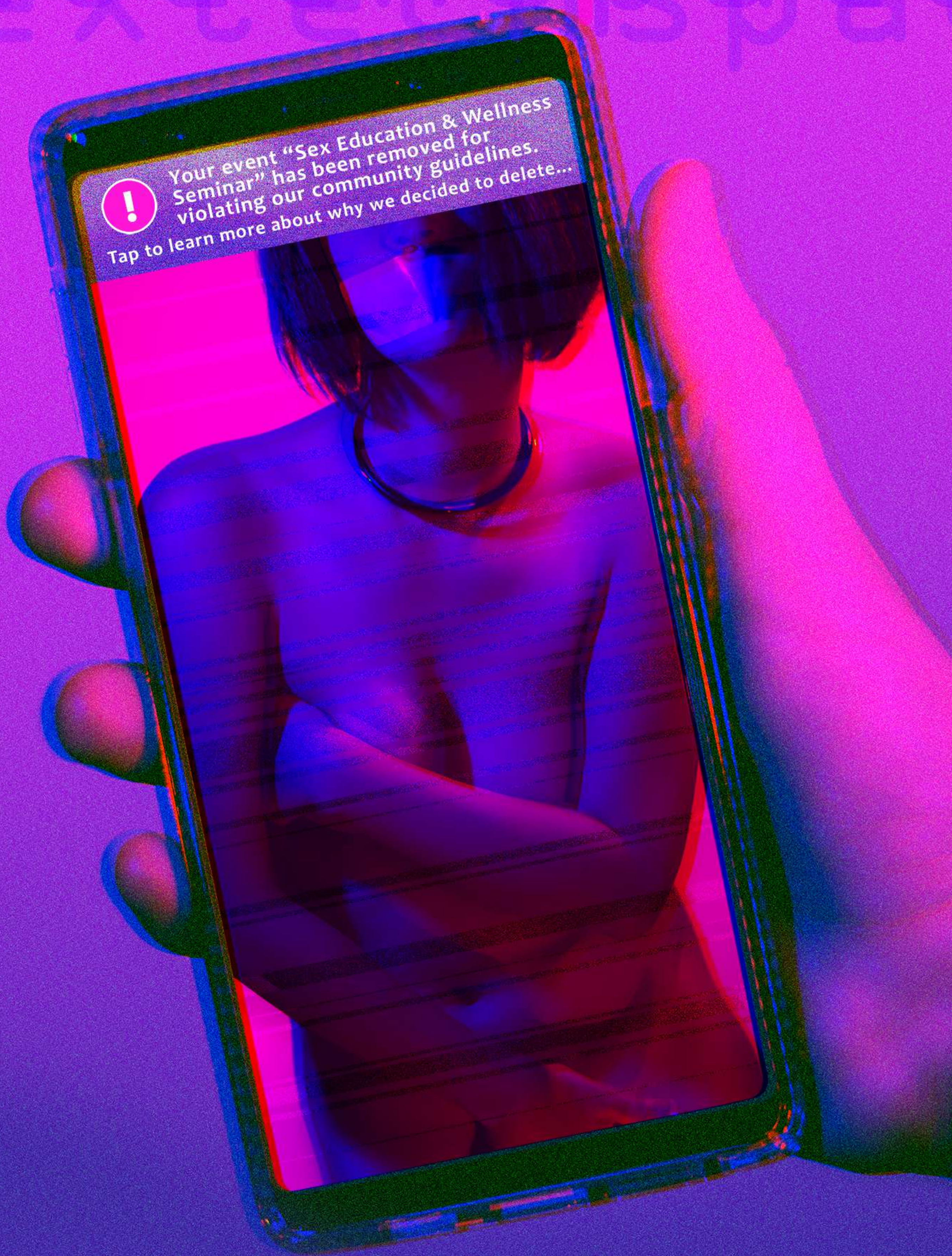


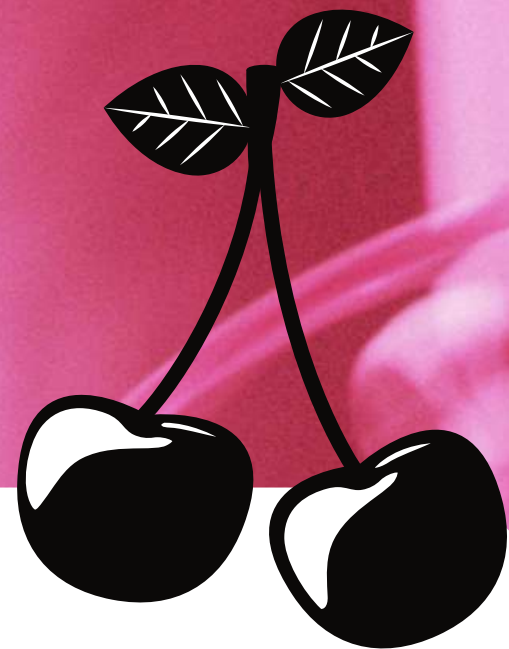
<sextechspace>



<issue #4>

SESTA/FOSTA

EDITOR'S LETTER



When we talk about being inclusive in tech, one of the key components is including all major stakeholders that will be impacted by your product in order to avoid causing any type of inconvenience or harm to the user. Creating a product without key stakeholders or representatives from impacted demographics results more in creating something just because you CAN and not because you SHOULD. The impacts of SESTA/FOSTA legislation has had large repercussions on the tech industry and its consumers as a whole. You will find those stories in these pages - directly from the user and not from a third party source.

The material within this issue is for educational purposes. I want you to take a moment to set aside all preconceived notions and read this issue from a place of learning and unlearning. As our world gets smaller and we stumble upon people with different views from our own, it's important to set aside bias and be an active listener. Realize the consequences of bias and go into these articles with an open mind.

This issues dives into the impacts of technology on sex education, consensual sex work and human trafficking. Choose to not let your imagination and assumptions get in the way of the facts. And when you are done, marinate on what you've learned and stand up for what is right. As a tech community we have a responsibility to protect tech consumers at all costs.

Alison



COVER CREDITS

PHOTOGRAPHY
AND DESIGN

Kianna Chauntís of
Lady Aether Productions

COVER MODEL

Sabor Insanity

INSIDE

SESTA/FOSTA
sluttish

YOUTUBE
Eva / What's My Body Doing

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Cameron Glover / Sexed In Color

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Kianna Chuantis / Lady Aether Productions



SESTA/FOSTA

by Vanina Tsoneva, Sluttish

SESTA/FOSTA IS A LAW, CLAIMING TO FIGHT SEX-TRAFFICKING.

It was supported by U.S. Senators and signed into law by Donald Trump in April 2018. Contrary to the notion that it was republicans who made the bill reality, the truth is it received almost absolute bipartisan support by the House of Representatives (only 2 reps voted against it).

Instead of diminishing sex-trafficking, SESTA/FOSTA (Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act and Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act) has already proven harmful to all sex workers without helping trafficking victims, and pushing labor trafficking further underground.

SESTA/FOSTA doesn't punish traffickers, but makes websites legally liable for any user generated content found to "knowingly assist, facilitate, or support sex trafficking". As stated by the White house the action makes it a Federal crime to own, manage, or operate a website with the intent to promote or facilitate prostitution.

The law undermines section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which protects the right of citizens to communicate and share information via online communities. It forces online platforms to police their users' speech more forcefully than ever before, silencing legitimate voices in the process. It strips away the general immunity websites have had thus far from the actions of their users, and eliminates the means for consensual sex workers to work safely online. SESTA/FOSTA uses broad language open to interpretations. Instead of the term "sex trafficking" it uses "prostitution", thus not distinguishing between sex trafficking and consensual sex work. All these factors create a dangerous environment for all sex workers, especially the most vulnerable populations (people of color, LGBTQ, trans people, migrants).

Shutting down websites that sex workers use to work safely does not stop traffickers. It doesn't help trafficking victims either. Instead it is pushing them to the streets and makes it harder for police, prosecutors, or online services to identify and help them. SESTA/FOSTA takes away the opportunity to advertise online, to screen and filter clients and exchange bad date lists, to access community-contributed information about violence, victimizers, or HIV/STI transmission. It strips the little safety sex workers had created for themselves making them more vulnerable. Denying these resources exacerbates the risk of violence and victimization for sex workers, including those who are victims of trafficking

A 2017 study from West Virginia University and Baylor University found a 17% drop in female homicide rates correlated to Craigslist opening its Erotic section – because it made sex work safer. In an international research on the relationship between HIV transmission and sex work, the amount of control sex workers had over their working conditions directly correlated to rates of transmission. Working indoors is an essential part of that control.

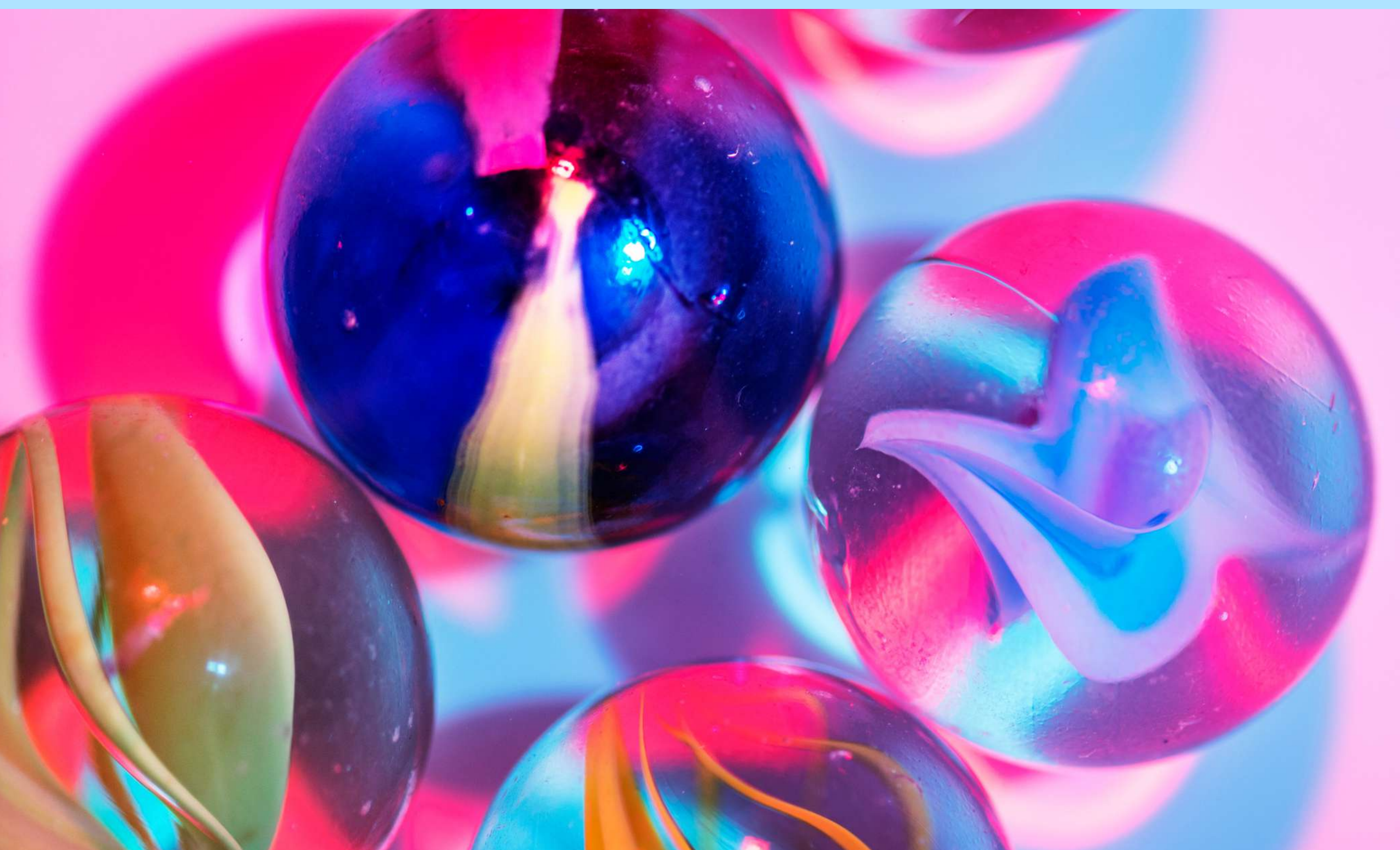
The law has already caused many sites and services to over-censor, to remove whole sections seen as potentially problematic, or to completely shutdown. A lot of these websites (used to) hold vital resources for trafficking investigations. Some of the big closures are:

Craigslist shutting down personal ads // Reddit closing subreddits such as /escorts and /sugardaddy// Google drive deleting explicit content and/or locking out users // Microsoft Terms-of-Service update that the use of “offensive language” and “inappropriate content” such as nudity may result in suspensions or bans(Skype, Xbox, Office and other services to be affected) // Google Play updated its policy to ban explicit content such as “promotional images of sex toys” and “apps that promote escort services” // CityVibe shutdown // Nightshift shutdown // VerifyHim closed its discussion board and mailing list // Pounced.org shutdown // Patreon suspending accounts that are aimed at producing and creating pornography // Youtube removing Erika Lust's documentaries with porn performers

SESTA/FOSTA has been criticized by numerous nonprofit organizations and has caused a significant outcry from the sex worker community. The law can cause severe consequences for sex workers and trafficking victims alike according to Freedom network USA, and is a serious, yet unsuccessful attempt to stop the use of the Internet for sex trafficking says the American Civil liberties union. The Electronic Freedom Foundation is suing to invalidate the law, calling it unconstitutional censorship. There have been protests by sex workers and allies in many major cities in the USA. The first sex worker town hall was held in Brooklyn. The town hall was hosted by the congressional candidate Suraj Patel, which makes it the first such event, containing political promises and possible actions for repealing SESTA/FOSTA, and even more importantly - setting the path for decriminalization of sex work. These milestones made it to the campaign of another candidate from the Democratic Party - Julia Salazar.

Salazar's platform outlines steps toward decriminalization that include an end to raids on massage parlors; working with district attorneys to stop charging sex workers with crimes; and creating a network of optional social services to address workers' needs, such as housing, child care, syringe access, and job training. She ran for the state Senate seat representing North Brooklyn in this September's primary. Even after a negative media campaign against her in the last week before the elections, Salazar won the seat. Time will show if the promises made will turn into political actions towards better working conditions for sex workers and eventually decriminalization.

Read the original article [here](#).



YOUTUBE

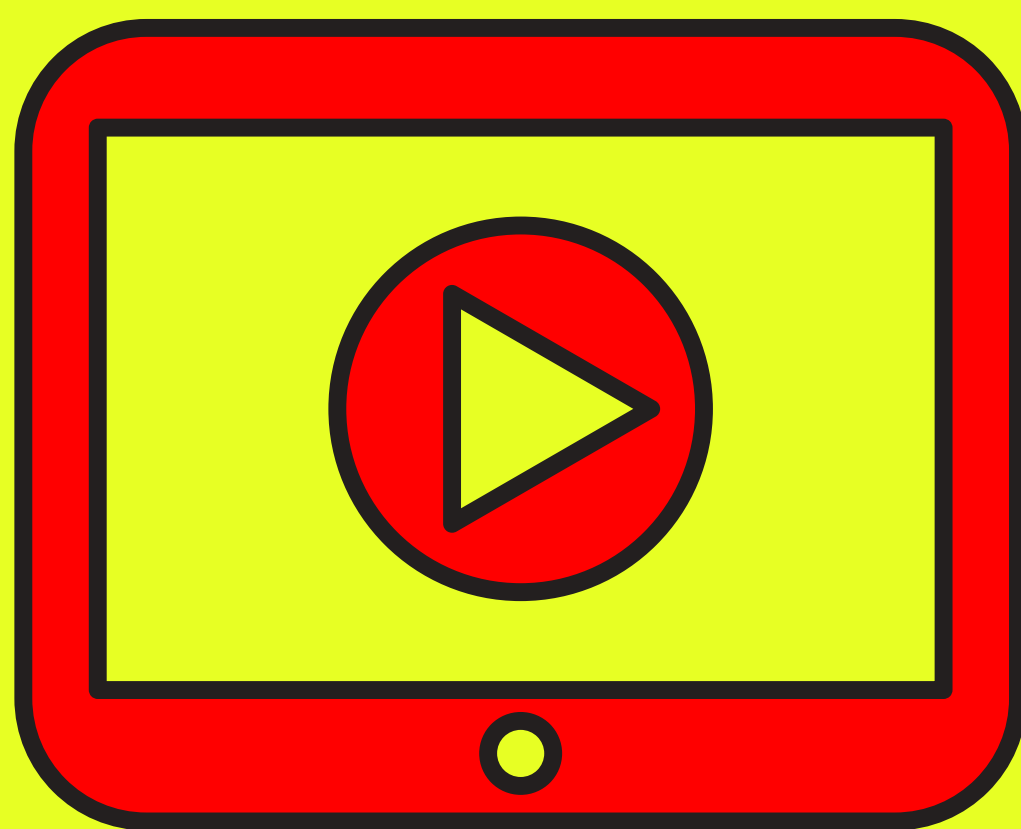
eva / what's my body doing



YouTube has been hosting sexuality-related content since the site's inception and, as the site has grown, so has its community of sex educators. From Sexplanations, a sexedutainment show hosted by clinical sexologist Dr. Lindsey Doe started 2013, to a playful storytelling channel hosted by UK creators Florence Barkway and Reed Amber entitled Come Curious, to burgeoning creators such as Evie Lupine who hosts an inclusive BDSM education channel. With a pervasive lack of sex education around the globe, YouTube has been able to provide inclusive, shame-free sex education to anyone with access to wifi. However, within the past few years, there have been changes to YouTube's policies that have made it increasingly difficult for these important channels to continue producing content.

While the website's beginning years were something of a Wild West for content, YouTube has been slowly introducing increasing censorship on its content, which came to a head in August 2017. Partially in response to findings of terrorist propaganda on the site, YouTube put forward the strictest regulations yet to monitor the content on their platform.

With this, they have also been documented going above and beyond to penalize videos that aren't even against their new policies, but are in some way controversial or inflammatory. This ambiguity around what can be considered "controversial" has allowed sex education content to be targeted, when it is only educating young people about their bodies, health, and relationships. While representatives from YouTube have denied any influence from SESTA/FOSTA on these regulations, many YouTube sex educators, such as Florence Barkway from Come Curious, aren't convinced. The creator instead fears that the influence of SESTA/FOSTA may push the censorship further to the point where these channels may no longer be allowed to exist all together.



Nonetheless, YouTube's prerogative to expunge any potentially controversial content from the platform has had serious negative impacts for sex education creators in the form of demonetization, age restriction on content, and the removal of custom thumbnails. For one, sex education content on YouTube largely does not qualify for monetization.

Most videos on YouTube receive revenue from advertising, thus enabling creators to continue making and improving the quality of that content. Examples include Stevie Boebi's Lesbian Sex Ed series, which has been entirely demonetized and countless videos on Sexplanations' YouTube channel. Trans creator Chass Ross has also documented how including the word "transgender" in the title or tags of a video causes YouTube to demonetize his content. As well, it is more difficult to obtain sponsors for videos on topics related to sexuality, as many YouTube content creators do for an additional revenue stream. In this way, the demonetization packs a double punch for YouTube sex educators.

Another mode of censorship on YouTube is blocking education content from users under 18 years of age. In addition to preventing young people from getting access to informational videos, this also prevents videos from appearing in recommended feeds or home pages, thus hindering creators from reaching new viewers. One example of this is on What's My Body Doing's channel (that's me!), a pleasure and LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education channel. The only two videos that have been age restricted on the channel are a video about how to put on a condom (which is a skill that many sexually active teens may benefit from) and a video about strap-on sex.



Masturbation, Chronic Illness & Queerness with Kirsten Shultz | What's...

What's My Body Doing • 642 views • 9 months ago

Are you ready for the 3rd episode in my MASTERING MASTURBATION series?! I sat down to chat with the amazing sex


It is disappointing that while hundreds of videos on the channel about straight sex aren't considered "controversial", a video about queer sex is blocked from queer teens, thus preventing them from learning more about their sexuality.

Lastly, YouTuber sex educators such as Watt's the Safeword host Amp, hosts of Come Curious, as well as myself, have noticed that custom thumbnails have been removed from videos on our channels. As an important way for YouTubers to reach out to a wider audience, this can have serious impact on our ability to grow our channels. It is clear that with decreasing opportunities for monetization of sex ed content, blocking teens from accessing important information related to their bodies and health, and preventing channels from using the site's features to reach more viewers - YouTube's increasing restrictions all serve to strangle the creativity and outreach of sex education content creators.

Overall, YouTube is an incredible platform for sex education. From sexual health, and kink to LGBTQ+ sexuality, YouTube has been a place for people of all ages to find information that is so often ignored in traditional sex education. While many creators have turned to crowdsourcing platforms like Patreon to support their content (which is not without its own problems), the fear of continuing censorship as a result of SESTA/FOSTA still looms over us. I sincerely hope this won't be the case, because increasing the restriction of inclusive sex education, even on YouTube, makes the world a more dangerous, less sex-positive one.

Eva is a sex researcher and online sexuality educator. She is currently pursuing a Masters with her thesis focusing on sexting and is the creator of the pleasure-inclusive, evidence-based sex education YouTube channel “What’s My Body Doing”, which has garnered over 500,000 views and 5,000+ subscribers. She has spoken at the Guelph Sexuality Conference among others and is a winner of a Planned Parenthood Toronto’s Choice Award (2017) for excellence in sexuality education.



A vintage computer monitor with a beige frame and a light blue screen. The screen displays the title and subtitle of an article. Below the monitor is a matching beige system unit with a floppy disk drive. In the foreground, a portion of a beige keyboard with white and light blue keys is visible. The entire setup is set against a solid yellow background.

WITH SESTA/FOSTA
What does the future
of Sex Ed online look
like?

BY CAMERON GLOVER

The state of sex ed is changing — and it can be hard to figure out which way it's going.

Before, sex educators dealt with IRL frustrations: conservative legislation, restrictive guidelines for working in schools, and the typical discomfort from the populations we teach. Nothing we couldn't handle. But now, sex educators have (yet) another hurdle to face. The wake of SESTA/FOSTA is leading to another shift in how sex education is shaped online, and it might not be for the best.

Let's start with the cause: SESTA/FOSTA. The conversation around SESTA/FOSTA has, rightfully, been centered on how it impacts sex workers. As sites used to screen out violent clients and share vital information have been taken down, one by one, sex workers and allies are doing what they can to digitally survive. And for civilian sex educators, we're beginning to feel the effects of this as well. Account after account is being shadowbanned — trouble logging in or posting here or there; reporting of dick pics and other inappropriate or violent trolling gets the accuser's account locked down for hours. And now, we're seeing the locking out and deleting of accounts altogether. Sex-positive accounts that have dedicated years of content to create large followings are literally waking up one day to find that they can't log into their account and followers can't access it. Some of the lucky ones have followers that fight to have their accounts reinstated, but too many don't.

Scrolling through Twitter following the massive Instagram/Facebook glitch, I came across this tweet that really got my attention. “Again, you rent social media space,” it reads. “You own your domain (site/blog). It’s your digital real estate. Putting all your eggs in the Instagram basket is a set up. You own nothing there - not even the content you post.”



Mattie James
@themattiejames

Again, you rent social media space. You own your domain (site/blog). It’s your digital real estate. Putting all your eggs in the Instagram basket is a set up. You own nothing there - not even the content you post.

I couldn’t stop thinking about it because I’ve heard this time and time again. When social media goes down, there’s a feeling of restlessness and uncomfortability — we’ve been socially trained not to be able to sit with our discomfort. But there’s a deeper part to this that business owners, entrepreneurs, and sexuality professionals — civilian and sex workers — need to understand: social media has always been overutilized, but SESTA/FOSTA is the wake up call that we need to invest in other avenues.

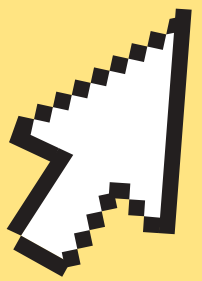
If left unchanged and completely reliant on social media, sex education won’t die. However, it remains sanitized, watered down, and rooted in shame — the exact opposite of why we do the work that we do in the first place. Sex education deserves to thrive online because it gives access to a wider community, bringing it out of the shadows and into the spaces that need it the most.

What does this mean for sex education online? Well, it's getting harder to navigate... but it's not impossible. To me, there are too few resources for sex educators to actually know how to use technology to their advantage to build their businesses. The glitch earlier this year proved exactly how underprepared so many of us are.

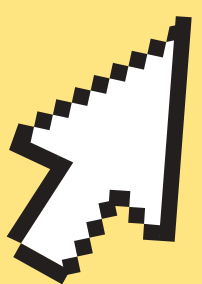
But I think that the good thing about what's happening is that this is the opportunity that we need to rally, recollect, and reconfigure how to make tech work for us, rather than us work mindlessly for it.

The appeal of social media comes from the community aspect. Many of us are on Facebook, Instagram, even Twitter because we want to put ourselves out there in a way that like-minded people and the clients that need us can find us best. That doesn't have to go away; but the restrictions of SESTA/FOSTA make this harder to navigate because the consequences weigh unfairly on us. Know this: just because we are being shadowbanned, restricted, and kicked off social media, that doesn't mean our work is any less invaluable. Even as this weighs on so many of us, we still have each other. We still have the community of fellow sex educators and other sexuality professionals to lean on.

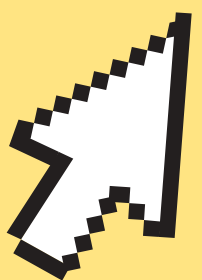
Here are a few steps to begin reevaluating your sex education business to be a little less reliant on social media censorship and restrictions:



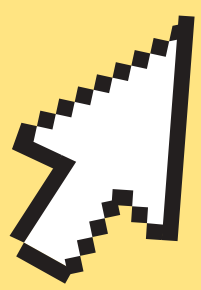
LEARN WHAT NUMBERS MATTER: I've relearned what numbers really matter in your business, and it's changed my life. Seriously. The short version is this: your follower count isn't as important as you think it is, because social media is rented space. Ideally, you want the number of people on your email list (we'll get to that) and number of customers that invest in your business by purchasing your offerings. You want the number of digital spaces that you control to be the ones that have the most followers, at the end of the day.



OWN YOUR OWN DOMAIN: Seriously, EVERYONE should have their own website. At the very least, you need to have your bio, portfolio, and contact information readily available (here's an example of my site). In the words of one person on Twitter, "make it easy for people to find and hire you."



MAKE A NEWSLETTER: In addition to your site, you want to have something where you can create consistent content. And no matter what your business is, you NEED to have an email list. Even if your newsletter (mine is [here](#)) consists of a note to your subscribers and a recap of what you've been working on, you want to make sure to cultivate this space and be as consistent as you would your social media postings.



ADD SOME VARIETY TO YOUR MARKETING:

If social media were removed today, would your business still survive? If the answer is no (which it is for most sex educators), then you need to re-examine your marketing strategy.

Sex education is invaluable, sacred work. You deserve to be here, to thrive, and to be as successful and supported as possible.



Cameron Glover is a writer, sex educator, and host of the explosively informative and entertaining podcast, Sex Ed in Color. She specializes in developing resources which help individuals embrace their personal power through exploring identity, social justice and the sexual experience.

SexTech: Why Should I Pay Attention?

Darren Mckeeman
/
Founder KinkBNB



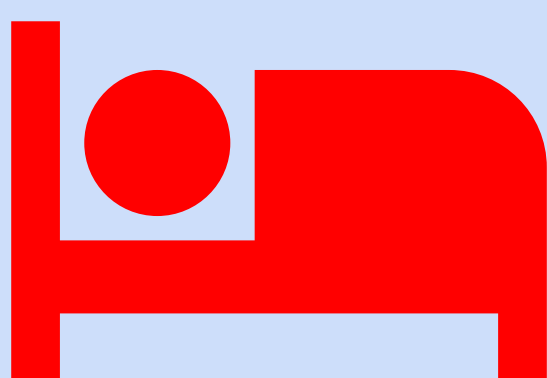
One of the least supported trends by American VCs right now is SexTech—startups that deal with human sexuality and sex education. Against logic, there are a lot of SexTech startups right now—despite the climate of hostility in the US that is most represented by recent passage of SESTA/FOSTA. Why is this?

It's because you don't need deep pockets to make money if you have the right idea. And SexTech definitely makes money.

I can only point to my own experiences. About three years ago, I started KinkBNB. Of course it's piggybacking on the huge amount of marketing dollars spent by AirBNB to build their brand but -

AirBNB's shortsightedness led to my startup taking off.

I've been doing startup work in San Francisco for 25 years. Most of the time I work for other people building their ideas for them. As a hobby, sometimes I build websites on a lark since it comes so easily to me. In February of 2015, my friend (and professional dominatrix) Eve Minax took to Facebook to complain about being kicked off their platform for leaving a sex toy in a photo. This is the aforementioned "climate of hostility"—more than likely they googled her and made a snap decision based on her profession despite her only offering a room as a side hustle.



Whatever the motivation, this made me think “Gee, there ought to be a version of AirBNB where people can show their sex toys or play spaces.” A few minutes later and I discovered that kinkbnb.com was expiring in a week. I snapped it up with the best \$12 I’ve spent in years (we’ve never taken outside money).

A few days later I’d loaded an AirBNB PHP clone onto a server that a friend who runs IT for YCombinator let me spin up with his company very cheaply. Did I mention at this time I was barely surviving? San Francisco is very brutal to people as old as me—no startup there will hire older people (because they have to pay them what they are worth). I adapted by moving onto a sailboat at Pier 39 (cheapest rent in SF, and yet another story) and going on food stamps. I sent the URL to Eve and asked her to put her space on it as a test. What I did not tell Eve to do is tell all her friends—and I discovered she’d done this when an hour after I emailed her I had over 100 people signed up to the site I’d thrown together. This was my first clue that I had a tiger by the tail.

I decided I needed help, so I hunted for a cofounder. I found a great cofounder in Ryan Galliotto, a Chicago native who helped start Shibaricon (a Chicago convention that was devoted to the Japanese art of erotic rope bondage). We formed a company and I wrote a press release that I sent out on April 20th announcing our official launch on May 1st. The next day I went to go get my monthly food stamps. While I was waiting in line at the food stamp office, Huffington Post called me and asked if I had time for an interview. I don’t know if you’ve ever gotten food stamps, but while you’re in line you have nothing BUT time. That was how I gave my first interview, and this article started the tsunami.

Our story was picked up by Associated Press, and before I knew it we were on the crest of a huge wave of traffic. My biggest fear was our single server would not be able to handle the traffic—but it did. We were featured around the world and I was interviewed by Playboy, Marie Claire, Cosmopolitan, and many more. At the height of our first wave of publicity, we were featured on the bonus round on Comedy Central's show @Midnight with Chris Hardwick. As it turns out, sex attracts marketing eyeballs.

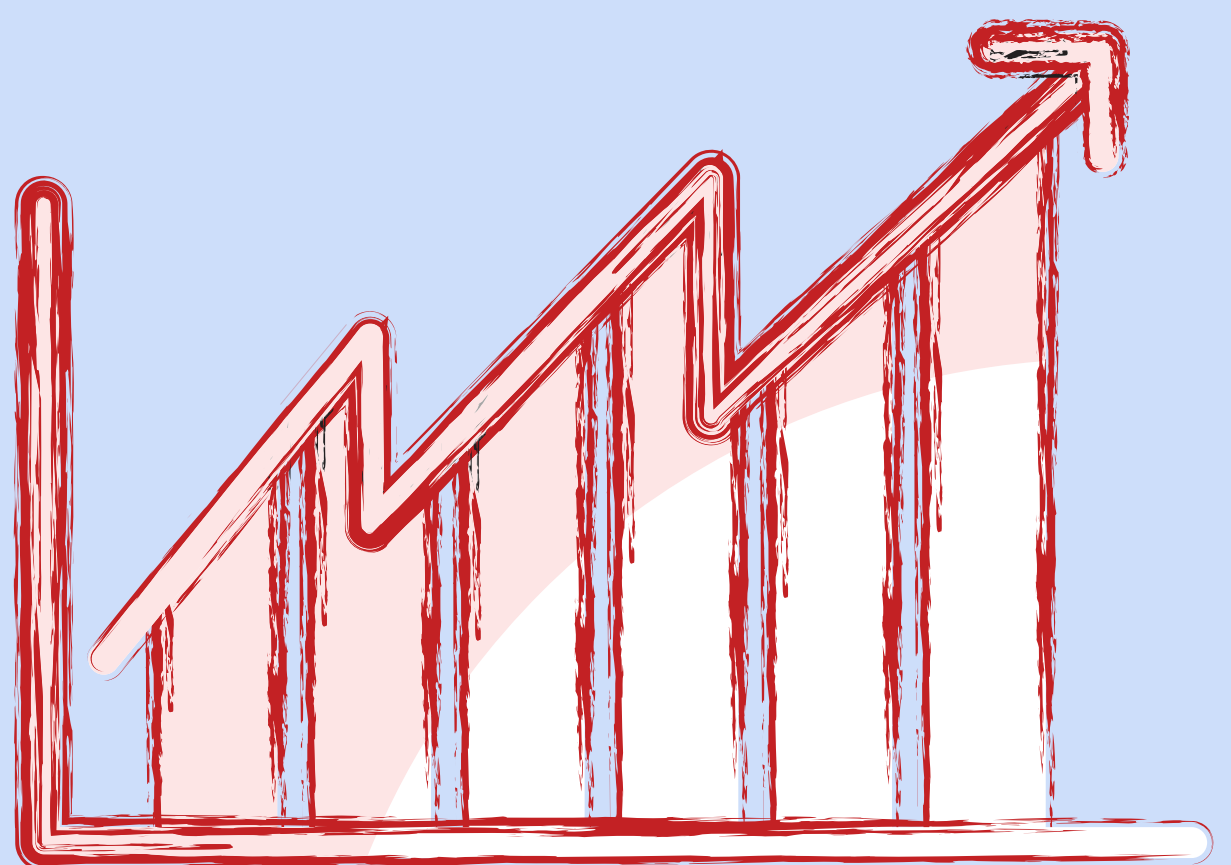
And it's still got legs, which still surprises me. It's three years later, and we have over 500 listings in 50 different countries, with over 40,000 users signed up to the system. We've learned a lot in the quest for monetization—the AirBNB model does not work at small scale, so we fell back on a membership system. In hindsight, I wish I'd done that to begin with while we had our initial traffic—six months after we instituted memberships we started turning a profit. We were just featured on the VICELAND channel in a 20 minute segment.



You can't buy that kind of publicity. It's one of the many features I love about SexTech startups. I've never been one to shy away from controversy and run-ins with the legal system. I will continue to do so, because I believe it's more important than ever. My company supports decriminalizing sex work as a cause, and the irony of me writing this in a jurisdiction where Tom Dart has power is not lost on me. More important to me than telling my story is bringing to your attention the recent SESTA/FOSTA legislation.

While being framed as an attack on sex trafficking (which is a problem!) it does little to nothing to alleviate that problem. Instead, it's so vaguely written that it could be applied to ANY website—AirBNB, Facebook, etc. If you think it doesn't matter, think about how Craigslist just shut off their personal ad section. This law could be used to shut down apps like Tinder, Grindr, OKCupid, and more. I'm investigating moving my servers out of the country as a result. While we can't speculate on the agendas of the groups behind SESTA/FOSTA, we can study those same groups' past advocacy work. Given that history, one could be forgiven for thinking that some of these groups see SESTA/FOSTA as a mere stepping stone to banning pornography from the Internet or blurring the legal distinctions between sex work and trafficking.

I hope sharing my story has inspired a few of you. To be honest, I feel a bit lonely in this space—SexTech as a niche is not very populated right now, but that's changing as VCs and accelerators like YCombinator, who had several SexTech companies in their past two batches. SexTech is not a niche for everyone—but much like the budding cannabis space, if you are bold and want to make money there's gold there. I'll leave you with this nugget—the market for SexTech is projected to be \$52 billion by 2022. If that doesn't get your attention, nothing will.



*This article was originally published on Medium, you can read it **here**.*

FOSTA: A Sex Tech Lawyer's Perspective

- BASIC POINTS OF LAW
- REAL EFFECTS
- CURRENT STATUS

BY MAXINE LYNN



On April 11, 2018, the “Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017” was signed into U.S. law by President Donald Trump. In the text of the law, known in short by the acronym “FOSTA,” the stated purpose is to provide federal and state authorities with more tools to fight “sexual exploitation of children or sex trafficking.” Though stopping sexual exploitation is certainly an honorable cause, FOSTA has actually created big problems for legitimate websites, while in reality, also increasing the difficulty of finding and prosecuting human trafficking.

Let’s start with a little background. Section 230 of “The Communications Decency Act of 1996” [U.S.] has allowed the Internet to thrive as a place of open speech and communication by relinquishing website providers of certain liabilities for illegal activities of users on their sites. That law says that a provider of an interactive computer service is NOT to be treated as the publisher or speaker of information provided on the service by a third-party user. So, under Section 230, if a user of a site posts or transmits information that is furthering an illegal activity, the site provider is not liable for that. In my opinion, this makes sense as a site provider is merely a passive conduit, like a phone service provider, rather than an active participant.

However, fast-forward about 20 years, and a dent... Well, actually, a giant gaping hole, has been put into that protection. In the text of FOSTA, it says that “section 230 ... was never intended to provide legal protection to websites that unlawfully promote and facilitate prostitution and websites that facilitate traffickers in advertising the sale of unlawful sex acts with sex trafficking victims.”

The new law rolls back the protections of Section 230 for content that promotes or facilitates prostitution or human trafficking. FOSTA states, in pertinent part, “Whoever... owns, manages, or operates an interactive computer service ..., or conspires or attempts to do so, with the intent to promote or facilitate the prostitution of another person shall be fined under this title, imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or both.” An “aggravated” violation is committed, when in addition, an interactive computer service -

(1) promotes or facilitates the prostitution of 5 or more persons, or

(2) acts in reckless disregard of the fact that such conduct contributed to sex trafficking.



An aggravated violation is punishable by a fine or prison sentence of up to 25 years.

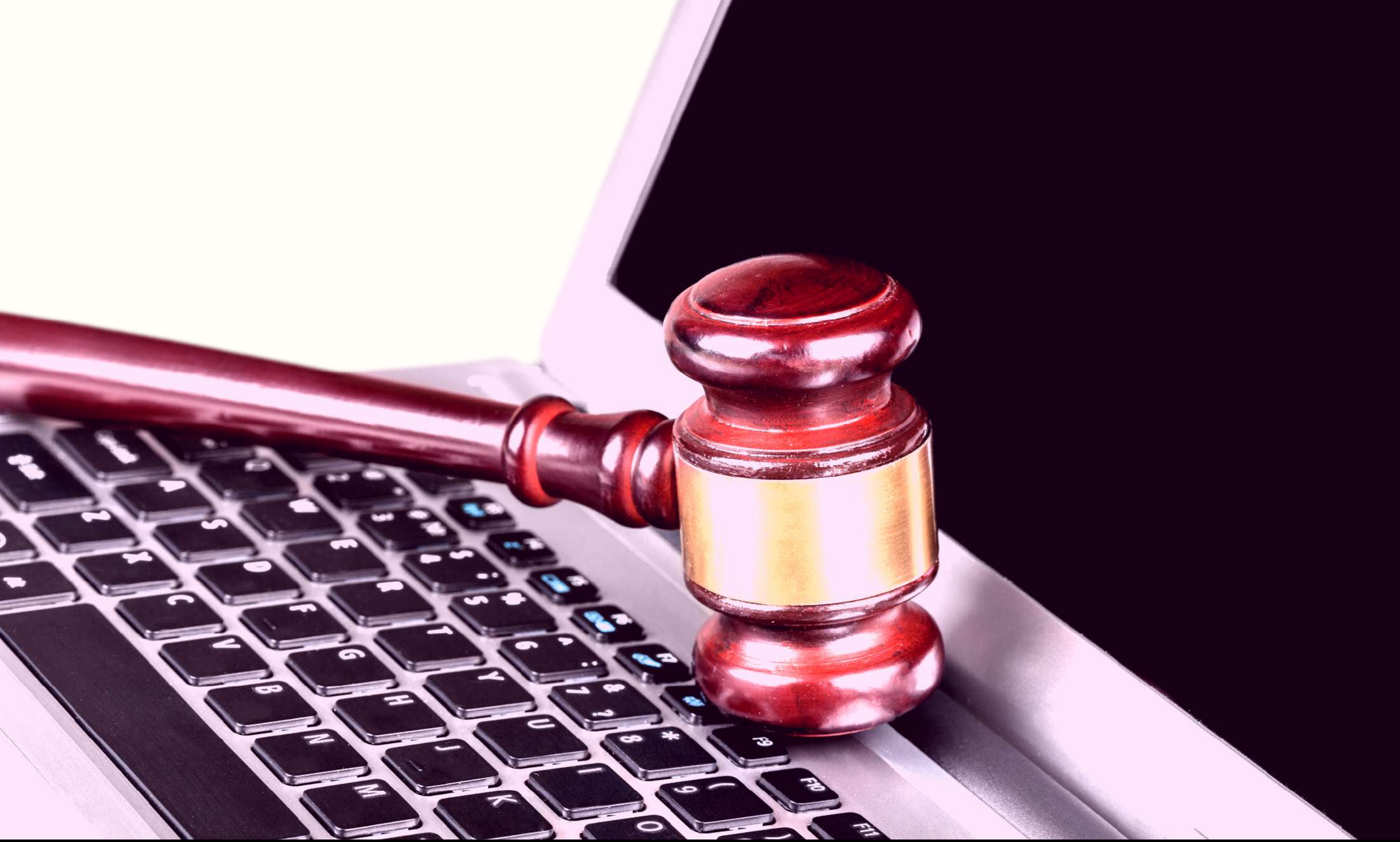
In short, an operator, owner, or manager of an interactive computer service, that with the intent to promote or facilitate the prostitution of another person, or should have known of such on their site, can be subject to civil or criminal liability under the law. Violations may result in the imposition of fines and jail time of up to 25 years. For the purposes of FOSTA, an “interactive computer service” can be any website which allows the posting or transmission of user-generated content. Examples include porn sites, live cam sites, tube sites, dating sites, escort ad services, web forums, as well as mainstream websites, such as social media sites.

Accordingly, the practical effect of FOSTA is that providers of websites that allow users to post or communicate with one another now have to review and censor user communications and posts for possible prostitution or human trafficking. This is especially true for websites directed to adult themes since the adult industry has always been a target of the government. Government has routinely tried to interfere with the adult industry's ability to do business whether it be in "obscenity" prosecutions, in declaring porn a public health crisis (over 20 states have done or attempted to do this), in zoning of sex toy shops out of municipalities, or by allowing warrantless raids of porn production studios (via a law known in the biz, in short as, as "Section 2257"), among many other examples.

In order to comply with the provisions of FOSTA, at a minimum, companies should update the Terms of Service for their websites to include a user agreement prohibiting the sale of sex, setting up dates in exchange for money, and other activities that could potentially be interpreted as sex trafficking.

In addition to that update, website providers must now monitor the postings of private messages of users on their sites. Yes, you read that right – even private messages. Automated software monitoring systems will be ideal for filtering text-based communications. Image analysis software may be used for discerning the content of images and video.

For large-scale companies that already have traction (i.e. money to spend), the answer is likely a tailored software solution integrated into their platform. For other smaller websites, a third party provided "canned" system may be more reasonable in terms of pricing and feasibility.

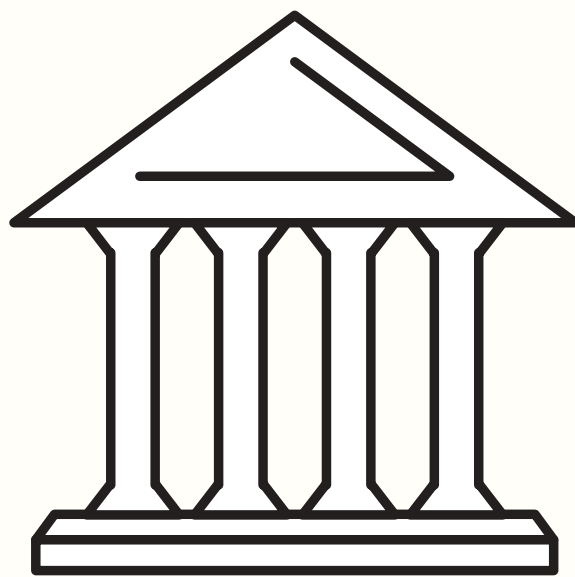


Human assessment will likely need to be involved as well – For example, to review for confirmation of filter-flagged material prior to a disabling of an account or removal of a communication. Though neither automated systems, nor humans, will be perfect, it will at least show a good faith effort and serve as significant evidence in negating “reckless disregard” (basically, “should have known”) and “intent” to allow illegal activity on a website.

Companies should develop and implement an internal cohesive written policy about how to monitor and process communications that could be related to facilitation or promotion of sex trafficking or human trafficking. The policy should address the levels of escalation, including warnings (if any), disabling of accounts, and removal of communications or accounts of users that appear, through filtering or otherwise, to be promoting or facilitating such illegal activity.

Note that FOSTA's effect is retroactive. Companies may be subject to liability for illegal prostitution or sex trafficking activity that happened through their websites prior to the passage of the new law. Whether enforcement for prior activities will actually occur has yet to be seen, but beware of the possibility.

Accordingly, the stakes are high. Website providers must be conscientious in efforts to comply with the new law. Even if a website is hosted outside of the U.S. (for example, in Europe), but is accessible to users in the U.S., FOSTA may still apply. Though obtaining jurisdiction in U.S. courts would be much tougher for sites outside of the country, in some circumstances, it would not be impossible. The U.S. government and courts have broad powers.



This law change is historic in the United States. Although many of us in the legal community take serious issue with FOSTA's legality under the U.S. Constitution, it typically takes years for a law to work its way through the court system in a challenge. Luckily, the fight has already begun. In June of 2018, Woodhull Freedom Foundation, Human Rights Watch, and other plaintiffs brought suit to challenge the law in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The case was initially dismissed in September based on a formality (rather than on the merits), and is now being appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

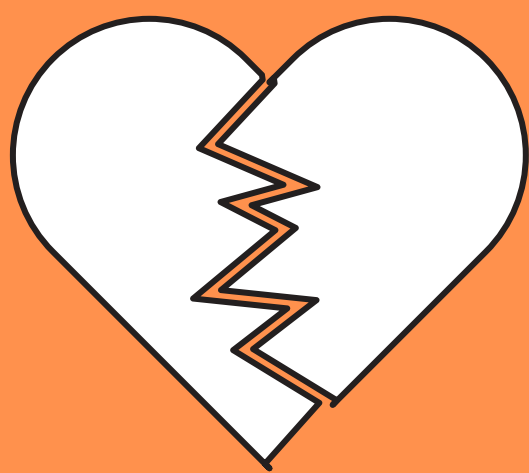
That appeal is much needed for the adult industry, as well as for victims of human trafficking. A very sad outcome of FOSTA is that its effect is truly the antithesis of what it was supposedly was set out to do. Evidence of human trafficking, which previously could have sometimes been obtained from offenders' online actions, is no longer available since trafficking operations have moved offline and "underground." Now, instead of being able to trace IP addresses and electronic message strings, members of law enforcement have to go into the trenches, which is slower, more difficult, more dangerous, and much less efficient.

In addition, without being able to communicate online, willing sex workers (prostitutes) have now had to go back to pimps who, it is no secret, are abusive and steal the fruit of their labor. Operating in cyberspace allowed sex workers to instead manage their own businesses, screen clients for themselves, and reap the financial benefits of the work they'd chosen to do.

Keep your fingers crossed that the challenge of FOSTA is eventually successful... for the sake of free speech, the adult industry, sex workers, and human trafficking victims. I'll be watching, and so should you. Even if you work outside of Sex Tech and the adult industry, this law has sweeping ramifications that could affect your life and probably already has, though you might not have realized it at the time.

About: Maxine Lynn is an intellectual property (IP) attorney with the law firm of Keohane & D'Alessandro, PLLC, having offices in Albany, New York. She focuses her practice on prosecution of patents for technology, trademarks for business brands, and copyrights for creative materials. Through her company, Unzipped Media, Inc., she publishes the Unzipped: Sex, Tech & the Law® blog at www.SexTechLaw.com and the Unzipped: The Business of Sex® podcast at www.BusinessOf.Sex.

Disclaimer: The content of this article constitutes general information, and is not legal advice. If you would like legal advice from Maxine Lynn, an attorney-client relationship must be formed by signing a letter of engagement with her law firm. To inquire, visit www.Sextech.Lawyer.



BYE!

**SEX SELLS,
UNLESS IT'S
#SEX**

By Dania Micala /
Instagram Algorithm Expert

Sex in advertising is a notorious psychological strategy to influence sales or awareness for a particular product or service. Whether ads are incredibly obvious or particularly subtle, sex sells. From classic pin-up girls to Calvin Klein posters, sex has played a major role in marketing strategies for over a hundred years. As digital marketing rises on social media platforms, where sex continues to sell, it's often surprising that posts or discussions involving sex tech or sex-education are so quick to be censored or deleted. This is especially concerning, yet not surprising when it comes to advertising on such platforms. It's a double standard when those with penises must reach orgasm in order to procreate and thus allows "male sexuality" and pleasure to be categorized under "family planning." Meanwhile those with vulvas have their sexual health and wellness deemed a vice category because orgasm does not needed to be reached in order to procreate.

Countless communities, brands, and companies migrate to Instagram in hopes of promoting their work to over 1 billion active users. Instagram provides an opportunity to increase reach, spread awareness, and network with like-minded individuals. However, Instagram also enforces strict policies and guidelines that we must abide, otherwise resulting in decreased visibility or deletion of accounts. With one banned hashtag (#sex), your entire account is at risk of being disabled. Many sex tech, sex education, sex work, and body positive Instagram accounts have felt the wrath of these guidelines. Understanding these guidelines will allow you to safely grow your account on Instagram.

How To Stay Safe on Instagram in the SexTech Industry:



Thoroughly read and review Instagram's Community Guidelines to understand what you may or may not post. Instagram states: "We know that there are times when people might want to share nude images that are artistic or creative in nature, but for a variety of reasons, we don't allow nudity on Instagram."



Do not use banned hashtags. This is tricky considering banned hashtags change on a regular basis. #Curvy was banned in 2015, but at the time this article is written, it is now an acceptable hashtag. As of today, #sex is still banned. You can discover which tags are banned by simply searching the tag on Instagram. If the tag does not show, or does not show recent photos, the tag is banned. Using a banned hashtag may result in loss of visibility and/or deletion of your account.



Remember that all communities have cyber-bullies and trolls. It is very important to protect yourself and never tag your exact geo-location in real time. You can always upload later! You can also tag broad general areas like Los Angeles, versus your Los Angeles apartment complex. This will help maintain your privacy and keep you safe.

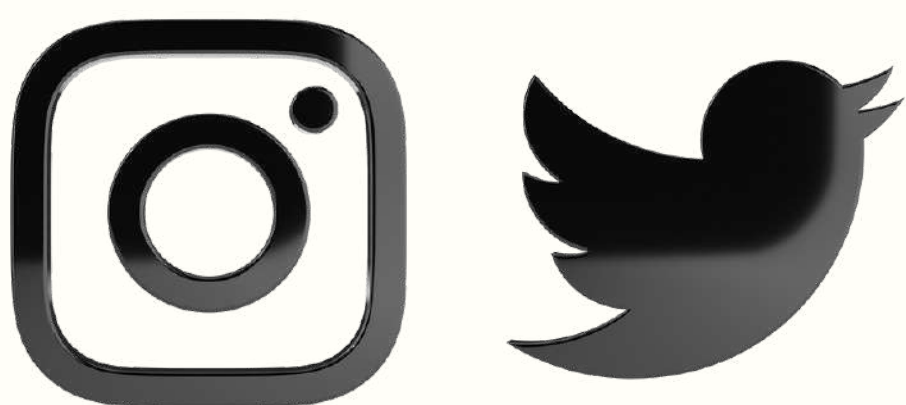


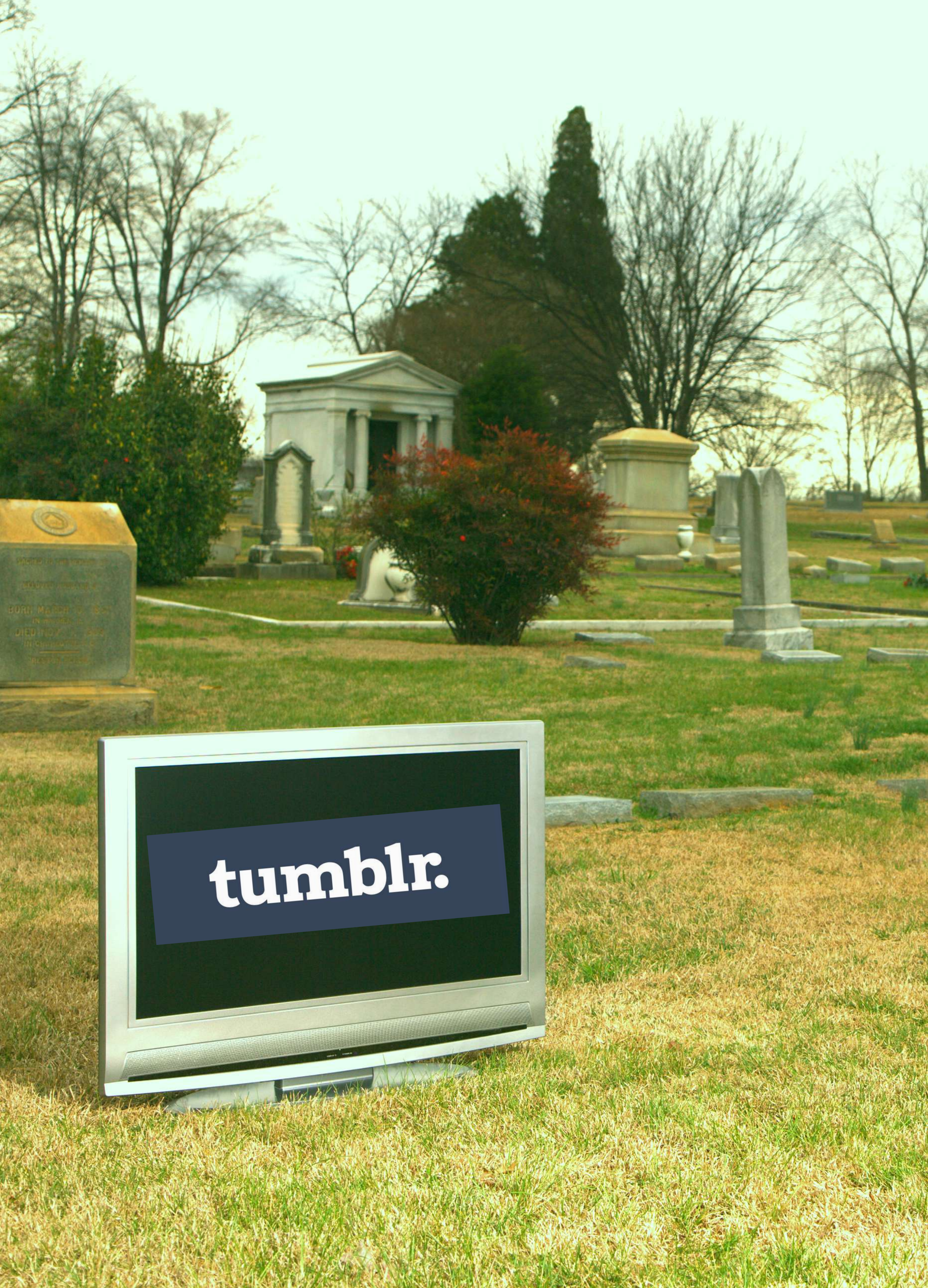
Create a backup account. This will allow you still build your following and your dedicated audience will know where to find you should something happen to your main account. Furthermore, don't rely on one platform. This is rented space that you don't own and can disappear at any time. Collect a mailing list, create a website, exist in more than one space if possible.

So if you follow all of these steps, will you be able to ensure your accounts safety? The harsh truth is that no one can ensure their account's safety. As much as we like to believe that we own our Instagram handle, Instagram will always have control. This is not to discourage you from building a digital empire, but a necessary reminder to use Instagram as a tool to enhance the impact you are making in the real world and other online spaces.

When it comes to deleted posts or accounts, it is also important to understand who is doing the moderation. You can read more about moderators **here**.

If you are in the sextech industry or a consumer of Instagram's services and struggling to build a brand on the platform due to their guidelines, just remember that history has taught us that progress relies not on what we already know, but imagining what can be. New ideas are often resisted. With a clear understanding of Instagram's guidelines and using approved hashtags, you can continue striving for progress and awareness.





BY: THE CHILDLIKE EMPRESS



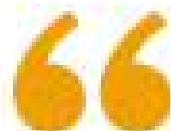
+ Pick avatar

Aa

Text



Photo



Quote



Link



Chat



Audio



Video

It was surreal to watch a platform that, in my mind, was used largely for sexual expression and exploration begin to flag and ban sexual content. I've had a Tumblr since middle school. That's crazy for me to think about. We are from the generation that saw the birth of social media. We are not the generation that was entirely raised with smartphones and social media, but I certainly do think a lot of my self discovery was nurtured by content I found through these social and creative platforms. And yes, a large part of my identity is based in sexual pleasure and exploration. So it was difficult to lose the support and safety of one of the most popular platforms for sharing that kind of content. And I understand why it happened. There has always been a war on sex work. Sex work is nothing new, it's just less taboo. It's being talked about more, but instead of accepting it as a respectable occupation, it is being further criminalized and scrutinized. SESTA and FOSTA were created under a thin veil of wanting to fight sex trafficking. The reality of those bills being passed, meant very little for stopping actual sex traffickers, but instead targeted consenting adults participating in sex work and furthermore anyone that uses the internet to interact with sexual or "adult content." At the beginning of last year, I made a new Instagram account to use as my "work account." Though I'm proud to be a stripper and very open about it, I did not feel fully comfortable combining my real and work personas onto my main page.

hi-host

Your post was flagged

REVIEW



There's also a matter of safety and not allowing customers in clubs to have direct access to your actual identity. In my experience as a stripper, I've had a lot of customers ask to keep in contact with me through Instagram, so it was very important for me to have a separate page to post updates of what clubs I'd be working at and when without sharing too much of my actual life with people that just wanted to see me shake my ass. I never once posted anything that violated community guidelines and yet my account was deleted as I reached a little over a thousand followers. I was not even given an option to dispute the claim. All I got was a screen saying my page was against community guidelines and could not be salvaged.

Something very similar happened to me on Tumblr once they changed their guidelines. Almost all of my photos now have a red banner on top saying “It looks like your post might be in violation of Community Guidelines and is now hidden.” Photos of me in swimwear in the lake with my dog are now deemed a violation to the Tumblr community. They are relying on a faulty algorithm to detect “explicit” content, but very innocent things that have nothing to do with sex are being flagged and taken down. Even if the tech had been properly tested and successfully carried out its intended purpose, why is this what a platform used for self expression has come to? It deeply saddens me to see a platform that has been used heavily for sexual exploration and education completely 180 it’s rules. I fear that future generations, even those just a few years younger than myself will not have access to such a wide range of sexual content to help them figure out who they are and what they like. I love porn, but it’s no secret that most of the mainstream porn streaming sites are run by misogynistic racist white men. Most of the content being put out and featured on many porn sites is very limiting and harmful to the way that we learn about, perceive and explore sex.

This reblog was flagged



Again, I say this as someone that loves and supports porn, but it certainly needs work. An average of 77% people in the US aged 18-30 watch porn at least once a month. Knowing this, why would it make any sense to limit the types of porn anyone falling into this category can consume? There is still an alarming lack of representation and diversity in porn, which is why it's that much more crucial that independent performers and collectives trying to make a difference in the porn and sex industry have platforms to share their work and get paid. For a society that sexualizes everything, we sure are weird about sex and everything encompassed in it, especially when people are making capital off of their own bodies and setting their own rules and boundaries.



The Childlike Empress is a multifaceted artist creating dynamic work focusing on mental health, sexuality, fluidity and healing from trauma. They grew up in NYC, but currently reside in Pittsburgh where they have been working on their debut album, sensual self portraits, music videos, spreading awareness of the realities of sex work and many other projects.

**Tumblr images from this article are all from <https://me.me>*



THE IMPACT OF FOSTA/SESTA ON ONLINE SEX WORK COMMUNITIES

By Jessie Sage

Adult content creators are reporting that their porn videos are disappearing out of Google Drive; Microsoft has announced that they will prohibit profanity and nudity on Skype; Patreon has changed its terms of service to exclude pornography; Facebook is censoring events that are related to sex – including even sex ed by refusing to allow for paid promotion; Twitter is shadowbanning sex workers at alarming rates; and several platforms related to erotic services have shut down entirely: Craigslist personal ads, several sub-Reddits, The Erotic Review, MyRedBook, CityVibe, Providingsupport, to name a few.

Much of this is a reaction to the passage of FOSTA (Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act) in the House, and SESTA (Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act) in the Senate. These bills are a response to the government's inability to prosecute trafficking cases against the online classifieds site Backpage (a competitor to Craigslist known for being more hospitable to sex workers like those from Swallow Salon). These bills amend Section 230 of The Communications Decency Act of 1996, holding websites liable for content posted by 3rd parties and making it easy for plaintiffs and state attorney generals to sue websites that “knowingly assist, facilitate, or support sex trafficking” (a phrase that the bill does not clearly define and often seems to conflate with prostitution more generally).

In other words, once these bills are signed into law, Craigslist, for example, could be sued because of something that a user posts, if an attorney general from any of the 50 states decides to interpret it as vaguely related to sex trafficking. And, many proponents of FOSTA/SESTA seem to be indicating that they view all sex work as equatable to sex trafficking.

The title of the bills make them near impossible to vote against. What politician would want to be viewed as pro-sex trafficking? Indeed, SESTA passed with a 97-2 vote. But what's already clear from the aftermath of these bills is **that they have a chilling effect that reaches far beyond sex trafficking**. In fact, the consequences already seem to be more of an anti-sex work (and perhaps more broadly anti-sex), than anti-trafficking. Perhaps this shouldn't be surprising, given that one of the main proponent of these bills was the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, a rebranding of Morality in the Media, which was founded in 1962 to fight against pornography. On their website they argue that:

Pornography is a social and physical toxin that destroys relationships, steals innocence, erodes compassion, breeds violence, and kills love. The issue of pornography is ground zero for all those concerned for the sexual health and wellbeing of our loved ones, communities, and society as a whole.

Clearly, this is as much about pornography and sex work in general as it is about trafficking.

My sense from being a part of the community is that clip producers who create and sell their own content and who use Google Drive in the process; escorts who advertise[d] erotic services on Craigslist, Backpage, and RentBoy; and sex workers of all sorts who use Twitter and Reddit as a platform to discuss safety measures and build community with other sex workers and fans are, by and large, independently managing their own careers, making their own decisions, and, therefore, not trafficked. In fact, escorts describe sites like Backpage as having made their jobs safer by enabling them to solicit clients from the safety of their own homes rather than out in the streets. One result of FOSTA/SESTA is that independent escorts and trafficking victims alike will be pushed back into the streets to find clients. That is to say, those being affected by these bills are not the ones who the bill is ostensibly aiming to protect. Moreover, **the bills do not come with any funding to help actual victims of sex trafficking (which, for the record, sex workers are probably most committed to and have the greatest stake in fighting).**

[T]here is a great social need right now to disambiguate what constitutes trafficking from consensual sex work for the safety of everyone. To have a productive conversation about this, we need to do a couple of things.

1. [W]e need data on sex trafficking. What information we have now is incredibly poor. (The preamble to SESTA cites a spike in calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline as its main source of data, without examining how many of those proved to be legitimate trafficking cases or mentioning that the spike coincided with a major marketing campaign.)

2. [W]e need to listen to the voices of sex workers whose lives, safety, and businesses are impacted by these bills. Sex workers are speaking out on social media in huge numbers, and an unprecedented lobbying campaign is under way by sex worker-led groups.

Tech scholars and tech-oriented social scientists have real potential to do social good by examining these sites more closely and working to demystify the panic around trafficking. Without data to support this alternative understanding, sex workers of all sorts will be further marginalized and harmed.

*This article was originally published on The Society Pages, find the full feature **here**.*



jessiesage.com



@sapiosexual



Peepshow Podcast

Jessie Sage is a sex worker, writer, and public speaker covering sexual politics, sex work, and feminism. She is a weekly sex columnist at Pittsburgh City Paper, co-host of the Peepshow Podcast, and an organizer for the Pittsburgh chapter of the Sex Workers' Outreach Project. Her writing can be found in The Washington Post, Motherboard, Men's Health Magazine, The Establishment, and more.



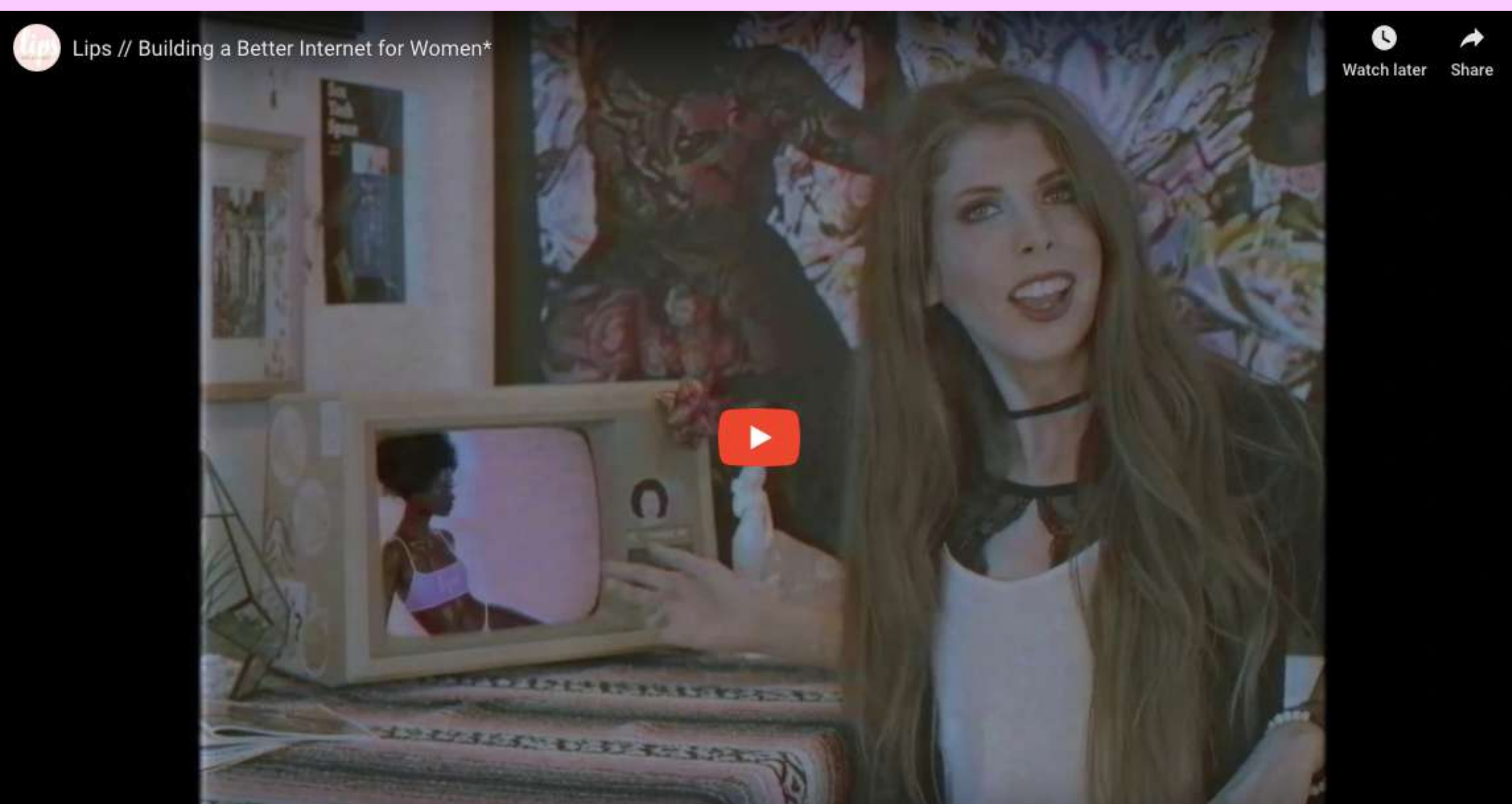
LIPS: A NEW CRYPTOGRAPHIC PLATFORM

Art by Opalslut Universe

FOSTA/SESTA is supported by tech companies, and was quickly implemented, for a number of complicated reasons - moral, political and economic. However, *tech companies do not speak for their users - and often times act without their best interests in mind*. When you consider those running tech companies are cis, straight, white men, it's not surprising that marginalized voices are the first to be silenced when corporations err on the side of censorship.

Sex workers, cam girls, strippers, NSFW models, erotic artists, queer activists, sex educators - these are just a few of the groups impacted by increasingly strict censorship policies on online platforms.

Lips is a cryptographic platform designed for women and LGBTQ individuals seeking a space to express themselves through art without the unhealthy aspects of mainstream internet culture such as online harassment and censorship. Lips is filling the void that Tumblr and other platforms left when they imposed FOSTA inspired censorship policies and forced artists and marginalized communities to share their stories elsewhere.



Lips started out as a sex-positive campus zine. When they attempted to digitize the print publication, the Lips team quickly discovered that due to a lack of awareness surrounding women's and LGBTQ issues by technology leaders, in addition to an unhealthy Internet culture that discourages open and honest expressions of sexuality, it was important that Lips, as an organization, step up to help build a solution to existing problems of online censorship made worse by FOSTA.

Cryptography has recently exploded in popularity due to its potential as a means to decentralize the Internet. Most applications have focused on cryptocurrencies, health records, and precise tracking. However, Lips argues that perhaps one of the most impactful applications of blockchain could be its role in reducing the negative impact of social media on LGBTQ persons and women's mental health.

Lips founder Annie Brown and her team are currently developing **cryptographic and blockchain features** to allow users to post anonymously and protect their IP, thus moving closer to their vision of a more open and honest Internet. Lips will also upend the prevalence of patriarchal algorithms by incorporating feminist philosophy directly into the coding of the application.

Up until now, Lips has only been able to accept semi-anonymous submissions. They publish anonymously if asked and never disclose author information. This being said, the anonymity of the author is somewhat compromised by the submission process. Users would anonymously submit via a P.O. Box on campus, which they could drop into – this solution only works on a local basis. For a global solution, Lips decided to turn to cryptography.

Anonymity is important because it allows for women to express themselves freely regarding sensitive topics. Contributors are more likely to speak truthfully about uncomfortable experiences if given the opportunity to submit anonymously. Once the submission is well-received and celebrated by readers, contributors typically feel more comfortable submitting again with names attached to their work.

Cryptography presents us with the opportunity to have honest discussions on the Internet, rather than carefully crafted/photoshopped distortions of reality. Also, it allows content creators to claim authorship of their work, as well as be compensated without having to name themselves.

For vulnerable populations impacted by FOSTA this could mean online expressive outlets that are more inclusive than current social media options, and perhaps most importantly – healthier and safer.

Help Lips build a sex-positive sharing platform by backing **their crowdfunding campaign**.

Backer rewards include stickers, playlists, commissioned nude portraits & exclusive prints, all provided by Lips Community Artists. Even a \$1 donation gets Lips closer to their crowdfunding goal!

**FOR MORE INFO ON LIPS AND
BLOCKCHAIN, CHECK OUT
THIS EPISODE OF FORK THE
PRODUCT.**

@LIPS_ZINE





<fosta fallout>

the silencing of sex workers

by kianna chauntís

"If there is crime in the streets, do we seek out the attackers and bring them to justice, or do we close the streets completely, and keep potential victims from walking them?"

In his latest conspiracy theory series, notorious Youtuber and documentarian Shane Dawson produced a segment focusing on his long-time friend's close call with human trafficking. Brittani Louise Taylor recounts her marriage with a Serbian "doctor" she met on Tinder. After quickly becoming pregnant and having her son Rex, things started to get fishy. Taylor found herself pressured to return to her spouse's home country of Serbia, and observed his strange relationship to his mother, who appeared to be overly attached to the couple's newborn son. Taylor's mother-in-law was even making strange requests in regards to raising the child, that included suggesting his hips be bound so that they would "develop better."

Little did Taylor know at the time that these strange occurrences were common symptoms of grooming for human trafficking. "Every police officer and person we have talked to thinks they were going to try and traffic us," Taylor explained to Dawson. Upon remembering her ex-husband's urgency to get passports and plane tickets to Serbia for her and their child, Taylor was left relieved that she never made the trip. Had she done so, it was likely she would have never returned to America.

The act of utilizing a fake persona to lure someone into a relationship, or "catfishing" as it is commonly known as, is a widespread phenomenon on the web. While it can sometimes be

a harmless act, conducted by a lonely individual who is simply seeking human attention, it has been practiced with more malicious intentions, including what Taylor had experienced. It is situations like this that the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) and the Stop Enabling Sex Trafficking Act (SESTA) bills hoped to put an end to. Passed in April of 2018, the act itself aims to hold social media websites liable should their platform be utilized for the sake of human trafficking. This essentially gives victims of human trafficking the power to take these companies to court, should their platform have been used at any point for communications with the victim's attacker.

The fallout from the passing of this legislation has had social media giants such as Facebook and Tumblr remodeling their terms of use to be more intolerant of any content that is even mildly related to sex. Facebook's new community standard guidelines on "Sexual Solicitation" even prohibits the exchange of nude images or private messages discussing sexual acts or preferences using their messaging app. It is new policies like this that not only feel like a violation of our first amendment rights, but also an extreme overstepping of boundaries in general. Gone are the days that we can safely use these platforms for making connections with potential partners.

As a web developer myself, I at first wondered why these companies did not stand up and insist they not be held liable for how their apps and websites are used, especially considering most have already had terms of use in place that directly bans their users from using their platforms for illegal activity, or to be harmful to other members of their communities. Yet, with the way FOSTA & SESTA were phrased, it would prove

difficult for any company to stand against it without coming off as being "in favor" of human trafficking or not finding it to be that great of a threat. Even considering this, it is hard to believe that these decisions were only backed by fear of bad PR. With the concept of sex already so stigmatized in society, one has to wonder if these changes were already well on their way into existence in the first place.

Beyond the effects this legislation has on utilizing social platforms for sparking connections between consenting adults, one thing that was never considered is how the law would affect the marketing efforts and online business conduct of sex workers who have utilized these platforms for years to safely sell and promote their content. What was initially presented as an endeavor to stop enabling sex trafficking, has started to feel a lot more like a witch hunt designed to stop enabling sex *workers*, including those whose services are completely legal.

As a result, many sex workers have had their accounts across social platforms deleted, severing their ties from thousands of fans and supporters, in a campaign that reads as erasure, rather than protection from predators. It is action like this that may very well force sex workers back to the streets, where they will no longer be able to screen their clients ahead of time from the safety of their keyboards.

"Instagram deleted my previous account at 10K followers that I'd had for 7 years with no warning and no explanation. Tons of photos are just gone forever."

This forced departure from the web to the streets will also have sex workers subjected to higher probabilities of abuse from law-enforcement. In an open letter, the Sex Worker's Outreach Project or Pittsburgh cited that in some cities, as many as 25% of sex workers report being sexually assaulted by police officers. Even worse, those who may actually be true victims of human trafficking are also arrested during sting operations. "Officers conducting sting operations will have sex-to completion—often multiple times, before making arrests" SWOP Pittsburgh writes. SWOP also states that 90.8% of sex trafficking victims are arrested and deported for the crimes they are forced to commit. If this is how victims are being treated, what can we expect out of treatment towards consenting adults, including those who do legal work?

"FOSTA/SESTA has caused the social media platforms I use to sell my content to crack down heavily on the sharing of adult content," Austin-based dancer and erotic content creator Merrick Frisk states. "Instagram deleted my previous account at 10K followers that I'd had for 7 years with no warning and no explanation. Tons of photos are just gone forever."

Where these platforms used to reserve account deletion for downright nudity, something that has always been a violation of user terms, they now seem to be focusing any account that appears to be approaching the line, regardless of whether or not the user is still within written terms. Even content creators who are often posting photos of them in swimsuits or lingerie that still covers the more "explicit" (give me a *break*) parts of their anatomy are being targeted as well. Even so much as linking off-site to where creators host their content is not allowed.

"I can only assume it was because I was linking to my FanCentro (which now doesn't let you show nudity on your profiles) and posting risque photos and hashtags," Frisk says.

"I feel it is extremely important to realize that FOSTA/SESTA has been doing more harm than good," reports Austin Vampire Queen, dancer and erotic model Daley South. South and her husband, Logan, host a monthly fetish event, VAMP, which she says promotion for has been affected by the legislation. South states that her other endeavors and services have been affected as well.

"I have definitely seen a decline in the options available for promotion of my services," South continues. "Social media platforms have become increasingly more strict, which has left myself and many in my profession walking on eggshells trying to promote services. Keywords that are harmless promotion of even legal sexual services are being flagged and many business pages shut down entirely. I've been banned a few times from my business pages for even talking about sex."

South explained she also has to keep "backup" profiles on her more used platforms, in the event she gets subjected to a ban. The concept of a backup profile is a fairly common practice for adult content creators and performers across the industry.

This crusade of censorship has even had some sex workers I have spoken with withdraw from the industry completely. One former worker, who has chosen to remain anonymous, reported that SESTA/FOSTA was not just a reason for their retirement, but *the* reason. Is silencing those doing sex work that is perfectly legal really the

best way to combat trafficking? If there is crime in the streets, do we seek out the attackers and bring them to justice, or do we close the streets completely, and keep potential victims from walking them?

In addition to the fallout the sex work industry has observed on social media, other websites, such as Craigslist, that were used to list services and vet clients have also modified their terms to ban the use of their platforms for even legal sex work. Similar sites, such as the Backpages, were shut down completely.

Austin based dominatrix Julius recounts how the changes made to Craigslist affected him. "Fetish and domination/submission practice, held to proper standards, is a great exercise for consent affirmation, stress-relief and fun for the sub, and creative outlet," he explains. "Occasionally this is my only income so I work hard advertising to clients. For some reason, I believe, Craigslist was a known source to seek kinky activities with locals by placing ads. I used it to great success adding many experiences to my dom portfolio while increasing profits. Craigslist had an advantage because it was one of few places that even non-kinky folk would know they could simply ask for what they want. In other words, lots of first-timers using that platform to dip their toes in. With it gone, many people likely just put their unexplored desires on the back-burner."

Without the use of these online services and tools, sex workers now lose the ability to properly screen their clients upfront as previously mentioned. Granted, any in-person work was still risky to begin with. "It's worth noting my male privilege here, and that I fared well

"The whole debacle is a ploy to keep women from having autonomy both in terms of one, inability to profit off their labor on their own terms and two, reinforcing that their sexual labor ought to be given freely."

going about and meeting strangers in public places using those ads," Julius admits. "Others have to take extra precautions or cannot risk it, though to be sure I take precautions as well since I can still fall victim."

Many sex workers are fighting to raise awareness on the harms this legislation has produced. Beyond that, the criminalization of sex work regardless of current legality resonates with what feels like sexist undertones to begin with.

"The whole debacle is a ploy to keep women from having autonomy both in terms of one, inability to profit off their labor on their own terms and two, reinforcing that their sexual labor ought to be given freely," Julius preaches. "The travesty is that criminalizing sex work exacerbates sex trafficking. A responsible society places police resources at the benefit of those who likely can be first to identify signs of sex trafficking—sex workers! To instead turn out the lights is reprehensible. There is a discussion to be had about which types of media ought to be hidden from unwitting public consumption, and which platforms ought to be considered utilities under public/congressional control rather than private, but the foundation needs to be one that respects sex work to begin with."

While FOSTA and SESTA make things difficult for sex workers, the truth is that things were never easy for us in the first place, making the blow hit that much harder. Many may find that the future of their business will be better controlled if transactions are handled through a website they own and operate themselves, but even generating a website is a task within itself. Many popular domain registrars and hosts prohibit their services from being used to house explicit content. Even finding a SW-friendly payment processor proves to be difficult, as many payment processors and e-wallets that are widely used refuse to manage what they consider to be "high-risk accounts."

As a web developer of 10 years, and with the above in mind, I have begun to focus my work on creating affordable members-only websites for sex workers to sell their content and connect with their supporters, an effort that has been a struggle in its own way. My first initiative towards building this service had me reading countless user policies from many of the tools I use to build websites for my previous safe-for-work clients. More often than not, my head would be hanging low before I even reached the bottom line of the fine print, having found that many of my most used platforms prohibited the use of their services for anything pertaining to explicit or NSFW content. This has limited my choices in regards to payment gateways, web hosting services, domain registrars and even plugins I would use for my CMS of choice, Wordpress.

Having sifted through many platforms that are not accepting of sex work however, the brightside was that I was able to better acquaint myself with platforms that do not discriminate against

explicit content or sex work. I have compiled a *whitelist* of these platforms below.

I would like to mention that given the fallout so far, the terms of these platforms are subject to change, but as of April 2019, all systems are go!

Should you wish to learn more about the services I offer in regards to building online stores and members-only websites for the marketing and selling of adult content, you can visit me at

[<aetherweb.net>](http://aetherweb.net)

<Web Hosting/Domain Registration>

HostGator - hostgator.com

Dreamhost - dreamhost.com

Hostwinds - hostwinds.com

A Small Orange - asmallorange.com

WebHostPro - adultwebhosting.com

<Payment Gateways>

Payment Cloud - paymentcloudinc.com

eMerchant Broker - emerchantbroker.com

Paxum - paxum.com/us

**must be registered for a business account
if located in the US.*

Intimate.io - intimate.io

**for cryptocurrency transactions*

<E-commerce/Website Platforms>

Wordpress - wordpress.com

**must be marked as mature*

Wordpress (self-hosted) - wordpress.org

Woocommerce (for Wordpress) - woocommerce.com

Shopify - shopify.com

**limited options for payment gateways*

Joomla (self-hosted only) - joomla.org

