Moving Trans History Forward Conference
March 28, 2025

Trans Technologies

Oliver L. Haimson

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

1. Identity
2. Passports
3. Prisons
4. Military service
5. Medical care
6. Schools

TFN

Trans Family Network
Connecting those in need across the U.S.

About   Getting Started   Resources   Volunteer   Contact Us

Home

No matter who you are, you're not alone
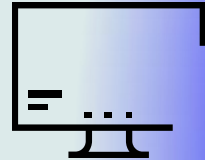
I need help

I can help

TRANS TECHNOLOGY
(practical definition)

technology that addresses the unique needs and challenges faced by transgender people and communities

often designed in response to the lack of trans inclusion in more mainstream technologies
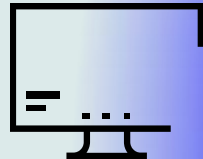
. . .

TRANS TECHNOLOGY

(theoretical definition)

technology that embraces change and/or transition, fosters the creation of new trans worlds, and opens up new possibilities for what technology means and what it can do

Trans Technologies
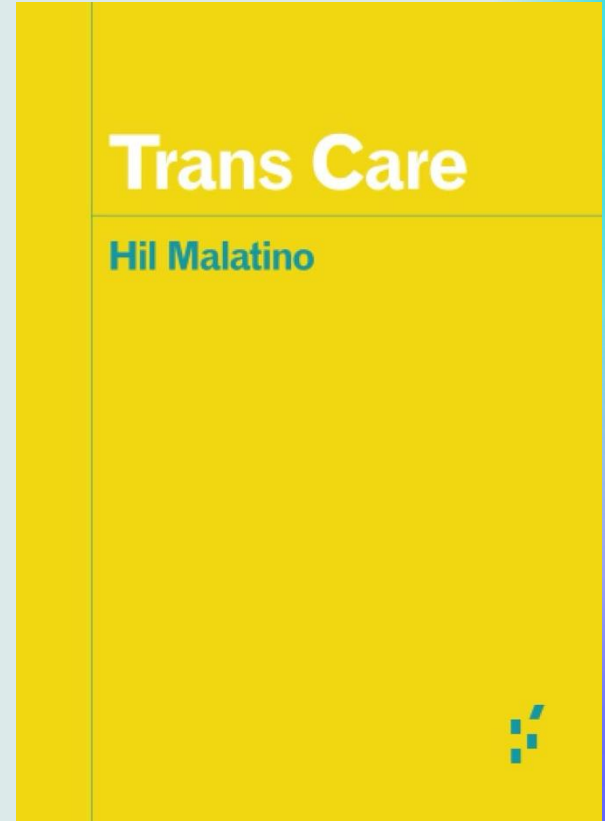
By Oliver L. Haimson

A few key concepts:

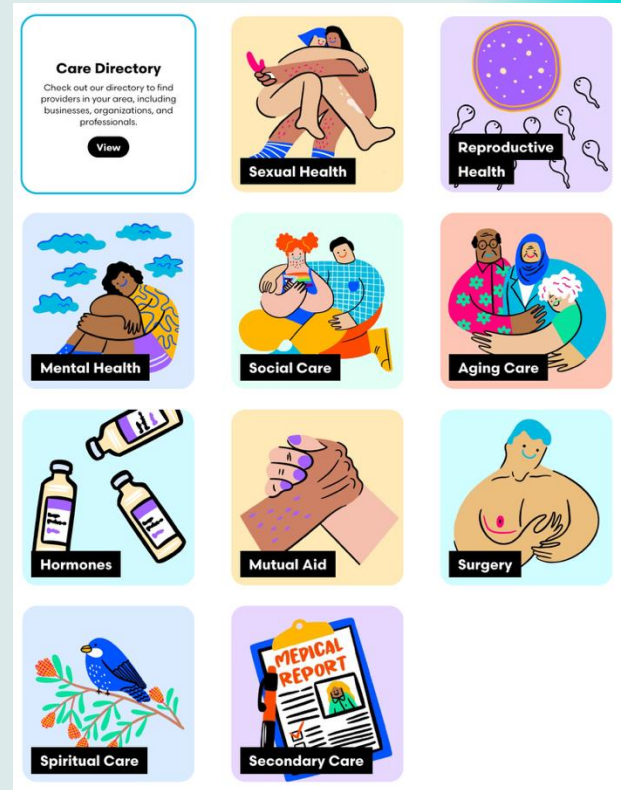- Technological trans care

- Ambivalence

. . .

Trans care

trans people **showing up** for each other, **supporting** each other, and **helping to address each other's needs** in the absence of support from mainstream systems

Trans Care

Hil Malatino

Technological trans care

trans people **creating innovative technological mechanisms** to **support** each other and **address the needs** that they and their communities face in the world, when mainstream systems and technologies reject or exclude them

- Trans technology is a form of *trans care* (Malatino 2020).

- one-to-many and can reach wide audiences, as opposed to one-to-one

Ambivalence

Trans tech creators navigated **tensions** between **competing** emotions, goals, and desires that they experienced **simultaneously**.

Ambivalence

sasha winter ☀️🌙⭐
@stargazersasha

right then:

🗡️🔥📢 TRANS FUCKING RAGE JAM 📢🔥🗡️
MARCH FUCKING 10TH - APRIL FUCKING 10TH

📢 MAKE IT LOUD 📢
🔥 MAKE IT ANGRY 🔥
🗡️ MAKE IT UGLY 🗡️

LINK IN REPLY

10:12 PM · Mar 8, 2022

234 Retweets   22 Quotes   370 Likes   22 Bookmarks

140101 Xiketic

341312 Dark Sienna

901312 OU Crimson Red

DA1312 Maximum Red

ED4587 French Rose

FF78FB Pink Flamingo

Submissions (82)

All submissions · Browser playable (6) · Windows (10) · macOS (4) · Linux (6) · Android (2)

wolves inside me. $6.66
FEEL THE CITY WRITHE UNDER YOUR ...
stargazersasha

HIKEBACK
a playable ghost story that changes with ...
CLOWN
Visual Novel
Play in browser

An Outcry $9.99
Harass your neighbours. Debate with bir...
Quinn K.
Role Playing

YOU ARE A BEAST
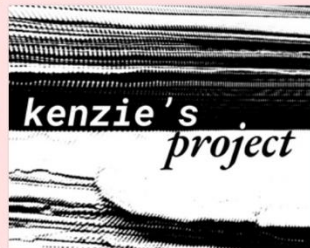A microgame about existing as a trans pe...
wintertide games

WAS/WERE $4
Murdering a person that hurt you is hot, ...
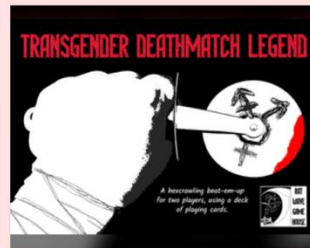RodFireProductions
Interactive Fiction

BITCH HELL $6.66
A NEW NIGHTMARE BY WIFESOFT GA...
evie
Shooter

KENZIE'S PROJECT $10
a 3-player horror game about how acade...
stargazersasha

Transgender Deathmatch Legend $15
A hexcrawling beat-em-up for two player...
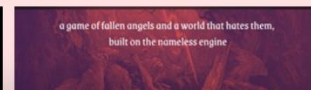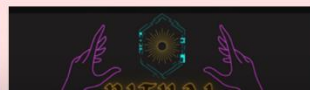Rat Wave Game House

LAST
It's your last night. Live your best queer li...
high-tea
Visual Novel

You Are an Unfinished Thing $1
A solo micro-RPG about becoming whole
Glaive Guisarme Games

Ambivalence

sasha winter ☀️🌙⭐️
@stargazersasha

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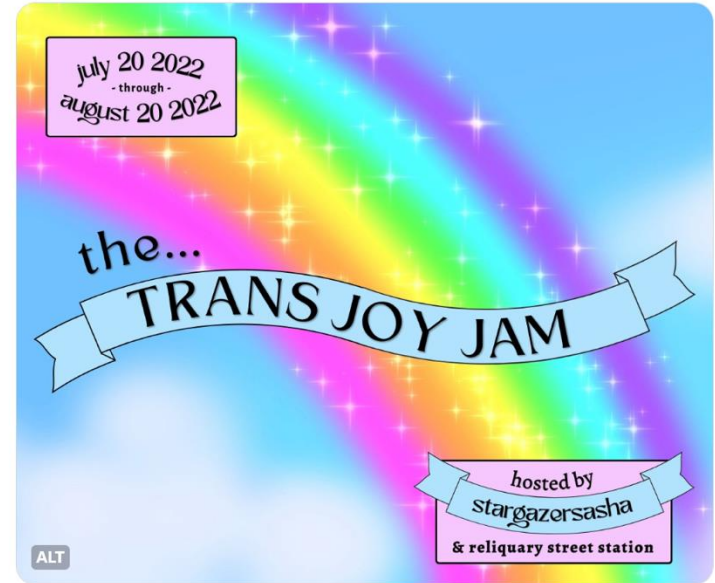234 Retweets   22 Quotes   370 Likes   22 Bookmarks

sasha winter ☀️🌙⭐️
@stargazersasha

NOW ANNOUNCING:

🌈☀️☁️💖 THE TRANS JOY JAM 💖☀️☁️🌈
JULY 20TH - AUGUST 20TH

🌈 MAKE IT LOUD🌈
☀️ MAKE IT SILLY ☀️
💖 MAKE IT JOYOUS💖

LINK IN REPLY — RTS APPRECIATED :]

july 20 2022
- through -
august 20 2022

the...
TRANS JOY JAM

hosted by
stargazersasha
& reliquary street station

ALT

10:16 PM · Jul 18, 2022

💬 2   ⟲ 113   ♡ 134   🔖 10
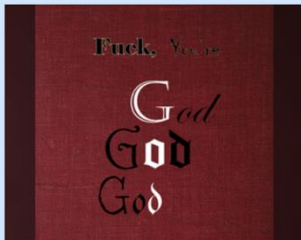
Submissions (32)

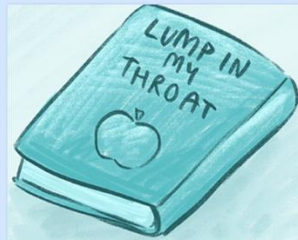## do gay crime
be gay, do crime!
steff
Adventure
`Play in browser`

Fuck, You're God `$3`
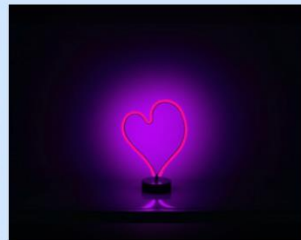A nsfw prompt driven game for one playe...
breathingstories

Lump in My Throat
A trans girl has a rough day.
AnjachArts
Visual Novel

Gender Bending Reflections
Reminiscing over gender identity
DarkJaguar

Left At Home
Your love goes out while you sit at home ...
RodFireProductions
Interactive Fiction
`Play in browser`

A Faerie Court Visitation `$5`
The faerie royal extends a proposal to yo...
somewhere with stories

SELF-CARE or DARE! `$3`
I dare you to play this game!
Ilya Lytvyn

Journey to You `$3`
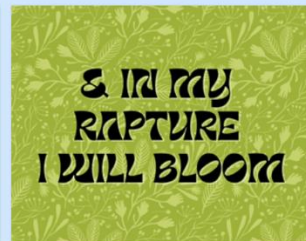A short game about queering yourself an...
breathingstories

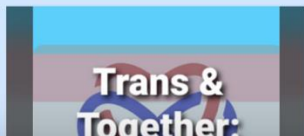## LESBIANS BUILT THIS FARM `$5`
An RPG about lesbians.
che

& In My Rapture I Will Bloom `$3`
A game of tangible joy.
Kay Marlow Allen

Trans & Together:

Trans [everything]

who am i

Herding Cats

Ambivalence

right then:

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TRANS JOY JAM

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ALT

10:16 PM · Jul 18, 2022

2   113   134   10

Primary arguments:

- Creating trans technology can be powerful and empowering because technology creators have agency to create the tools they themselves, and their communities, need to navigate the world.

- However, when trans communities are not involved in design processes, this can lead to overly individualistic design that speaks primarily to more privileged trans people's needs.

- Trans technology creation can have most impact and best address trans needs if diverse community members are meaningfully involved in design processes.
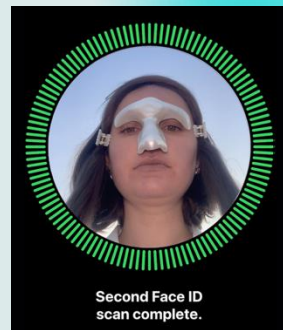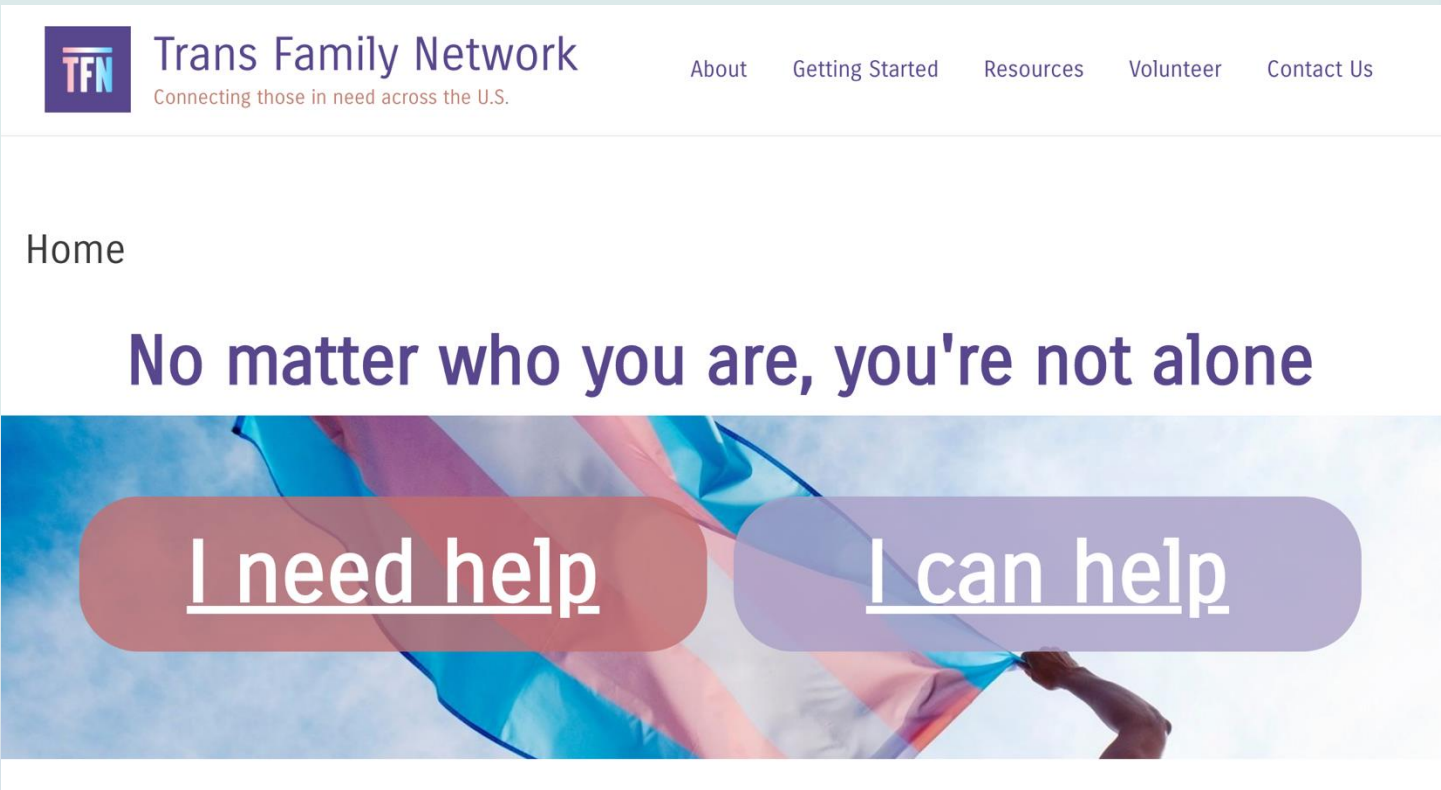
Technology helps us imagine new possibilities for trans people and communities.

&&&

Trans experiences help us imagine new possibilities for technology.

Technology helps us imagine new possibilities for trans people and communities.

Trans experiences help us imagine new possibilities for technology.
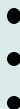

Heather Dewey-Hagborg and Chelsea Manning. *Probably Chelsea.*

As we continue to search for ways to emerge from the toxic climate that trans people are currently forced to inhabit, we can set our sights on trans technologies on the horizon and start to build those technologies that help us escape transphobic worlds. I personally tend toward a more optimistic, utopian view. I have immense hope for those sixteen-year-olds, sitting in their bedrooms in their parents' houses, or in libraries, or in youth drop-in centers, hacking at their keyboards to create browser extensions; those vast armies of trans game creators channeling their rage and creativity into trans game jams; and all those people building new technologies to help address the challenges their community faces. Each of these creators are ripples, extending out from earlier trans technologies that have inspired them. At the same time, they are also new objects breaking the surface, and they will inspire waves of future trans technologies, spreading out across the water toward the horizon.

Gaspar Avila

TRANS TECHNOLOGIES
OLIVER L. HAIMSON

MIT Press, 2025

THANK YOU!

Technology helps us imagine new possibilities for trans people and communities **&&&** trans experiences help us imagine new possibilities for technology.

order link:

haimson@umich.edu
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NSF

award #2210841