

# The Big *Gaydar* Workshop: Connections, Tensions and Digital Interventions

28<sup>th</sup> May 2010, University of Sussex

## Call for Papers, Interest & Participation

### ***Gaydar turned ten this year.***

In the decade it has been operating, the website has survived the bursting of the dotcom bubble, the rise of competitor services and the evolution of 2.0 social networking practices. Yet *Gaydar* continues to be the number one gay male dating site in Britain and the brand now extends beyond the web. *Gaydar* is a radio station, a brand, a sponsor of international gay events, a charity donor, a marketing tool and part of a company that also owns two commercial venues, in the heart of London's gay district.

### ***Gaydar is ...?***

As befits a phenomenon of this size, *Gaydar* encounters contradictions that reflect the tensions operating in contemporary gay male subculture. It is both a site for HIV prevention work *and* a space in which barebackers can find one another. It funds gay Pride events, yet is often criticised for ignoring the margins of the LGBT community. It provides opportunities for queer youth to explore their sexual identities while also interpolating gay men into a dizzying array of categories. It allows users to advertise themselves to one another, and mines that information for financial gain. It is also a digital environment firmly rooted in the material realities and the corporeal pleasures of the physical world.

### ***The big Gaydar workshop***

Organised in conjunction with the University of Salford, this one-day multidisciplinary workshop is hosted by the Centre for Material Digital Culture at the University of Sussex and will take place on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010. Departing from the standard conference format, the organisers are keen to organise the day around a series of round-table discussions that explore different facets of and interactions with *Gaydar*. ***The topic of these discussions is currently open*** and at this stage we welcome proposals and suggestions from interested individuals, groups and organisations.

### ***Participation***

Do you work with, or find work through *Gaydar*? Have you used *Gaydar* for political or activist reasons? Do you use *Gaydar* for professional or personal motives? Do you have an opinion about *Gaydar*? We are interested in hearing from you! Each roundtable discussion will open with between one and three short positioning papers (5 minutes max). Following these brief presentations, the discussion will be opened up to the floor for response and further input. The organisers are keen to employ a range of techniques to ensure that all those who wish to speak get a chance to do so, and those preferring other forms of communication (Twitter, blogging etc) can exploit these technologies.

We strongly encourage collaborative work within and across industries, disciplines and sectors and seek input from academic and non-academic experts alike. Interventions and positioning papers can take a variety of forms and should be aimed at opening up the discussion.

### ***The details***

Registration costs £10 (payable in advance) and refreshments will be provided. Please note that places are strictly limited and will, in the first instance, be allocated to those offering discussion topics and positioning papers.

If you have a proposal for a discussion topic, or would like to discuss the workshop, and your potential involvement in it, please send an email (including your name, affiliation and any proposal) to the organisers.

### ***Timetable for application***

- *Closing date for discussion topics:* 19<sup>th</sup> February 2010
- *Closing date for positioning papers:* 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010
- *Workshop date:* 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010

### ***Organisers***

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