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Digitizing Revolution

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# Race, Gender, and the Technological Turn

A Roundtable on Digitizing Revolution

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VERONICA PAREDES, AND T. L. COWAN

EDITED BY ANNA EVERETT AND GUISELA LATORRE

## INTRODUCTION

We are an intergenerational, multiracial roundtable of senior faculty, doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and lecturers who all write about race, gender, and digital culture. We were asked to meet online and in person over the course of a year to discuss at length variations on the theme of digitizing revolution. While our conversations began in the spring of 2016, we presented together on a panel in November 2016 at the National Women's Studies Association's Annual Conference—just days after the conclusion of the US presidential election between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. As such, the particular social and political context of the election has worked as a troubling backdrop that continues to inform how each of us reflects on the complicated ways in which race, gender, and the digital correlate and shape public discourse.

The roundtable that follows is a result of these many ongoing conversations, with each of us offering a short essay on one aspect of the range of topics we have continued to discuss—from intersectionality in gaming communities to trans visibility to the racial and gendered politics of platforms like Tumblr, Twitter, and FemTechNet. When the contributions are read together, we hope the roundtable well synthesizes our dialogic analyses of how power exercised through digital forms uniquely affects women, racial minorities, transgender people, and other marginalized groups.

The roundtable begins with Dorothy Kim's timely reflections on the ways in which Twitter's live feed and algorithms, especially when contrasted with Facebook, create different affordances and challenges for marginalized users and communities. What lessons about black feminism and digital participation can we learn from thinking about Beyoncé's *Lemonade* in the same

conversation as mainstream digital platforms? From Kim's musings on social media, race, and gender, the conversation shifts to another pressing aspect of popular engagements with digital culture: video games. TreaAndrea M. Russworm and Corrigan Vaughan discuss the complicated dynamics of racism, sexism, and misogyny that were all too evident in the circulation of the #Gamergate hashtag on Twitter. Both respondents consider the extent to which the misogyny in gaming culture is intersectional while also taking care to note how race and racism factored into, and were suppressed within, the gaming industry's most visible and sensational manifestation of hate and boundary policing. In continuing our focus on active but often marginalized voices in digital spaces, Cassius Adair reflects on some of the ways in which corporate control, anti-harassment measures, and the relative weight of visual versus textual media shape digital participation for transgender communities on Twitter and Instagram. Finally, in reflecting even more directly on feminist organizing online, Veronica Paredes and T. L. Cowan discuss the challenges and radical possibilities they have experienced while organizing and practicing critical digital pedagogy as members of the networked collective FemTechNet. Implicit in all of our contributions to this roundtable are our attempts to answer the question: given the current political landscape, what potential for revolution is there on social media platforms, in gaming communities, and in feminist networks?

DOROTHY KIM // ALGORITHMS, TIMELINES,  
AND TWITTER COMMUNITIES

In February 2016 Twitter announced a change in its platform structure that would move away from a chronological timeline of tweets to an algorithmic timeline. The Twitter users and public reacted with #RIPTwitter. Suffice it to say, Twitter users were not pleased.<sup>1</sup> However, this is not the first time that this change in the social media platform's framework has been brought up. Zeynep Tufekci discussed this issue in a September 2014 *Medium* piece that precisely pointed out the problem of changing one of Twitter's major platform features—the livefeed timeline.<sup>2</sup> She explains that a change to an algorithmic timeline would change the variety of voices, making Twitter more akin to Facebook's echo chamber.<sup>3</sup> There is a reason why Facebook is called "Racebook."<sup>4</sup> In online feminist discussions this is a platform development change that would give many non-white feminists and womanists pause.

Twitter has often been seen as the space in which non-white and non-mainstream feminist discussions have trended, become discussion points, and created large and loosely connected communities in the last several years.

The hacking of this corporate microblogging space has been led by the work of #BlackTwitter and black feminist discussion on Twitter. It's the digital platform known most for black, indigenous, and WOC feminist digital bodies to speak back and interrupt mainstream "feminist" discussions that have excluded their point of view. But more important, as so many black feminist critics have discussed, it's the space where communities of color can talk to each other and build their own worlds. Thus an idea of integration into a larger online feminist conversation is actually not the point. The point is for these communities to talk and build with one another. The goal is to commune with your own group who get your point of view, your world, and your politics and feminism. The timeline feature that flattens out what one sees by organizing it by the reverse chronology of one's curated follows is one of the ways in which these kinds of communities, connections, and discussions can happen and flourish. The timeline allows for a wideness of connection and information. It does not rely on a corporately created algorithm to decide which things are important, should be read, or which bodies should connect with which other bodies in often bubble neighborhoods. Thus what will happen if Twitter becomes more like Facebook—that is, living in specific digital neighborhood bubbles? In the aftermath of the US 2016 presidential election, we can now ask the question in the other direction. What happens to Facebook when it becomes more like Twitter?<sup>5</sup> When Facebook is called the toxic platform and the one known for calling out racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, Islamaphobia, and antisemitism? What happens when white users of Facebook are starting to leave the platform because it has become too "toxic" and feels like "harassment"?<sup>6</sup> Now after the 2016 US election, Facebook has become a non-stop feed to witness post-election hate crimes, the realities of the marginalized groups attacked by Trump, and the consistent call-outs of violent racism, sexism, xenophobia, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, Islamaphobia, and antisemitism as well as the go-to platform location of education resources. I wonder if there will be digital white flight off Facebook?

One of the best pieces that examines Twitter as a stream for black, indigenous, and women of color feminist discussions is Sydette Harry's in *Dissent*.<sup>7</sup> In "Attacking the Stream," she writes:

Does it matter that our spaces of communication are operated by mega-corporations and tracked constantly by the government? It may seem naive to talk about tech after 2013 without talking about the NSA. But for those of us in marginalized communities, surveillance is a part of life that we have long been accustomed to. We know we are being watched and measured. Unlike many who bemoan a more innocent era of tech,

we have come to accept those conditions because they were practiced on us first. So rather than falling into a fight or flight mentality, we find the cracks in the infrastructure and break through them. In the process, we remold the technology itself. We ground it in our communities. And we turn it into a tool not only for communication, but for survival.<sup>8</sup>

If Twitter does change its timeline framework, it will become more like Facebook before the 2020 US elections, and in fact shut down community, connection, and critical feminist conversation. Or it will be about platform proliferation, as discussed by T. L. Cowan in this roundtable: “Techno-promiscuity has been a key tool for FemTechNet in our attempts to center intersectional analysis. That is, a praxis of platform proliferation has allowed us to build momentum by meeting folks where they are, rather than insisting on a single FemTechNet platform, meeting or working place.”<sup>9</sup>

After the US 2016 election, Facebook has become a space of techno-promiscuity, as a main organizational and educational space, and as a way in which to hack the feeds of people in their digital neighborhoods and homes. Facebook now has become, like Twitter, “a tool not only for communication, but for survival.” Harry explains that there will be ways to “remold the tool,” to “find cracks and crevices” to help these communities continue to connect, discuss, flourish (for example through hashtags, etc.), but there will be a tipping point when the primary affordances of this network will change too much for it to continue to be a robust public space for BIWOC feminists.<sup>10</sup> What I mean by this is not that these groups can be integrated into a larger and usually white mainstream feminist conversation but rather that they can have their own conversations and their own digital space to speak to each other. What I can observe now is that Twitter is still a robust public space for BIWOC feminists and that the current political events of 2016 in the US and Europe have also had guerilla feminist nodes move into reshaping and hacking other platforms, including Facebook (the gated community of social media) for revolution. I believe the tipping point can mean people will leave one social media platform but that groups also can begin to reshape other social media platforms to remold these for their own uses. An example of this is the importance of Facebook live to document social justice as Vine on Twitter becomes obsolete.<sup>11</sup> The terrain is changing on these digital platforms, and you can see that right now, post-US election 2016, with how Facebook has become a primary avenue of information and dissent against a Trump regime.

The question remains: where are the digital spaces where black, indigenous, and WOC feminists can connect, speak, build that is not about centering a white mainstream feminist audience? Or is that kind of space precisely

the fear that allows so much vitriol to be thrown particularly at “hashtag feminism” powered by BIWOC feminists?

During the same week in which Twitter announced and then tried to backtrack on its change to an algorithmic timeline, Beyoncé dropped a new video and song, “Formation,” from her new album. In *Rolling Stone* Zandria Robertson explains that in this song and video, “[Beyoncé] centers the voices and visuals of black women and queer black people so that they can give and get information and bring the roots of current black justice movements into view.”<sup>12</sup> Naila Keleta-Mae’s insightful piece in *Vice*, “Get What’s Mine: ‘Formation’ Changes the Way We Listen to Beyoncé Forever,” points out a similar black feminist theoretical praxis of “multivocality.”<sup>13</sup> Keleta-Mae explains how

Mae Gwendolyn Brooks argues that black women writers have long used multiple voices in their work because it allows them to “communicate in a diversity of discourses.” Not as a means to integrate into the white mainstream but instead to “remain on the borders of discourse, speaking from the vantage point of the insider/outsider.” In “Formation,” black women’s bodies are literally choreographed into lines and borders that permit them to physically be both inside and outside of a multitude of vantage points. And what that choreography reveals is the embodiment of a particular kind of 21st Century black feminist freedom in the United States of America; one that is ambitious, spiritual, decisive, sexual, capitalist, loving and communal.<sup>14</sup>

Keleta-Mae’s piece also notices one very important framework in Beyoncé’s “Formation” weekend surprise. After a savvy use of Instagram and iTunes to drop her *Beyoncé* 2013 album to major sales and no other marketing, she now has complete control over her own platform.<sup>15</sup> Keleta-Mae points out: “She must have decided that she no longer needed Instagram; and judging from the speed with which ‘Formation’ is racking up views on YouTube—she was right. And now that TIDAL’s here Beyoncé no longer needs iTunes. Instead, she releases her music directly to the streaming service that she’s a part owner of and uploads her video on her website and on YouTube.”<sup>16</sup>

She has control over her own digital platforms to disseminate her vision and view of multivocal black feminism to other black feminists. This platform control to send out what my collaborator Eunsong Kim described once to me as the “Bat Signal” (the communication of a BIWOC feminist praxis and theory that does not center a white audience) is a mode of BIWOC feminist organizing and is what intrigues me at this moment. The question perhaps is not how can BIWOC feminists find community on a platform like Twitter,

integrate to mainstream feminist discussions, or mold it as a tool for their discussions, community, and activism, but rather, how can a platform become dominated by BIWOC feminists in order for them to control it and “slay.”

I wrote my earlier piece before the full album *Lemonade* dropped as a visual video piece on HBO and also as a full album on Tidal. Likewise, I turned in this earlier piece before the Superbowl half-time show in which Beyoncé was not the technical “headliner” (apparently that was *Coldplay*), but her production of “Formation” took over the discussion on Twitter and the visual and vocal airwaves. In the aftermath of Beyoncé’s performance at the Superbowl and the complete release of *Lemonade*, there has been a constant back and forth about whether she is really a “feminist.” In particular, bell hooks wrote a piece in response to *Lemonade* entitled “Moving Beyond Pain.”<sup>17</sup> In her conclusion to this piece hooks particularly explains:

Only as black women and all women resist patriarchal romanticization of domination in relationships can a healthy self-love emerge that allows every black female, and all females, to refuse to be a victim. . . . To truly be free, we must choose beyond simply surviving adversity, we must dare to create lives of sustained optimal well-being and joy. In that world, the making and drinking of lemonade will be a fresh and zestful delight, a real life mixture of the bitter and the sweet, and not a measure of our capacity to endure pain, but rather a celebration of our moving beyond pain.<sup>18</sup>

A number of black feminists responded to hooks’s critique, but the most compelling was LaSha’s long-piece response in Salon that focused on pain and the body. LaSha explains the revolution in Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* as precisely about the addressing of black feminist pain:

“Lemonade” is not “a measure of our capacity to endure pain” absent “a celebration of our moving beyond pain,” as hooks indicates. I too am beyond weary of the depiction of the strong black woman perpetually able to take hit after hit and tragedy after tragedy, and come out unscathed. “Lemonade” does not pretend that black women are some unbreakable force. Instead, it presents a broken Beyoncé—a rich, beautiful, revered pop superstar who despite the ostensible cloak of invincibility is torn apart by cheating. It presents a broken Lesley McSpadden, the incurable grief of losing her son worn in her eyes. It allows us to be human and vulnerable and defeated. The celebration is not in our endurance but the realization that we are human and have the freedom to go through tragedy and rebound. The celebration is the realization that black women,

though devaluated by the world, still see the value in each other. The celebration is in the resurrecting power of sisterhood and embrace of black femininity in spite of pain.<sup>19</sup>

Now post-US 2016 election, as the black, indigenous, WOC, queer, trans, disabled, Jewish, Islamic bodies on the streets of the United States have become the loci of violence and untold pain as the Trump machine ramps up, I cannot but think that the potential for revolution in these social media platforms (as Twitter has first shown us, and now as it transforms other platforms like Facebook) is going to be about communicating the pain of these digital bodies. Celebrating beyond pain seems at the moment a utopic dream. Rather, organizing and creating revolution in these digital spaces will require that we acknowledge pain and find community with other black, indigenous, WOC, queer, non-Christian, trans, and differently-abled (i.e., intersectional) feminists, who will not flinch from addressing it and will make sure these platforms are dominated by that message of pain.

TREAANDREA M. RUSSWORM // VIDEO GAMES  
AND THE PERSISTENCE OF WHITE SUPREMACY

I have resisted writing publicly about #Gamergate. There are two main reasons for this. At first, especially when the online hate campaign was most active, I felt there was ample public and scholarly attention mounting, and I was leery of entering the fray and perhaps inadvertently giving the ideas behind it more traction than I thought they deserved. Second, as someone who writes about and studies video games and race, I was concerned that a focus on the hate and intimidation tactics of a few would obscure what for me has been the real “lead” story in gaming: mainly that gaming communities are diverse, full of agency and creativity, and far more interesting than the angry (often white) men who were trying to police and control the borders from within. While #Gamergate is still not a dominant way for me to write about and participate in gaming culture, I do now believe that more closely examining it stands to teach us some things about how toxic masculinity and organized online harassment can work together to wrest power, both symbolic and real, from a larger public will. After all, if the person many dismissed as a social media troll can become president of the United States, then the social and political stakes surrounding #Gamergate may very well indicate where we are headed in our offline and non-gaming realities in the not so distant future.

While Dorothy Kim has just explored some of the ways in which women of color have formed a powerful participatory block on Twitter despite technical

changes that would otherwise undermine their collective voices and authority, I want to explore briefly here how some of the more dystopian aspects of social media continue to function as tools of oppression. For those who may have missed it, #Gamergate was spawned in 2014 as an online movement ostensibly created to expose alleged unethical practices in games journalism. Instigated by Eron Gjoni, a community of male gamers initially identified Gjoni's ex-girlfriend, *Depression Quest's* Zoe Quinn, as emblematic of rampant fraternization between video game developers and games journalists. Some gamers then used the infamous hashtag and tactics like doxing to humiliate and discredit Quinn as they quickly subsumed any just cause into one of the ugliest online hate campaigns to date. While Quinn has been the mob's primary target, Gamergaters have used technologies of oppression to publicly harass, intimidate, and silence nearly anyone who represents what the mob construes as imposing "liberal politics" or "social justice awareness" on video game culture. As such, Quinn, along with other women, including fellow developer Brianna Wu and *Feminist Frequency* host Anita Sarkeesian, have been repeatedly subjected to hundreds of rape and death threats as a part of the movement's explicit anti-feminist agenda. Gamergate has also become one of any number of recent examples of how individual perpetrators can use powerful digital platforms to join with hundreds and thousands of other men to abuse and harass women physically and psychologically.

While the national media have waned in their momentarily voracious coverage of Gamergate as a sensational news story—think "Geeks, Sex, and Terror!"—both the still active hashtag (now often subversively short-handed as GG without the #) and the ideologies that inform it continue to be symptomatic of other, less visible, problematic dimensions of the popular life of video games.

For instance, although less often discussed than Gamergate's apparent misogyny and sexism, whiteness remains very much relevant to these events, both in terms of Gamergate's most public victims and in the way its defenders have expressed a desire to protect *their* game spaces from perceived outsiders. While Gamergate's most visible victims have been white women, and its defenders (and criminal perpetrators) have mostly been white men who freely utilize rhetorics of white supremacy, the less visible social and relational context for Gamergate is one of a complex and shifting video game demographic. That is, Gamergate has most obviously been about the attempt to preserve gaming as a play space of white masculine privilege, where women and racial others are barely tolerated so long as they accept their proper place as interlopers who also adhere to established hierarchies of gender and race.

Perhaps predictably, then, Gamergaters' public and violent defense of gam-

ing as a masculinist and supremacist pastime has evolved simultaneously with an actually shrinking base of white male gamers. Considering that women now make up almost exactly half of all gamers, and that there are robust communities of Black, Latinx, and other minority gamers, we have to understand Gamergate's discontent properly as a violent response to the displacement of white masculinity wherein its defenders commenced a cultural war around their imagined community's treasured digital objects and play spaces—objects and spaces that have long conflated leisure and digital play with technocracy and power.

And yet, while white men are now in the *minority* of people who actually play video games, they continue to dominate not only the public perception of who plays games but also the reality of who makes them, especially the high-profile games that continue to set industry economic standards and shape the general public discourse, games like *The Witcher 3*, *Fallout 4*, and the *Grand Theft Auto* franchise, for example. And so this discrepancy among who plays games, who the public perceives as representative gamers, and who designs the majority of popular games has produced a complex set of contradictions and under-examined paradoxes.

When understood in the context of the simultaneous displacement and hyper-visibility of white masculinity, the intersectional stakes around Gamergate and video game culture become much more apparent. Although Gamergate's most public victims have been white women, people of color—and Black women in particular—have been subjected to the same harassment and intimidation tactics, especially in online gaming, long before 2014 and Gamergate. The same community of Reddit, Twitter, and 4chan users, bloggers, and YouTubers who so publicly defend Gamergate as a legitimate cause also terrorize women of color on a daily basis in incidents that are simply not covered by news outlets. Here I am thinking specifically of Black women like Tanya DePass of #ineeddiversegames and game developer Auriea Harvey of Tale of Tales Games, who created *Sunset*, the first independent game starring a Black female character.<sup>20</sup>

As the transphobic crusades against women like Carolyn Petit and Katherine Cross demonstrate, other factors like sexual orientation, gender identity, and perceived gender identity have also determined who has been marked and targeted as gaming outsiders. In each of these cases, the Internet's penchant for spreadability and social media's efficacy for shaming have been used by online mobs that would no doubt be outnumbered and less effectual offline. While research on Internet hate crimes has confirmed that among college students “nonwhite females [have] faced cyber harassment more than any other group,” and that being “lesbian, transgender, or bisexual”

*and* a woman of color increases the risk of online harassment, the popular attentiveness to only the surface text and public personas of Gamergate obscures these important realities.<sup>21</sup>

Games research concerned with representation and identity beyond what Gamergate most overtly signifies can help address the acute need for more critical examinations of the industry's intersectional blind- and hyper-visible spots as well as the broader implications of gaming culture's inherent power dynamics. One way to do some of this work, I propose, is by bringing digital cultural studies and research more squarely into dialogue with philosophies and theories of play, epistemologies that historically have been only marginally interested in how considerations of race, gender, sexual orientation, and class might challenge and enhance existing understandings of play in public and private culture. Such an approach would necessarily prioritize reading gaming as play and popular play as designed to ritualize and reinforce axes of fantasy, knowledge, and power.

To return to my opening remarks about understanding #Gamergate in the context of a post-2016 election culture, I think we can readily note the degree to which the mix of toxic masculinity, hate speech, embellished facts, distorted perceptions, and strategic online harassment can certainly win—and win “bigly” at that. The way white supremacy and gaming collided here anticipated, of course, what we would later see with the results of the 2016 presidential election. That is, Gamergate was a functional tool of white supremacy that was constructed to reinstate old hierarchies and reinsert masculine privilege and authority at a time when the broader gaming public stood in stark opposition to such ideologies. Yet, as I have discussed here, the way the hashtag and deliberate hate campaign persisted as a violent and disruptive tool only speaks to the many ways in which white supremacy continues to function as a dominant organizing and disciplining machine—in both on- and offline spaces. To what extent, then, should we expect our digital cultural lives to depart radically from the discrete institutions of power that govern our lives offline?

While these provocations might dampen any broad claims we are tempted to make about the revolutionary potential of games as a politicized playspace, I remain inspired by Anna Everett's and Lisa Nakamura's earlier writings on video games and digital culture.<sup>22</sup> As pioneers writing about race, gender, and technology, both Everett and Nakamura warned of the persistence of whiteness as a cultural logic of the digital. Neither, however, has written about these logics from a position of deterministic surrender. Following in this vein, neither do I. If there is potential for revolution in gaming culture—and I think there is—we might find it in the communities of resistance who have always been here challenging so-called norms and using social media and other dig-

ital tools to fight back. Moreover, as video games have always been a gateway technology that introduces and familiarizes millions of women and people of color with practices like hacking, modding, creative play, and forming likeminded groups online, I suspect gaming will remain a meaningful site of technological participation despite the persistence of violent trolls, the industry's lack of representation, and the global rise of fascism.

CORRIGAN VAUGHAN // #NOTYOURSHIELD: MAKING  
#GAMERGATE'S INTERSECTIONALITY VISIBLE

That #Gamergate as a movement was wrapped up not only in misogyny but also in racism and antisemitism seemed clear from nearly the moment of its inception. While the inciting incident itself related to one particular white woman targeted by an angry ex-boyfriend, by the time *Firefly* actor Adam Baldwin was tweeting his support and popularizing the name Gamergate, the so-called fight for “ethics in games journalism” became a more overtly political battle against “social justice warriors” (SJWs) in whatever form they might take—whether advocates of feminism, LGBTQIA+ rights, or racial justice.<sup>23</sup> The assumption that the majority of Gamergaters were white and male, and, naturally, the critique of white male privilege, appeared in nearly every discussion of the group, from Salon to Slate to Kotaku to Gawker and so on. Trea-Andrea M. Russworm has, in her remarks in this roundtable, quite appropriately troubled the prevailing whiteness of discussions of Gamergate. As a phenomenon that arguably only gained the momentum it did because it centered on the victimization of white women, what was often overlooked or merely footnoted was that women of color, LGBTQIA+ people, and other marginalized groups had been loudly testifying to this level of harassment for ages. White public figures like Zoe Quinn, Anita Sarkeesian, and Brianna Wu became the prime representation of the female experience on the Internet, further pushing to the margins those who had long been unsympathetic targets.

Russworm speaks to the ways in which critics of Gamergate as well as games scholars invested in representation and identities must expand beyond discussions of gender to include race, sexual orientation, and class. This necessity is, I believe, demonstrated in the rarely remarked upon #notyourshield hashtag that circulated at the height of Gamergate. A significant element of Gamergate, and, indeed, the modern Men's Rights Activism movement, is the tactic of asserting that those who would bring to light white privilege are actually the racists. Naturally, the idea of “reverse racism” is not new, but the way it has been wielded by Gamergaters and MRAs is worth thinking about, both in terms of the sense that the diminishing

power of whiteness is shaping current political and intellectual discourse, and in terms of how this discourse forces intersectionality into what could otherwise be co-opted as a white feminist issue. The #notyourshield hashtag forces an acknowledgment of race's place in the conversation, as women and people of color who supported the Gamergate movement came out to say that they refused to be used as pawns in the fight to demonize gamers. In fact, this hashtag might serve as a particular challenge to feminists to prove their intersectional cred; to make clear that their concern for minorities and marginalized groups isn't simply Twitter liberalism but a conscious acknowledgment that feminism without intersectionality is hardly feminism at all. While #notyourshield tweeters might not have intended it, their pushback against the tendency of white feminists to speak for or silence people of color was actually a strong critique of "white feminism."

I do not mean to assert, of course, that because of the backlash against white feminism in the Gamergate saga, white feminists became suddenly enlightened to the differences in lived experiences of women of color and handed over the platform for them to speak for themselves. That Gamergate forums on 4Chan and Reddit, as well as Twitter feeds and blogs of those active in the movement disproportionately targeted and showed hostility toward women of color was notable but not necessarily paradigm shifting for white feminists pushing back against Gamergate. In fact, the #notyourshield hashtag was largely met with bewilderment or flat-out hostility by white feminists who discussed it, failing to understand the social dynamics that might lead these gamers to be wary of feminism.

I am also not asserting, however, that #notyourshield is a rational, egalitarian response to marginalization from people simply wanting to be heard. Users of the hashtag often participate in racist, misogynistic, homophobic, and transphobic discourses. In defending an industry they care deeply about, often they not only forgive but actively take part in its worst practices. Further, it is arguable that many participating in the hashtag were not minorities or women at all, but white, male Gamergaters creating fake accounts to exaggerate minority support.<sup>24</sup> It is important not to paint a picture of villainous white feminists versus innocent minority gamers. That characterization is exactly what the hashtag was intended to do in order to discredit the anti-Gamergate movement. What I am instead asserting is that Gamergaters' reversal of the narrative to point out racial blind spots in white feminists is instructive in many ways. Accusations that the *real* racists are women pointing out white male privilege are, of course, baseless, but the rise of #notyourshield serves as an important critique of a feminist movement that is seen by many as being exclusive of a large group of people whom it claims to represent. In

garnering support for the movement on sites like 4Chan, “SJW hypocrisy” was often a buzz phrase. A number of diverse women fought back against the SJWs, claiming their own agency and refusing to see themselves as victims of the video game industry and its acolytes. While it is not unique for human beings to side with ideologies that are harmful to them, the sense that white feminism has excluded and marginalized many of these women is worth considering in trying to understand why they might side with an industry with little regard for catering to nearly half of its consumers.

In light of the revelation that white women in nearly all demographics voted largely for Donald Trump in the 2016 election, as did a surprising number of Latinxs—if nowhere near a majority—the reaction to Gamergate is relevant to the reckoning we’re coming to with white feminism. When we talk about Gamergate and #notyourshield, and then we look at white feminists and white moderates telling minorities to stop mourning and start taking action on things they have, in fact, been loudly protesting, it is one of many ways we can grapple with the superficial brand of feminism that has become mainstream, particularly in news and social media. To reiterate Russworm’s point once more, attention must be paid to the place of race, class, and sexual orientation and identity in discussions of gaming culture, and gaming culture is not simply an irrelevant subculture but a window into many “alt-right” ideologies, of which the scope and hold on white Americans is now truly coming to be understood. This has become even clearer in the wake of Milo Yiannopoulos’s ascendancy to fame and notoriety. As moderate liberals claimed that suppressing any form of speech, even hate speech from white supremacists, made “us” just as bad as “them,” feminists of color and other progressives rightfully pointed out the privilege involved in equating hate speech with attempts to protect undocumented, trans, and other marginalized student populations. After all, Milo saw his downfall only after making comments advocating pederasty. The white supremacy, xenophobia, and misogyny were treated as necessary evils of free speech. We have been dismissive of movements like Gamergate, which raise heroes like Milo, as things in which maladjusted basement dwellers participate, but the realities of our current political climate and the mainstreaming of blatant hostility toward women and minorities necessitate taking a closer look at just who is mentally high-fiving Gamergaters and telling feminists that they are #notyourshield.

CASSIUS ADAIR // TRANS VISIBILITY ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

When considering the role of racial identity in transgender digital spaces, it is important to consider how visibility—both political and ocular—operate in

trans contexts. Being read, literally seen by others, as trans and as a person of color is a material vulnerability that extends from the interpersonal encounter to online platforms. As a window into this question, I'll explain a phenomenon that may at first seem counterintuitive: the relative popularity and influence that certain Black trans women have on Twitter. White trans men, even those whose images have circulated within mainstream media outlets, do not seem to have achieved celebrity status on this particular platform. Rather than understand this dynamic as a sign that Black trans women have achieved certain amounts of social cachet while white trans men remain marginal and "invisible," I urge feminist critics to understand the role that platforms can play in distributing social visibility.

To name the issue plainly: if Twitter followers were an accurate metric of social cachet, you might imagine that Black transgender women had pre-eminent status within online trans communities as a whole. Laverne Cox, a Black trans woman and star of breakout Netflix show *Orange Is the New Black*, has 512,000 followers; Chaz Bono, arguably the trans man with the most comparable "celebrity" status, has a little over one third of that number, with 139,000.<sup>25</sup> Janet Mock, a Black trans woman writer and intellectual who hosts her own online pop culture show through MSNBC, has 97,600 followers, whereas white trans man Aydian Dowling, who recently placed in *Men's Health* magazine's "Ultimate Guy" contest, has fewer than 10,000.<sup>26</sup> Extrapolating too much from this limited data set is ill-advised, not only given the challenges to interpreting social media interaction, but also due to the difficulty of understanding who counts as "transgender" and the fact that "trans" is an inadequate description of many genders outside white European contexts.<sup>27</sup> Still, these numbers imply that at least some Black trans women can achieve and sustain, if not "revolution," then at least a megaphone, on Twitter.

To be perfectly clear, my suggestion here is not that Bono or Dowling *should* have more of a celebrity status on Twitter. Cox and Mock are not Twitter-famous just due to their high-profile appearances on legacy and new media outlets but because they are important social commentators. They have performed both online and offline political advocacy, traveling to university campuses and LGBT events around the country. Cox and Mock have used Twitter to leverage mainstream trans visibility and cis gazes in order to call attention, for example, to the case of CeCe McDonald, who was incarcerated for defending herself against an allegedly racist and transphobic attack in 2013. In addition, Black women, cis and trans, have also created a social network in which issues of misogynoir, to use Moya Bailey's productive term, are regularly discussed, critiqued, and organized against, a non-monolithic assembly of voices that some have deemed "Black Twitter." Indeed, political and social

prominence of Cox and Mock may be better understood within the larger context of Black women's organizing on Twitter—as responding to the “Bat Signal” that Dorothy Kim describes earlier—than within a uni-dimensional “trans representation” framework.

My concern, then, is not that certain white trans men are relatively less popular on Twitter: visibility is not necessarily a privilege, given the documented relationship between hypervisibility and racial-gendered violence within trans communities. What worries me is that Twitter—a platform that, as TreaAndrea M. Russworm and Corrigan Vaughan have outlined in their dialogue about #Gamergate, has at times been infested with harassment and doxing—has weak user controls, and can present a generally difficult environment for marginalized people, is *still* a more hospitable space for Black trans women to achieve rhetorical influence than more image-heavy platforms such as Tumblr or YouTube. Those who study and teach about race, gender, and power in digital spaces should take into consideration the fact that, although Black trans women have been able to find a strategic home on Twitter, white trans men have enormous social power on other social media platforms, often within in-group and difficult-to-search media channels that are less navigable by cis scholars. Thus, to understand trans communities online as somehow upending normative racial and gender hierarchies would be to miss the extent to which these observations might be *platform-dependent*.

For example, while the aforementioned trans male entrepreneur Dowling is not a breakout star on Twitter, he has a vast following of both trans and cis people on Instagram, Tumblr, and YouTube.<sup>28</sup> These platforms are, in practice, more pseudonymous, more visual, and have even fewer anti-harassment user controls than Twitter. While a non-trans person might have difficulty accessing such spaces, as a trans scholar I find that within Tumblr's vast and often labyrinthine vernacular trans communities, it is skinny, normatively masculine, white trans men who accumulate a form of intimate, in-group celebrity status that Cox and Mock do not. Instagram, too, is flush with white trans men documenting their transitions and muscle “gains,” sometimes leveraging their performances of white masculinity into the creation of clothing brands or other small business ventures.<sup>29</sup> While these vernacular celebrities may be less visible to the general public than Cox or Mock, they nevertheless have prominent (albeit hard to measure) places in trans social media worlds. Merely examining different digital platforms can provide radically different portraits of trans communities' racial exclusions and hierarchies.

I offer two tentative explanations for this phenomenon, based on impressions from my personal and scholarly engagement with trans digital spaces. The first is that Twitter, although it does support image circulation, is still a

text-dominant medium; on mobile, in particular, Twitter's interface for viewing images remains clunky. Given the relationship between visual assessment as trans and harassment of transgender women of color, a medium that tends to coalesce around text-based speech acts rather than image-sharing can have the unintended consequence of being a space in which embodiment has relatively less relationship to social stature. The circulation of the hashtag #girlslikeus by Janet Mock in 2012 is one example of this phenomenon. In her web post explaining the function of the hashtag, Mock decenters the role of physicality in her Twitter activism.<sup>30</sup> In response to the critique that "#girlslikeus seems like it's only for well-known, attractive trans women," Mock writes: "The roots of #girlslikeus began with conversations with young women and launched in support of a beauty queen. So I understand the miscommunication, but #girlslikeus has always been about all trans women, regardless of looks, celebrity or gender expression." Emphasizing her desire for her hashtag to be "a space where so-called everyday trans women just living their lives in their towns can dip in and connect," Mock writes that she is "in love with all of these women, regardless of their color, location, level of so-called attractiveness, and how they fall on the gender spectrum." On the other hand, "so-called attractiveness," often measured via white-dominant standards of beauty, is critical to the popularity of figures like Dowling on image-dominant platforms such as Instagram, even if Dowling himself does not necessarily endorse such a phenomenon.<sup>31</sup>

In addition, it is even harder to rebuff harassment and fetishization on Tumblr than on Twitter. Tumblr's privacy features are also historically more difficult to customize; the site only introduced a "block" feature in 2015.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Tumblr's relatively loose community standards and lack of spam-reporting features make it a haven for porn.<sup>33</sup> Tumblr porn blogs can easily recirculate individual trans women's images, even non-pornographic selfies, and "reblog" such photos on "tr\*nny" or "shem\*le" blogs. Given the fact that trans women of color are more likely to be viewed as sex workers, this understudied phenomenon likely disproportionately affects trans women of color.<sup>34</sup> The lack of recourse against porn blogs that siphon up everyday trans women's content and recast it as pornography likely accounts for some of the disproportionate number of white trans male "Tumblr celebrities," despite trans men (probably) making up no more than 50 percent of the trans population as a whole, and white trans men obviously even fewer. Indeed, when using anti-porn search filters on Tumblr, the decrease in images of trans women of color is stark. To point this out is not to make an argument against pornography or participation in sex work. Rather, it is to draw attention to the extent to which non-consensual inclusion in pornographic or fetishistic hashtags can

have a chilling effect on the participation of Black trans women and other trans women of color on sites like Tumblr.

As scholars, thinkers, and activists consider the possibilities of political action and community-building on social media, it is critical to recognize the way that platform affordances and limitations skew our shared perceptions of who has power and what power looks like. For trans people, like other marginalized people, visibility does not mean just one thing; the visibility of Laverne Cox and Janet Mock on Twitter may, ironically, be conditioned upon the relatively low emphasis on visual images on that particular platform. For this reason, describing trans social media hierarchies necessitates a broader understanding of how anti-black and anti-woman visual cultures operate, starting with work from scholars such as Shawn Michelle Smith, Kara Keeling, and Nicole R. Fleetwood. When weak anti-harassment measures and non-consensual pornographic tagging controls accidentally make some social media platforms more accessible for white trans men than for other trans individuals, this is better understood as a problem for feminism, not as a victory for white trans masculine visibility. If they wish to take seriously the differential capacity of different platforms to support and sustain Black trans women as political leaders, feminist platform designers must generate creative solutions to these paradoxes of visibility.

VERONICA PAREDES // REPURPOSING AND  
DISRUPTING CONNECTION IN FEMTECHNET

During the past three years of FemTechNet's existence, one of the collective's primary contributions has been its experimentation with the design of *connection* in, through, and to FemTechNet's many remote and hybrid gatherings. The idea that care and collaboration are feminist technologies is abstractly posited in the collective's manifesto and is described in great detail in the group's "Collective Statement on Teaching and Learning Race, Feminism, and Technology" included in this issue. This notion also informs how the collective designs and documents its practices—in its Operations Committee (previously co-chaired by Hong-An (Ann) Wu, Sharon Irish, Stephanie Rosen, and Ashley Walker) and in its Tech Praxis Working Group (buoyed by Hong-An Wu and me).

The work of FemTechNet (FTN) involves the everyday management of a distributed course and a framework to support that system of knowledge production and contestation. How can that support be reframed to make perceptible the relationships animating the labor of connecting and the alienation of being disconnected? What have been the limits of being

connected to FTN, and how are those experienced not only in the collective but through the platforms we have used to connect and collaborate? Reaching into FemTechNet's history, in the next section I bring in a tense moment of connection and disconnection in order to highlight how important these questions are, both in the microscale of experiencing alienation online in single video conference calls and in the broader scale of how FemTechNet organizing can center women of color feminism and critical race and ethnic studies. Moving forward, I am interested in exploring how FTN as a collective has learned to be attentive to modalities of belonging and not belonging in the network, and how that knowledge can potentially build, destroy, and rebuild FemTechNet's socio-technical-affective system.

During the week-long inaugural Feminist Technology Network Summer Workshop in 2013, the primary activated nodes in the networked feminist collective were located in Los Angeles and New York City, planned by FTN co-founders Anne Balsamo and Alex Juhasz. While the workshop acted "as an invitation to plan and participate in a DEMONSTRATION of the practice of feminist innovation,"<sup>35</sup> even early on the platforms presented challenges to FemTechNet's collective connectivity. On the first day we all convened in virtual room in Blackboard/Elluminate, a space reserved for the group by Sharon Irish at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Irish shared a link to a training video that demonstrated how to configure audio deliberately: "Follow the steps to configure your audio. First, select your audio output device. You may have more than one device that can play the session's audio. Select the desired output device. If it is to an unplugged USB device, plug it in and wait for the system to recognize it." Once the collective's various members were connected, however, achieving clear and audible feeds was no easy task. Ambient noise from different locations, unexpected interruptions, and the feedback of multiple machines connecting from the same location made it so that breakout sessions and large group meetings were bogged down by technical complications.

A session titled "Terms' discussion/Inclusivity" was called to address the racial and ethnic diversity of both the summer workshop membership and interviewees most visible in the core curricular materials being produced for the semester. Concerns about the diversity of this group raised some important questions around representation and intersectionality, well-worn topics in the history of feminist organizing. The transcript of that day's discussion shows that these concerns were shared by members across the network, even as the group struggled to articulate a method of representing and productively documenting it:

I think part of our question is how do we explicitly think about how our “institutionalization” as a group was realized in a way that does not represent the demographic (and beyond demographic) diversity we would wish . . . and whether this should be part of a white paper, or how else we make our related “process” visible?

Meanwhile the various systems themselves are referenced as potentially exacerbating alienation during these sensitive moments of the conversation: “sorry, dropped out for a little bit”; “audio is going in and out”; “we need a break.” Following this discussion during the workshop, the quickly formed “Video Dialogue Sub-Committee on Inclusivity” issued a message to the broader network base urging members to continue an “effort to grow . . . dialogues . . . and to allow them to represent the varied commitments, interests, and communities in our diverse ranks.” The call emphasized the need “for our public representations to be expressive of our multiple points of view and inclusive in their design.”

The FTN Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) Committee would not begin its work until the 2014 summer workshop node held at Elizabeth Losh’s house in Los Angeles. Workshop participants involved in this early development included Anne Cong-Huyen, Genevieve Carpio, and Lilly Nguyen; Lisa Nakamura’s support to this formation cannot be overstated.<sup>36</sup> The committee’s focus was on how materials from the already growing archive of FemTechNet pedagogical materials and assignments could be compiled into a workbook dedicated specifically to the intersection of feminism, technology, and critical race and ethnic studies. A key part of this effort involved the collection of citations and acknowledgments to closely affiliated projects. FTN’s Situated Critical Race + Media (SCR+M) Committee is now co-chaired by Alexandrina Agloro and George Hoagland and is working to produce a podcast teaching module series on the intersections of race, feminism, and technology. The committee’s current description explains the group thus: “Anchored in the legacy of critical race and ethnic studies, we are community activists engaged in practice-based scholarship and cultural work.”

Connected to the tension experienced in “diversity work,” FemTechNet and specifically the Situated Critical Race + Media Committee have wrestled with, resisted against, and taken from the academic structures that shape the network. How must knowledge of these unspoken and tacit connections influence our aspirations to situate FTN among other feminist networks? How can we be accountable to the collective’s potentially complicit role in a system of power that exploits adjunct labor, while simultaneously using

the network's different positions in the academy to redistribute resources? These questions drive many of the current and future research questions of a collective now giving itself over to a horizontal committee structure and replacing network co-facilitator roles with a more distributed leadership model whereby committee co-chairs and members lead key network activities and decision making.

One way we have begun thinking about this in the Tech Praxis working group as well as in the collective's Steering Committee is to consider the academy as one aspect of the many platforms FTN uses. Alongside Blackboard, Canvas, WordPress, Facebook, EdX, Blue Jeans, Google Hangouts, Twitter, Flipboard, Slack, and Wikipedia, FTN toggles through a diversity of institutions, centers, departments, and universities. If the academy is a platform, how can FTN establish ethical forms of connection? Just as we must, as activists, be aware of the potential pitfalls risked in using a mainstream tool like Facebook (e.g., problems with privacy, restrictive real name policies that unevenly police users), we must identify how the academy reinforces conservative, patriarchal, and racist notions of knowledge that are then reproduced in hiring and promotion in American universities.

FemTechNet is able to amplify institutional power achieved by scholars on individual campuses across the network, and it is able to direct these gains "toward . . . the radical redistribution, reinvention, and repurposing of technological, material, emotional, academic, and monetary resources."<sup>37</sup> It is also important that FemTechNet know when amplification is unnecessary, and possibly harmful. Initiatives like the Center for Solutions to Online Violence (CSOV) bring together "activists, advocates, content creators, and educators" to outline ethical citation practices in researching and teaching social media. The academic work of Moya Bailey and Jessica M. Johnson demonstrates how important it is to unpack the layers of communities, knowledge, history, and power to understand possible violence enacted in collaborating with, and originating scholarship in, social media knowledge communities. As current co-director (with Bailey), T. L. Cowan will have more to share about the CSOV project. The possibility for revolution, or transformation, is woven into the practice of collaboration. It can be found in centering the work of those most vulnerable in doing this work—whether those threats take the form of online violence in social media or labor exploitation in various knowledge markets, including the academy. As it always has been, in the field of digital knowledge making, revolution is enacted when the intersection of women of color feminism, Black feminism, transfeminism, queer studies, and critical race studies is made to be the center of knowledge production.

I am thinking about the themes of this issue through my experiences with the Feminist Technology Network (FemTechNet),<sup>38</sup> since 2013, and more recently with the Center for Solutions to Online Violence (CSOV or, #C4SOV),<sup>39</sup> a collaboration between FemTechNet and The Alchemists, a group of activists, scholars, and digital media makers who explore the unique ways that anti-feminist violence impacts women of color who are Black and Latinx in the Americas. CSOV has been one of the ways that FemTechNet and The Alchemists have responded to the kinds of violence and harassment made most visible through #Gamergate, as Corrigan Vaughan and TreaAndrea Russworm describe in this roundtable. As a former co-facilitator of FemTechNet, as long time chair of the FemTechNet Pedagogy Committee, and as collaborator, contributor, and now co-director (with Moya Bailey) of the CSOV, I have spent a lot of time thinking about the various digital tools that we have used over the course of our intense four years of networked activity and community organizing, both within and beyond (or on and off) the platform of the contemporary university, as Veronica Paredes notes in her contribution here. I have begun to think of the ways that techno-promiscuity supports coalitional work and has been a key tool for FemTechNet and CSOV in our attempts to center intersectional analysis. That is, a praxis of platform proliferation has allowed us to build momentum by meeting folks where they are, rather than insisting on a single FemTechNet or CSOV platform, genre, meeting, or working place.

Our attempts to be as accessible as possible to as many participants as possible have created a situation where the work of our networks is being done using so many different tools and platforms that people might be confused about where the work is done. One conclusion that many of us have reached is that the work itself is the infrastructure; the platforms and tools that we use are instrumental to, yet not determining of, what gets done and who does it.<sup>40</sup>

I am reminded of two particular scenarios that inform my understanding of feminist techno-coalition-building, platform proliferation, and intersectional politics in the work of online organizing. In her revolutionary presentation at the 1981 West Coast Women's Music Festival, Bernice Johnson Reagan calls coalition politics a practice that can only be practiced outside of the "barred room" of racial and political homogeneity. She notes that to work with "folks . . . who are not like you," is the work of coalition, and:

Coalition work is not work done in your home. Coalition work has to be done in the streets. And it is some of the most dangerous work you will

do. . . . Some people will come to a coalition and they rate it on whether or not they feel good when they get there. They're not looking for coalition; they're looking for a home. . . . You don't get fed a lot in a coalition. In a coalition you have to give, and it is different from your home.<sup>41</sup>

For feminist work that happens online, it must happen across multiple platforms, some of which will not be the spaces in which we are most comfortable. While the utopian promise of the Internet was to create openness and clear communication across difference (or to eliminate difference because we would all be equal on the web), a generation of transnational and translocal feminist, critical race, queer, trans, crip, and decolonizing scholarship of the Internet and other digital spaces, devices, and designs has shown us that this is not the case. As Lisa Nakamura famously notes, the Internet is built upon the same “desires, fears, and anxieties that exist in the culture” and “is not a panacea for social ills and inequalities.”<sup>42</sup> What we have seen in practice is that online platforms have the capacity to produce more homogeneity rather than less, to cultivate and reproduce the hierarchical logics, inequalities, and biases that structured human existence in the world before the Internet.

Similarly, feminist online organizing—like phone-tree and flyers-and-posters technologies that inform it—reflects the “desires, fears, and anxieties that exist” within feminist scenes. As Cassius Adair’s and Dorothy Kim’s contributions show us, digital organizing cannot cure all the ills that permeate feminist academic-political-cultural-economic scenes; rather, as Adair puts it “platform affordances and limitations skew our shared perceptions of who has power and what power looks like.” It is only by engaging critically with the structures and methods that our communicative and organizational technologies reproduce, that a relational and dynamic grouping like FemTechNet might be understood to revolutionize the digital.

The work of feminist online organizing, then, must happen across platforms, social media and otherwise, and must not rely on the supposed diverse pool of users on those platforms to diversify our work and to ensure that the work we are doing is accountable to multiple communities, not only to those with whom we individually have most contact and comfort.

The second scenario I am reminded of comes from Christina Hanhardt’s tragic-comic description of feminist processing:

For anyone who has been to such a meeting, you likely have experienced that moment of clarity when, *four hours in*, you realize that this might go on forever and there really will be no future. But at the end of an individual campaign that may or may not have been won, the process of making arguments and of building a group can feel like a win even if the

world at large can prove to be worse than it was when you began [emphasis mine].<sup>43</sup>

Think back to all those times you were in those meetings *four hours in*, in the same face-to-face room. Veronica Paredes's piece here goes a long way to helping us to imagine a typical FemTechNet meeting, convening over an experimental assemblage of digital tools—video conferencing, electronic communications like email, text, the telephone and other messengers—some that are free, some that we are pirating, all that we need to hack to make our work work. And yet at the end of it, we find ourselves with a document or a conference or a new set of resources that have been built through those many hours when it felt like it might *go on forever and there really was no future*.

These two scenarios remind me that feminist work has never been a slice and that doing it online, working for the revolution using coalitional politics and digital tools doesn't make it easier. No matter what, you still *have to give, and it is different than your home*.

I believe that it is only by maintaining techno-coalitional attitudes and practices that FemTechNet is able to account for, attend to, and nurture our abilities to work with and across differences. This “work across differences” always sounds like code to me when white people say it. Let me try again: I think that feminist organizing needs to use a coalitional approach to technological innovation and usage—rather than homogenizing an approach that works for a few of the most vocal members, it is necessary to work outside our techno homes in order to do the important work of living outside our racial or political comfort zones.

Hence, while FemTechNet is in many ways working within, beside, and sometimes against academic disciplines of feminist science, technology, engineering, arts, math, and media studies (STEAM/M), we use organizational strategies that are based in genealogies of activist and cultural work. FemTechNet practices what I'm calling a “platform proliferation politics” because we know that no one platform or tool works for everyone and every task, and we are attentive to the ways that technological affordance is often also technological gatekeeping. So we keep researching, experimenting, making, and making the best of what we have in any given moment. Similarly, CSOV uses a coalitional politics of bringing the work of many people from different experiences and connections to the work of digitizing the feminist revolution, and feministing the digital revolution to a shared locale, so that it can be distributed from there across our many worlds.

Since 2012 when FemTechNet was hatched, it has put to innovative use a range of digital and analog organizing tools:

- a flipbook, a manifesto, a white paper or technical report, many chalk boards and white boards, some phone-tree-style contact lists, and the postal service
- several university-hosted email listservs, two websites each with dozens of design iterations, at least six email addresses, and a Google+ page and countless Google documents, forms, and tables
- a Twitter handle and several hashtags, multiple Tumblr blogs, and a Google Map with over 1,000 pins and over 8,000 views
- a formerly public (now closed) Facebook group, a few secret Facebook groups, and several now-archived, event-specific closed Facebook groups
- postcards, T-shirts, and stickers
- a Vimeo channel with more than sixty videos of varying production values, and a handful of video conferencing experiments including Skype, Google Hangout, Blackboard, Adobe Connect, Facetime, and Blue Jeans
- a student work publication and peer-review process, and an open-source curriculum called the DOCC on the topic of “Collaborations in Feminism and Technology,” and a Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Workbook developed and hosted on Scalar
- town hall meetings, Online Open Office Hours (OOOH), a couple of Slack teams, and a complex committee structure with committees each having their own morphing communication patterns and techniques

Additionally, CSOV has gathered hundreds of resources from other feminists and feminist organizations to help people understand, respond to, and stop online violence. We have developed original content that includes several videos and a teaching handout on research ethics and social media, a Power and Control Wheel and Respect Wheel designed by The Alchemists and inspired by the Power and Control Wheels used in domestic and intimate violence settings, short essays (by Monique Judge and Jamie Nesbitt Golden), a graphic novel (by Mikki Kendall), and a classroom assignment.

If there is any potential for revolution, FemTechNet and CSOV need to continue to use coalitional techniques that are more familiar to cultural production, social movement organizing, and survival economies than to the commercialized platform of the academic industry; this is the intervention and innovation—*intervention?*—that FemTechNet makes both in and in-excess-of the academic platform. I think the dialectic between cruel optimism (attachments to and hope for the university, for example) and revolutionary

optimism (that we see in FemTechNet's Manifesto, for example) structure FemTechNet's and CSOV's assemblaged ways of working. It is possible that platform proliferation doesn't always "work" and it is certainly true that it is often frustrating; I am reminded of the important equation Intention  $\neq$  Impact. But it is a work in progress. It is a way of working and that is the work we are doing.

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17. bell hooks, "Moving Beyond Pain," *Bell Hooks Institute* blog, May 9, 2016, <http://www.bellhooksinstitute.com/blog/2016/5/9/moving-beyond-pain>.
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20. For more on these intersectional dynamics, see Sarah Beth Evans and Elyse Janish, "#INeedDiverseGames: How the Queer Backlash to GamerGate Enables Nonbinary Coalition," *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 2, no. 2 (2015): 125–50.
21. Danielle Keats Citron, *Hate Crimes in Cyberspace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) 14. For more on gender, misogyny, and online harassment, also see Bailey Poland, *Haters: Harassment, Abuse, and Violence Online* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016).
22. See Anna Everett, *Digital Diaspora: A Race for Cyberspace* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2009), and Lisa Nakamura, *Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
23. The expression "actually, it's about ethics in games journalism" became a meme surrounding #GamerGate, as its supporters used it in attempts to distance themselves from accusations that the movement was about misogyny.
24. In a blog post on Medium.com, writer Ashley Lynch provides a particularly compelling case that #notyourshield was nothing more than "a culture jamming

campaign to disrupt and silence rather than an innocuous grass roots campaign to give voice to the voiceless.” That article can be accessed here: <https://medium.com/@ashleylynch/a-final-word-on-notyourshield-628ca5876cec#.etkbg6n0>.

25. <https://twitter.com/Lavernecox>; <https://twitter.com/ChazBono>. Follower counts are as of May 2016.

26. <https://twitter.com/janetmock>; <https://twitter.com/AyidianDowling>. Follower counts are as of May 2016.

27. See *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 1, “Making Transgender Count,” for more on this problem. For broader questions of race, nation, and trans identity, see b. binoahan’s *Decolonizing Transgender 101* and David Valentine’s *Imagining Transgender*.

28. There is even a small Ayidian Dowling celebrity “fandom” on Tumblr, as evidenced by blogs such as [mylionobsession.tumblr.com](http://mylionobsession.tumblr.com), the URL for which is a reference to Dowling’s Instagram handle @AlionsFear.

29. Clothing brands include Dowling’s “Point 5cc” label, a reference to a popular dosage of injectable testosterone. To be clear, my point here is not to imply that Dowling should not sell T-shirts, but rather to point out that he, and others, are able to do so because of their social media audience.

30. <http://janetmock.com/2012/05/28/twitter-girlslikeus-campaign-for-trans-women/>.

31. While this hypothesis is complicated by current diversity of trans people on YouTube, white, cis-passing trans men were much more popular and had much more robust discourse communities than other demographic groups of trans people when I first began observing the site in 2010.

32. <https://staff.tumblr.com/post/120551226975/hey-tumblr-welcome-to-your-better-blocking>.

33. <https://techcrunch.com/2013/05/20/tumblrs-adult-fare-accounts-for-11-4-of-sites-top-200k-domains-tumblrs-adult-fare-accounts-for-11-4-of-sites-top-200k-domains-adults-sites-are-leading-category-of-referrals/>.

34. <https://www.aclu.org/blog/arrested-walking-while-trans-interview-monica-jones>.

35. A. Juhasz and A. Balsamo, “An Idea Whose Time Is Here: FemTechNet—A Distributed Online Collaborative Course (DOCC),” *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*, no. 1 (2012), doi:10.7264/N3MW2F2J.

36. Lisa Nakamura was also a FemTechNet co-facilitator for the next academic year, along with Sharon Irish and Elizabeth Losh. I was a co-facilitator for 2015–16 along with Anne Cong-Huyen, T. L. Cowan, Paula Gardner, and Jasmine Rault. Of course, the FTN co-founders and first co-facilitators were Anne Balsamo and Alex Juhasz.

37. FemTechNet, “We Are FemTechNet,” October 2014, <http://femtechnet.org/publications/manifesto/>.

38. FemTechNet, <http://femtechnet.org/>.

39. Center for Solutions to Online Violence, <http://femtechnet.org/csov/>.

40. I want to acknowledge here the massive work of infrastructure building, maintenance, and innovation that the FemTechNet Operations Committee does to sustain the platform of this work, including long-time members of the committee Veronica Paredes, Sharon Irish, Ashley Walker, Hong-An Wu, and Stephanie Rosen. I also want to recognize that massive organizing work done by Jacqueline Wernimont, the principal investigator on our CSOV grant, as well as CSOV collaborators Tassie Gniady, Moya Bailey, Rebecca Richards, Elaine Zundl, Seda Gürses, and Elizabeth Losh.

41. Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century," in *Feminism and Politics*, ed. Ann Phillips, 242–53 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

42. Lisa Nakamura, *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 57–58.

43. Christina B. Hanhardt, "LAUREL and Harvey: Screening Militant Gay Liberalism and Lesbian Feminist Radicalism circa 1980," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 23, no. 1 (March 2013): 17–37.