



Getting It On Online: Cyberspace, Gay Male Sexuality, and Embodied Identity (Haworth Gay & Lesbian Studies)

John Edward Campbell

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Learn how gay men use Internet technologies to connect with others sharing their erotic desires and to forge affirming communities online!

Getting It On Online: Cyberspace, Gay Male Sexuality, and Embodied Identity examines the online embodied experiences of gay men. At once scholarly and sensual, this unique book is the result of a three-year ethnographic study chronicling the activities on three distinct social scenes in the world of Internet Relay Chat (IRC)—virtual spaces constructed by gay men for the erotic exploration of the male body. Examining the vital role the body plays in defining these online spaces offers insight into how gay men negotiate their identities through emerging communication technologies. The author combines a critical look at the role of the body in cyberspace with candid accounts of his own online experiences to challenge conventional views on sex, sexuality, and embodied identity.

Getting It On Online provides an inside look at three specific online communities—gaychub (a community celebrating male obesity), gaymuscle (a community formulated around images of the muscular male body), and gaymusclebears (a space representing the erotic convergence of the obese and muscular male bodies emerging out of the gay male “bear” subculture)—in an effort to unsettle those models of beauty and the erotic depicted in more mainstream media. The book demonstrates how the social position of these men in the physical world in regards to age, race, gender, class, and physical beauty influences their online experiences. Far from a realm of bodiless exultation, Getting It On Online illustrates how the flesh remains very much present in cyberspace.

Getting It On Online examines topics such as:

- why people chat online
- the history of IRC (Internet Relay Chat)
- how people construct their identities in cyberspace
- how some online spaces function like virtual gay bars
- the concept of online disembodiment
- the role the body plays in online social relations
- the future of online communication
- ethnographic research in cyberspace
- mediated images of the male body and the gay male beauty myth
- and much more!

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