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Digital Spaces, Material Traces : Investigating the Performance of Gender, Sexuality, and Embodiment on Internet Platforms that feature User-Generated Content

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As ever more social interaction and cultural production takes place in the networked digital spaces of the internet, it is crucial to develop an understanding of the ways in which gender and sexuality are articulated in these online practices. Through four comparative case studies, this dissertation demonstrates how various forms of user-generated content are employed in the digital performance of gender and sexuality. Far from being immaterial, disembodied, or cut off from the physical conditions of everyday life, it is argued that the internet exists of 'digitally material' spaces and artifacts that contain multiple traces of the embodied users who shape and inhabit them. As such, this dissertation offers a new way to make sense of how gender, sexuality, and embodiment are made to 'matter' on the internet.

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