Call for Papers – Edited Collection

Online Othering: Exploring the Dark Side of the Web

Editors: Dr Karen Lumsden (Loughborough University) and Dr Emily Harmer (University of Liverpool)

The Internet plays a vital role in many aspects of our social, political and cultural lives and in the early days of its expansion there was much enthusiasm for its potentially transformative role in providing a space for individuals to construct their identities, communicate with others and share ideas and concerns. A perhaps unanticipated consequence of these developments has been the extent to which some individuals and groups have used this freedom to engage in hateful or discriminatory communicative practices online in these loosely regulated spaces, often hiding behind the cloak of anonymity. For instance, women on Twitter and in the public eye have found themselves subject to online harassment, sexism and trolling, while the aftermath of the Brexit vote saw in a rise in reports of hate speech including racism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism, in both online and offline contexts.

This edited collection explores the othering and discrimination propagated and encountered by individuals online and in social media contexts and cultures. It problematizes and analyses the dichotomy presented between real and virtual worlds (and spaces) by exploring the motivations behind certain offending and othering behaviours, and the impact this has on the targets of online abuse and hate speech. This includes the extent to which online othering constitutes a new phenomenon and how the motivations for committing forms of cyber-abuse, cyber-hate, and othering relate to the expression of these attitudes and behaviours in the offline context.

It explores the extent to which forms of information and communication technologies facilitate, exacerbate, and/or promote, the enactment of traditional offline offences (such as domestic abuse and stalking). Finally, the collection addresses the role of the police and other agencies in terms of their interventions, and the regulation and governance of virtual space(s).

The edited collection is an output from a one-day conference on *Online Othering* hosted at Loughborough University. We are seeking additional contributions to the volume from scholars and researchers working in disciplines such as sociology, communication and media studies, criminology, political studies and/or gender studies.

Contributions should address the ways in which various groups and identities are subjected to othering in online environments. This can include news websites, social media platforms (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.), blogs, and forums. We are also interested in contributions which explore othering across multiple contexts. Potential topics can include, but are not limited to:

- Trolling and gendered online abuse/harassment;
- Cyber-bullying or cyber-stalking;
- Hate crime/speech online;
- Homophobia and/or transphobia;
- Online representations of disability;
- Class bigotry;
- Racism, Islamophobia, or anti-Semitism;
- Sexting and/or revenge pornography;
- Brexit, Trumpism and the rise of the 'alt-right'.

The edited collection proposal is to be submitted to Palgrave as part of their Cyber-Crime series by Autumn 2017. For accepted submissions, the finalised chapters will need to be received by the end of September 2018.

<u>Submissions:</u>

Interested contributors should email a title, abstract (250 words) and biography (100 words) to **both** Karen Lumsden K.Lumsden@lboro.ac.uk and Emily Harmer E.Harmer@liverpool.ac.uk by 31 August 2017. Authors will be informed of decisions by 30 September 2017.