Title
Embracing Open Relationships with Our Network Tech

Abstract
In this article, I argue that in order to design for trust, we must first update our conceptions of trustworthiness. Networks are inherently poly-nodal. They are created by and are productive of many interconnected relations between people, energy, and machines. And yet, our conceptions of trust and fidelity are ill-fittingly monogamous. Drawing from feminist theorists—including Sue Campbell, Donna Haraway, and Alexis Shotwell—I propose an ethical non-fidelity for our networked technologies.

Etymologically, fidelity shares a Latin root with *fealty*. As many feminist theorists have argued, the Euro-American version of marriage descends from feudal practices of property ownership. Current economic models for networks wed our digital doppels to platform and provider policies with no option for negotiation or even comprehension of the terms to which we will surely comply. This odd marriage of individual propriety to proprietary network is most obvious in the terms and conditions to which we all (coercively) agree in order to access everything from our email to social media. These unread, banal confirmations of contractual obligations create expectations that are then inevitably dashed. Every reported data leak feels like lipstick stains on a partner’s collar; just more proof of ill-placed trust.

Rather than chasing authentic(ated) relationships based on an outdated version of trust, it might be time to embrace the radical openness of relationality. Building from ethical non-monogamy, I propose a future network ethics based on responsibility, negotiation, and the inherent vulnerability of relationality. I close by exploring how a commitment to mutual flourishing and responsiveness would reconfigure networks and trust as we practice them.