

Are You a Feminist? How Feminism and Internet Communication Technologies Interact to Create a More Equal Society

Since 1911, March 8th has been known globally as International Women's Day. This is a day dedicated to feminism and women's equality and it celebrates women's social, economic, cultural and political achievements. In addition, this day serves as an annual call to action to end gender inequalities and advance the status of women in society worldwide. Gloria Steinem, world-renowned feminist, journalist and activist explains the fight for equality as "The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights".

The movement for gender equality has been undertaken by generations of women. Women have been fighting for social change, democracy, and equality for decades upon decades. International Women's Day celebrates the women who have created the foundations of the feminist movement and the leaders of today who demand equality and respect for women. This [video](#) from International Women's Day 2018, "The Time is Now," demonstrates worldwide support women's rights and equality, and highlights some of the people today who are furthering women's liberation.



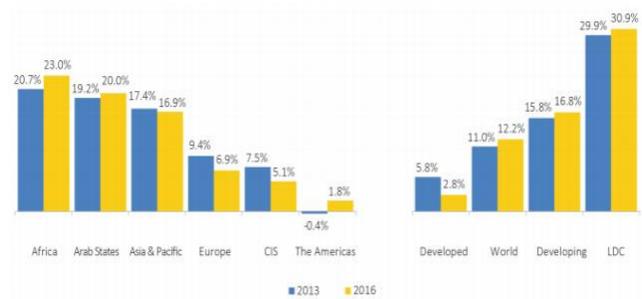
In honor of International Women's Day 2019, thousands of rallies took place all over the world, including the capital of Spain, Madrid. Over 40,000 people gathered to protest inequalities facing women and high rate of gender violence in Spain (left). People of all ages and genders participated in these marches, showing widespread support for women's equality. Marta Garcia, a protester at the rally, stated "gender violence must end, equality must be attained and the glass ceiling for women in business broken."

International Women's Day 2019 focused on spreading their cause through sharing the hashtag "[#BalanceforBetter](#)." This tag was spread through social media to connect with people and further the movement by celebrating women's achievement, raising awareness against bias, and taking action for equality. Gender equality in all capacities is essential for economies and communities to thrive on a global scale. Through furthering equality, International Women's Day is uplifting all people.

The digital divide is the discrepancy that exists between people in different geographic regions and demographics around the world in relation to access to internet communication technologies. One measure of the digital divide in internet users worldwide is the difference between male and female usage. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has found that the overall proportion of men using the Internet is higher than the proportion of women in two-thirds of countries globally. As of 2016, developed countries had a 2.8% gender difference in internet usage, while least developed countries (LDCs) had a 30.9% gender gap. It has been shown that there is a correlation between gender equality, education, and the proportion of internet usage in a country. In addition, because of this disparity, women in developing countries often receive less education, access to information, and necessary technical skills. In order to combat the global digital divide, women must receive more equal access to resources and education.

Women in technology is especially important to women’s equality in economic, social, cultural, and political capacities. In addition, it is a part of the Association for Progressive Communication’s (APC) 17 Feminist Principles of the Internet. This specifically pertains to the principle of usage, which states that we must improve the ability of women to access the internet as users, developers, producers, and creators. It is necessary that we empower women to overcome the gender divide in usage in order to foster the development of a feminist internet that is more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming.

Chart 6.12: Internet user gender gap (2013 and 2016)



Note: 2016 are estimates. The gender gap is the difference between the Internet user penetration rate for males and females in relation to the Internet user penetration rate for males, expressed as a percentage.
Source: ITU.

Technology is an industry that is overwhelmingly dominated by men, which consistently leaves women at a disadvantage to their male counterparts. While recent years have seen an increase in women in technology based careers, women still only make up 21% of computer programmers and 22% of all other technical professionals globally. It is especially important in today’s society to support the initiatives that invite women and young girls to explore technology as a space of creation and empowerment.



According to the International Women’s Day website, almost half of people globally (47%) are confident that discrimination against women in education will be eradicated by 2040. One organization working to end the gap in technical education for women and girls is Girls Who Code. This non-profit organization has trained over 185,000 girls to code. Not only does this program teach young girls technical skills, but they empower them with the confidence and leadership skills that will help them succeed. Girls Who Code supports girls from minority groups to study computer science as a lifelong pursuit. This [video](#), “Getting Women to Love Computer Science,” further examines the important work of Girls Who Code to increase female interest in coding and success in the technology industry.

Now more than ever, it is important to empower young women and girls in technology in order to achieve equality and expand respect for women globally. This calls for more female coders, business leaders, ICT entrepreneurs, and beyond to pursue influential roles in society. Girls Who Code, International Women's Day, and APC, are some of the organizations furthering the feminist internet movement and inspiring the next generation of females to fight for equality and normalize female success in technology.