

“Disadvantaged in the American-Dominated Internet”: Sex, Work, and Technology

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Problem, Gap, and Hook

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 Technology impacts how professions operate

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Hook How sex workers use technology in their profession
 What profession specific barriers exist in current technology

How do sex workers use technology?

Main Research Question

Descriptive - Exploratory Question

Study Design

Performed informal web analysis to inform interview protocol

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29 semi-structured interviews

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Different language interviewers would sync up to ensure consistency

Interview Protocol

Context about experiences in sex-work

“Can you tell me a little bit about what you do for work currently?”

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Non-work-related technology use

“Do you use social media at all?”

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How participants used technology for sex work

“Where are you connected with your clients?”

“Are there other ways that we have not talked about in which you use the internet for your work?”

Analysis

Grounded-theory open-coding process

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Authors independently read four interview transcripts

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Coded/recoded all interviews by at least two authors

Interesting Results

Majority of platforms created for sex-work are not run by sex-workers

Many of these platforms exploit workers (e.g., several platforms will steal, photos which can be difficult or impossible to remove)

Vastly do not meet needs of workers, requiring workers to have a complex network of accounts and platforms in order to work effectively

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American puritanical values and “morality” and American domination of the internet makes it difficult to operate as a sex-worker

Platforms are allowed to discriminate against sex workers (e.g., PayPal frequently shuts down sex-workers accounts and keeps their funds, even if the account isn't used for sex work)

Many platforms require real names which puts the privacy of workers at risk

Summary

Problem	Technology is ever changing and impacts how professions operate
Gap	Very little to no study on how technology is used by sex workers
Hook	Study explores how sex workers use technology and barriers faced
Question	How do sex workers use technology?
Design	Semi-structured interviews with German and Swiss sex-workers
Protocol	Context, sex-work experience, technology use (personal & work)
Analysis	Grounded-theory open-coding of interviews by multiple authors
Highlight	Current range of tools available for workers is not effective or efficient