

# Queer Women's Experiences of Patchwork Platform Governance on Tinder, Instagram, and Vine | Sage Journals

By Stefanie Duguay, Jean Burgess, Nicolas Suzor

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Analysis of queer women's experiences on Tinder, Instagram, and Vine have found that the sites' algorithms and architectures often reinforce oppression and make it harder for these women to participate.

Leaked documents, press coverage, and user protests have increasingly drawn attention to social media platforms' seemingly contradictory governance practices. We investigate the governance approaches of Tinder, Instagram, and Vine through detailed analyses of each platform, using the 'walkthrough method' (Light, Burgess, and Duguay, 2016 *The walkthrough method: An approach to the study of apps*. *New Media & Society* 20(3).), as well as interviews with their queer female users. Across these three platforms, we identify a common approach we call 'patchwork platform governance': one that relies on formal policies and content moderation mechanisms but pays little attention to dominant platform technocultures (including both developer cultures and cultures of use) and their sustaining architectures. Our analysis of these platforms and reported user experiences shows that formal governance measures like Terms of Service and flagging mechanisms did not protect users from harassment, discrimination, and censorship. Key components of the platforms' architectures, including cross-platform connectivity, hashtag filtering, and algorithmic recommendation systems, reinforced these technocultures. This significantly limited queer women's ability to participate and be visible on these platforms, as they often self-censored to avoid harassment, reduced the scope of their activities, or left the platform altogether. Based on these findings, we argue that there is a need for platforms to take more systematic approaches to governance that comprehensively consider the role of a platform's architecture in shaping and sustaining dominant

| technocultures.

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