

CALL FOR PAPERS  
A One-Day Symposium: June 4, 2009

**Virtual Sex Ed: Youth, Race, Sex and New Media**

The Section of Family Planning and Contraceptive Research and the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture at The University of Chicago invite paper proposals for a one-day symposium on **Virtual Sex Ed: Youth, Race, Sex and New Media**, which will be held at The University of Chicago on June 4, 2009. This conference will explore novel approaches to reach, educate and engage youth in their sexual and reproductive health using new virtual media such as the Internet (e.g., social networking and peer education sites), health games and filmography. Our keynote speakers for the symposium will be: **Deb Levine MA**, founder and director of Internet Sexuality Information Services (ISIS) in Oakland, California, an organization that develops technologies such as customized web sites, cell phones and PDAs to promote sexual health and healthy relationships. **C.J. Pascoe PhD**; researcher with the Digital Youth Project at Colorado University, her recent book on gender in high school, *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*, received the 2008 Outstanding Book Award from the American Educational Research Association. We are currently seeking a peer-reviewed journal for the publication of the papers presented at this symposium.

How youth interact with virtual media in their daily lives is a topic of considerable importance. A recent report from the MacArthur Foundation discovered that youth use social networking sites, on-line games and video sharing sites to connect with peers, to learn and to engage in self-expression. Additionally, 44% of individuals between the ages of 18-24 use the Internet to search for information about sensitive topics such as pregnancy, birth control and sexually transmitted infections. These findings show how important virtual media is in communicating positive sexual health messages and promoting healthy reproductive behaviors for all youth.

We are interested in highlighting research and projects that theorize and/or describe how new virtual media are being used for the purposes of: (1) reaching at-risk youth to encourage their participation in protective sexual health behaviors; (2) educating youth about reproductive and sexual health; (3) engaging youth in campaigns or political efforts to reduce reproductive health care disparities and structural inequalities that constrain youth's reproductive health decision-making; and (4) creating and testing research methodologies that better appeal to youth such as email interviews and Internet-based interventions, etc. We are interested in hearing how these efforts are framed, designed and implemented. Work grounded in theory or evidence-based practice and rigorously evaluated are strongly preferred. We will specifically highlight efforts to reach and communicate with youth of color about their reproductive health.

Proposals must be sent electronically with a copy to each of the following email addresses by **April 15, 2009**: [rgutierrez@uchicago.edu](mailto:rgutierrez@uchicago.edu) and [esmith1@babies.bsd.uchicago.edu](mailto:esmith1@babies.bsd.uchicago.edu). Proposals should not be more than two single-spaced pages and should be accompanied by a short two-page CV for the Principal Investigator or Project Director who will be presenting at the conference. For research projects, the proposal should include the following sections: study objectives, methods, findings, and conclusions. For program descriptions, the proposal narrative should include the following sections: background of organization, target populations, project description, outcomes and lessons learned. All domestic travel and accommodation expenses will be paid by The University of Chicago for those presenters selected for the conference.

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