part of a secondary project I've been working with the Digital Scholarship Center at Temple to build an Omeka site documenting our primary materials. We're actually going through and scraping down some of these Web sites, reviews, wikis, videos, so that we have an archive of this content which we're working on in connection with the Strong Museum of Play in Rochester. The Omeka site will be publicly available, so people can find those resources. The actual information itself will be stored at Strong with their archive of video game and play history in the U.S.

Even then, there are quite a few games that are simply lost to history, especially indie games. As one example, the earliest queer indie games we've been able to find is *Caper in the Castro* by C.M. Ralph, which was released as a charityware game in 1988. The idea was that people could download it for free, then donate what they would have spent on it to the HIV/AIDS charity of their choice. The only record we have of that game existing is a 2014 interview with the designer. A journalist had to track them down. There's no record of the game. Nobody has a copy of the game. Nobody even remembers much about the game, except that it was about a lesbian detective trying to find a transwoman who went missing in the Tenderloin district. That's it. That is the history of that game and what we have available to us. One of the things I wanted to talk about today is the goal of making this a publicly available site. I could very easily have done this as a quiet project until my book came out, and be done with it.

I had two main goals in making it public. One was, I thought an ethical choice, that most of my ability to do this research in the first place is reliant on fan labor. People who have produced these wikis, who've produced these walk-throughs, these videos, and these reviews. By making my research also publicly available, it allows it to not just source material for my research.

The other part though is that the publicness also contributes to making the research more thorough. Most of the existing lists, because nobody's gone through systematically to add to them, are incomplete. Now that I have this master list, people can send in games that are missing or games that we haven't found yet. New games that just came out. As one example, somebody through our primary page sent in a game that they remembered from the 1990s. It was a Mac game. There's a boyfriend named Ned. According to the e-mail I received: "I think it was called *Fubar* versus the DEA. There were pink triangles and rainbows."

I was like, "Let's go find it." I typed in the name that they gave me. I found nothing. Off to Twitter I went. Said, "Does anybody know anything about this game?" Seven months later, somebody e-mailed me and said, "Hey, I heard you were looking for this game. My friends made it." They gave me a different spelling and contact information for their friend. With the new spelling I found some info, but some people online said this it about *Foobar* finding his boyfriend Ned. Others say friend. When I got in touch with the original designer he said, "Oh no. It was meant to be a gay rights game." It was a gay rights game about the war on drugs and censorship. That was purposely made with pink triangles and rainbows as part of the fly-over mission. This is the kind of information about this game I wouldn't have otherwise. Especially because the main designer of the game died shortly after making it. Making it a public archive allows it to be much more responsive, but also much more complete.

A lot of people have been sending in games that otherwise people don't have records of. Some with more or less information. Thanks to a variety of volunteers and assistants around the world at this point, we're able to build a much richer archive.

Trans identity and digital spaces **by Oliver Haimson**

Because my research is in the area of social media and gender transition, I spend a lot of time thinking about what it means to be trans in digital spaces. By digital spaces here I mean a lot of different things: social media, virtual worlds, even early Internet chat rooms — all of these types of things. First I want to give a quick definition of transgender. This is Susan Stryker's definition:

“People who move away from the gender they were assigned at birth, people who cross over (trans-) the boundaries constructed by their culture to define and contain that gender” (Stryker, 2008).

Today I’m going to be talking about the body of research on trans people in digital spaces. A lot of the research has focused on *opportunities* here: things like access to information and support, arenas for identity exploration, and political organization. Other researchers have focused more on the *challenges* of being trans in digital spaces: things like online harassment, sites with expectation of a singular identity, and difficulties with self-presentation and disclosure. I’m going to go through each of these in detail.

First, digital spaces have allowed trans people access to information and resources in ways that really weren’t possible pre-Internet (Cavalcante, 2016). This is a quote, not from a research project, but that a trans woman posted on Quora. She said, “The Internet brought information, and it brought community. It made it so much easier for people who were wondering if we were really trans. It gave us access to people who had been through this already, and could talk about our stories and tell us about what our options are” (Norris, 2016). You can see how digital spaces allow people to more easily navigate their transitions, and find resources around things like trans healthcare, legal support, coming out, and more (Horak, 2014; Whittle, 1998). Digital spaces allow trans people to find communities of support during gender transitions. This is often a welcome alternative to things like in-person support groups, given the difficulty of presenting one’s trans identity in the physical world early in one’s transition (Haimson, *et al.*, 2015; Whittle, 1998).

In addition to this, digital spaces can be important arenas for identity exploration. Because things like appearance, name, and gender presentation are often flexible attributes in a lot of online spaces and virtual worlds, digital spaces can be important places for identity exploration without some of the barriers that are present in the physical world (Haimson, *et al.*, 2015; Turkle, 1999). Stephen Whittle talked about this in his 1998 article. He wrote, “The body [...] is no longer the dictator of gender. Gender has become who or what you experience as actual — what you choose to represent as you type at a keyboard” (Whittle, 1998). Whittle argued that identity exploration online can lead to the ability to be real in the physical world. That can lead directly to activism. He wrote, “The virtual self [...] has allowed an actual self to be recognized and become the primary organizing center of activism” (Whittle, 1998).

Following from Whittle, Eve Shapiro (2004) argued how the Internet allows for trans activism, by reducing barriers to mobilization and allowing tools and organizing strategies. Activists can be more effective by using the Internet in some cases (Shapiro, 2004). A few examples of recent political organization online include trans people responding to state “bathroom bills” by posting bathroom selfies with #WeJustNeedtoPee (Kellaway, 2015), and online fundraising for trans people to change identification documents like driver’s licenses and passports (Douglas, 2016).

Now that I have talked about these *opportunities*, I’m going to be moving on to some of the *challenges* that trans people face in digital spaces.

I think that one of the most important things here is online harassment of trans people in particular. There’s not really anything that I’ve found that has been published on this yet. I did a talk about this last year, and you can access the slides from that talk if you’re interested in learning more (Haimson, 2016). What I’ve found is that trans people are especially vulnerable to online harassment. That includes things like threats, hate speech, and offensive or ignorant reactions to trans identity disclosure, even from family and friends. I think we can learn some things from the more general literature on online harassment, but because trans people are an especially vulnerable population, I think this research area is important especially because trans people go online sometimes for respite from harassment in the physical world.

On a survey I asked participants, “Because you changed your gender on social networking site(s), how frequently are you a target of harassment, discrimination, or violence?” You can really look at

the results in two ways. On one hand, it's great that approximately 83 percent of the survey respondents said they were rarely or never harassed. On the other hand, there's about 17 percent of people who either occasionally, frequently, or very frequently are harassed. Keep in mind that this is specifically related to their being trans. It doesn't really account for other harassment that these people might face due to being a woman, being a person of color, etc. Here's a quote from one person from my survey. She said, "It was bad enough that I felt like my only option was to leave Facebook entirely, or else to use a new 'stealth' account. For all the benefits that come with social networking, it still wasn't worth the emotional damage of the constant harassment."

Another challenge that I wanted to talk about is the expectation of a singular identity. Presenting trans identity is often difficult online given that many online spaces expect a singular and static identity (Haimson, Brubaker, *et al.*, 2015; Haimson and Hoffmann, 2016). Sandy Stone wrote that "there is no one to one relationship between physical bodies and identities" (Stone, 1995).

The fact that a lot of online spaces expect singular identities leads to some of the challenges that people face around self-presentation. We know that much has been done to address some of these challenges around self-presentation such as Facebook's custom gender options, but there still remain some programmatic difficulties. Rena Bivens wrote that, "Facebook's software normalizes a binary logic that regulates the social life of users. The conditions for binary existence are easily produced while any meaningful non-binary existence is severed, even though the capacity to move beyond the binary has always been a programmatic possibility" (Bivens, 2017).

In addition to self-presentation difficulties, I also wanted to talk about disclosure difficulties. This is really what a lot of my work focuses on. On sites like Facebook where context collapse (boyd, 2008) occurs when people's online social networks include people from many different life contexts, it is challenging to disclose one's trans identity (Haimson, Brubaker, *et al.*, 2015). People have to either come out to everyone at once, or create multiple accounts (which is actually in violation of Facebook's policies), to manage their trans identity disclosure (Haimson, Brubaker, *et al.*, 2016; Haimson, Brubaker, *et al.*, 2015). Many people will turn to social media sites that do allow for anonymous identities to engage in things like identity exploration and to find support and resources (Renninger, 2015). In my research I found that Facebook can really be a stressful place for gender transition due to difficulties of transition disclosure, but often support from one's Facebook network can help to mitigate some of this stress (Haimson, Brubaker, *et al.*, 2015).

When reviewing the existing research about trans people in digital spaces, I found that there has been substantially more work published about the *opportunities* than the *challenges*. I want to identify this as a gap in the literature. I think it's really important to understand the *challenges* that are inherent in digital spaces for trans people.

If we can address this gap in the literature around *challenges* that trans people face in digital spaces, then this can help lead to more inclusive design for digital spaces. By inclusive design, I mean things like combating online harassment, whether that's with human moderation or with effective blocking and reporting mechanisms. Inclusive design means supporting multiple identities and pseudonyms, as is currently offered on some sites like Tumblr or Imzy. I think that as researchers, we need to identify how digital spaces currently, and can in the future, serve vulnerable populations rather than further marginalizing them. We, as researchers, can help designers of online spaces to understand how to design to embrace rather than constrain trans people and others with changing or faceted identities.

What can ethnography offer to queer Internet studies?
by Mia Fischer

I come to the question of what is queer Internet studies or what might it look like from this notion of visibility, and what does visibility mean for different groups and different people.

Most of you have probably seen this *Time* magazine cover that came out in 2014, claiming that 2014 marked “The transgender tipping point: America’s next civil rights frontier” (Steinmetz, 2014). I approach this alleged tipping point from a very different, more cautious perspective. I argue that this increase in trans visibility has led to an explicit cultural backlash where we see anti-trans bathroom legislation being passed among various other discriminatory policies and practices. As a media studies scholar I am particularly interested in questions of trans representation. While increased coverage and portrayals of transgender people have appeared in the media, they often continue to stereotype and/or fetishize trans people as deceptive, deviant, and threatening rather than providing in-depth or critical coverage of issues facing the trans community.

Such representations are often used to justify, and even normalize, state-sanctioned violence against gender non-conforming populations. For example, in November 2014, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* published full-page ads in its sports section by the Minnesota Child Protection League, a conservative anti-LGBT organization, employing fear tactics that cast trans students as preying on their peers:

“The end of girls’ sports? Her dreams of a scholarship shattered, your 14-year-old daughter just lost her position on an all-girl team to a male ... and now she may have to shower with him. Are you willing to let that happen?” (Strupp, 2014)

Where I try to enter this conversation of visibility is by looking at how the (hyper)visibility of trans folks also creates more normativising and normalizing mechanisms.

In terms of what queer Internet studies can look like, I’ll use one of the projects that I’ve been working on around navigating trans identity online to provide some insights. Tumblr has been a very prominent site for a lot of trans youth to navigate their identity and coming-out experiences, and to also respond to what these teens often view as the tokenizing of certain trans celebrities. For example, if we think about the hype around Caitlyn Jenner or a Laverne Cox in mainstream media, Tumblr presents a crucial site of resistance to the commodification of trans–normative imagery.

In response to Jenner’s much publicized “coming-out” on the cover of *Vanity Fair* in July 2015 entitled, “Call me Caitlyn” (Bissinger, 2015), many young trans people took to Tumblr to (re)create and curate their own cover art. Under the hashtag #MyVanityFairCover, users asserted that not every trans person has the financial means to access, nor desires to embody white, cis-normative beauty standards promoted by Jenner’s transition and to be neatly re-boxed into the gender binary. Instead, users’ covers portrayed a wide range of gender queering, gender fucking, and fluid ideas of what trans embodiment and trans identity can look like.

To me, it’s always interesting to scrutinize how social media interact with mainstream media discourses: how do social media challenge mainstream media? How can social media push back against mainstream discourses? Or how do they oftentimes also reinforce really problematic tropes? Analyzing visibility has long been a staple for media studies scholars, but what I want to caution against, or what I’m more interested in is not necessarily whether representations are good or bad; or whether they’re progressive or regressive. Instead, I encourage us to take up Mary L. Gray’s (2009) call to de-center media as the sole object of analysis for media studies scholars.

Which means that, why don’t we actually go and talk to the people who are producing a lot of the content that becomes the object of our analysis? My attempt to think about queer Internet studies is, thus, also driven by an interest in thinking about how we can introduce and engage with ethnographic methods in social media data analysis. What I want to briefly think about then is what it might look like to bring ethnography into digital spaces. What are some of the challenges that are involved in that? To me this also closely connects to the question of who do we actually do this queer Internet studies for? What are our accountabilities as researchers to the communities we’re

claiming to be in allyship with, or whose insights and whose knowledge are we using and accessing in our research? I want to come back to this at the end of my talk.

I went to the University of Minnesota and conducted most of my dissertation work in the Twin Cities. Some of you might remember that in Minneapolis in 2011, CeCe McDonald, a black trans woman, was charged with murder for killing her attacker in which was widely understood to be a transphobic and racist assault. McDonald tried to claim self-defense, but despite her attacker's four-inch swastika tattoo and known record of domestic violence and drug abuse, the prosecutor did not believe her (Fischer, 2016).

There was really horrific local press coverage that racialized McDonald's trans identity to frame her as inherently violent, deceptive, and threatening. At the same time, the Hennepin County lead prosecutor Michael Freeman invalidated McDonald's right to self-defense by arguing that she had the opportunity to retreat and didn't do that:

“Self-defense cases are when the person is defending her own person against the person who is causing the present harm. And there is no indication, fact that we have today that the victim was a threat to Ms. McDonald [...] If you are outside of your home and you are out on the street, you have a duty to flee if you can; but if the threat is so profound that you cannot do that then you have the right to use the force necessary to protect yourself including deadly force. Evidence here does not reflect self-defense. She didn't, she stepped forward to thrust the weapon into a person who had not assaulted her. That to me just doesn't fit.” (Freeman, 2012)

McDonald's case was seeped in insidious rhetoric of color blindness and the alleged neutrality of the law. The prosecution was eager to deny that race, gender, or socio-economic status played any role in its pursuit of the case:

“The scales of justice have got a blindfold on them for a reason, and we try to follow that. [...] It doesn't matter what her record was [indicating that McDonald had been convicted for writing a bad check once], and it doesn't matter what her sex is, and it doesn't matter what her race is, none of that matters.” (Freeman, 2012)

However, these identity categories clearly did matter, especially their intersectionality. When crimes are committed because of and in direct relation to intersecting identity categories how can the criminal justice system ignore them?

What was fascinating to see in Minneapolis at the time was that there was a really strong support group that organized and rallied around McDonald and took up her case. I was interested in researching how her Support Committee utilized social media to push back against the dominance of these denigrating and dehumanizing mainstream narratives. I was able to interview some of the local news people and editors writing about her case, as well as the activists involved to scrutinize how the Support Committee's social media work brought her story to national attention (which is why some of you probably know about this case).

McDonald originally faced up to 40 years in prison. The social media campaign was widely credited for being able to reduce her sentence. She ended up agreeing to a plea deal and served 14 months in an all-male correctional facility in St. Cloud, Minn. If I would have solely looked at the various social media outlets that her Support Committee utilized — from tweets urging supporters to pack the courthouse, fundraising calls on their Facebook page, to McDonald's prison letters on the

Support CeCe Web site — I would have gotten a very different picture of the campaign, had I not also talked to the folks who were rallying behind her.

For example, what I realized through talking to Lex Horan, one of the Committee’s co-founders, was that her support group largely drew from queer and anarchist communities in the Minneapolis area, as well as those connected to prison abolitionism. These activists came from widely different political spectrums and they all had very different ideas of what they wanted this campaign to do and to achieve. Nonetheless, two key goals for the campaign were: first, to get McDonald the best outcome possible in her case; and second, to build broader activism around the prison-industrial complex, particularly its violence against trans women of color. What the Committee really tried to highlight was the lack of intersectionality that wasn’t addressed at all in the media coverage.

Local news outlets were not acknowledging that McDonald was targeted because she was trans *and* because she was black. Similarly, the legal system, as I mentioned earlier, did not acknowledge that white supremacy was a key motivating factor in the attack, *i.e.*, that her attacker Dean Schmitz had a swastika tattoo on his chest. While all those things were ignored in mainstream discourse and local news reporting, the Support Committee deliberately sought to change these narratives through their use of social media. However, despite tirelessly highlighting the intersections of racism and transphobia impacting McDonald, the Committee fell prey to a lack of intersectionality in their own organizing.

While the Committee was a multiracial group, it was still a “majority white-multiracial group” lacking any leadership from black communities. In practice, the group was much more familiar and comfortable with doing organizing around homo- and transphobia than around racism, which led them to cast their outreach efforts narrowly. The community organizing around McDonald, therefore, illustrates several of the problems and stratification processes that have affected other U.S. social movements, such as Occupy Wall Street [5].

How then do we really live up to our claims to intersectionality and coalition building? Talking to the activists “on the ground” gave me those insights that I would have otherwise not had. But talking to people can also be really problematic in terms of acquiring IRB approvals. It’s difficult to get people on a schedule. I frequently got blown off for interviews. It also required me to think about what does it mean for me as a White cisgender person to enter these communities? There’s oftentimes resistance and caution among trans communities to “outsiders,” which is absolutely warranted given that academia and academic scholarship has a history of treating trans people pretty horribly.

It’s really important to me in my research to grapple with questions of community accountability. I hope that we conceptualize a queer Internet studies that is cognizant of the inherent hierarchies of academic knowledge production that we’re all bound by. We’re expected to get tenure. We’re expected to publish in certain journals and write books. But how does this actually benefit the communities that we’re claiming to be in allyship with? How does it benefit the folks that are beyond the ivory tower that are our interlocutors and the subjects of our research? Those are some of the pressing questions that I have for queer Internet studies.

Notes from the (digital) field ***by Carmen Rios***

I am the digital editor at *Ms. Magazine*, longtime writer, former community director, current feminism editor at *Autostraddle.com*, contributor at *Everyday Feminism*. Basically, I do a lot of writing that uses the ideas of feminist history and women’s studies concepts together, and puts them either in a place where people can break them down and easily digest them, or in a way where I’m presenting people with actionable ways to put them into practice.

When I think about the queer Internet, when I think about the Internet really, I think about feminism and activism. That's always been my center in digital spaces. I call myself a writer and a revolutionary. I struggle a lot with the idea that there is that ampersand there, writer *and* revolutionary, that there feels like there's not a single word for those two things, that feels like they're two different things that serve two different purposes.

I feel like in the digital age those two things are the same thing. I consider myself an activist, traditional sense activist. I march, I make signs, I organize rallies, I send postcards, I phone bank, but I also really did grow up on the Internet. It feels as much of a home as the "real world." I've been building and sustaining and expanding online communities specifically for women, online, for nearly a decade. Some of them are queer, some of them are broader than that. Something that comes to my mind is that that mission that I undertake to unite and create platforms for and mobilize my communities online, where I feel like we have relatively equitable access to space, to information, to time. It's that work that I do digitally that grew out of the fire that fuels my more traditional activism.

My work seeks to harness digital energy for social change and purposefully shape online communities to become centers of empowerment. Whereas community organizers go door to door, people like me go Facebook post to Facebook post. Some movements are articulated by speakers and lead by community organizers, and some are also articulated by writers and lead by digital natives.

When I think about the first communities I ever found online, I think about when I was 16. I had a white iMac, it was really beautiful. My mom hated social media and thought I was going to get killed by someone or meet someone super weird on it. I had a MySpace with no profile picture. I had a Facebook that was super securely protected and I was basically only friends with my cousins. Those pictures do still exist there too. When I was 17, Hillary Clinton ran for president [in 2008, eventually losing the Democratic nomination to Barack Obama] and in the real world I was in New Jersey, a high schooler, trying desperately to find people who loved Hillary Clinton as much as I did. It was not easy. I was super passionate. I was super excited.

I had really already become aware of my own feminism, had already started to articulate it to myself and I was literally dying. I just wasn't finding what I needed in the real world, and so I ended up accidentally finding it on Facebook because I would often troll people on the right on Facebook, and groups. I found a Facebook group for Hillary Clinton supporters. There were five to ten people who were regulars, we were reoccurring people in this space. That was a safe space. Before I knew what a safe space was, that was a safe space for me. It was a war room for me before I had ever sat down with groups of activists and organizers from different communities and developed strategies with them, or thought about how we move forwards, or how we articulate ourselves.

I'm pretty sure I was one of the only women who was one of the regulars in the group. I was definitely the youngest person. I was too young to vote in the primary, I didn't even get to vote for her. I was a lot more emotional than I was rational at the time. I was seeing hostile sexism for the first time in my relatively sheltered life. I was really overwhelmed. These people who knew nothing about me, were complete strangers, they really took me in. They explained things to me. They leveled with me and helped me challenge myself and see where maybe I was unwilling to accept information that I didn't like, or they also helped me grasp issues that were maybe out of my control.

When people came in and attacked us, they protected me. When Hillary conceded they checked in on me. That group went from being something that felt like a huge secret to being people I would talk about in my real life. That group became a part of my real world. The idea that it was a digital space didn't matter. That experience was really powerful for me. I felt a lot less alone. Feeling less alone helped fuel my pendulum swing towards being an activist. Those people gave me the support

to engage in hard conversations, the fuel to convince my friends to believe in the things I believed in.

The self-assurance to articulate my policy ideas and feel like I knew what I was talking about. These are all things that people need to become activists. I feel like when I look at that moment, I think that maybe in 2008 I had experienced my problem with no name. I was seeing sexism. I felt like I was crazy. Nobody seemed to understand the world as I understood it, and all I needed was someone to tell me, "You are valid and I respect you. You are right and I support you." Once I realized I wasn't the only person yelling at the television, once I found out that there were a tangible number of people who agreed with me about the ways I thought policy should impact our lives. Once I no longer felt like I was walking through the world thinking, "I'm the only one who's invested in this. I'm the only one as excited about this," that was a huge click moment. That would never have happened to me in suburban New Jersey. That could only happen to me on the Internet.

I feel like then, years later, when I came out, I had already really cut my teeth in the feminist movement and established myself as a leader on my campus. I had done internships and worked on campaigns. Suddenly, I was, once again, very lost. I was a baby gay in my rainbow phase who had quite literally cornered herself into a straight white feminist discourse.

It was around this time that I fell into the *Autostraddle* universe. I started writing. I wrote more. I was writing once a day, twice a day. It felt like every single time I wrote something for that community, for that Web site, in that digital space, every time I spoke up in it, every time I articulated myself in it, I felt really affirmed in my sexuality, in my identity, it made me feel less self-conscious about where I was at, and it helped me really rewrite my feminism.

But while I was there I also discovered what a purposeful online community looks like, and I recognized sort of the inherent revolutionary practices in it. I watched that community engage in politics with itself, challenge itself, reckon with itself, but also support itself, literally fund itself. I watched as the leaders of the *Autostraddle* community on staff lifted readers up, celebrated victories with them, mourned losses with them, connected with them, really, genuinely expressed interest in where they were at in their lives, and I watched as our readers responded by wanting to keep our platform alive, wanting to support us, wanting to read us, trusting us. Then, obviously, being opened up to queer feminism turned everything upside down. I became a lot more queer and inclusive in my feminisms, but also my real life changed after that. It became much gayer, and I just feel like community online feels a desire for the same kind of thing off-line.

Our movements online reflect and shape our movements off-line. And this is the approach, or I guess the instinct that I bring to my work as a writer and a revolutionary, as a capital "A" activist, as a capital "W" writer. It's true for me that this maybe comes more easily. My preference for explicitly politically oriented content and communities does shape my understanding. It's true. I'm guilty. It's as easy for me as a person to take to the streets as it is for me to draft up a tweet. It's as natural for me to show up as it is to share something.


That's still just a part of how I interact with the world. This past election cycle I created one of the secret underground Hillary clubs but it turned from just the support space into a space of 5,000 people who are raising money, organizing, making calls together, and encouraging each other to speak up. At *Autostraddle* when I was community director and feminism editor at the same time it felt very natural because I was basically just being like, "Hey, I'm your friend let me in." Building relationships with our community members then being like, "Oh, you should probably do these five things read about these seven really cool feminists that you don't know about then I go out and change the world with me."

At *Ms.* I do the same thing as the digital editor, and I'm constantly thinking about how we expand our community and bring these activists together. Just getting the magazine, just reading the post even just leaving a comment on it you're not actually fostering that community organizing approach

where the people who are all sharing in that moment should be able to share it together. I think for career people, for women, for people of color, for differently abled folks on and on and on. Community building has always been movement building. There is no ampersand there, there is no community and a movement. The community is the movement, the movement is the community.

In the age of Trump but also at any time to gather is a revolution to claim space to support and educated each other that's what consciousness raising was. It takes feeling seen and heard and reflected to convince people that they have something to stand up for and that someone will stand with them. If the personal is the political in the movement is also community, we must build the clear Internet that we want to see in the world which should be a reflection of the queer world that we want to live in. A place where you can read the comments, a space online where you don't want to hide but instead you feel more motivated than ever to be seen. A space where you trust in someone's good faith even though you know maybe nothing about them.

Our existence as queer people I feel we've long told ourselves that our existence is a revolutionary, I believe that. Our pride is a political statement, our gender identities are our galvanizing forces. Our love is a rallying cry and our communities are our movement.

Our work as crew people online I think is not simply to find one another but to embolden, empower and immortalize one another. That to me is sort of not just the future of digital feminism or the future of the queer Internet but just the future of the entire landscape of the fight for our rights and our lives. 

About the authors and editors

Daniel Cockayne is an Assistant Professor of Economic Geography at the University of Waterloo. He explores anti-work politics through the lenses of feminist, queer, poststructuralist, and Marxist theory. His empirical research concerns work culture, the production of gender and sexuality, and emotions and affect in digital media start-up firms in San Francisco, California, and the Kitchener-Waterloo Region, Ontario. He explores queer Internet studies in geography through a series of papers; most recently he co-edited a themed section of *Gender, Place & Culture* with Lizzie Richardson, entitled "Queering code/space."

E-mail: daniel [dot] cockayne [at] uwaterloo [dot] ca

Mia Fischer is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Colorado Denver. Working at the intersections of critical media, sports, queer, trans and surveillance studies, her work has appeared in *Feminist Media Studies*, *Sexualities*, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, as well as the anthology *Expanding the gaze: Gender and the politics of surveillance* (University of Toronto Press, 2016), among other venues. Mia is currently finishing her first book project (forthcoming with the University of Nebraska Press), which explores how the increased visibility of trans people in the media is connected to an attendant surge in surveillance and regulatory practices of trans people by the state.

E-mail: mia [dot] fischer [at] ucdenver [dot] edu

Jen Jack Giesecking is Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Kentucky. He is engaged in research on co-productions of space and identity in digital and material environments, specifically how such spaces support or inhibit social, spatial, and economic justice in regards to gender and sexuality. He is working on his second book project, *A queer New York: Geographies of lesbians, dykes, and queer women, 1983–2008*, which is under contract with NYU Press.

E-mail: jack [dot] giesecking [at] trincoll [dot] edu

Oliver L. Haimson is a President's Postdoctoral Fellow at University of Michigan's School of Information as of Fall 2018. He conducts social computing research focused on how people present

and disclose changing identities on social media during life transitions, with a goal of impacting technological inclusion of marginalized users. He received his Ph.D. from the Informatics Department at University of California, Irvine's School of Information and Computer Sciences.

Carmen Rios is a writer and journalist, who explores in particular the topic of digital feminism. Her writing on the themes identity and social justice bridges the realm between activism and academia. She is currently the digital editor at *Ms.* and contributing editor at *Argot Magazine* and has contributed to *Buzzfeed*, *BITCH*, *ElixHER*, *MEL*, and *Feministing*, among others. As an advocate and activist she has created social media strategies for groups like Hollaback!

Adrienne Shaw is an Associate Professor in Temple University's Department of Media Studies and Production and School of Media and Communication graduate faculty. Her book *Gaming at the edge: Sexuality and gender at the margins of gamer culture* (University of Minnesota, 2014) won the 2016 Outstanding Book Award from the Popular Communication Division of the International Communication Association. She also co-edited *Queer game studies* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017) with Bonnie Ruberg, *Queer technologies* (Routledge, 2017) with Katherine Sender, and *Interventions: Communication research and practice* (Peter Lang, 2018) with D. Travers Scott. In addition, she is a founder of the LGBTQ Game Archive (www.lgbtqgamearchive.com). She became a Higher Education Video Game Alliance Fellow in 2018.
E-mail: adrienne [dot] shaw [at] temple [dot] edu

Mitali Thakor is a postdoctoral fellow in the Sexualities Project at Northwestern, with affiliations in Anthropology and Gender & Sexuality Studies. Her research and teaching cover issues of policing, computing, surveillance, sexual violence, and queer studies of robotics. She is currently working on her book manuscript, *Facing the child*, an ethnography of artifice, evidence, and the global policing of child pornography. Mitali earned her Ph.D. in 2016 from MIT's Program in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, & Society. In Fall 2018, Mitali will join the faculty at Wesleyan University as an assistant professor in the Science in Society Program. You can read more about her work at <http://www.mitalithakor.com> and on Twitter at @mitalithakor.
E-mail: mitali [dot] thakor [at] northwestern [dot] edu

Notes

1. D'Emilio, 1983, p. 1.
2. Alcoff, 2005, p. 6.
3. Alcoff, 2005, p. 8.
4. Ahmed, 2006, pp. 569–570.
5. For more details see Fischer, 2016, pp. 765ff.

References

Sara Ahmed, 2006. "Orientations: Toward a queer phenomenology," *GLQ*, volume 12, number 4, pp. 543–574.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-2006-002>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Linda Martín Alcoff, 2005. *Visible identities: Race, gender, and the self*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rena Bivens, 2017. "The gender binary will not be deprogrammed: Ten years of coding gender on Facebook," *New Media & Society*, volume 19, number 6, pp 880–898.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815621527>, accessed 6 June 2018.

danah boyd, 2008. "Taken out of context: American teen sociality in networked publics," at <https://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/research/publications/2008/taken-out-context-american-teen-sociality-networked-publics>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Buzz Bissinger, 2015. "Caitlyn Jenner: The full story," *Vanity Fair* (25 June), at <http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2015/06/caitlyn-jenner-bruce-cover-annie-leibovitz>, accessed 1 August 2017.

Andre Cavalcante, 2016. "'I Did It All Online:’ Transgender identity and the management of everyday life," *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, volume 33, number 1, pp. 109–122.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2015.1129065>, accessed 6 June 2018.

George Chauncey, 1994. *Gay New York: Gender, urban culture, and the makings of the gay male world, 1890–1940*. New York: Basic Books.

Eli Clare, 2015. *Exile and pride: Disability, queerness, and liberation*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Cathy J. Cohen, 1999. *The boundaries of blackness: AIDS and the breakdown of black politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cathy J. Cohen, 1997. "Punks, bulldaggers, and welfare queens: The radical potential of queer politics?" *GLQ*, volume 3, number 4, pp 437–465.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-3-4-437>, accessed 6 June 2018.

John D’Emilio, 1983. *Sexual politics, sexual communities: The making of a homosexual minority in the United States, 1940–1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

James Darsey, 1991. "From 'gay is good' to the scourge of AIDS: The evolution of gay liberation rhetoric, 1977–1990," *Communication Studies*, volume 42, number 1, pp. 43–66.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510979109368320>, accessed 6 June 2018.

David Douglas, 2016. "Growing social media movement helps trans people fund ID changes," *NBC News* (18 November), at <http://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/growing-social-media-movement-helps-trans-people-fund-id-changes-n685826>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Lee Edelman, 2004. *No future: Queer theory and the death drive*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Mia Fischer, 2016. "#Free_CeCe: The material convergence of social media activism," *Feminist Media Studies*, volume 16, number 5, pp. 755–771.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2016.1140668>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Michael Freeman interviewed by Andy Mannix, 2012. "Michael Freeman talks prosecution of CeCe McDonald," *City Pages* (11 May), at <http://www.citypages.com/news/michael-freeman-talks-prosecution-of-cece-mcdonald-video-6539787>, accessed 5 November 2014.

Mary L. Gray, 2009. *Out in the country: Youth, media, and queer visibility in rural America*. New York: NYU Press.

Oliver L. Haimson, 2016. "Transgender experiences with online harassment," paper presented at Social Computing Symposium 2016 (12 February), at

oliverhaimson.com/transOnlineHarassment.pdf, accessed 6 June 2018.

Oliver L. Haimson and Anna Lauren Hoffmann, 2016. “Constructing and enforcing ‘authentic’ identity online: Facebook, real names, and non-normative identities,” *First Monday*, volume 21, number 6, at <http://firstmonday.org/article/view/6791/55211>, accessed 6 June 2018.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5210/fm.v21i6.6791>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Oliver L. Haimson, Jed R. Brubaker, Lynn Dombrowski, and Gillian R. Hayes, 2016. “Digital footprints and changing networks during online identity transitions,” *CHI '16: Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, pp. 2,895–2,907.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2858036.2858136>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Oliver L. Haimson, Anne E. Bowser, Edward F. Melcer, and Elizabeth F. Churchill, 2015. “Online inspiration and exploration for identity reinvention,” *CHI '15: Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, pp. 3,809–3,818.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2702123.2702270>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Oliver L. Haimson, Jed R. Brubaker, Lynn Dombrowski, and Gillian R. Hayes, 2015. “Disclosure, stress, and support during gender transition on Facebook,” *CSCW '15: Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing*, pp. 1,176–1,190.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2675133.2675152>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Christina B. Hanhardt, 2013. *Safe space: Gay neighborhood history and the politics of violence*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Laura Horak, 2014. “Trans on YouTube: Intimacy, visibility, temporality,” *TSQ*, volume 1, number 4, pp. 572–585.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2815255>, accessed 6 June 2018.

E. Patrick Johnson (editor), 2016. *No tea, no shade: New writings in black queer studies*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

E. Patrick Johnson and Mae G. Henderson (editors), 2005. *Black queer studies: A critical anthology*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Mitch Kellaway, 2015. “Trans folks respond to ‘bathroom bills’ with #WeJustNeedtoPee selfies,” *Advocate* (14 March), at <http://www.advocate.com/politics/transgender/2015/03/14/trans-folks-respond-bathroom-bills-wejustneedtopee-selfies>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Tessa Norris, 2016. “What kind of impact does the Internet, and social media, have on the trans community?” *Quora* (24 March), at <https://www.quora.com/What-kind-of-impact-does-the-internet-and-social-media-have-on-the-Trans-community>, accessed 4 July 2017.

Bryce J. Renninger, 2015. “‘Where I can be myself ... where I can speak my mind’ Networked counterpublics in a polymedia environment,” *New Media & Society*, volume 17, number 9, pp. 1,513–1,529.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814530095>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Eve Shapiro, 2004. “‘Trans’ cending barriers: Transgender organizing on the Internet,” *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, volume 16, numbers 3–4, pp. 165–179.
doi: https://doi.org/10.1300/J041v16n03_11, accessed 6 June 2018.

Allucquère Rosanne Stone, 1995. *The war of desire and technology at the close of the mechanical age*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Katy Steinmetz, 2014. "The transgender tipping point: America's next civil rights frontier," *Time*, volume 183, number 22 (9 June), p. 38.

Dean Spade, 2015. *Normal life: Administrative violence, critical trans politics and the limits of law*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Joe Strupp, 2014. "Misleading anti-transgender newspaper ads spark outrage in Minnesota," *Media Matters for America* (1 December), at <http://mediamatters.org/blog/2014/12/01/misleading-anti-transgender-newspaper-ads-spark/201724>, accessed 1 August 2017.

Susan Stryker, 2008. *Transgender history*. Berkeley, Calif.: Seal Press.

Sherry Turkle, 1999. "Cyberspace and identity," *Contemporary Sociology*, volume 28, number 6, pp. 643–648.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2655534>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Gill Valentine, 1996. "(Re)negotiating the 'heterosexual street': Lesbian productions of space," In: Nancy Duncan (editor). *BodySpace: Destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality*. New York: Routledge, pp. 155–169.

Stephen Whittle, 1998. "The trans-cyberian mail way," *Social & Legal Studies*, volume 7, number 3, pp. 389–408.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/096466399800700304>, accessed 6 June 2018.

Editorial history

Received 1 June 2018; accepted 5 June 2018.

Copyright © 2018, Mia Fischer, Oliver L. Haimson, Carmen Rios, Adrienne Shaw, Mitali Thakor, Jen Jack Giesecking, and Daniel Cockayne.

A conversation: Queer digital media resources and research
by Mia Fischer, Oliver L. Haimson, Carmen Rios, Adrienne Shaw, Mitali Thakor, Jen Jack Giesecking, and Daniel Cockayne.

First Monday, Volume 23, Number 7 - 2 July 2018

<https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/download/9255/7458>

doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5210/fm.v23i7.9255>