



Sex Education Alliance: SEA Side Chat Follow-up (2/18/21)

Blocked! Circumventing Social Media's Fear of Sex Terminology

Members have voiced concern about the inability to promote their work due to being blocked by social media outlets. There are certain trigger words that these outlets find distasteful, despite being used for educational purposes.

Issue:

Using typical sexual health education terminology can find users shadow-banned or completely banned.

When banned, much effort and time is required to become reinstated.

We questioned how certain groups are able to circumvent this issue, such as Planned Parenthood, sex toys, guns, and condoms.

Is sexism involved in censorship?

The Black community is often targeted as well, and disproportionately. This is tied into race politics.

Who is doing the blocking? Bots? People? Clearly they are taking the words out of context.

Member Chat Comments:

Lori: Facebook will reject ads pertaining to "sex". If rejected, you need to resubmit the original ad that was rejected. Expect at least a day for approval on FB.

Saleema: I got out of Facebook jail for a facebook ad providing a free downloadable on kids and TikTok, if you can believe it. Emailed them every day for 3 days and they let me out. My account wasn't frozen, just no ads. Then after that when I tried to do another ad about a workshop I was doing, I had to get approved to post about "Social and Political Issues". Took 3 weeks of emailing everyday, but now is fine. All this to say that maybe there is a way to be "approved" by Facebook so they will leave you alone? I haven't been banned for any of my posts other than ads, but use @ or # to write naughty words.

Lauren: No gun advertising allowed, but you can advertise a gun blog or group connecting gun enthusiasts.

Potential Resolutions:

Use *%#@# to replace letters in certain words.

Subject line should avoid all terminology to avoid going into Spam folders.

Schools are especially particular. Be aware of your wording.

Steph mentioned that Cameron Glover said to use social media as a promotional tool, not to share your content. Steph abides by that advice.

Make sure followers know where your content lives: blog, website, newsletter, etc.

SEA can make a living document in which hashtags that are banned/approved can be shared amongst members.

Can we prevent censorship of our work by reaching out preemptively to social media companies and seek approval?

Bill Taverner posts on FB about his issues. May have successful strategies.

Advocacy Opportunities:

Approach social media tech leaders about employing professional sex education professionals to help navigate censorship.

Reach out to leaders in the field such as Bill Taverner and others. Collectively use our influence and expertise to approach tech leaders.

Perhaps collaborate with Black leaders as they deal with the same issue of censorship?

Links courtesy of Steph Auteri.

<https://sassandclacks.co.uk/so-youre-shadowbanned-on-instagram/>

<https://www.theverge.com/2018/5/16/17360458/anti-sex-trafficking-law-fosta-sex-work-education-oschool>

<https://mashable.com/article/sex-toy-ads-blocked/>

<https://www.cameronglover.com/sex-ed-censorship/>

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/y3g58m/instagram-rules-censoring-sex-educators>