

Symposium Call for Papers [2nd edn.] – “Queer Joy, Revisited”

This is the second iteration of the ‘Queer Joy’ symposium, building on the work of the *Queer Joy as a Digital Good* project, which was funded by ESRC’s Digital Good Network (2023-2024). Digital Humanities Southampton has committed to continue the work of the project by sponsoring the symposium as an annual event.

We understand queer joy as the expression of queer identity and life unencumbered by standards of cis-hetero-patriarchal propriety and palatability. We work from the premise that queer joy is a societal good, and that queer joy in online spaces is therefore a digital good. In our project, we make the case for conceptualising the express facilitation of queer joy online as a possibility for a good digital society that benefits each users, platforms, and policy. In an age of increasing hyper-visibility for queer people, there are all too many examples of queerphobic political regress and its mediatization online. Queerphobic politicking has become increasingly implicated in both online and offline contexts in recent months with substantive damage done to institutions and individuals in many countries, sectors, and industries. We therefore foreground queer joy as an essential practice of personal and collective resilience amidst a socio-political landscape of increasing queerphobia. In so doing, we contend that the affordances digital technologies have for enabling joy are vital indicators of its contribution to a good digital society.

We invite contributions to a symposium on the theme of ‘Queer Joy as a Digital Good’, broadly construed. The symposium is intended as an intentionally interdisciplinary exposition on the role queer joy plays, can play, and might play in a digitally good society. By bringing together academics, artists, activists, policy makers, lawyers, community organisers, and cultural industry professionals, we aim to establish a community of practice committed to embracing and enabling queer joy now and in the future.

Expressions of interest for contributions should be submitted to Lexi Webster at: l.webster@soton.ac.uk. Please include a title, the description for a 15-20 minute session* (approx. 200 words), and a brief speaker biography.

*We are open to receiving expressions of interest for sessions delivered in a variety of ways, including traditional research papers, round-tables, performances, installations, etc. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and we also welcome proposals for other forms of contribution.

The extended deadline for submissions is 16th June 2025. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by 23rd June 2025.

The symposium will be hosted on 16th July 2025 at the University of Southampton (Southampton, UK, SO17 1BF). Travel bursaries are available for students, postgraduate researchers, and precariously employed contributors on a first-come, first-served basis. Please indicate in your submission whether you would require a travel bursary to attend, including where you would be traveling from and your preferred mode of transport (i.e. rail; car).