

Decoding Stigma: Designing for Sex Worker Liberatory Futures

April 8, 2021

- Hi, everyone and welcome to the fourth event in our two-week long conference, "Informal, Criminalized, Precarious: Sex Workers Organizing Against Barriers". My name is Lorelei Lee and I'm a sex worker activist, writer and organizer, I'm a co-founder of the Disabled Sex Workers Coalition, a founding member of both the Upstate New York Sex Workers Coalition and Decrim Massachusetts, a researcher and analyst with Hacking//Hustling and a justice catalyst fellow at the Cornell Gender Justice Clinic. The "Sex Workers Organizing Against Barriers" conference is co-facilitated by the Disabled Sex Workers Coalition, Hacking//Hustling, Cornell Law School Gender Justice Clinic, Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University and the Center for Information, Technology and Public Life at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. I am so appreciative of our conference co-organizers, Rachel Kuo, Danielle Blunt, Zahra Stardust and Tiffany Tso as well as of our conference co-sponsors, The Berger International Legal Studies Program, The Dorothea S. Clarke Program in Feminist Jurisprudence, The Cornell Labor Law Clinic, The Cornell Student Chapters of Outlaw, National Lawyers Guild, Women's Law Coalition and the Black Law Students Association, Justice Catalyst, the Red Umbrella Fund and the Asian American Feminist Collective. Special thanks also to Livia Foldes, Naomi Lorraine, Eves and Alexis Briggs for all of your work and support as I think you all can probably tell, this conference was born out of a lot of collective work and a lot of collective dreaming. Thank you also to all of you who have donated via our Eventbrite page, our co-sponsors and our public donations ensure that we can follow one of our core ethics in this organizing, which is to pay people for their labor, in particular sex worker organizers who do so much work that is unrecognized and unfunded. For each of our conference panels, closed captioning is available and the recordings and transcripts will be available afterward on hackinghustling.org, where you can also find the full events schedule. A recording of today's panel will also be available afterward on the Berkman Klein Center's events page. Our community agreements are adapted from the Asian American Feminist Collective, Brave Space, Collective Sex, AltDiv Hummingbirds and By Us For Us and are as follows; first, to bring in our histories and to speak from our own experiences, second, to be committed to each other's collective learning and growing, third, to be open to learning, forth, to respect the diversity of our identities, which particularly for this conference, includes not assuming the identities of organizers and activists for whom sharing every element of our lived experience is not always safe, fifth, to practice not using ableist language, sixth, to prioritize care for ourselves and each other, this last agreement in particular, is a disability justice issue and both our panelists and our audience members should feel free to do whatever is needed to care for yourselves during this conference, including standing up, moving around, lying down or even disengaging from any of the events at any time. We are very grateful to have panelists Zooming in from most continents on the earth, all of them except Antarctica and many of our panelists are Zooming in from North America or Australia, where we are living on stolen land that is always and still indigenous land. To learn more about the land you are living on, you can look at the resources collected by the Native Governance Center, which are available at nativegov.org. And now I'm very privileged to be able to introduce our moderator and organizer of this panel, Zahra

Stardust is a former Hustler Honey, Australian Penthouse Pet and Feminist Porn Awards Heart Throb of the Year. Her PhD research explored the regulation ethics and interventions of independent career in feminist pornographies, she's an activist, lawyer and academic and has written numerous books chapters, journal articles and media on sexuality, criminal law, human rights, public health and labor organizing. She is currently a fellow at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society and a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Automated Decision-Making and Society at the Queensland University of Technology. So now I'm going to hand it over to Zahra.

- Hello, and welcome to "Decoding Stigma: Designing Sex Worker Liberatory Futures" and we're so glad to have you all here. Thank you so much, Lorelei for your incredible work in Hustling and bringing this whole conference together. I'm Zahra Stardust, I am a fellow here at Berkman Klein Center at Harvard but I'm Zooming in today from the unseated and stolen land of the Turrbal and Yuggera peoples of the Toowoomba Peninsula, also known by its colonial name of Brisbane, Australia and I'm wanna pay my respects to the elders past, present and emerging. I recognize that colonization is ongoing, always was, always will be Aboriginal land. As Lorelei mentioned, this is the third of three lunchtime panels and the first explored the role that sex workers played in building up the economic infrastructure of the internet, the second explored sex worker activism, experiences of exclusion from online space and barriers to organizing and today we are going to be building on from those two events to have a panel discussion on what the internet might look like if it was designed by sex workers and how we might code sex work ethics into future design. This collaboration began with the aim of bringing together conversations on sex and tech within the academy and the series also follows on from Hacking//Hustling's previous conference that was held at the Berkman Klein Center and sponsored by the Cyberlaw Clinic in 2019. And our starting point was that sex workers hold unique insights into the real world impacts of platform capitalism, housework politics, digital surveillance and sexual gentrification. But so often our time is occupied in reactive rather than generative space. We across this organizing, fighting against bad policy, poor design, criminal laws, and this saps up the energy that we could be using dreaming and imagining different futures. So we wanted to discuss if we took sex worker lens to tech ethics, how might we envision a radically different online space? What might we build for one another? What would alternative community standards look like, different terms of use? How would our content be organized? What would cooperative governments look, look like? How could we use consent frameworks to conceptualize the art of privacy? What does it mean for us spaces to be accessible? And what kinds of legal, political, social, cultural, economic and material changes would be necessary to even make all of this possible? A few things about how today's session will be run, we're going to hear from Gabriella Garcia, who's the founder of Decoding Stigma and a postdoctoral fellow at NYU, we're also gonna hear from Chibundo Egwuatu, a PhD candidate at, in Socio, Sociocultural Anthropology at Illinois and we're gonna hear from Yin Q, who's a founder and creative director at Kink Out, Body of Workers and a co-organizer with Red Canary Song. So each are gonna speak for 10 minutes and then we will have a 10-minute panel discussion where they've kindly agreed to ask each other spontaneous questions for your enjoyment, I don't know what they are, it's a surprise and then we will open up into your audience Q&A. So please go ahead and use the Q&A function to ask your questions along the

way. And we encourage sex workers to the front. I also encourage you to live Tweet today's session, we're using the #SexWorkersOrganizing, it's the American spelling which is in Z, so if you have capacity and you feel enthused, please Tweet along at #SexWorkersOrganizing. So to begin, first up we have Gabriella Garcia, Gabriella is a postdoctoral fellow at NYU's, Interactive Telecommunications Program with a research focus on cybernetic intimacy and the promotion of sexual ethics in the tech design space. Her current work is Decoding Stigma, a collaborative effort to bridge the gap between sex work, technology and academia. In addition to her own research, Gabriella is the acting managing editor of Adjacent, NYU's journal for emergent interactive media. Gabriella also sits on the Community Advisory Board for Urban Justice Center's, Surveillance Technology Oversight Project, STOP. Take it away Gabriella. You're on mute, Gabriella.

- Thank you very much, so thank you, Zahra and thank you to all the organizers, sponsors, the collaborators of Decoding Stigma and attendees today, I'm gonna try to share my screen, obviously I'm quite nervous, so apologies for any future snafus. So yes I am a co-founder of Decoding Stigma, so I named this talk after that "Or why it is time to have 'the Talk' with technologists". This is how you can reach me, my Instagram, Twitter and Venmo is Stabriella, donations during this talk will be given to SWOP Behind Bars and the Decoding Stigma is basically decodingstigma. however you wanna find it. So the background of the Decoding Stigma really starts with this thought, "To Big Tech, the sex worker is as indispensable as they are disposable" and it starts where those last two panels left off. So thank you for setting me up to that here and I'm about to provide a quick crash course for those who didn't attend them, apologies for redundancies for those who have. In the spirit of Melissa Gira Grant, we must understand that all sexual commerce is technological. Erotic labor built the internet and pretty much financed all mass media communications before it, visible to the mainstream or not. These are images from traveling stereoscopic porn and peep shows from the 1800s. This type of erotic material fiscally supported the emergence and distribution of photography. This, the term "call girl" comes from the fact that high-end brothels were some of the first urban institutions to install telephones. Money made from the erotic market of the proto-internet in the 80s and 90s literally paid for the material infrastructure for mainstream commercial internet by pushing demand for better computer graphics, faster processing speeds and greater data bandwidths. Once established, digital sex workers were first to invest in encrypted payment practices, literally the first users of PayPal for access to adult content. But we currently live in a present in which technology is explicitly built to target and eliminate sex work, it's a turn toward what we call "whorephobic" tech design. In development, the creative input and experience of sex workers is totally exploited. Essentially whorephobic design can be thought of as digital vice raids, attempting to sanitize the internet. Digital vice raids come in the form of deplatforming and restriction of access to resources such as income, education materials, community and the ability to move freely through both digital and physical space. This is an image of a Stanford DeepDive project, which was part of DARPA's Darknet search and they basically brag about obtaining scraping unconsensually, over 30 million advertisements posted by sex workers on the internet in order to basically research and deploy unchecked surveillance technology and this ultimately profiles and further harms at-risk communities. Digital sanitation is sold as making the internet safer but as with any gentrification, the question

is safer for whom and at the expense of what preexisting communities? So we go back to our original thoughts, "To Big Tech, the sex worker is as indispensable as they are disposable". It leads to the question of, why? When you look at the history it becomes clear that the answer is exploitation toward the goal of profit-driven growth. Is this really what we want technology to be, another narrative of extraction where venerable parties who have cultivated creative survival strategies are utilized and then brutalized for the benefit of the fewest most privileged individuals? At best the narrative is boring and at worst it's violently tyrannical, which is the reality that we live in today. I argue that the sex worker must play a crucial symbiotic role in this design space. What if instead of being violently censored, sex workers were celebrated and platformed for the enormous amount of creative capital they have generated for the output of consumer-level technology? In including sex worker voices in the design space, it becomes a locus for a radical, feminist design justice movement that recognizes the complicated relationship between sex society and human computer interaction design or as Blunt from Hacking//Hustling more succinctly says, "If we create technology that is safe for sex workers, we likely create a technology that is safe for everyone" and I quote this in almost every talk I give, I can't quote it enough. So this is where Decoding Stigma begins. At its core, Decoding Stigma is a cross-institutional cohort working to prioritize sexual autonomy as unnecessary ethics question for futurists. We are an interdisciplinary, cross-institutional mix of folk across tech, design, law, public health, gender studies, computer science, anthropology and clinical social work, meeting regularly to deconstruct and regenerate the relationship between sex and tech. We've been meeting for about eight months now but it wasn't so much of a choice to create this group, it was more of a convergence, an organic response to a much needed conversation. The group started like many other subversive communications network form, by being able to find each other on the internet which is why this conversation is so important to have. Livia Foldes, a brilliant designer at Parsons, reached out to me on Twitter when I was posing these questions in my thesis last year and offered to try to collaborate to make this a reality. Livia is now the artistic mastermind of behind everything Decoding Stigma, including these slides and you might recognize her work. Soon after we were joined by a number of active voices in the Venn Diagram of Sex work, Technology and Academia, a sort of network of radical individuals, stranded on different institutional islands. To try to answer this question, "What can tech learn from sex workers?", this panel and this whole conference really embodies what happens when sex workers are cited, invited and paid. So what can tech learn from sex workers? Our first priority is liberatory futures. We want to make space for conversations that don't take precedence when there are so many immediate crises and fires. We put so much energy into all things we're trying to abolish, what would it look like if we could redirect that energy toward liberation? These are direct quotes from our meetings, this is what we talk about, this is what we hold space for. This comes directly from, also from the mindset of Ruha Benjamin, whose brilliant book, "Captivating Technology" really does inform a lot of the thinking that I do in which she asks, "What social groups are classified, corralled, coerced and capitalized upon so others are freely, free to tinker, experiment, design and engineer the future?" And Ruha Benjamin calls us to task by saying, "The task is to work with others to imagine and create alternatives to the technos quo as part of a larger struggle to materialize collective freedoms and flourishing". So I don't know why the image on this slide isn't showing up but on December 18th, we hosted a "Freedom to Fucking Dream", this was the healing

aftercare events on international, the day after International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers, which is held yearly on December 17th, the idea was to create a space to joyfully worldbuild and nourish the spirit of the movement and celebrate radical network of laborers and accomplices, endeavoring to dismantle tech-facilitated imperious ideologies. This was facilitated by the Oracle of Transfeminist Technologies, a card deck designed by Sasha Costanza-Chock at MIT's co-design lab and Joana Varon at Coding Rights in Brazil. And it allowed us to radically imagine alternate futures for tech. It was a call for healing the hetero patriarchal whorephobia that has been embedded into technology by giving attendees a sort of flight paths into the future in which technology had been historically built by sex workers. Our second value is to create a knowledge pool, to combine the expertise of people in every part of academia and tech and sex work. We literally want to empower sex workers with technological know-how. So in November, we hosted a workshop in collaboration with Kendra Albert and Amanda Levendowski, which looked at how to access trademark electronic search system, so sex workers and accomplices can use trademark disclosures to take action against surveillance technology development that threatens the privacy and safety and livelihoods of sexually marginalized and other at-risk communities. More recently, we hosted Xin, the creator of Together.net, an open-source consent-based communication software built for grassroots software development that centers digital rights and community building. This was a cross-pollinating conversation that helped us better understand the possibilities for our own tech-based community building, while providing a sex worker lens to a technologist invested in creating ethics-based social platform. So this is what happens when bridging the gap between sex workers, tech and academic research, it's a lot it's, digital hygiene and cybersecurity as a priority. It's the demystification of new technology, open-source resource sharing, consent-based communication, skill shares, collaboration, it goes on to consider responses to lack of access to digital communication, creating litmus tests for research departments, emphasizing the obligation to include sex worker voices in all spaces that purport to design, be designing the future. So our final value or the final value I'm gonna present here is the creation of radical networks and connecting a network of the radical individuals stranded on different islands. There is not much I can say about this beyond what you are seeing at this incredible conference, this is what happens when sex workers are invited, cited and most importantly, paid for their labor. With that in mind, if you're not already Zoomed out, our regular meeting just happens to be tomorrow, April 9th, at 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, we are opening it up as an informal conference meetup, if you would like to join, please email us at decodingstigma@protonmail.com and I shouldn't have to emphasize this but this is for community peers, it's not for, for voyeurs and it's just to continue the conversation and hopefully meet those who are working in this space. With that in mind, thank you and I'll pass it off.

- Thank you so much, Gabriella, I love how you set this up, especially looking through all of the ways in which sex work has contributed to the material infrastructure of the web and talking us through that history and asking those really important questions about harm and safety, safety for whom and at whose expense. Decoding Stigma has been so busy this year and forging some really exciting collaborations and so I can't wait to see where the group goes next and definitely everybody should be encouraged to join us tomorrow for our next meeting and think about

ways in which you might like to collaborate with Decoding Stigma in future. Next up we've got Chibundo Egwuatu, who is a PhD candidate in Sociocultural Anthropology at the University of Illinois. Chibundo's research interests engage with the activism of Black sex workers, decriminalization and digital space. Chibundo is also a member of the Champaign County Bailout Coalition and an officer in the union, the Graduate Employees' Organization. Thanks so much, Chibundo.

- Okay, hi everybody, can you hear me? Well, I can't hear you answer that, so I'm gonna assume I'm heard. Real quick before I start, I'm gonna put my slide deck in the "Chat" so you can follow along, I have a couple definitions that might, might take some time to think through if they're the first time you're seeing them but here we go, let me put the screen up. I'm clicking "Present", though it's just taking a second. Okay, so my presentation is called "On Value Production and Collaborative Futures", my name is Chibundo Egwuatu, I should've started there, I'm a grad student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, by, in Sociocultural Anthropology, as Zahra just said, before I even start, I wanna think Livia for the inspiration of making gifs on everything, I think it has made this presentation a lot more fun to look at, before this it was just text on a white screen, so thanks for that. Okay, so first a bit about me, so my research interests, I focus on this activism of Black sex workers, thinking of it in the context of Black liberation praxis and my sites, I'm having some special attention paid to the digital but I'm really interested in the interplay between digital and physical spaces and thinking of them as just facets of a continuous reality, a continuous social-legal reality really. So thinking about these spaces as places from which people can be contained within, can be displaced from and how the colonial gaze just annexes territory and makes terrain out of digital and physical locations basically. And since I'm focusing on Black sex workers of course, I'm thinking a lot about the racialized logics of social stratifications and I'll talk a bit about that bit more, when I get into racial capitalism but basically seeing how people are categorized into types, how those types are put into hierarchies and how those types that are lower on hierarchies are basically valued then devalued and then we in industries of knowledge and information, create surplus value from their, their productions, from their thoughts, X, Y, Z. And my question research-wise has always been, well, is currently, "How are activists building a world where Black people can dwell as they are and as they wish to be?" and I see sex work activism as an integral part of Black liberation, praxis in Black liberation, Black liberatory futures and I could give you a bunch of citations but if you've ever read Mireille Miller-Young's, "A Taste of Brown Sugar" or legal scholar, Regina Austin, there's a lot of Black feminist work, talking about how Black women specifically but I would say Black people of any marginalized gender are seen as sex workers and therefore how Black people are treated, affects how sex workers are treated due to this kind of confluence and how sex workers are treated affects how Black people are seen and treated. Last thing I'll say about this, if you look at for the, the Movement for Black Lives, I believe their manifesto from 2016, they also talk about decriminalization of drugs and sex work because of this confluence of racialized treatment. Okay, some key terms and definitions, just for what we're talking about today, so I have six, they're pretty chunky and I'm tried to make them as vague as, like not vague but inclusive as possible. So first, we have the concept of value production, a lot of people define this in different ways, so I just try to get a very general, probably widely agreed upon definition of value production as a creative process that sustains

and reproduces market economies. Human capital, which is very important in our post-industrial society, which we'll get into next but human capital are the human, are human capacities and attributes that can produce economic value. So for example, the idea of like why am I in a PhD program at all? You know, period. It's basically because I know that it will make whatever thoughts and contributions I put into the world, be seen as more valuable and even myself as a human, more valuable or as a person, let's not get into the discussion of the human right now. Third, we have the post-industrial, industrial society, so basically when society, when our society that we're currently in I would say, at least in the States, we moved from a manufacturing economy to a service economy, where there are more focus on ideas in human capital rather than a production of goods. So this is very important to talk about to the current audience we have here of academics and technologists, we are all people who in some way, make money off, make careers off ideas and especially the concept of, quote and quote, innovation. Racial capitalism and surveillance capitalism work really well together to talk about how sex workers are treated in the digital, so with racial capitalism, this is from Cedric Robinson, the text "Black Marxism", so this is basically the idea of extracting value from people through the unequal differentiation of human value. So all the things I was talking about above and we see how that really helps describe what we see happening with how technologists, academics, and generally talking about information and knowledge professionals, how we treat sex workers and how we engage with sex work as a concept. And lastly, well, not lastly but surveillance capitalism on the other side, which is Zuboff, producing value from human data, so like human behavioral data really and trying, and turning this data into use for prediction-based behavioral futures markets, so a very simple explanation or I guess, example of this could just be Instagram ads, how the Instagram ads, the more you start using Instagram, the more it seems like those ads are really already thinking about things you wanna be looking for. And then the last one is interest convergence. So this is Derrick Bell, legal scholar, he talked about this specifically with Black folks in White societies but I'm again generalizing this idea for use for us here today. So where the interests of the marginalized only advanced, are only advanced when aligned with the interests of the powerful. So thinking of us as technologists, as academics, as being in that kind of powerful knowledge-producing category for now and thinking of sex workers in this devalued and expropriating knowledge production category, we can see how even when we do collaborate, our interests or the interests of our institutions, do tend to come first, I shouldn't hedge that, they do come first. So the purpose of this presentation is not to articulate calls for or against capitalist modes of value production, I don't think that's the intervention that needs to be made right now to this audience but rather it's to talk about the role of our industries and academia is an industry, in the production of value from the thoughts, insights and knowledge of sex workers and I would say just labor in general. So the question I'm posing to everybody right now and I'm going to show a little exercise of me thinking through this is, is as researchers, technologists, knowledge producers, et cetera, with, especially with institutional affiliations and who derive our creative authority from colonial processes, what role must we play in bringing about a world where sex workers are not marked for expropriation and disposability? So this is the grounds of which I think our collaboration should exist, that whatever collaboration we do together as technologists and knowledge producers with sex workers, they must be collaborations towards the goal of sex workers no longer being a marked category for expropriation and disposability. That's the only type of

intervention that is necessary. And since futures, this thought, thinking about futures is a speculative project, we have to think definitely about what is our role in organizing the labor of envisioning futures. So basically what I'm saying is that we need to bring sex workers to the table and the way we bring sex workers to the table is by thinking through how do we fund unpopular work in and outside of the academy. So as an anthropologist's person, I've had a lot of trouble trying to figure out how to get resources from grants, fellowships, la di da di da, to the people that I care about and to the people that I wanna work with. So again, this is my way of thinking through the previous question and giving and the next thing I'm gonna do is give everybody some really, I think concrete suggestions about how we can move forward. These suggestions are not particularly radical, they're actually just using the structures of the institutions we currently are as they work, we are, as technologists and knowledge producers, we live in a space, we exist in a space where valuing and recognizing and compensating ideas, that's our entire structure here. So we have ways to do that. So let's think more about how we can actually do that for and with sex workers. So here's my first page, so getting people to the table, so tech is material, so therefore our ethics about this must be material and our support needs to also be material. So since tech need homes, if we wanna get people to the table to talk about tech, specifically sex workers, they need to be housed, so they need to be paid, they need to have money, disposable income with which to take care of themselves and then of course, how that surplus energy and attention to give to the projects that we want to put them on. So thinking about the materiality of tech is going to be a very important part here. So I'm just gonna go through these lists, so visiting organic scholar programs, fully funded of course and as, well, I'm not gonna get too much into it, but of course the concept of "fully funded" can be a little dodgy, so you've, we've probably seen fully funded programs where people are still not making enough to live off of, so being very, to the letter of the law, when it comes to the concept of fully funded will be important here but we already have infrastructures for visiting scholar programs. However, these visiting scholar programs are usually based off of institutions speaking to and making value with other institutions. So doing some kind of a visiting organic scholar program, is something that was really exciting to me when I started writing about this and that's why it's at the top of this list. Contracting sex worker activists for research projects, of course at least in my research grants, the way we could contract outside help can be pretty vague. So this can mean anything you really need it to mean. Since we make ideas, we actually have a lot of leeway to produce spaces for expertise and for outside expertise on our projects. Building relationships with sex worker organizations to be research and development consultants or beta testers on projects, this is pretty cut and dry, I used to do some beta testing on mostly video game stuff as a, as a child, as a youth, so I know how to get on those lists and we know that the, the audience that are, the audiences that are built for beta testing research and development work, those audiences are built with, with a lot of intention, they're curated very specifically. So make sure that your audience and who the people you are including in your audience of course, are sex workers. So again, a very conservative, easy thing to do, not particularly creative, just using the structures we already have to recognize expertise and value contributions and making sure sex workers are part of those infrastructures. So paid invitations to speak, present, be discussants and respondents in our classes and our conferences and la di da di da. This one again is pretty simple but as you're seeing here, the, the focus on compensation is going to be at the forefront of here and it's gonna continue through all of

these and sex workers as sensitivity reviewers for publications. So this is also I think, a very, very important one here, during my doctoral work and my master's work, honestly, honestly, undergrad work too, when you read a lot of stock texts around sex work, academic stock texts around sex work and I'd say particularly within anthropology, I kept feeling that it would have probably been good for at least one sex worker to read this before someone decides to publish this and just being shocked. Now, especially when I'm in the publishing process, seeing how many eyes, how many passovers go on texts before they come to a print, how at no point did anyone seem to think that the opinion of one sex worker would have been important. Last page of suggestions, so building research grants that make material support more fully possible, this of course means we have to start talking to our funding agencies and talking about how our funding agencies imagine our interaction with the communities we care about, the communities we research with and on, should look like. So that means like if you have a grant that expressly takes out funds, like giving money to your interlocutors, that's probably not a grant that you should be interested in to do work with sex workers. So us as researchers also can be pretty specific in how we choose which funding sources we move forward with. Recruiting sex workers in skill-development courses you host, so if you have skill-development courses in tech skills or in grant writing skills pretty broadly, please recruit sex workers to be in those, in those courses, we again, know how recruiting course, for courses go. So making sure that sex workers are in the audience of that recruitment pool, is a very conservative and simple thing you can do to make sure that skills are being given to the populations that need skills in order to be at the table to talk about these things and of course, training and hiring sex workers to teach those courses. So this can be a recursive process where you recruit sex workers for these courses, train them and then hire them to teach the courses and of course, bring the information back to their own communities. Citing sex workers and your syllabi, in your papers, in your talks, again, very simple, my first conference paper ever was on a concept called "Citation Justice", where I wrote about proheauxism. Femi Babylon was here earlier this week and it's really exciting to be in a same webinar series with this person who my first writing as an academic was about but that citational work that I suggested as my first piece, I saw how uncomfortable people were with it and it's just showing how our citation processes or citation practices are extremely colonial as well. Hiring multilingual sex workers for translation services, this is of course is a great intervention into work we do with migrant sex workers especially, though sex workers of all sorts of nationalities have different language [Indistinct] but this is a big one for working with migrant workers, hiring the workers you're actually working with and doing research with to translate is something very simple, we have spaces within our grants to do this, we have spaces within there institutions to do this. And then lastly, the last suggestion I have here, is building research projects with sex worker collaborators in our teams. So that means that you have sex workers at every stage of the research gathering, the research, like even planning the research project at every step and of course, writing their payment into your budgets. So this is just my own little exercise, trying to answer this question for myself and giving that to y'all. So I wanna leave everyone with three provocations to think more about this concept and maybe a little less conservatively about how are the futures of sex worker and industry collaborations should look like, can look like, must look like for a future where sex workers aren't expropriated and disposed off to exist. So number one, how do we transform our funding structures to support sex worker activists? So this means funding structures in your

institutions, in your companies, your IRBs, so if you have an institutional review board of, or some sort of institutional oversight committee for your research, this means really thinking more about how those institutions are kind of recreating this racist logic of ranking and de-valuing sex workers, two, how do we hold our funding structures accountable for not accommodating material support? That is a question that you have to answer yourself, we have a lot of funding structures. And then three, how do we build structures that materially support and respect the expertise of sex workers towards creating a digital future not based on the reproduction and expropriation of stratified difference? Okay, that's it from me, so thank you guys for listening.

- Thank you so much Chibundo and that that's a really important framing, thinking about labor, thinking about material infrastructure, thinking about racial capitalism and those processes of extraction and I know you've been thinking and talking a lot lately about those ideas of permissibility and dwelling in space and critiquing who owns the space and who owns the content and who owns the ideas, so thank you for giving us such concrete suggestions for a whole range of issues from funding, to redistribution of work and labor, and really handy tips for not just peers and communities but also for industry and for academia. Finally, we have Yin Q, Yin is a queer and non-binary Chinese-American mother, Kink educator, writer, producer and sex worker rights activist. Yin's writing can be found in Afro-Asian anthology, BUST, Point Magazine and the We Too anthology, recently published by Feminist Press. Their media work includes "Mercy mistress" and "Fly in Power". Yin is the founder and creative director of Kink Out, Body of Workers and co-organizer with Red Canary Song. Welcome, Yin.

- Hi, thank you so much. So I'm Yin Q and I just also dropped my slides in the dock, in the "Chat" and I'm going to also put the Venmo for anyone who wants to also support the work that I'm going to be presenting today, please make sure you reference this panel as well as Body of Workers, which I'm going to be presenting. So I'm going to go ahead and share my screen, sorry, it'll take a moment. Okay, I'm back to present. So I want to thank Hacking//Hustling of course, as well as the BK Center and we have been working with Kendra Albert from BK Center, Cyberlaw Clinic and her, their amazing team, of Sasha and Mac during this time of creating Body of Workers, during our time at Eyebeam Org, which is the tech and art organization that has really supported the residency in the beginning founding sections of creating this space. So first I wanted to talk about Body of Workers, which is a platform that Kink Out and E-Viction, a few different kinds of coalitions of sex working orgs and allies have brought together, during phase one of the Eyebeam residency this past year, I believe it was last summer that it started in phase one, Veil Machine, which is a group of three and other producers, Sybil Fury, Niko Flux and Empress Wu, Veil Machine produced E-Viction, which was a self-destructing virtual arthouse whore gallery, that was live for 12 hours on August 21st of 2020. After the event, sex workers who, who attended expressed a desire for a permanent platform like E-Viction where their art and community could thrive, free from censorship and surveillance. I also wanna speak about how the work that I've been doing with Kink Out has been bringing sex working organizations, as well as the kink and leather communities into museum spaces, such as Leslie Lohman performance space, New York and then during the winter of 2019, '20 during a residency at PS1 MoMA, we had an art and activism create, residency that hosted both a

literature reading space in the art space, where there was zine-making as well as writing, writing letters to incarcerated sex workers and then we also hosted spaces in February of 2020 and that was over 600 people coming through the VW Dome of PS1 MoMA, of over 30 different artists and collaborators creating work that represented sex work, leather work, the leather community and, and the queer community. So during that residency, Kink Out also began conceptualizing an online sex workers archive and art space that could house and connect workers on a global scale. This really came about during a conversation that I was having with other allies about how SESTA/FOSTA was, was affecting our friends, our community, a friend of mine in the, as a sex worker said, told me that their Instagram had been taken down seven different times, they were constantly getting banned and they still are and so since one of the, my drives in, in activism has always been through art, I started looking, looking online at like online museums. I'm also been a sex worker for over 25 years now and so I really saw, I was actually in a spaces where, places like Arrows Guide started being created and having using websites, creating my own website or having friends help me develop them, as well as using public spaces like LiveJournal and have been seeing like the progression of these different kinds of spaces but then also the destruction of, and the targeting of during, during this time. So my thoughts were to create a space online through art that can really create a space for sex workers, by sex workers, of connecting community to each other. So for phase two of our Eyebeam organized residency, Kink Out and Veil Machine produced an... started to team up to produce a virtual Sex Workers Museum. For this residency, our first step was launching Body of Workers, which is a private gallery. Now I wanna speak about, a little bit about why we, we wanted to create a private gallery, first, it's a private, uncensored, social space, art space for and by sex workers to address immediate deplatforming and censorship threats and to create a revenue-generating model that can eventually sustainably fund the museum. So the idea is for the, the worker, sorry, for the platform to be a private gallery and I, I describe it as something like the space behind the strippers stage, the locker room, the den or basically the bar where sex workers meet up or the, the, the spaces where we come together to support each other, to talk smack and to share all of each other's stories but also resources, talk about health needs, refer lawyers, I mean, there's, there's so much that we do that is being, has been done online and then has been targeted and taken away from us. So creating that sort of inner space that feels really safe and I'm gonna use the word safe, although it's, as we know, no space is truly safe, this is more of a brave space but when I say a virtual safe house, it's just sort of a, a flagging to other sex workers that this is for them, this is not a space that we're, that is targeting just to use their bodies and their, and their work to, to, for the gains of any other corporation. So we're trying to create a safe space that, where people could share works to each other and by using the privacy buttons on the, on the space, they can also sort of lift that veil so that it can be seen by other patrons that can come through onto the site as well. So that curators, patrons of art, anybody who wants to contact that, that worker, then can, can look them up quickly, knowing where, where their work is, where the location of work by cities and in this way, it's kind of creating like this virtual peep show as well so that people from the public can then also see what we're doing and that we have control of that content and what is being seen because as we know, so many, so much of sex worker art, as well as culture and work has been put out there but then stolen, taken, doxxed, whatever and then appropriated and then placed into the hands of Netflix producers, as well as numerous, numerous movies that have

been made about sex workers and about sex workers stories and yet have never then gone back into the community. So Body of Workers is the first private online gallery space that then will hopefully be able to be our first step in creating a sex workers museum. This is just a bit of the coalitions that we've been working with but these are just to name a few, they're mostly New York City based coalitions, however, we plan to cast a really wide net for Body of Workers and then on the scale of -, sorry, first sex workers museum, we'd like to go on a absolutely as global as we can so that we are hiring, contacting, connecting and collaborating with workers in their cities so that they can express their needs, express their curation of what, what should go into their own exhibits. So this again is a little explanation about how Body of Workers runs as a tiered-membership-based virtual art salon, for sex workers, Body of Workers is a private social media platform where we can share art, stories and collective care and for non-sex workers, Body of Workers is a peep show into our world. So allies and clients can pay to view our members contents and profiles, learn about sex workers perspectives and discover new ways of supporting and meeting providers. Our needs to be addressed, Body of Workers pushes back against the censorship of sex workers experience on corporate social media platforms and under laws like SESTA/FOSTA. Our struggles are such that sex workers are constantly being shadow banned, deplatformed, censored, their work is constantly being appropriated, in the age of COVID-19, these platforms are our primary stop sites for sharing art, stories and building community, deplatforming and censorship can happen at any moment, our profiles, our archives are disappearing forever without notice. And as you can see from our art by Jacq the Stripper on the side, this is like a little bit about what is going on on Instagram. So our solution is as a space of artistic expression, Body of Workers resists regulations imposed by tech platforms in response to SESTA/FOSTA and offers a free, safe space for sex workers to create and convene. In February 2021, we presented a prototype version of Body of Workers for sexy working artists, we are planning to do a soft launch of the beta site this summer of 2021 and our goal is to have 30 to 50 artists profiles live at the time of our prototype launch, on launch day, we'll open registration to other sex working artists and the general public will be able to see a select artwork from existing artists for a limited time during our prototype launch week. The homepage, which I'm not showing it this time as we're still in development, the homepage will be a minimalist landing page to prompt login for the first veil or to login as an artist into, as a sex working artist, they would also gonna be invited to create their own profile. On the inside to grow the platform, artists must create a profile to go in and all artists can browse all profiles from inside, however, artists can control what, who can see their individual works, again, that would be through the privacy settings. All users can see the artists listed on the platform, learn more about their, browsing their profiles, react to artwork and artwork can be made visible to only the artists, all other artists, all users and the general public. Granular data points gathered for each artwork will be, enable rich, rich filtering of our database in later version of the platform. I also want to mention right now that we've been working with our cyber team on the terms and services of, that usually on most platforms have been specifically quite violent against sex workers in terms of using workers bodies and yet also, as, as we have said, or as, as Gabriella has mentioned of course is also seen it as disposable. So we have been working to create terms and services that for one thing is, is language that is easily understandable but also that it protects the actual artists and not just the platform. And that's been extremely important to us in terms of how we are creating and designing the work. Also what goes on

behind the actual platform creation has also been really important to, to us of like how are we storing people's information, making sure that we don't keep any legal information, that we don't keep in any legal names that only emails are being used to contact, that all art work is being looked at by human eyes so that we can understand like community agreements, keeping it a safe space and making sure that it doesn't become an abusive space. I also want to mention that one of the... along with how we are working on behind the scenes even during the residency, we cast a wide net of like who we wanted to start working on the tech platform itself even though many of us weren't coders, we weren't, we aren't in tech, however, creating a platform is one side, creating the community, creating how the work happens behind the scenes is just as important to us. So making sure that our work can be accessible, as well as uplifting of the most marginalized and vulnerable communities within our, within our industries has been very extremely important to us. So this is some of our questions that we've been asking for ourselves and trying to answer them amongst other sex workers. So how do we protect the data of users, how do we design for diversity, vetting incoming artist applications, making the platform accessible for as many as people as possible and what are the third parties we can work with who are sex worker friendly? I also want to mention that with my work with Red Canary Song, I work with a very marginalized migrant community that does not use tech except for certain platforms like WeChat, so they're not necessarily on places like even Zoom or going on to places like sex workers museum or... so language is very important to us not imposing the words of sex work necessarily upon the entire communities who may be affected or whom we want to, to welcome has also been in discussions. And this is the last team that is behind the work at this moment. We do have more people working on our tech team.

- Thank you so much, Yin, this is such an incredible project that we're also excited about and it's such a perfect example of how sex workers are creating alternative platforms and rejecting those terms of use and you've been forming so many important community connections and coalitions in that process and it's, it's such a practical, artistic and innovative way to archive all sex worker stories as well as build community. And thank you for sharing those really useful questions at the end, which will be very helpful for others doing similar projects around all those stuff, around privacy and vetting and, and access. We are running out of time and there's some really interesting questions in the "Chat" around better regulation of tech companies and virtual reality and sex robots and we're just gonna have to pack that for another time because we obviously have way too much to say and we could be talking for hours, so I'm just going to ask each of the panelists a very quick question to conclude, which is what are your top three things that need to happen for a sex worker regulatory feature? And I'm gonna hand over to Gabriella to begin.

- I'll be quick, I think my response is just one and it's just stop being so embarrassed. You like, I feel like so much of the issue with tech design is those getting their ideas from places that they are embarrassed to admit and then using that knowledge as some sort of epiphany that they had without actually just giving credit to the person who is hidden behind the curtain and it's, it's really upsetting and violent.

- Sorry, I'm next 'cause I was next in the... Okay, sorry. So I have three things that I'm thinking of and they're more like just, I guess, wisdom, so the first one comes from Tuck and Yang, so they had this really great article about "R Words" research and yeah, they, they, their indigenous scholars talk a lot about decolonizing knowledge production, so in their "R Words", they have three provocations, the first two that I think are really useful here would be one, is research the intervention that is necessary in the projects that you see and two, there's knowledge that our institutions do not deserve. So knowing that, if you wanna help someone out or help, or be a part of something, does your institution need to be a part of this? That's a big question to ask yourself and when you're collecting information to turn that into a project, is the machine you're about to put this information in, is that safe for the people whose information you just took? Basic ethics things. Two, if you're engaging in a project where I'm not, like, I guess processes of expropriation would make the project untenable, the project is untenable. Again, another ethics thing, very basic, the project shouldn't exist. If like stopping these processes this expropriation will destroy your career or destroy your institutions, both your institutions and your career should not exist, that's, it's just that simple. And then lastly, the money's already printed, so going back to my whole thing with funding, our institution's got the money, it's already printed, it's a lot collected, so our job here is really to think about how do we make new ways or use the ways that are currently existing to make sure that sex workers are being compensated for their labor that they have already put into all of our projects, to the data that we've already taken from all of them, just figuring out how to not even make it right but just do basic things that we already do for people who are not seen as sex workers. That's it.

- All right, thank you. Yeah, I, I would, I think those answers are incredible. I'd also say to start designing with the idea of joy and care in mind for, as we start to... as sex workers are starting to take that [Unclear] and like really feel empowered to be there and take the space to create tech for sex workers that, so I'm speaking more to my sex worker organizers, that, to constantly make sure that we're inserting joy and celebration of each other and reaching out to each other with a lot of radical love and that that can be incorporated in our technology as well as we create it for each other and that we don't want to necessarily continuously create platforms that are mirrors of the capitalist society, oppression and discarding of bodies and discarding of what our work even means. I think that, yeah, I think that that's my answer, is to bring more joy and also to, for the, this, this kind of... Well, it's sort of a tangent from what you just said Chibundo but also just yeah, accepting that all, all of our bodies have desires and so, and that's going to translate into our tech as well, so just sitting with that and accepting that for oneself is really important on an individual basis as well as a community.

- Yes to joy, yes to radical love. Thank you so much for all of your absolutely brilliant minds, that is all we have time for but everybody in the audience, I really encourage you to donate to Red Canary Song, to Decoding Stigma, to Hacking//Hustling, to follow our speakers on Twitter and Instagram and support their projects, attend the rest of the conference or you can watch it later on the Hacking//Hustling YouTube, speak to your local sex work organization and learn more about how you can help and find ways that you can pay and support sex worker peer initiatives. Thank you all so much for coming, I'm so grateful and in awe of all of our wonderful speakers, it's been such a pleasure. Thank you.