

Engendering the Internet

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The Internet in Numbers

- There are **5.11 billion** smart phone users in the world today, up 100 million (2%) in the past year.
- There are **4.39 billion** internet users in 2019, an increase of 366 million (9%) compared to January 2018.
- There are **3.48 billion** social media users in 2019, with the worldwide total growing by 288 million (9%) since this time last year.
- **3.26 billion** people use social media on mobile devices in January 2019, with a growth of 297 million new users representing a year-on-year increase of more than 10%.

Source: wearesocial.com

The hidden gender gap: Access statistics

- The ITU estimates that, globally, women are 12% less likely than men to use the internet, and in two-thirds of countries, there is a higher proportion of men using the internet than women.
- Not only are young women less likely to be connected, they also use the internet in less meaningful ways, resulting into offline gender discrimination being manifested online.
- The gender gap is wider in certain parts of the world; in the least developed countries, women are 33% less likely than men to use the internet, which means only one out of seven women in these countries are using the internet compared to one out of five men.
- Mobile is the main channel to access the internet in low- and middle-income countries, where women are 26% less likely than men to use mobile internet.
- **Wikimedia: 70,000 active users. 14,000 come from the global South. And only 1000 are from Africa. Only 1 in 10 Wikimedia authors are women.**

Digital silence: why are the voices of women so little heard online?

- Social-cultural boundaries
- Lack of knowledge on the use of the Internet
- Cyberbullying/ trolling
- Financial constraints, cost of internet access/data is expensive
- Decision making is male based, few women are involved in decision making in Internet governance.
- Lack of local content and content relevant to women
- Lack of connectivity since most women are in rural areas.
- Family responsibilities

Making the Internet more Female

- Creating awareness through community networks e.g. Community Networks (Kondoa Community Network - Tanzania, Tunapanda Network, Kibera - Kenya)
- Demand equal opportunities for women as consumers of Internet content
- Encourage women to create online content and use the Internet as a platform to assert their rights. To this end, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UN Women 2016 jointly set up EQUALS, a global partnership for gender equality in the digital age, which develops many ideas to promote a more active role for women online. The initiative focuses on three core issues:
 1. **Access:** improving access to digital technologies for women and girls;
 2. **Skills:** developing skills among women and girls in the fields of science, technology and mathematics;
 3. **Leadership:** promoting women to decision-making positions in the ICT sector.

Making the Internet more Female

- Encouraging and mentoring more women to take part in decision making bodies such as ICANN, IGF and local regulators.
- Having more local content present online in terms of language and local relevance.
- Enacting better policies to enhance women engagement in IG and even in ICT.
- Passing Cyber bills and acts that protect women online

Conclusion

- As the world looks to connect the “**Next One Billion**” of Internet users, there is a **STRONG** need to have measures in place to reduce the widening digital gender gap.
- Let’s make the Internet more female-friendly, so women can attain agendas 3,4,5, 8,9,10,11 of the 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The Internet should NOT be a male domain.

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Q&A

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