Yoel Roth

“No Overly Suggestive Photos of Any Kind”: Content Management and the Policing of Self in Gay Digital Communities

Abstract

This article examines the policies and practices that manage user-submitted content on three gay-targeted social networking services. While managing user-generated content is a common practice across social networking services, the policies implemented on gay-targeted services tend to be distinctively restrictive in scope and highly specific in formulation. This analysis identifies the technical, legal, and social affordances that authorized the creation of these policies. Framing content management policies as derived from the technical rules of platforms like Apple’s App Store obscures normative judgements about proper self-presentation and community formation. Identifying the normative character of these policies requires an analysis rooted simultaneously in technology studies, media policy, and subcultural identity politics.