'(Im)personal Desires: Pornography, Sexuality and Social Networks of Desire'

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INTRODUCTION

Just as there is an emphasis placed on issues such as identity, sexuality and transgression in gay / straight porn and online networks of communication, these are also organised and produced as repetitive and thus recognisable commodities. This special-themed edition of *Networking Knowledge: Journal of the MeCCSA-PGN*, titled '(Im)personal Desires: Pornography, Sexuality and Social Networks of Desire,' has been designed to question the extent to which there is still the potential to subvert, transgress and de-personalise online sexual representation, and perhaps more pertinently self-representation through processes of assimilation, subversion and self-reflexivity.

In the last decade discourses such as celebrity culture, reality television, social networking and transnational media have shifted the emphasis of online pornography away from a private and clandestine domain towards a self-authenticating and transformative embodiment of self-expression. As a consequence, online sexual identities are now positioned as a central index and catalyst of both straight and gay desires. From Facebook and Twitter to Grindr and gaydargirls the 'inter-textual' nature of online communication has enmeshed itself into our sexual identities to become a constituent part of identity construction.

Through a total of five articles, this guest edited edition addresses and examines how and why the simultaneously marginalised and commodified online subject of both production-based and amateur pornography has the potential to arbitrarily unsettle the hegemony of cultural standards in a post-modern, post-queer and post-capitalist framework as well as within broader dimensions of media and culture. Collectively the edition's articles examines modes of online communication which subvert and address the (mis)use of 'personal' and 'impersonal' profiles, blogs, and pornographic websites, stars, and communities. The work also seeks to investigate how the metaphors of sexuality, pornography and subjectivity have been culturally positioned, sexualised, and indeed fetishised as metonymic objects related to performative aspects of otherness, subjugation and subversion.