

# **“Is this too risqué?”: organizational experiences of content moderation of sexual health promotion on Facebook and Instagram**

## **Authors:**

Williams JK<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne University of Technology

## **Background:**

With young people increasingly turning online to learn about sex, sexual health organisations are using social media platforms (particularly Instagram and Facebook) to distribute sexual health promotion content. However, there is growing concern that content moderation policies impede the distribution sexual health promotion content on social media. This study examines sexual health organisation’s experiences of content moderation, and the content moderation policies that regulate sexual content, to increase the ability of the sector to produce that can be distributed through social media.

## **Methods:**

This exploratory study involved semi-structured interviews with producers of digital sexual health promotion employed by 12 sexual health organisations in Australia and the United Kingdom. Interviews focused on understanding professional experiences of producing and distributing social media content. Key themes identified within the interviews were analysed alongside the Facebook Community Standards and Advertising Policies (which also govern content distributed on Instagram).

## **Results:**

Nine of the participating organisations reported being negatively affected by Facebook and Instagram’s content moderation practices. Two of these organisations had had their Instagram account’s removed for violating content moderation policies, while the remaining six having had content removed and/or advertising rejected. Additionally, eleven organisations reported being acutely aware that their content and/or account was likely to be deleted in the future.

Despite these negative experiences, none of the interviewees were aware of the specific details within content moderation policies that affect sexual content, beyond a blanket ban on nudity and advertising sex work. To fill this gap in the sector’s knowledge, I provide a high-level overview of the prohibition and restrictions of sexual content that exist within the Facebook Community Standards and Advertising Policies.

## **Conclusion:**

This session will leave attendees with greater awareness of the content moderation policies and practices that currently govern the distribution of sexual health content on Facebook and Instagram.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

This research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship. No additional grants were received in the development of this paper.