

# THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

## Departmental Research Seminar

### A SELF-REGULATION APPROACH TO CONTENT MODERATION: ADDRESSING SOCIAL MEDIA THREATS TO BODY IMAGE

By



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**Date : 15 Jul 2025 (Tue)**  
**Time : 10:30 am – 12 noon**  
**Venue : M714, PolyU**

#### Abstract

The proliferation of body image issues and eating disorders has become a pressing global health concern. This is exacerbated by social media's idealized appearance content promoting unhealthy beauty norms. So far, efforts to address this issue have focused on platform-enforced content moderation to reduce exposure to such content but have had limited success. Therefore, work is needed to identify effective interventions to mitigate these adverse effects. Grounded in self-regulation theory, we use a novel, user-centric approach to content moderation by teaching people how to remove idealized appearance content from their feeds using built-in platform features. We conducted a pre-registered one-week intervention study with 347 female Instagram users to evaluate whether user-driven content moderation improves body image. Results show that participants who applied this strategy experienced a healthier body image after one week. This study contributes to the information systems and social media literature by demonstrating that users can mitigate threats to their body image through self-regulated technology use by applying existing platform features. Our findings underscore the potential of user-driven content moderation as a self-regulation practice, the power of social media's built-in content moderation features, and the possibility of sustainable strategies that users can employ to protect their mental health.

**Prof. Jason Bennett Thatcher** is the Tandeand Rustandy Esteemed Professor at the Leeds School of Business, University of Colorado Boulder, and holds additional appointments at Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, and the Technical University of Munich, Germany. His research interests include individual decision-making, strategic alignment, cybersecurity, social media, and digital leadership, with publications in journals such as *MIS Quarterly*, *Information Systems Research*, and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Prof. Thatcher's work has been widely cited and recognised internationally. He currently serves as Senior Editor for *MIS Quarterly*, ambassador for the *Journal of Operations Management*, and has held editorial roles with *Information Systems Research*.

**All interested are welcome.**



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