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News Item

The demise of #NSFW: Contested platform governance and Tumblr's 2018 adult content ban | New Media and Society Journal

By Jeanna Sybert
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> On December 3, 2018, Tumblr announced that it would ban sexually explicit content from the platform, drawing immediate backlash from users. The ensuing discord on the site is conceptualized here as *contested platform governance*, or a conflict between users and ownership, in which not only are a platform's policies and features challenged, but also its core values, identity, and/or purposes are put into question. By examining 238 Tumblr posts, this analysis identifies the unique ways users combatted the ban and (re)inscribed community values, while also contesting the owners' legitimacy to govern the platform. Holding implications for the site's long-term survival, such conflicts capture a critical moment in which the boundaries of power between users and ownership are challenged and, possibly, transformed. By examining Tumblr's Not Safe For Work (NSFW) ban through the lens of platform governance, this study offers insight into how power and its limits are negotiated online.
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Source: The demise of #NSFW: Contested platform governance and Tumblr's 2018 adult content ban – Jeanna Sybert, 2021