

Porn, Law, video Technology

Namita A. Malhotra

The Internet in India has had many problem children, of which pornography and access to adult content has probably been one of the most notorious. The availability of pornographic content coupled with new forms of social interaction through networking platforms, especially against the backdrop of growing gendered and sexuality violence has been a concern for most of the stakeholders. It is a mixed problem that necessitates some forms of regulation, which, net-porn, because of its very nature, escapes, and also a problem that has severe ramifications about the freedom of speech and expression, censorship and authoritarian control of online content.

Namita A. Malhotra, in her monograph on 'Porn, Law, Video Technology', changes the stake of this debate by building a framework that charts out the rather tricky terrains of working with pornography. The monograph finds a new point of entry into existing debates by looking at legal construction of pleasure through different technologies of mass consumption. The monograph suggests that pornography is a mode of engagement with technology — erotic, engendered, intimate, and perverse. In the law's inability to deal with this affective, subjective and personal investment in production, consumption and distribution of material that can be deemed pornographic, Malhotra recognises the potentials of revisiting debates around obscenity, morality, late-modernity and cultural production in India. Malhotra produces a comprehensive over-view of different debates, both in the West and in India, to concentrate on how the visual aesthetics of pornography, the new circuits of pornographic consumption, the privilege of affect over regulation lead to possibilities of interaction and negotiation with heteronormative power structures in the country. The monograph demonstrates how the grey zones of pornography and the law's inability to deal with it, offer new conceptual tools of understanding the spaces of digital interaction and identity.



Namita A. Malhotra

Namita A Malhotra is a researcher, writer and media practitioner. She works at Alternative Lawit Forum and Padma (Public Access Digital Media Archive). Her current obsessions are technology, video, law and affect. She is interested in exploring these via interdisciplinary research, video and art practices and collaborative models of knowledge production and archiving. Her works have been published by Association for Progressive Communication, Public Service Broadcasting Trust (India) and Yoda Press and her media/art/database works have been shown in Bangalore, Delhi, Jakarta and Athens. They engage with information and media politics in form and content, with a focus on technology, remixing practices and open video.

Researchers @ work

The Centre for Internet & Society's 'Researcher's At Work' is a series designed to build and explore the intellectual resources for mapping and understanding the complex interactions between the rise of digital and communication technologies and the spheres of living that they influence. The monographs in this series, explore embedded approaches, frameworks and historical trajectories to understand the ways in which new technologies shape the nature, form, and texture of life and living in contemporary times. The (CIS-RAW) series was designed to build local intellectual resources for mapping and understanding the complex interactions between the rise of digital and internal technologies and the spheres of living that they influence.