

**Anna READING**

***The Playful Panopticon?  
Ethics and the Coded Self in Social Networking Sites***

The evolution of personal communication technologies that are both mobile and socially networked traverse conventional binaries such as the private and the public, the individual and the social, the virtual and the real. These are leading to the need to reappraise the ethics of mediated relationships as well as to the development of new codes of conduct for the socially networked self.

This paper examines codes of conduct and ethics in relation to people's uses of social networking sites such as Facebook. These offer new possibilities for staging the self and its co-construction with other users. Users develop and create their own public profile, making decisions about posting images, finding friends and whether to send out regular "status" updates of themselves. Users can also seek out other people and check on the status of their "friends" through such sites.

The paper explores the usefulness of Foucault's critique of the panopticon, and the technologies of the self, through looking at these in relation to the ethics of Facebook, exploring the degree to which men and women respond to the public self-construction of their mobile gendered identities using memory and play. The research draws on the staff, student and administrative body of London South Bank University, one of the most diverse university communities in the UK. It uses a combination of methodologies including virtual ethnographies in the form of qualitative electronic postcards, combined with a sample of qualitative interviews. The research asks how, when and why men and women are using social networking sites, such as Facebook and the ethics that are developing associated with its use.

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