

**Sex Work Politics and the Internet: Forging Local and Translocal
Political Communities Through the Blogosphere**

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“Nothing about us, without us.”ⁱ

In the three years that I have been studying the political practice of U.S.-based sex work activists I’ve heard this line many times, both as a warning to be open and reflexive about my own research, but also as a criticism of historical trends in cultural and intellectual productions about sex workⁱⁱ. Though a limited number of sex workers have published popular books based on their experience in the industry (see Monet 2005, Oakley 2007, and Brooks 2006, 2009 for examples), and some academics like Nagel (1997) have showcased the voices of sex workers in academic publications, sex work activists in the U.S. bemoan the vast production and consumption of scholarly and journalistic information about sex workers that neither benefits their political efforts to gain destigmatized recognition of sex work as a collective identity and legitimate form of labor, nor takes into account the diversity of their perspectives and experiences. Mainstream media over the last two decades have focused largely on prostitution through the lens of sex trafficking in women and children, or on street prostitutionⁱⁱⁱ, and academic studies have most often targeted women working in outdoor prostitution^{iv} as convenient objects of study (Weitzer 2005a). Paradoxically, most of this knowledge production has been about a minority of the overall population of prostitutes, as studies estimate outdoor sex workers actually comprise a minority of the contemporary industry (Weitzer 2005a, Vanwesenbeeck 2001, O’Leary and Howard 2001, Matthews 1997). Comparatively, male and transgender sex workers have also flown under the radar of academic and media inquiries (Weitzer 2005a). Contemporary sex work activists are well aware of these inconsistencies. Using both old and new techniques for political organization, they have been adamantly protesting the public dismissal of their diverse experiences and needs under the symbolic penumbra of women prostitutes victimized at the hands of male pimps and clients^v.

This chapter examines how sex work activists in the U.S. have utilized the blog “Bound, Not Gagged” (BnG) as an outspoken “mouthpiece for [the] movement”^{vi} and a supplement to more traditional face-to-face modes of political organization.

The opening of the Internet to the public nearly two decades ago spawned many competing utopian and dystopian speculations on the sociopolitical impacts of Internet use. Some hailed the web as an opportunity to build a cyberdemocracy in which individuals could engage and interact as equals online, despite differences in age, race, gender, nationality or religion that might hinder equal interaction in the real-time world. Others pointed to the dangerous isolating effects of supplanting conventional face-to-face association with computer mediated communications (Kraut et al. 1998, Nie & Erbring 2000). A number of scholars have also pointed to the potential *reproduction* of class inequalities in access to information services. For example, Schement (1999) points out that information services like the Internet, cable, and phone services produce ongoing costs, whereas traditional information goods such as radios and televisions require one-time purchases. With regards to political activism, however, Hill and Hughes (1998) and Schneider (2000) have noted that Internet communication and networking may provide significantly lower cost alternatives for the mass distribution of movement messages and calls to action than former print media. Additionally, Web 2.0 platforms allow users to create and disburse their own content on the web, including video and audio, which partially mitigates the problem of uneven access to mainstream media outlets. Nearly two decades later, it is now fairly clear that the Internet poses no intrinsic threat or boon to our sociability and civic or political participation, though it may augment pre-existing patterns of behavior and interaction, or be used in novel ways to resist dominant power structures and practices (DiMaggio et al. 2001).

Somewhat surprisingly, relatively few studies have been conducted on *how* and *for what*

social movements use the Internet and particular forms of social media in collective action (DiMaggio et al. 2001, Calhoun 1998). A notable exception is Stein's (2009) comprehensive content analysis of established U.S. social movement organization (SMO) websites^{vii}. While she finds that U.S. SMOs frequently use their websites to provide information, call their constituents to action, make requests for funds and to connect with the websites of coalitional groups and allies, she finds that very few of these sites contained spaces for interaction and dialogue or creative expression (2009). As she herself acknowledges, part of this dearth in interaction and expression on websites may have been due to her focus on established movement organizations rather than emerging or developing movement groups. Another factor may have simply been the *type* of media on which she focused; different forms may have particular strengths and weaknesses. For example, Twitter can provide real-time moment-to-moment information and updates, but currently, "tweets" have an archive expiration date of less than two weeks. Alternately, blogs typically have archives of older posts, and informational websites may hold information for extended periods (or at least as long as creators maintain their domain fees). Examining a blog as one form of social media used by sex work activists offers partial corrective to overly general statements about computer mediated communications, as well as insight into how specific forms of social media are useful to activists for specific purposes.

Activism *by* sex workers (former and current) and *for* sex workers has been ongoing to various degrees in the U.S. since at least the 1970s (Jenness 1993), but the movement has garnered little in terms of policy changes or a acquiring a definitive "space at the table" for decision-making processes regarding prostitution^{viii}. Far from discouraging activists in their work, since the early 2000s, the number of sex work SMOs and visibility of their activities across the nation appears to be growing^{ix}. As the spatial organization of the sex industry has changed with many workers moving

online and indoors due to demographic shifts in urban residency and changing patterns of law enforcement (Murphy & Venkatesh YEAR, Bernstein E. 2007), the sex worker movement has seen a similar shift in spatial organization, as well as changes in the kinds of tools and strategies being utilized for mobilizing, framing, and addressing the public with their message. By tapping into social media that allow for the rapid transfer and processing of information across broad geographic spaces, sex work activists can ensure that indeed, nothing produced about sex workers that is within their reach will go without their thorough analysis.

Based on a qualitative analysis of BnG blog entries over a period of three years (May 2007 to April 2010) and select ethnographic data from two national sex worker conferences (Desiree Alliance Convergence 2007 and 2008)^x, I argue that blogs can provide a powerful means for socially and legally marginal groups like sex workers to carve out safe platforms to anonymously contribute to debate within the public sphere. By providing a platform to share personal stories, trade politically relevant information, news, and analyses, as well as to provide support and commentary to blog posters, BnG augments and maintains preexisting, but geographically dispersed networks of sex work activists. However, blogs as a mode of social association and political organizing are limited in that they may exclude some segments of the sex work population from participating, and because of the anonymity of online communities, may have limited effects on the movement's capacity produce mobilize sex workers and conscience constituents to action. Additionally, though blogs provide spaces for sex work activists to share messages that have been articulated and agreed upon in real-time prior to their public presentation, particularly messages about who and what messages may be included as a part of their community and who or what is not, blogs are less ideal for collectively negotiating the details of collective action frames. Such heated debates are best reserved for backstage face-to-face spaces provided by conferences and organizational meetings.

In the following sections, I will first provide some overview on the background and intended purpose of Bound, Not Gagged. I will then examine trends in the type of posts and comment section interactions of BnG. Finally, I will conclude with a discussion of the possibilities and limitations of the use of blogs by the sex work activists for the purposes of collective action.

We Are Bound, Not Gagged

“In the story of alleged DC Madam, Deborah Jean Palfrey, one voice is conspicuously absent: ours, and our lips are, despite what you may have heard, hardly sealed. We’re a group of educated, Internet-savvy, politically game escorts, and we aren’t for hire. (Not here, anyway.) We’re apparently the exception to the rule, but for us, this is just business as usual. Of course, rich and powerful men want access to erotic companionship. Of course, Washington is a hotbed of hypocrisy. We know this not because we’ve been privy to really fantastic pillowtalk, which some of us have, but because we work the halls of government by day, as well. We want to talk to you, but we might have to do it in private. We might have to do it in the dark. We might not be able to tell you our real names, but that doesn’t mean we have to be quiet about it, either. We’re Deepthroated, bound, maybe, but certainly not gagged. And here, we’re going to go down, and dirty, on Washington.” [BnG post by *deepthroated*, 05/04/07]

This initial post on Bound, Not Gagged sums up the circumstances under which the blog was launched, and the secrecy to which sex workers must wed their work and identities to avoid potentially violent legal and social persecution. Co-founded by two sex worker activists Stacey Swimme and Melissa Gira, BnG was launched in May 2007 in the midst of the political scandal involving DC Madam, Deborah Jean Palfrey^{xi}. Conceived of as a space for sex worker voices to be asserted and heard in response to their frequent exclusion from media coverage that favored appearances by credentialed “experts” on prostitution to comment on Palfrey and other prostitution-related stories, BnG still serves primarily as a site for sex worker surveillance and

analysis of media coverage on sex work and sex work-related issues. However, as we shall see, it clearly functions as more than just a filter for sex work news.

Based in Wordpress.com, there was presumably no cost for BnG to be established and maintained. As a community blog, BnG hosts sixteen featured authors for blog posts^{xii}, though any registered user of Wordpress may post comments to engage in discussions within the comments section. While not open for public posting, featured bloggers have occasionally posted information and statements on behalf of other advocates for sex worker rights, and in other instances, on behalf of oppositional advocates as a means to start discussions. As is common for blogs, postings appear on the home page in reverse chronological order with the most recent posts listed first. Links to recent posts, recent comments, posts-by-author, posts-by-date and “top posts” allow for easy navigation of the site. BnG also features RSS subscription feeds to BnG “tweets” and a prostitution “Bust Tracker” that follows sex worker arrests in the news, both local and national.

In addition to these navigational and informational links, BnG is also littered with lateral links to related blogs. These are blogs by sex workers (some of whom are BnG authors), client blogs, health-related blogs, a blog for youth resources, and a limited number of blogs for sex worker organizations. Additionally, direct links to U.S.-based sex worker rights organizations and international sex worker rights organizations are listed. Included in this roll call of organizational links are all of the organizations with which BnG authors are affiliated, plus some organizations not directly represented by authors. These organizations include some of the most active organizations within the movement in dispersed locations ranging from San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Las Vegas, and locations on the southeastern coast of the U.S.^{xiii} BnG authors and representatives from these organizations regularly attend the national Desiree Alliance Convergence Meeting, a forum for sex workers, health professionals, social scientists, sex

educators, and allies to meet in person and to discuss and present on a variety of issue related to sex worker rights^{xiv}. Although Desiree Meetings have happened annually in different locations across the U.S., there has recently been some discussion among its organizers of making the event biannual to reduce the cost of organizing the event each year, in addition to the significant cost to individual activists for travel and lodging during these weeklong events. In addition to listserves and national conference calls for some organizations, blogs like BnG do provide a comparatively low-cost alternative for sex work activists and affiliates to keep in touch and communicate over space and time.

How are Activists Using BnG?

Publicly Re-Presenting and Debating Sex Work

The majority of posts on BnG fall in line with the founders' initial intents, featuring posts and links to mainstream media coverage of sex work in the news. Favorite past topics have included the foundational media coverage of the DC Madam scandal and suicides, New York Governor Eliot Spitzer's tryst with an escort, and currently, coverage on the Long Island serial killer.

Information is often posted alongside scathing critiques of media portrayals of sex workers, analysis and articulation of sex worker perspectives on current events, and when warranted, support for particular media coverage. Most often, media stories about sex work-related issues are roundly critiqued for including only anti-prostitution perspectives, for reproducing stereotypes about sex workers (for example, that they are all drug-addicted, all outdoor workers, all are being pimped or trafficked), or for only addressing the opinions of credentialed prostitution "experts" that may run counter to the experiential knowledge of sex workers in the activist community.

A favorite lightning rod for the movement is Melissa Farley, a prominent and outspoken

anti-prostitution advocate, founder of the nonprofit Prostitution Research & Education and clinical psychologist turned researcher. Farley is often cited in media coverage discussing the victimization of women and children in prostitution (which she equates with sex trafficking) as representative of the entire industry. Because her academic credentials offer her greater status as an “expert” to members of the press, she is frequently given free reign in media coverage to propagate stereotypes supported by the authority of scientific research^{xv}, a situation that draws vitriolic rage from authors and commenters on BnG. In response to such unfavorable and limited representations, BnG bloggers frequently offer oppositional counter-representations and narratives about sex workers by commenting and posting about their own personal stories, or research information that they have collected independently. However, BnG authors do give credit where they see that credit is due, though their comments may be a little tongue-in-cheek. In reference to the representation of sex workers in a television news report on Deborah Jean Palfrey, one poster states: “I think this is the first mainstream media television story on sex workers that didn’t feature the mandatory woman leaning into a car.” [BnG 05/05/07, melissagira]

Not all of the informational posts on BnG revolve around media representations and coverage. Some posts directly tackle published research on prostitution, providing clear analyses of what is “good” or “bad” about particular studies for sex workers as a group. Others have followed and analyzed U.S. policies (rather than directly analyzing media coverage and representation) as they impact sex workers. These analyses are not limited in scope to the U.S., though U.S. policies have often been placed under the greatest scrutiny. For example, the anti-prostitution pledge to the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (USAID), drafted by Randall Tobias – the USAID Administrator who was later convicted of hiring escorts – drew a good deal of negative attention from BnG authors and commenters for its negative impact on international sex worker

organizations. The pledge required that any organizations accepting PEPFAR funds must not support prostitution in any way – this put many organizations that provide services to working prostitutes without encouraging industry exit in a bind, as they could be interpreted as “supporting” prostitution.

While undoubtedly cathartic for individual activists and perhaps other sex workers who read them, most of the above-described posts and analyses appear to be intended for the broader public. These posts offer a lens into the way some sex workers are interpreting and thinking about current events, knowledge production, and media portrayals of sex workers. Comment sections for such posts have also provided a space for deliberative discussion, disagreement and consensus on particular interpretation of issues. For these more publicly oriented posts, “outside” commenters – those not affiliated with the sex worker rights movement – have frequently posted their oppositional sentiments, generating heated discussion and debate between those who support a sex worker rights platform, which entails full labor and human rights for those currently engaged in the industry, and those who support the abolition of prostitution and the removal of all prostitutes (consenting or not) from the sex industry.

In this way, BnG comment sections serve as a sort of bounded public sphere. I say bounded for at least a couple of reasons. First, the anonymity of interactive comment sections allows sex workers to virtually “come out” and speak *as* sex workers on issues of interest to them in rational deliberation with political opponents, the general non-sex worker public, and each other, while still safeguarding their real-time identities. In the face of the very real legal, social, and sometimes violent sanctions that sex workers face in real life, the anonymity of the Internet allows sex workers to safely offer admit their status in the industry as a means for validating the authenticity of their experiential knowledge, as well as to gain support and a sense of community from other sex

workers.

However, the cover of anonymity provided by the Internet is a double-edged sword. One might ask how movement “outsiders” are determined from movement “insiders” (or potential future “insiders”) by BnG commenters. Comments suggesting that prostitution should be abolished, that all clients and pimps are violent men, or that consensual prostitution is the exception rather than the rule are easily identified by both posters and readers of BnG as “outside” the movement, even if they may claim some relative insider status as former prostitutes^{xvi}. Often, “insider” contributors to BnG comments and posts also already know each other through real-time interactions that they’ve had with each other at Desiree Alliance and other sex work SMO meetings, and are able to identify each other in the online world based on their prior face-to-face interactions and knowledge of individuals’ virtual pseudonyms.

Despite this, some comments are not easily identified on their own merits as outsider or insider. For example, in the midst of a rare comment section discussion over what the movement should be doing, one commenter claimed to be an independent escort and stated that she (or he) did not support Proposition K, a ballot measure that would have decriminalized prostitution in the city and county of San Francisco and defunded the prostitution diversion programs of SAGE, an organization that primarily seeks to remove women from prostitution and trafficking situations. This commenter was immediately razed by known insiders as a “hater with a really bad undercover disguise”, indicating that this particular commenter was an anti-prostitution advocate posing as a sex worker rights advocate. Nobody had had face-to-face experience or knowledge of this poster, nor were their comments convincingly presented as authentically couched in “sex worker rights”; however, it was far from clear that this person was definitely an anti-prostitution advocate. Most individuals do not come to movements with fully-formed static grievances and understandings of

movement issues that they share with other activists. Benford and Snow describe “framing” – the mutually constitutive act of reality construction that movement activists engage in to diagnose social problems, offer potential solutions, and mobilize constituents to action – as a key activity of movement actors (Benford and Snow 2000). This points to a potential limitation posed by the anonymity of online blog discussions for social movements. For potentially new movement recruits, not having connections to sex work activists in real-time who can vouch for their credibility, and not having engaged in real-time framing activities at national and local meetings poses significant barriers to their virtual acceptance within a community of activists.

Insider Motions

In addition to public-oriented presentations, BnG posts are also used for practical movement-based purposes. Information regarding local organization or chapter events is circulated on BnG, serving as both a reminder to local activists (or potential activists) who may want to attend, but also as a way to keep the broader network of activists in touch with what local activist groups are doing. Though less frequent than other types of posts, fundraiser information and posts requesting donations for specific sex work SMOs have also been circulated.

More than simply providing information to sex work activists and the broader public, BnG provides a means for activists to support each other in their political and industry work. Many posts serve to circulate media stories, audio and videos featuring sex work activists, or activist-generated videos. The most frequent comment section responses to these featured-activist posts are supportive statements and encouragement from other movement actors. Related to these, some of the blog posts and comments on BnG have followed up on discussions from Desiree Alliance Meetings to provide explicit information and tips on how sex workers should address and

respond to the media to avoid identity exposure and make sure that their interactions with members of the press are mutually beneficial (BnG 7/19/08 sadielune). Such posts have been met with comments of gratitude from other activists in the comments section, along with additional tips from similarly media-savvy sex work activists.

Other posts have been devoted to personal stories of from sex workers about their work in the industry. Many of these are construed as a “typical day in the life of...”-type stories, and paint positive pictures of interactions with clients and significant others in order to provide counter-representations of sex workers that demonstrate that their experiences may not be so different from other members of society, or at least, that they are not always steeped in violence and exploitation. Although most of these posts have drawn positive support from like-minded activists in the comments sections, others have drawn negative feedback, or at least concerns about the public presentation of the sex workers on, and linked to, BnG. Some particularly bitter posts from two independent escorts on their negative and exploitive experience working at a brothel in Nevada on their personal blogs (which are linked to BnG) provoked a warning post from one BnG author about not silencing other types of sex workers in the movement. In this way, she acknowledges the relative homogeneity of BnG authors (and in general, sex worker movement actors) as middle-class, independent female-bodied escorts who work indoors. Titled “solidarity for some?” kitteninfinite writes:

“I can’t even imagine what would happen in this movement if the tables were turned: a sex worker from a much different background with much different experiences coming into our community and telling us what is wrong with the way we work, and then blogging about it? What *would* that look like? PLEASE THINK ABOUT THIS. Cuz I know that we DO know how this feels, we just have yet to make the correlation.” [BnG 08/29/08 kitteninfinite]

This post spawned a good deal of framing discussion among sex work activists, some contradictory, in an attempt to articulate the purpose of their movement. Some emphasized labor rights and decriminalization; others emphasized destigmatization. Implicit in this discussion were questions about *how much* and *what kind* of information about sex workers should be disclosed *publicly* in a space like BnG as it relates to the strategic presentation of sex worker experiences in service of their movement. The escort bloggers implicated by this post expressed their hurt and resentment at being sanctioned for talking about their personal experiences on their personal blogs. In response, one self-identified sex worker states that she has worked in all varieties of sex work, including outdoor work, work under the management of pimps and madams, and as an independent escort, but that she carefully excludes some stories from her public presentations. She writes:

“Believe me I have stories. Believe me I have stories. After twenty years, you bet your ass I do. I choose to keep those stories away from the public. We have many enemies and although at times it could be cathartic for me personally, any of those stories will only further the oppression against us. That is how it goes for us.” [BnG comments, post 08/29/08 lisaroellig].

In direct contrast, another sex work activist comments, “If people can’t speak their truth about their own experiences, then what kind of “movement” is it, anyway?” [BnG comments, post 08/29/08 AmberRhea]. In support of maintaining the diversity of perspectives within the movement, many other commenters echoed this sentiment, urging lisaroellig to share her stories despite her concerns that they would be used against the political cause of sex work activists.

Although many discussions between movement insiders and outsiders within the BnG comment sections revolved around framing and articulating which perspectives were clearly outside a sex worker movement perspective (with sex work activists and advocates rallying support for each other in constructing and dismissing outside perspectives), discussions depicting heated debate and intra-community disagreement *between* sex work activists over the specific elements

internal to a sex worker rights frame were relatively rare. While it is unclear how much attention BnG actually receives from the non-sex worker public, or the general sex worker public for that matter^{xvii}, this blog does provide a positive space for sex work activists to share clearly articulated already-agreed upon messages. However, based on the above posting and subsequent discussion, it is clear that blogs are a less comfortable space for activists to hammer out the sticky details of their collective action frames for sex worker rights. Such debates are better left to semi-private forms of media like listserves^{xviii}, or better yet, face-to-face interactions in the form of local and national meetings that provide a “backstage” to the “frontstage” presentations exemplified by blogs.

Discussion

It is clear that BnG is used by sex work activists for multiple purposes to positive ends. The space has been used: as a space to present sex worker perspectives and counter-representations to the general public; to circulate information about movement events; to provide support for activists across space and time. The anonymous and interactive features of blogs allow sex workers to safely “come out” as sex workers and to speak about their experiences and interpretations of current events and issues that affect them and their work. Comment sections allow sex work activists to interact and debate “outsiders” to the movement in a way that solidifies the broadly agreed upon meanings that sex work activists already hold.

However, as a social movement tool, blogs like BnG are limited in some important ways. First, the anonymity of net-based social media, while providing safe cover for marginalized groups, may also hinder the online recruitment of potential movement activists if they do not already share particular understandings of movement issues. Particularly for activism by and for underground and stigmatized populations that are suspicious of outsiders (with good reason), the mobilization of new

movement constituents is best done in face-to-face real time interactions which may facilitate more trust and transparency. Next, although they provide a cost-effective and simple movement “frontstage” to present political messages, interpretations and ideas to the public, blogs are not ideal spaces for “backstage” disagreements and arguments over the details of movement frames and meanings, as they depict the movement as fragmented and unclear.

Finally, many of the posts in BnG echoed reflexive concerns over the relative class, industry sector, and race-based privilege that blog authors possessed, which is representative of similar problems within the movement at large. Echoing concerns over the digital divide, these discussions are a reminder that inequalities may be reproduced, rather than mitigated, by some forms of social media, particularly when used as a supplement to, rather than a substitute for face-to-face interactions and community building. Although sex work activists are well-aware of and actively attempting to combat the homogeneity of their movement constituents, it is clear that the demographic unevenness of their movement base is being reflected in their online community.

ⁱQuote taken from the May 23, 2007 blog post of *Bound, Not Gagged* <www.deepthroated.wordpress.com> (Accessed April 2, 2011). Many thanks to Aziza Khazzoom and Jill Bakehorn for reviewing this piece prior to its presentation at UCI.

ⁱⁱ Although activists use the term “sex work” to refer to any trade of sexual services, including but not limited to prostitution, exotic dancing, porn performance, BDSM practices and phone sex operation, I find that most uses of the term within activist circles actually refers to prostitution. Unless otherwise noted in this paper, I use “sex work” interchangeably with “prostitution.”

ⁱⁱⁱ For example, see Intelligence Squared 2009, Kristof 2011, Grinberg 2010, and Nieves 1999 for just a few examples.

^{iv} Outdoor work refers to sex work that is solicited and agreed to outside, though the transaction of goods and services may take place indoors. However, it should be noted that clear-cut distinctions between outdoor and indoor sex work are somewhat inaccurate, as individual sex workers may move between a variety of venues and sex work practices over time.

^v Of course, this is not at all to say that the victimization and exploitation of prostitutes does not occur. Activists are also aware of and concerned over the problem of sex trafficking. However, they argue for an understanding of prostitution and trafficking that clearly distinguishes consensual from non-consensual sex work.

^{vi} BnG 08/29/08.

^{vii} For another excellent discussion, see Chadwick (2006).

^{viii} One notable exception would be the recommendation of the San Francisco Task Force on Prostitution to the SF Board of Supervisors for a service organization providing services for workers currently in the industry as an alternative to preexisting groups that pushed for industry exit. This recommendation, in combination with the

work of COYOTE, the Exotic Dancers Alliance (EDA) and the SF City Clinic, resulted in the opening of the St. James Infirmary Clinic, the first peer-run occupational health and safety clinic for sex workers in the U.S. though the effects of this organization and its temporary assemblage speaks to the lack of impact. However, more recent sex work activist activities have largely been overshadowed by anti-trafficking organizations and messaging, and Weitzer (1991) and Mathieu (2003) have pointed to the failure of this movement to achieve any far-reaching policy changes on prostitution at local, state, or federal levels.

^{ix} Sex work activists have been making headway by appearing in mainstream media to comment on the Long Island prostitute murders [CITATION]; many of them were contacted by members of the press via their organizational websites.

^x In my analysis, I consider BnG blog posts to be cultural artifacts of the U.S. sex worker social movement. Fieldnotes, blog posts and comments were analyzed using HyperResearch qualitative analysis software. First open-coding and then more focused coding was used to develop themes and patterns in the data.

^{xi} Palfrey was charged with and later convicted of prostitution-related racketeering for her DC-based escort agency Pamela Martin and Associates [CITE]. Frequented by some prominent federal government actors, including Randall Tobias, the Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development who famously authored the anti-prostitution clause of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), BnG authors and commenters were quick to point out the irony with acid wit and frustration.

^{xii} The number of authors on BnG is actually higher than this. In analyzing data, I found at least three additional post authors that were not listed in the featured author section of the blog. This may just be due to a lag in updating the featured author list as new members were authorized to make blog posts. All new members are authorized by blogmaster Stacey Swimme, who is also the co-founder of the Desiree Alliance Convergence and a co-founder of Sex Workers Outreach Project.

^{xiii} SWOP-East (Sex Workers Outreach Project) is a network of organizational members along the southeast coast of the U.S., and constitutes one chapter of the national organization SWOP.

^{xiv} www.desireealliance.org

^{xv} See Weitzer (2005b) for an academic critique of the methods Farley uses for research. The most notable flaw in Farley's research methods are the use of convenience samples of prostitutes drawn from organizations that offer programming to the most vulnerable, at-risk populations of outdoor sex workers.

^{xvi} For example, one commenter named Jody claimed to be an ex-prostitute and made frequent anti-prostitution statements in the comments section. For BnG regulars and authors, there seemed to be no question of her status as a former worker.

^{xvii} For an interesting discussion of "attention scarcity" on the web, see Goldhaber (1997). Nearly 80% of website visits are to just 0.5% of available sites (Waxman 2000).

^{xviii} I had initially intended to include sex worker movement listserves as a comparative case of social media to blogs. However, when I sent a request to my listserve of interest (of which I am a member), of the many responses that my request elicited, all agreed that the listserve was "too private" to be laid bare for research purposes.

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