

Dressing Against Code: How Twitch Plays with/on Green Screen Shorts

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2024, game streamers and audiences on Twitch.tv grappled with a social panic that would become known as the “Green Screen Shorts Meta” (GGSM). On- and off-platform outrage rose over the status of streamers, mostly women, who leverage green screen chroma-key textile to project gameplay onto their bodies. Herein, clothed buttocks and breasts came to the fore as dynamic gaming displays, forming an anatomy of surfaces for audience-player engagement and gameplay monetisation.



Figure 1: Morgpie on Twitch.

This paper reckons with the aftermath of how Twitch responded to this innovation: by revising its Community Guidelines to explicitly prohibit content that “lingered” too much “on intimate body parts for a prolonged period of time” (Twitch Safety, 2024). Through a case study that analyzes the production materials, policy revisions, and media discourse surrounding the most popular channel of this genre (Morgpie, Figure 1), I situate GGSM as it filters widespread cultural attitudes towards women’s precarious status as players on the gaming platform. Specifically, this case study analyzes green screen streamers’ attire innovations as a negotiating response to Twitch’s demonstrably vague regulations around bodily performance, which have disproportionately impacted women players in platform’s recent history.

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LITERATURE REVIEW: GOVERNING THE PLAYFUL BODY

Twitch represents a critical site for both contemporary gaming culture (Cata, 2019; Taylor, 2018) and civic politics (Foxman et al. 2024; Johnson, 2024). Within the growing field of Twitch Studies, scholars have extensively examined how visibility and financial success on the platform are contingent upon securing advertising revenue, donations, and subscriptions (Johnson & Woodcock 2019; Partin 2019; Tran 2024). Yet research also consistently documents that women and women of colour Twitch streamers face ongoing obstacles in their professional gameplay and are penalized for their visibility (Cote 2022; Cullen 2022; Guarriello 2019; Gray 2020; Tran 2022; Ruberg et al. 2019). GSSM reveal further challenges on the level of platform policy. Even when women players leverage creative innovations like chroma-key to literally abstract themselves from view, they still face penalties from both fellow players and the platform itself.

Platform governance research has directed increased attention to Twitch gaming as emblematic of larger feminist struggles in platform policy. As both Ruberg (2021) and Zolides (2021) critique, livestreaming platforms define “obscenity” in ways that have disproportionately policed women and genderqueer streamers, positioning women and non-cisgender bodies as always already sites of potential over-exposure and regulation. Recent research has identified the growing importance of the physical contexts in which Twitch streamers broadcast—from kitchen to bedroom and even bathrooms—as likewise vital sites of struggle where the politics of who is rewarded versus penalized for being seen are playing out (Harris et al. 2026; Reynolds 2025; Tran, 2025). As Jackson (2023) summarizes, “Twitch’s governance creates boundaries for streamers’ performed bodies based on their surrounding space” (p. 217). GSSM zooms further. Clothing has become another a gendered site for obscuring the feminist struggle over gaming’s future and past.

Women players have long been calibrating their physical presence from view via innovations from costumes (Tran 2024) to in-game pseudonyms (Cote, 2017). GSSM exemplifies how female self-abstraction is not enough to avoid exclusion in vital gaming spaces. Women players’ bodies threaten gaming’s core as both a commodity and a contested site of governance especially on gaming platforms. As such, attire represents an urgent area of research for deciphering the past and future of live gaming.

METHODOLOGY

Proceeding from Yin’s (2013) notion that *case studies* are the preferred method for providing a holistic account of uncontrolled events, I will make use of a variety of evidence to interpret the cultural rhetorical and policy implications of Green Screen Shorts Meta. This project will compose a case study from three primary sets of data.

First, I will make use of qualitative analysis of broadcast footage taken from livestreaming channels Morgpie (2024), who was foremost the most covered and popular Green Screen Shorts genre game streamer during the broadcast. Second, I will analyze media coverage of the GSSM throughout 2025 from news outlets such as PC Gamer, Kotaku, and other tech-based news sites. Finally, I situate GSSM within the governance policy changes that occurred over 2025 in relation to attire and sexual content, performing an institutional analysis of the changes to the Terms of Service and Community Guidelines.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper draws from Marxist feminist and social reproduction theory (Federici 2012; Bhattacharya 2017) to understand the role of women and women of colour's paid and unpaid work and the role such activities play in capital accumulation and control in gaming industries. Especially useful to this paper is the way that feminist researchers in communication studies use Marxist feminist theory to theorize the work of social media platform users as affective and emotional labour that are core to reproducing contemporary capitalism (Jarrett 2015; Duffy 2017).

I build on all this work to theorize how the work of Green Screen Shorts game streamers is mobilized in platform policies. As Theresa Senft (2008) reminds us, livestreaming economies are historically built on the performance of intimacy, a practice pioneered by camgirls that has since shaped gameplay monetization and audience engagement strategies across gender and genre. Yet as GGSM demonstrates, Twitch is ever distancing itself from this feminized labour history. My paper approaches this contradiction with specific attention to gendered and racialized labour practices of self-obscuring and self-promotion.

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS

Attire regulation on creator platforms like Twitch remains an urgent site of inquiry, as fickle and reactive governance over bodies continues to destabilize creators' visibility and financial security. Yet attention to the game of attire themselves in policy is understudied. Curiously, it is games literature that has taken up the politics of attire and fashion as part of a serious material practise which centres how women and girls have gained access to gaming spaces and technologies (Fron et al. 2007; Mascheroni and Pasquali 2013; Surayya and Setyabudi 2016).

By situating Green Screen Shorts Meta within game-centric critiques of platform governance and visibility politics, this paper contributes a feminist game studies-specific perspective on struggles in platform governance. In doing so, I model a framework for more expansive understanding of subjectivity, policy, and the monetization of play.

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