CRITICALLY ABSENT

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Critically absent: Women's rights in internet governance

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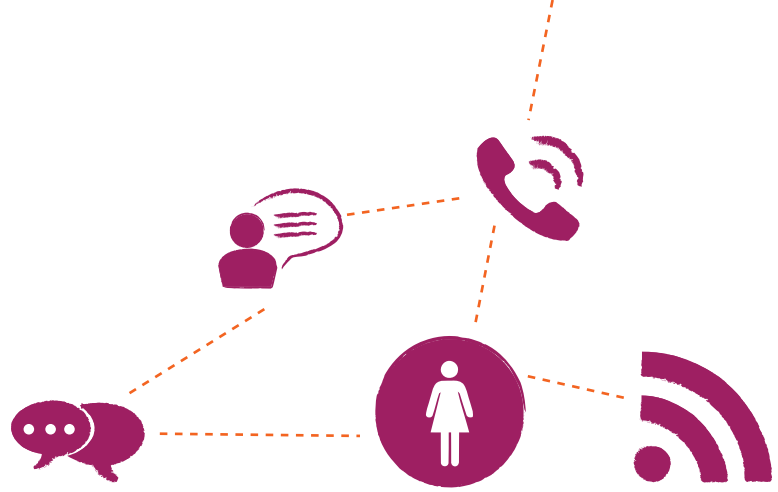ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS
ASOCIACIÓN PARA EL PROGRESO DE LAS COMUNICACIONES

WOMEN AND ICT POLICIES: THE COMMITMENT TO TAKE ON NEW DEBATES AND CHALLENGES

by Dafne Sabanes Plou

The right to communicate is vital to developing politically, economically and socially, but increasingly our public spaces are facing privatisation, excluding the poor and the marginalised. Is it time to expand the definition of public goods?

The right to communicate is vital to developing politically, economically and socially, but increasingly our public spaces are facing privatisation, excluding the poor and the marginalised. Is it time to expand the definition of public goods? Some in the feminist movement argue there is the need to work to strengthen public education and public health and recognise the value of public spaces. In the same way the internet is, or needs to be, a public good, with open content and access as a right. This is just one way where feminist voices could make a vital contribution to decision-making and public policy on the internet and new communication technologies.

Yet, still one of the first questions that arises when promoting women's participation in the decision-making of development policies on the internet and communications in cyberspace is "why should women be interested in these topics? What does the world of virtual communications have to do with women's rights and needs at present?".

It is true that the worlds of information and communications technologies (ICTs), computer science and science and technology in general have been marked by significant gender disparities. It is only in recent years, especially since the new century, that women have begun to achieve greater prominence in the ICT world, both through education and employment. This is apparent in the changing ways in which the internet is accessed. In the past, it was primarily through privately owned computers, either at home or in the office. But only a third of the world's population can access the internet regularly in these ways. Statistics are not clear about the number of women regularly using ICTs, because the results are not often broken down by gender. What is exciting about the changes in internet use is the increased use of computer and internet communication in community centres, in schools, research centers and universities, as well as in homes and the workplace,

which open up opportunities for thousands of people to connect to the network almost daily. It is likely that a high percentage of women can access the internet in these ways.

In countries that have adopted policies of digital inclusion such as one computer per student in primary and secondary schools, in theory all children and adolescents have equal opportunity of access to ICTs, creating a more level playing field for ICT access. Hopefully, these policies will encourage an increase in the number of women in technical secondary schools and tertiary careers related to computer technology.

When considering the latest statistics provided by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), we see that in several Latin American countries (Uruguay, Paraguay, Colombia. Honduras, El Salvador, Brazil) there is near parity in the number of women and men who regularly access the internet, while there are very few countries where a large majority of users are male (i.e. where there are 20-point differences between the sexes, as in Turkey, Morocco, Azerbaijan, Serbia and Croatia). In the United States, there is a slight majority of women in the number of internet users[1].

And if governments do not disaggregate statistics about internet users by gender, business does and it is interesting to look at their figures and conclusions. Sheryl Sandberg, a Facebook CEO, notes that women are not only the majority of users of this platform, but they also generate 62% of activities in the social network with messages, updates and comments[2]. On Twitter, they are not far behind. According to Dan Zarrella, women outnumber men slightly in the number of people who become followers and send "tweets"[3].

Other results tell us that:

· Social-networking sites reach a higher percentage of women than men globally, with 75.8% of women visiting a social online networking site in May 2010 vs. 69.7% of men.

· Globally, women account for 47.9% of total unique visitors to the social-networking category, but they consume 57% of pages and account for nearly 57% of total minutes spent on these sites.

· Women spend more time on social-networking sites than men on a global basis, with women averaging five-and-a-half hours per month compared to men's four hours.

· In the U.S., women buy online more than men, with 12.5% of female internet users making an online purchase in February 2010, compared to 9.3% of men4.

Market researcher Brian Solis, who knows a lot about online trends and consumption, speaks of "matriarchy" in the web when considering the number of women accessing certain sites and having a dominant presence there: Twitter, Facebook, Deli.ci.ous , Docstoc, Flickr, Myspace, Ning, Upcoming.org, Ustream, Classmates.com, Bebo and Yelp. According to Solis, the only "patriarchy", where men outnumber women as users, is Digg5. But does this mean that women are shaping the development of the internet as consumers and nothing more?

In addition to the internet, we cannot ignore the use of mobile phones, which have become a primary means of communication particularly in countries with poor telecommunications infrastructure. It is in these less developed regions where people access and make intensive use of cell phones, using them to connect to the internet and to participate with moderate intensity in social networks. While in these sectors there is still a bounded use of cell phones with prepaid cards or fixed rate combos, in most developing countries the number of cell phones in the hands of the population is almost the same as the number of inhabitants.

Returning to ITU statistics, in 2011, 86.7% of the world's population owned a cell phone, with 5.981 million mobile phone subscriptions in the world. Only 10% of the world's population has no cell phone coverage and there are regions in the world where there are more mobile phone subscriptions than inhabitants, (Russia, Europe, the Americas). The gap is still important in Africa, where only 53% own a cell phone, though the number of cell phone owners is increasing rapidly6. These figures, although not disaggregated by gender, indicate that women too, and in large numbers, have access to cell phones.

The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women and GSMA in 20107 undertook research about the use of mobile phones by women of all social sectors in the world. It reached some interesting conclusions:

· 93% of women reported feeling safer because of their mobile phone;

· 85% of women reported feeling more independent because of their mobile phone;

· 41% of women reported having increased income and professional opportunities once they owned a mobile phone;

· Women in rural areas and lower income brackets stand to benefit the most from closing the gender gap in mobile phone ownership;

· Across all countries a woman is 21% less likely to own a mobile phone than a man. This figure increases to 23% if she lives in sub-Saharan Africa, 24% if she lives in the Middle East and 37% if she lives in South Asia.

Results also showed that even among women with minimal resources, aged 14 to 74 years old, (base of the pyramid, with incomes below USD75 a month), 26% own a cell phone. Others report sharing their phones with other women. 54% of these women pay for the use of cell phones with their own income.

But are we only interested in increasing the number of women who consume internet and electronic tools, rather than defining the world in which they are used? Does it make sense to talk of "matriarchy" based on the large number of women in the use of certain social sites if they are not contributing to the design and function of those sites? The matriarchal analogy looks back. The debate has to get beyond this image. Women want to exercise full citizenship in cyberspace and to articulate the virtual world alongside the real one to assert their right to autonomy and the freedom to choose, without ties to traditional models.

Working for equal opportunities and equal access to the benefits of ICT use and appropriation could provide a unique

platform for women's personal, social, economic and political empowerment. The visionary action of women activists in the field of communication that led to the completion of Section J on Women and Media in the Beijing Platform for Action clearly laid an important foundation for creating an enabling environment in the field of communications for the exercise of women's rights.

It is therefore important to include a women's rights perspective to move the development of internet and ICT policies forward. In the World Summit on the Information Society there were recommendations that reaffirmed the need to include women in discussions and decision-making about the way these policies are implemented. It is essential to strengthen the implementation of these recommendations. Today we know that they not only lay the foundation for the development of global communications, but also the management of policies that impact on people's rights.

Personal and social communication have changed substantially with the use of ICTs, social networks and text messages. Issues of security, privacy, and surveillance are now part of the debate around ICT development. In the Cherie Blair Foundation study, women said that having a cell phone made them feel "safe". On the other hand, the mapping of gender violence and ICT use during the 2011 Take Back The Tech! campaign to end violence against women showed that cell phones were used in the majority of reported violent situations involving ICTs8. Threats, stalking, sexual harassment, improper use and circulation of intimate images or tricks to demean women, among others, constitute the universe of aggression that women face. This leads to both moral and psychological hazard. In addition, a significant percentage of these actions started as virtual violence, but ended in physical assault.

ICTs create new scenarios, new ways for people to live and these reflect real-life problems. Women should assert their rights here too, with determination and without delay. Women may not have been an active part of this conversation when it started, but the rapid pace of change online, means they need to participate now to ensure that the future of the internet is shaped taking into account women's rights concerns.

PROMOTING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT ON THE INTERNET

How should women and their organizations get involved and bring a gender perspective to the discussion on ICT policies? Is there a critical mass of women ready to enter the debate, argue, take forward the proposals and see that their views are included in the action plans of governments, businesses and international agencies? Are they ready to ensure that a suitable budget is allocated for their compliance?

In the 55th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2011, the inclusion of girls and women in the field of science and technology was central to the discussion.9 The subject can no longer be addressed only as a matter of access to education and knowledge because it deals specifically with the inclusion of women in the ICT production and employment market. Given the widespread use of ICTs, it is currently impossible and unjust to leave women without options in this field. There are even countries with unmet labour demand in the ICT field which could provide opportunities if there were adequately trained women..

But to form this critical mass requires more than expertise and experience in the field. Political skills such as lobbying and advocacy work are crucial. And the women's movement knows a lot about this. It has vast experience in debates and negotiations to achieve appropriate policies. It has confronted power in many areas: reproductive health; sexuality; women's human rights and economic, social and cultural rights; and the right to live a life without violence, among others. It is therefore important for the women's movement to put into action their skills and their recognized, proven expertise to win this space for women's rights.

Furthermore, to achieve critical mass it is necessary to create awareness about the need for intervention in ICT policies to work for women's rights. This will require developing communication activities within the women's movement and beyond as part of a political process, a process of empowerment, that will also require taking sides in the current debates on the development of the internet and ICTs.

One of the goals of women's organizations today, when they participate in policy discussions, is to achieve substantial changes in power relations and the inclusion of women's perspectives and women's proposals. Another objective is the explicit inclusion of women's rights in agreements. This involves promoting the participation of women's organizations

in the discussions, carring out lobbying and advocacy actions and building partnerships to obtain a stronger influence in the development and implementation of approved policies.

These actions have to be accompanied by the production of knowledge, research and reports that allow the discussion of development issues from the perspective of women's empowerment. They also need to include multistakeholder exchanges, where governments and the private sector are challenged to listen and take seriously women's initiatives.

Women know that their core aim should be to support democracy in the political, social and economic fields and, of course, in the field of communications, including the internet. Taking action around internet policies today means dealing with other issues and the rights associated with them that also affect people who are not connected. For example, if surveillance and internet censorship violate human rights in the virtual world, these rights are at risk in the real world too.

In these circumstances, one of the main issues to consider to further a feminist agenda should be to look to the future and see where it is essential to be present now. The women's movement has always had the ability to make visible the invisible and grant it a political character. One can start working on a feminist analysis about internet governance and make the connection with previous experiences in which women have achieved fundamental contributions on government and power structures, for example. In practical matters, one could take as examples the women's NGOs' commissions that exist in many countries that monitor and follow up the implementation of national agreements on the rights of women. Women's organisations should create or join monitoring committees on internet policies, as part of the broad participation of social movements and grassroots groups.

Something to keep in mind in any mobilization strategy that includes new issues is that they must be linked to the agenda of the women's movement's. There are many issues to be resolved to ensure the rights of women in everyday life, and it is very difficult to add onto that agenda concerns that are not well defined or connected to solutions that improve real life. To get involved with real commitment, women in grassroots' movements need to understand why it is important to include internet policy issues in their discussions, campaigns and actions.

As noted earlier, there are voices from the feminist movement that say it is time to create a new public good. There is

need to strengthen public education and public health and recognise the value of public spaces. In the same way the internet should be held as a public good, with open content and access as a right. Women's organizations need to get involved in movements for communication rights on the internet and to create spaces to affirm women's achievements and full participation in society.

In 2007 a *Dynamic Coalition on Gender* was created in the context of the Internet Governance Forum. Not many women's organizations participate regularly in this forum and it is only in recent years that women's participation in main panels and working groups has become effective. In the IGF 2011 in Nairobi, the Coalition decided to release a Declaration10 in which, among other things, it expressed concern about governments and companies' efforts to control the internet, compromising its openness and inclusiveness. Furthermore, the declaration states that these policies of control have created tensions by attempting to impose "retrograde, paternalistic and patriarchal visions of women's needs and rights". It ends calling for the inclusion of gender justice as an essential ingredient in the formulation of operating policies online.

This Policy Advocacy Toolkit encourages women and their organizations to engage in a political discussion about the promotion of internet development with a vision of inclusion, fairness and respect for human rights. We expect to be a tool that can be used to raise awareness and encourage participation in a new environment where women cannot and should not be absent.

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INTERNET GOVERNANCE AND GENDER ISSUES

by Avri Doria
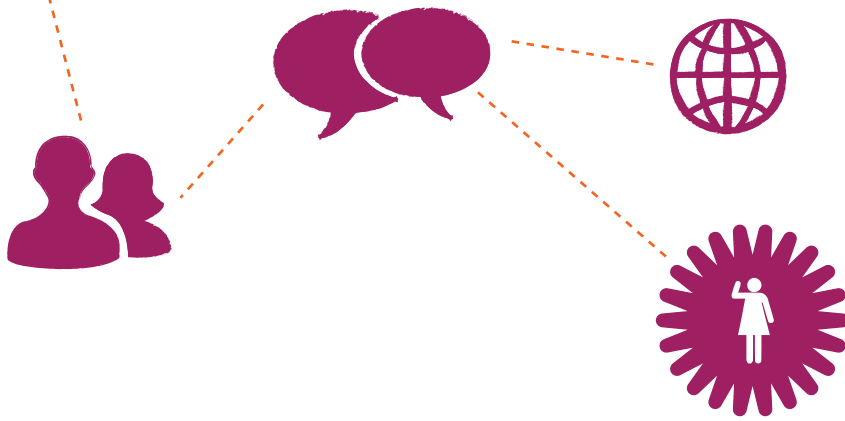
THE INTERNET[1], INTERNET GOVERNANCE AND ITS BASIC STRUCTURES

The Internet can be looked at in many different ways, ranging from a collection of protocols, bits and bytes, or a set of autonomous networks operating cooperatively, or a political maelstrom of conflicting rights, claims and infringements. In this article, the most relevant feature of the Internet is that it is a set of diverse networks, each with its own autonomy, that operate under a set of principles and norms that have for been largely accepted without any formal agreement or mandate. Within these networks, gender issues have not been a subject of concern, except occasionally.

The two fundamental documents on Internet governance are the Report of the Working Group on Internet Governance and the Tunis Agenda of the WSIS[2]. This paper is no different from other discussions of Internet governance that generally start with, and return to, the 'agreed language'[3] of these documents : created through a multi-stakeholder consensus in the WGIG[4] Report and by inter-governmental approval in the the Tunis Agenda.

The first important definition is that of Internet governance itself, found in the WGIG Report and repeated in the Tunis Agenda:

Internet governance is the development and application

by Governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet. (WGIG report page 4, Para 10, Tunis Agenda Para 34)

The WGIG report suggested the creation of a forum that became the IGF[5]:

Such a space or forum for dialogue (hereafter referred to as "the forum") should allow for the participation of all stakeholders from developing and developed countries on an equal footing. Gender balance should be considered a fundamental principle with the aim of achieving an equal representation of women and men at all levels. ... (WGIG report page 11, point 43)

The Tunis Agenda, the touchstone against which the practice of iInternet governance is measured, does mention gender issues, but barely:

We recognize that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divide in society and we reaffirm our commitment to women's empowerment and to a gender equality perspective, so that we can overcome this divide. We further acknowledge that the full participation of women in the Information Society is necessary to ensure the inclusiveness and respect for human rights within the Information Society. We encourage all stakeholders to support women's participation in decision making processes

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1. While the Association for Progressive Communication does not capitalise 'Internet', as a step towards demystifying the term, the author argues that it is a proper name and needs to be capitalised. This paper thus follows the author's preference.

2. WSIS: World Summit on the Information Society

3. Agreed Language: Once a group of diplomats arrive at language that their countries approve and put into approved documents, this becomes agreed language. This language has an almost magical property as it can used in almost any document as a way to grab the attention of a reader, and any argument based on agreed language starts with an advantage.

4. WGIG: Working Group on Internet Governance

5. IGF: Internet Governance Forum

and to contribute to shaping all spheres of the Information Society at international, regional and national levels. (Tunis Agenda, Page 61, Point 23)

As these words are 'agreed language' they can and should be part of any argument made to a government that has signed off on the WSIS process.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As mentioned in the working definition, the multi-stakeholder mix of Internet governance is understood in terms of various roles and responsibilities. According to the multistakeholder WGIG Report:

"Civil society. The roles and responsibilities of civil society include:

- Awareness-raising and capacity-building (knowledge, training, skills sharing).

- Promoting various public interest objectives.

- Facilitating network-building.

- Mobilizing citizens in democratic processes.

- Bringing perspectives of marginalized groups, including, for example, excluded communities and grass-roots activists.

- Engaging in policy processes.

- Contributing expertise, skills, experience and knowledge in a range of ICT policy areas.

- Contributing to policy processes and policies that are more bottom-up, people-centred and inclusive.

- Research and development of technologies and standards.

- Development and dissemination of best practices.

- Helping to ensure that political and market forces are accountable to the needs of all members of society.

- Encouraging social responsibility and good governance practice. "
(WGIG report page 11, point 43)

This set of roles and responsibilities allows for the introduction of, and advocacy for, a diverse set of gender concerns. While these roles and responsibilities were expressed by the WGIG, for various reasons, this list of roles and responsibilities was not included in the Tunis Agenda, which only stated:

c) Civil society has also played an important role on Internet matters, especially at the community level, and should continue to play such a role. (WGIG report page 19, point 49)

This limitation has, to my knowledge, never been accepted by civil society, which continues to strive for full participation as a stakeholder.

ORGANIZATIONS DEALING WITH INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Two of the more prominent organisations focused on internet governance are the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), initiated by the United Nations (UN) in response to the Tunis Agenda, and Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the institution that was in many people's opinions probably the real target of the WSIS process[6].

INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

The IGF is a global multi-stakeholder platform mandated by the UN General Assembly and initiated by the United Nations as an unfunded mandate[7]. Its purpose is to provide a place where all stakeholders can discuss public policy matters related to Internet governance. The IGF has a yearly international meeting and several preparatory meetings. Both the preparatory meetings and the yearly meeting are open venues that provide robust debate on policy dialogue and deliberation. The IGF does not produce binding decisions, but it does produce informal outcomes that seem to have had an effect on the groups responsible for managing critical Internet functions.

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6. Many have argued, with decent evidence, that the main impetus behind the WSIS process was one of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU, part of the UN system)'s perennial attempts to wrest control of iInternet addresses and domain names from ICANN. The degree to which this cynical view is true probably does not matter, as the multi-stakeholder model that came out of WSIS is something of real value to civil society in helping combat the digital divide.

7. An unfunded mandate is one way used by the nations of the UN to do something without doing it. While agreeing that something should be done, by not funding it they prevent it from happening. The IGF has managed to survive through contributions.

Over the last few years, many IGF-like meetings have been held in national and regional settings. These meetings have fed into the global IGF meetings and added a great deal of depth and pertinence to the issues discussed there. This may lead to having an IGF that is not under the top down control of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), but an IGF that finds its legitimacy in the bottom-up contributions of the national and regional IGF meetings.

The most involved component of the IGF is the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG). The MAG is essentially the program committee for the yearly meeting, comprised half from governments representing the UN regions and half from among the other stakeholder groups - civil society, the private sector and the Internet technical community. If gender issues are going to be on the main agenda of the IGF, it is essential that there be at least one champion for those issues on the MAG.

ICANN

In contrast to the IGF that has very few opportunities for leadership, ICANN has a very large number of opportunities for volunteer involvement in the leadership of the organization. Though in reaction to WSIS and IGF discussions, ICANN is at the forefront of bottom-up multi-stakeholder management. It is also the organization responsible for critical Internet resources such as IP[8] addresses and Domain Names. It comprises a great number of working groups, of many sorts, on many topics. Most are either responsible for policy recommendations or advise on policy and other activities within ICANN. There are several ways to get involved in the work of ICANN, and several ways to get involved in its leadership. One way, similar to most volunteer organizations, involves gaining a reputation from doing volunteer work and then being elected by one's fellow stakeholder members to some task or leadership spot. Another unique way in ICANN is the Nominating Committee, commonly referred to as the NomCom[9]. This group, drawn from all stakeholder groups inside ICANN and in consultation with several external groups, is responsible for bringing the voices of the global Internet community into the various groups inside ICANN. There are roles in the User or At-Large advisory committee, ALAC[10], in the policy committee for generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs) - the Generic Names Supporting Organization, in the policy committee for country code TLDs (ccTLDs) - the country code

Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), and on the ICANN Board. There are appointments available each year in each of the organizations. Further information on every year's recruitment drive, can be found on the Nomcom site.

WHY SHOULD INTERNET GOVERNANCE INCLUDE CONSIDERATION OF GENDER ISSUES?

Eradicating the digital divide is among the more important issues in Internet governance. In general, this work is succeeding. However, this has not come without a price for women. In any country that has separate spaces for women, as the digital divide for men decreases, the disadvantages for women increase; this is contrary to the mission as set out in the Tunis Agenda that assumes narrowing the digital divide for men also narrows it for women. This is directly mentioned in the Tunis Agenda and can be addressed through policies on Internet governance. It needs tobe addressed as soon as possible as the problem is worsening.

Another area of concern is around issues of privacy. Information is collected for many purposes when using the Internet, for example the personal information needed to register a domain name that is made public, or the information that is inevitably collected though the use of the World Wide Web that is sold to marketing companies and others. Often this information can be used in ways that threaten women and their families. This aspect of the problem rarely comes up in Internet governance discussion, but is an important component that could change the general understanding of the privacy issue.

Information filtering presents another real disadvantage to women, offsetting the advantage of access to information the Internet is supposed to bring. In many places, for example libraries and schools in the US, any information on reproductive rights or sexually transmitted disease prevention is filtered. So even if women can get access to the Internet, they often cannot gain access to the information necessary to improve the gendered conditions of their lives, information that can in many case save their lives and the lives of their daughters.

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8. IP: Internet Protocol. the addresses used to address the location of systems and functions in the Internet

9. Nomcom is a misnomer as it does not nominate a segment of the leadership, but is rather responsible for actually making the appointment. Some have suggested it be renamed.

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10. ALAC: At Large Advisory Committee

These are but three major Internet governance issues that have a direct effect on women that illustrate why we need to take the gender issue perspective seriously.

WHY SHOULD WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS CARE ABOUT INTERNET GOVERNANCE?

Often one hears that gender issues in the 'real world' are more important than those online and that there is no time for activism on gender issues related to internet governance. Yet the Internet has a real effect on gender issues, both in the possibility for good and the possibility for harm.

The Internet has a pervasive influence on today's political culture. Very few topics concerned with women's rights can be separated from issues of access, freedom to knowledge and of expression and privacy that are central to Internet governance. The issues of Internet governance are connected by their origin in human rights, as are gender rights.

Encouraging participation in Internet governance is not the same as encouraging participation in ICTs[11]. In an ICT effort, important as that is, there have always been good reasons why women's rights activists put other needs first. However, gendered Internet governance involves the question of how women are enabled to use ICTs.

For example, evidence shows that in many areas where women's space is separated from men's space, women do not have the same opportunities to use the Internet. Even when the space is allegedly neutral, such as an Internet café, women do not always have the same social and cultural freedom to enter those spaces or to use them safely and comfortably for prolonged periods of time. Throughout the world, women face constraints of mobility, time constraints and cost to utilizing ICTs fully. Internet governance provides a vehicle by which activists can work to ensure that women in their communities have equal opportunity to access the knowledge and information that are being made available to men. Some countries, such as India, have made reaching women a national priority and have worked to enable women's use of the Internet. Many countries have not. One goal of feminist Internet governance would be to advocate for such national programs.

Improving women's access to technologies, information and technical assistance can provide an avenue for them to become entrepreneurs and leaders of their communities. The Internet is one important means by which women gain the knowledge to purify water, produce crops, and gain access to knowledge of reproductive rights and infant well-being. As information becomes available in more of the world's languages and as download-able recordings and streamed video become ubiquitous, the limitations on Internet use decrease. In many ways, the effort to spread ICT is taking root, but women are not getting equal access to those social advantages. This is an Internet governance issue that won't be addressed without the participation and perseverance of gender advocates.

Other areas where Internet governance gender advocacy is needed include:

- Dissemination of expertise/ case studies tailored for policy- and decision-makers;

- Work with national governments to encourage them to mainstream gender in their information and technology policies;

- Protection of LGBTQIA groups that use the Internet as the only place where they are free to express themselves;

- Issues involving policies that enable the use of the Internet as a method of preventing violence against women;

- Providing access to information - this issue concerns not only information for women in developing regions but can, for example, extend to issues related to the availability of reproductive information that is filtered from many libraries in the US;

- Enabling safe access for women;

- Safety of women on the Internet especially as it relates to privacy.

Women's rights activists should take interest because the digital divide widens the gap between the access to knowledge that women have compared to their male counterparts. This lag contributes to women disproportionately bearing the effects of poverty in many countries, both developing and developed.

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11. ICT: Information and Communication Technologies - these are the other focus of WSIS and part of the solution to the digital divide.

Women rights activists should also take interest because Internet governance can enable and make available technology to combat gender-based violence. Privacy issues are bound up in this, as without privacy, safety is hard to ensure. A safe Internet not only gives women greater ability to report violence, it gives women the possibility of a safe place to share their stories, e.g. APC's Take Back the Tech! campaign.

PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN IN INTERNET GOVERNANCE

In terms of participation[12], women are in the room. At an ICANN or an IGF meeting, there is a significant, if less than equal, female presence. But, as one moves through the various layers of leadership and responsibility, the number of women in ICANN starts to decrease. One of the big concerns each year is whether any women will get into the ICANN Board of Directors. At the time of writing, out of 15 voting directors, only two were women[13]. And that is as good as it has been in ICANN. In terms of the IGF and its Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) there has always been a deliberate effort to balance the group in terms of gender as well as regional representation.

In addition to women's participation, one needs to look at how receptive Internet governance institutions are to women's issues. In general, while women's participation is welcome, they are not expected to bring up women's issue. It may be the old fashioned engineering ethos that all issues are gender neutral, or it may be due to policy issues that are believed to be driven 'purely' by business goals and trademark issues. Whatever the reason, the issues of Internet governance are not understood as being gendered. Descriptions of gender analysis would be listened to politely and then forgotten. It is not that the atmosphere is hostile, as that would not be considered correct professional behavior. It is just that gender aspects of issues are not recognized and don't fit into the general world view of most ICANN or IGF participants. In the IGF even though there is a Dynamic Coalition on Gender Issues and Internet governance, it has never been very active and has not really managed to affect the discussion.

GETTING INVOLVED

The first recommendation then is that women in general and especially women with a gender oriented agenda need to get involved with the Internet governance institution of their choice and need to look toward leadership. In one way it is easier than it seems. In many ways is it isn't as easy as I sometimes think it is.

Whether it is ICANN and one of its working groups, one of the Regional Internet Registries (RIR) and their policy committees, the IGF or one of its Dynamic Coalitions, if you can find a dynamic place to be, getting involved is as easy as putting your name on an email list and starting to take part in the discussions and volunteering to take on a task. Really, that is it all takes! One basic secret about volunteer organizations is that if you want to get something done, it helps to be one of the doers. It is not that doers get everything they want because the multi-stakeholder process does not work that way. But writing initial drafts or serving as an editor does gives one the ability to be part of shaping policies, recommendations and opinions.

Given cultural barriers and the difficulty most new participants, especially women, have with asserting themselves, this prescription may not be as easy as it sounds. E.g each of these multi-stakeholder organizations has its own methodologies and modalities. Each of these organizations also has its own jargon. The best method for bringing people into the organization is to use trailblazers or mentors who can guide and assist with the organizational maze.

In terms of getting gender issues into the agendas, there are two problems that need to be overcome, the fact that the other stakeholders, including many from civil society, do not recognize the problems as existing and that finding the appropriate venue can be challenging. Currently, women's issues get mentioned once or twice in every major meeting but they are neither explored nor discussed in any detail.

The solution to this problem involves educating the other stakeholders of the critical nature of gender issues. This cannot be done solely through well spoken representatives. Rather gender experts need to be persistent in submitting comments on varied and sundry topics under discussion, presenting gender analysis of the situation, whether it is WHOIS and privacy or cybersecurity and women's and

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12. The discussion on participation level is anecdotal. I know of no recording keeping for ICANN, IGF or other critical Internet resource that records male versus female attendance. I will speak of the two organizations in which I currently participate. It would be good to gather statistics on the various organizations. Figures are kept in many organizations on national origin of participants, but not it appears on the gender diversity.

13. There are also 2 non voting liaisons who are women out of 5 non voting liaisons to the Board.

LGBTQIA (aka gay) safety or any number of other subjects. Whether it is the opportunities in the IGF for comment on every issues involved in the program of the yearly meeting, or in ICANN where every policy goes through several periods of public comment, comments pointing out gender's relevance to the issue must be submitted. It is only by submitting comments that gender will make it into the synthesis and other reports.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE INTERNET

by Margarita Salas
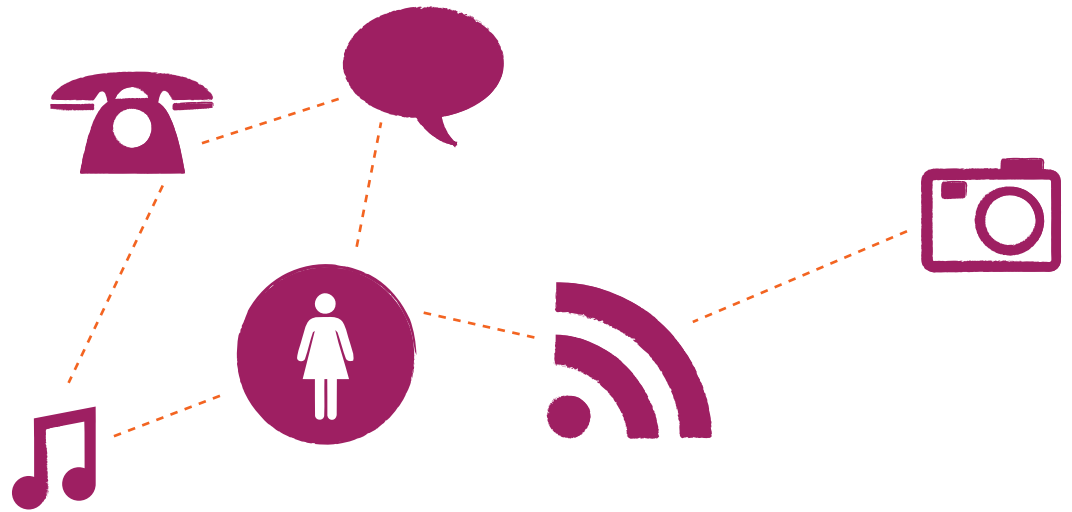
OUR VOICES IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The growth of the internet has been exponentially faster than any other medium of mass communication, whether printed news, radio or television. Over two billion people now have access to the internet, and half of those people have come online in the past five years[1].

If one also takes into account the growing tendency of media to converge, for example, television programs broadcasting videos that were originally posted online, it is not difficult to imagine the reach today of writers, journalists and communicators.

In the public imaginary, the internet represents great promise for bottom-up freedom of expression, a breaking point from the historical debate about ownership of the media and the potential to make visible the diversity of voices that conform our societies. However, each day it becomes clearer that the online assembly reproduces the power balances and inequalities of tr aditional media, because although we are using a new channel, we are generally still talking to the same audience. Hence, we face a largely patriarchal and conservative public, which now has more tools to voice its position and take action against those that diverge from mainstream conceptions.

Women face different challenges as a public voice than men. As Jeff Sonderman wrote in his article, Women journalists confront harassment, sexism when using social media: *"We, all men and women, share struggles against name calling, personal attacks and general trollishness in any online forum. But women too often face an additional layer of spite, insult and objectification."*

Just as happens in other public spaces, when women take the stand they find themselves struggling with gender based discrimination. Women's opinions and proposals are devalued not due to their content but in terms of our value as women, from the patriarchal perspective, which implies our physical appearance, our ability to engage in a relationship with a man or to bear children. That is, although we are acting and speaking in a public sphere, we are being questioned from a personal sphere; which is just another way of not recognizing our voice as legitimate in the public sphere.

In this sense, Nancy Fraser has made an important contribution to demystify Habermas's idea of the public sphere, stating that: "*Public spheres themselves are not spaces of zero-degree culture, equally hospitable to any possible form of cultural expression. Rather, they consist in culturally specific institutions (culturally specific rethorical lenses that filter and alter the utterances they frame.*"[2]

ONLINE HARASSMENT AS A SILENCING STRATEGY

Thinking of the internet as a communication and dissemination channel within a culturally specific public sphere allows us to understand the harassment faced by female communicators and journalists as a form of violence against women (VAW). Jennifer Gish, a columnist at Albany Times Union, reported receiving several forms of harassment after a sports article, including[3]:

- Recommendations that she conform to a traditional female role: *Maybe you should stay in the kitchen next time*

1. Kelly, S. and Cook, S. (2011) Freedom on the Net 2011. A global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media. Freedom House.

2. Fraser, Nancy (1992) Rethinking the Public Sphere: A contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy in Craig Calhoum (ed.) Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge

- Remarks about the journalist's physical appearance: *seen some photos of you and you are as ugly as your story about we bills fans.*

- Explicit sexual references: *YOU SUCK DONKEY D***! That's why females shouldn't be allowed to write articles about sports.*

It's important to point out that these threats and insults follow the same logic of cat calling and other forms of harassment: they are seen by the men that perform them as punishment, as a consequence women must face for behaving outside of their socially determined gender role. In this specific scenario, the online bashing is a silencing strategy, intended to keeps women's voices outside the public sphere.

Some readers may think that male journalists are often bashed by sports fans too, but to perceive the gendered response it is key to look at the nature of the insults. When readers disagree with a male columnist they don't comment on the reporter's physical appearance or sexual behavior - unless it is to question his manhood by assigning him female characteristics, another example of the widespread misogyny in our societies.

Also, women who represent groups that are socially discriminated against, such as the LGBT or the black community, receive more online harassment, which greatly questions the collective hopes being placed on the internet as a haven for freedom of speech. As Laurie Penny says, *"free speech means being free to use technology and participate in public life without fear of abuse and if the only people who can do so are white, straight men, the internet is not as free as we'd like to believe."*[4]

Since the media has a key role in shaping our social ethos, it is particularly important that we ensure it is a space where a diversity of voices is heard. If we don't take action to provide safe spaces for journalists and communicators who represent socially excluded groups, we will contribute to the misconceptions and misrepresentations about the capacity and interests of the diverse women that comprise our societies.

TAKING STEPS AGAINST ONLINE HARASSMENT

Women journalists and communicators face harassment both online and offline, so they've come up with some creative solutions to fight against it.

SPEAK UP

It may seem small, but telling others that we're being harassed is an important first step in the process of fighting this violence. Whether it's our friends, our colleagues, our readers or all of the above, when we speak about the forms of harassment we are experiencing it contributes to raising awareness of the issue and to identifying the specific ways in which we are being targeted to think of the best ways to fight it. It also tells others who face the same harassment that they are not alone, helps to identify the extent of the problem and thus to help provoke institutional responses to protect women communicators.

USE THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

As journalists or communicators we are aware of the power of public scrutiny, so we can use the fact that we are public figures in our favor and raise the flag against online harassment.

For example, Think Progress reporter Alyssa Rosenberg began tweeting the full names and institutional affiliations of her harassers under the #ThreatoftheDay hashtag and feminist blogger Sady Doyle used the hashtag #mencallmethings to document the slurs, the rape fantasies and the hate mail she was receiving.

THE POWER OF MANY

When one belongs to a socially discriminated group it becomes particularly relevant to engage in joint efforts. So if you are woman working as a journalist or communicator and you are being harassed, perhaps it's time to look up the closest journalist association and start talking to other female journalists that are facing the same challenges.

An interesting example is JAWS: the Journalism and Women Symposium, which started in 1985 as a gathering of 15 U.S. female journalists and has grown to be a group of hundreds of journalists, educators and researchers that support the professional empowerment and personal growth of other women in journalism and work towards a more accurate portrayal of society.

3. http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/mediawire/147661/a-female-columnist-writes-about-football-and-is-told-to-stay-in-the-kitchen-next-time/

4. http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/laurie-penny-a-womans-opinion-is-the-miniskirt-of-the-internet-6256946.html

THE WEIGHT OF THE LAW

It's important for us as female communicators and journalists to know the legislation that applies in our countries regarding harassment and online communications. And, if there are no applicable policies or regulations to protect us on these issues, it might be time to start advocating to change that situation. In this case, it's key to remember that Section J of the Beijing Platform specifically addresses the issue of women and media, including equal participation of women, as well as research to identify areas in need of attention and action.

LINKS AND RESOURCES

Although there are several tips on how to deal with online harassment, it is important to remind ourselves that this is a form of violence, which means that it is the result of patriarchy, a social system that discriminates against women, and not the result of our actions: in short, not our fault. As Sady Doyle says in The Girl's Guide to Staying Safe Online: "When I first started writing online, I was sure that I would be able to avoid attacks because I thought I knew the rules to the game. As it turns out, those rules are not what I thought they were. Every Photo Is the Wrong Photo. Every Name is the Wrong Name. Any Kind of Good is Too Good. Don't Go It Alone."

WORKING TO HALT ONLINE ABUSE (WHOA)

WHOA is a volunteer organization founded in 1997 to fight online harassment through public education, education of law enforcement personnel, and empowerment of victims. They've also formulated voluntary policies which they encourage online communities to adopt in order to create safe and welcoming environments for all internet users. Their volunteers work with people currently experiencing online harassment, and help others to learn how to avoid such harassment or minimize its impact if it does occur.

Among some of the useful resources that you will find in their website are:

- Online harassment and cyberstalking statistics reports from 2000 to 2011.

- Cyberstalking laws that are applicable in the U.S., Australia and India

- A list of lawyer referrals that will work with victims on a contingency basis

- Service providers and resources for computer and hard drive forensic analysis.

ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION (EFF)

Founded in 1990, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) combines the expertise of lawyers, policy analysts, activists, and technologists, to fight on behalf of consumers and the general public, in the area of digital rights. The organization works primarily in the courts, bringing and defending lawsuits, but also mobilizes citizens, advises policymakers, and educates the press and public. On their webpage you can find information about their criteria for assuming the legal defense of specific cases.

TAKE BACK THE TECH

Take Back the Tech! is a collaborative campaign to reclaim information and communication technologies (ICT) to end violence against women (VAW). The campaign calls on all ICT users – especially women and girls – to take control of technology and strategically use any ICT platform at hand (mobile phones, instant messengers, blogs, websites, digital cameras, email, podcasts and more) for activism against gender-based violence.

Take Back the Tech! accompanies the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (November 25 – December 10 each year) with daily actions that explore different aspects of violence against women and ICT tools.

"Map it. End it. Demand change." was the core of the Take Back the Tech! campaign for 2011. Take Back the Tech! used Ushahidi to map forms of violence against women, to name, point out, show as related, and denounce - and in that way changed the mapped territory into one that respects the rights of women and children. To map violence the platform receives information sent online, through cellular phone text messages or videos from smartphones.

# A STAR IS PORN? – INTERNET AND A KIND OF PORN WOMEN LIKE[1]

by Bruno Dallacort Zilli[2]

2. Bruno Dallacort Zilli is a Brazilian anthropologist. He has a Master's Degree in Collective Health and is a PhD candidate in Social Sciences, his current research being on sexual rights political activism. He wrote his M.A. thesis on an Internet "sexual" community (a BDSM network), doing ethnography online. He is also a researcher of the Latin American Center on Sexuality and Human Rights - CLAM.
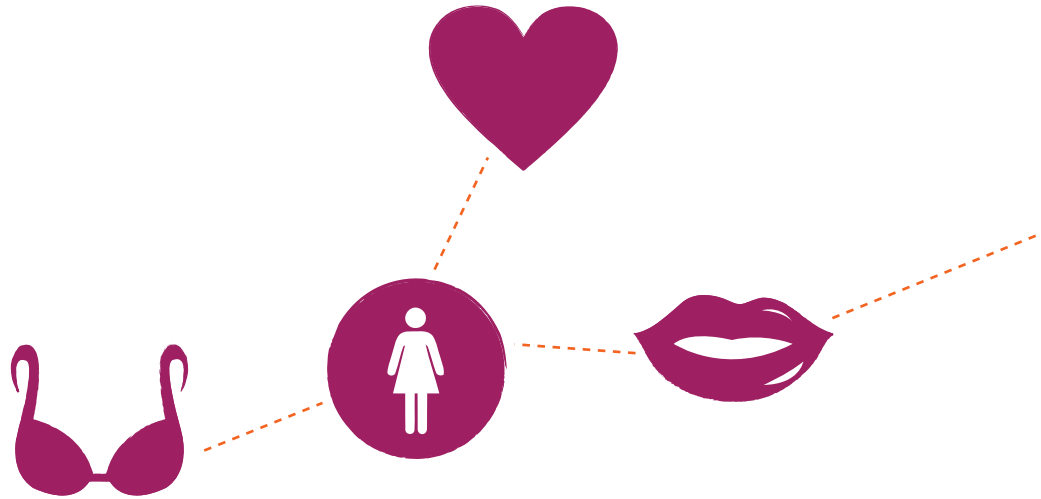
INTRODUCTION

In this article I will discuss representations of women's tastes, and how there are some preconceptions and misconceptions that take women for granted when it comes to their likes and dislikes. I will focus on the themes of sexuality[3] and the body[4], and propose that the internet and its myriad virtual spaces and forms of sociability can give some visibility to women's own words and discussions about their sexuality, which can help re-shape our perceptions about their interests.

I will also discuss internet regulation, since freedom of speech online has been a major issue, and "sexuality traverses the debate on content regulation in key, though invisible ways." (Kee, 2011:7) For instance, sexuality is usually central in arguments in favor of more intense internet regulation, and these arguments usually imply that there is a 'proper sexuality'. Initiatives to regulate online content targeting piracy can also have an impact on relevant and empowering expressions about the self, impairing cultural diversity online.

I'll be in dialogue with gender and sexuality studies, as well as social anthropology, as I will be focusing on the matter of social representations and cultural meanings. At the same time, I will adopt a similar point of view to authors such as Lévy (1995), considering the internet part of a gamut of experiences that start offline and continue online seamlessly, even if through different interfaces – the online being a technology mediated experience that foregoes physicality and co-presence: the virtual.

The APC-Women EroTICS Research Project introduced discussion about gender and sexuality into current debates on internet regulation, freedom of speech and the role of ICTs, helping to broaden and enhance their scope. I am drawing from my experience as a member of the EroTICs-Brazil team. Our research theorized internet and online sociability such that:

"Anonymity and interactivity are defining features of certain types of online sociability, facilitating meaningful engagements and generating precious opportunities for marginalized subjects, such as youth, women, and sexual minorities, to elaborate ideas and identities. The Internet has become a privileged site for the expression, construction, and subversion of hegemonic and subaltern, established and emergent discourses. Furthermore, online activity is crucial for the articulation and negotiation of public issues that are barred, tabooed, restricted, or subject to regulation offline. (...) The Internet and the virtualization processes it engenders are mechanisms intrinsically related to capitalist society and relations. The Internet materialized as part of the series of individualizing processes that transformed power relations with the advent of Modernity, as described by Foucault (1976). We highlight the role of this technology as a technique for the incitement to discourse about the self, which Foucault identified with the operation of the sexuality device. The Internet becomes a source for the production of truth about the self, and for the production of true discourses on sex. (...) In other words, the Internet is a space propitious to non-(hetero)normative expressions

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3. Sexuality is understood here as the full range of human sexual activity, from desires to actual intercourse, including sexual orientation and the social perceptions about sex.

4. The body is the main interface of human beings with the world around them, and understood as the center of all individuality ("my body"). But the body is also a subject of social constraints, from the way it is used (how we sit, eat and clean our bodies) to the way it is expected to look like (fat, thin, tall, short, beautiful, healthy, etc.). As such, culture has an impact on the body, including the ways society controls people through their bodies (imprisonment, clothing, medicalization, etc.).

(…). A parallel can be drawn between how the sexuality device operates and the effects of the Internet in terms of a segmentation of interests and the formation of virtual communities of people with common interests, demands, desires, fantasies, etc." (Sívori & Zilli, 2010)

Internet regulation initiatives usually consider online anonymity a problem. Interactivity is another feature deeply related to content regulation concerns, since the act of sharing is at the root of piracy. Hence, the importance of anonymity and interactivity is paramount; both as internet features that enhance expressions of self and as concerns that form the basis of stronger internet regulation initiatives.

WOMEN, INTERNET AND PORN

I will address a media product whose availability has been greatly enhanced by the internet, and that is usually assumed not to be in women's interest or of interest to women[5]: porn. Although I will be addressing hardcore, i.e. explicit porn, I make no distinction between porn, pornography and erotica (what would be labeled as softcore, i.e. non-explicit or 'artistic'), a distinction which seems to parallel that between high art/ literature and popular or mass entertainment – which, as Eco (1979) observed, only buys into the ideology of the products themselves without looking at the cultural contexts in which they are inserted, and the sociopolitical background which gives them character and function.

I want to focus on the male body in porn and how it is perceived by women, how gendered expectations about the bodies and sexual meanings are transmitted, and how narratives around the body can objectify and sexualize it. However, I will not work with the perspective that objectification and sexualization are inherently wrong or bad, or that it is wrong or bad to like and enjoy them. Instead, I will focus on what purposes they serve in the narratives in which they occur, and how they can sometimes be a rich and empowering experience to the people who enjoy them (and sometimes, to those who produce them[6]).

Online porn has seen a growing niche of 'female friendly movies'. The category seems to be fairly new, almost unheard of a year ago, but it has already drawn attention: Marie Claire has an online article on it with links to supposedly 'female friendly' websites. Some sites hosting online videos now have it, such as Porn Hub, which has a tag for it with a pink ♀. Long before the internet the porn industry had already

realized the potential of the female consumer. According to Ross (1993) there has been "pornography from a woman's point of view" since the mid 80s[7], but the internet is giving the niche a strength it never previously knew. Not only is the content female friendly, but so is the access to it: from the privacy of one's home, anonymously and securely – at least comparatively, since before the internet sex and porn were only commercially available in men-dominated public spaces (cinemas, video stores, bars, brothels).

Anonymity, security and privacy are all issues taken for granted on the internet. Although they are relative, dependent on legislation and service providers trust for instance, the perception of their effectiveness has improved the comfort zone for accessing porn. Changes on how porn is produced, with emphasis on amateurs' videos and exhibitionism (the success of cam4cam comes to mind), also brought women closer to porn. When porn grows closer to the domestic sphere, the home, then it grows closer to women, since this is traditionally the sphere of life associated with the feminine. Furthermore, access to pornographic narratives can have a positive impact on an individual's life: the EroTICs-Brazil research established porn as an important medium of sexual knowledge transmission and socialization, and porn can help a person come to terms with sexual desires, realizing or expressing them.

The free flow of information is a main issue when it comes to internet regulation debates, and online pornographic content is central because it 'hurts' both the porn industry through the free peer-to-peer sharing of their products and the moralizing sector of society, which usually see the easy availability of pornographic content online as a major social hazard, especially affecting those subjects that are often considered more vulnerable to 'internet dangers': children, young people and women. It is obvious that internet users need to be able to use the internet safely, but this does not have to be at the expense of freedom of expression, and a balance between these needs has to be achieved. As Kee (2011) noted on the Introduction of the EroTICs Exploratory Research Study:

"A central concern and key value is in the need to ensure greater protection of the right to privacy and security. Content regulation is almost always accompanied by surveillance measures, and in the face of missing privacy protection, this raises serious questions about the vitality of online spaces in advancing social justice. The trend towards punishment and criminalization anchored by

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5. And indeed major feminism theory assumes pornography is actually against women's best interests.

6. Ross (1993) argues that some porn stars and sex workers find the experience of being an object of sexual desire

deeply meaningful and empowering, and actually feel in control of such experiences specifically because it is based on a money exchange.

7. A friend, who used to own a video store, told me the VHS boxes for those movies were pink.

protectionist and moralistic approaches needs to be shifted and transformed to a framework that is grounded instead in human rights principles. The important lesson here is that it is the rights of people that need protection, not individual subjects who are constituted as vulnerable and limited in capacity." (Kee, 2011:18)

PORN THAT WOMEN LIKE

James Deen is the screen name of porn actor and director Bryan Sevilla. In his mid-20s and with a 'guy-next-door' charm, his performances in heterosexual hardcore scenes have become quite popular among women who consume porn. On July 25, 2011 blogger Emily Heist Moss interviewed Deen, discussing the issues of misogyny in porn and the female attention he has been receiving. Later, on November 15, 2011, he was interviewed in depth by Amanda Hess for the Good Magazine website, which inspired another article about him. Internet communicators had already realized there is something unique about Deen and the attention he is receiving from the female audience. A search for his name on Tumblr shows an interesting aspect of this attention – that many women, some of them young teens, like to watch his scenes and state that this is their first enjoyable porn-watching experience.

Online, women declare that they would like to have sex with the actor, among other fantasies, such as wishing to cook for him. They say they get excited not (only) by his appearance, but by his performance. In the movies, Deen can be seen whispering into actresses' ears, holding them tight in amorous embraces while he penetrates them, and enjoys giving oral sex. On the other hand, he also does a lot of BDSM-themed scenes, where he dominates women and performs rough sex. In some scenes, his partners are "older" women, "cougars" in their 30s and 40s. He has also appeared in at least one scene where the actress performs oral sex on his anus ("rimming"), which is very unusual for male actors in heterosexual scenes.

The diversity Deen brings to porn is that he is neither the 'disembodied' penis blindly penetrating female orifices, his physique is not an exaggerated mass of muscles, nor is he afraid to go beyond the boundaries of mainstream heterosexuality, though he doesn't escape them. He presents a more 'romantic' persona – even if his scene partners or the scenes themselves are not intentionally romantic. In this regard, it's interesting that it is not always his physical attributes that are the focus of feminine attention, even

though he is young and comely. It is the alternative his scenes represent to the 'grammar' of porn, 'speaking' a different language which is attractive to the women who like him.

Some of his fans post on his blog:

> my names jesse and i just want to let you know that i love you and would let you fuck me anyday.

> Just wanted to say hey and that I love the way you fuck. You're like a younger version of my "daddy", (I like the older dudes) and that's a damn good thing.

> I'm still a virgin but I would let you fuck me, hands down.

> definitivamnete tengo ganas de follar contigo eres mi fantasia corazon, besos humedos desde argentina

A Tumblr search with the key-words 'james+deen' shows the type of attention Deen is receiving from women. The most revealing are the posts that feature gifs, pictures and movies of the actor. Many gifs of Deen are not of an explicit sexual nature. For instance, some are of Deen during porn industry award ceremonies, fully clothed, or even pictures of his everyday life that he originally posted on his Twitter account or blog. The movies posted are online videos of his scenes. Many of the gifs, pictures and movies are accompanied by comments. Below are some text-only posts exemplifying Deen fans' reactions, all from January 2012. The profiles indicate these are predominantly teenage girls – which has already caused some media hype.

I just want James Deen in my bed.
Then I can make him burritos or tacos afterwards.
Because I know he fucking loves burritos/tacos .
and boobs.I'm an amazing cook..and have natural big boobs so…. LMAOOOO
welp there's nothing wrong with dreaming i guess
-.-
http://cunts3xual.tumblr.com/post/15441926632/i-just-want-james-deen-in-my-bed-then-i-can-make

i'm in love with james deen
[and then a reply to that comment:]
glad I'm not the only one
you're so in love with him that YOU SPELLED HIS FUCKING NAME WRONG. unless you were talking about the porn star, of course.
[which was replied by the original poster:]
Well I was talking about the porn star. Ofcourse!? I want him to look me in the eyes and hit me
http://judenkatze.tumblr.com/post/15432538372/im-in-love-with-james-deen

because i have read james deen's blog i hate him as a person
but ugh i love watching him fuck
http://harleyyquinn.tumblr.com/post/15397481687/because-i-have-read-james-deens-blog-i-hate-him-as-a

recent obsession with james deen
recent obsession with james deen is beginning to form.
keep looking up stuff about him, or you know, like porn, with him in it, on like… a daily basis.
don't know if him and joanna angel are still together or not. although she's not the prettiest girl in the pron industry, and 5 years older than james, I might add, she's got a super cute giggle.
i'm a sucker for cute giggles.
http://heylollypop.tumblr.com/post/15383705876/recent-obsession-with-james-deen

OMG THIS
First porn video I've managed to watch all the way through…this is the perfect porn for girls…i love how she reacts and everything he does is perfect! Plus it's one of very few videos which don't include sucking cock
http://intimatepassions.tumblr.com/post/15348463476/omg-this

THINKING ABOUT GENDER RELATIONS IN PORN

One way of interpreting what these women are saying is that they are enjoying the subversion of the gender language used in most pornographic narratives. They enjoy the novelty of this women friendly narrative, a form of resistance to the usual gender hierarchy which is simply rehearsed in mainstream porn. Usually, women are the main focus of objectification and sexualization. While the male body is just a stand in for the (presumed) male viewer, the female body is the object of desire around which the narrative is built. But as the 'Deen phenomenon' shows, there is porn in which men can be objects of sexual desire for women as well. This fruition of sexuality online is a novelty that cannot be ignored.

Snitow (2002) studied romance novels for women, and her considerations help understand the gender language used in porn. The author indicates that these narratives are titillating, talking about sexuality in a socially acceptable way for their female audience. Snitow argues that the mass market romances she analyzed display an inversion of the pornographic grammar, so the woman is the subject and the man is the object. It is the description of his body, not hers, that is detailed, even if his personality, motives (and heart) are a mystery the romance heroine must resolve, struggling against the waiting, the anticipation and anxiety by speculating and fearing – acts deeply sexualized, even if implicitly, throughout the narrative. As such, they are a kind of 'pornography for women'.

According to the author, the sexual behaviour in these narratives is presented in the context of a social behaviour 'proper' for women, and Snitow argues that female sexuality as illustrated by these novels is indeed socially determined by a number of things not directly related to sex. Sex is a social drama driven by emotions in these narratives. The uncaring

man will ultimately be revealed to actually love the heroine, and by doing so he submits to her ideology of emotion and romance – the only acceptable way, for her, of achieving sexual release. As Snitow puts:

> "In these romantic love stories, sex on a woman's terms is romanticized sex. Romantic sexual fantasies are contradictory. They include both the desire to be blindly ravished, to melt, and the desire to be spiritually adored, saved from the humiliation of dependence and sexual passivity through the agency of a protective male who will somehow make reparation to the woman he loves for her powerlessness." (:199)

Snitow's observations parallel what Deen is inspiring women to say about their sexual desires and fantasies. The paradox of being roughly possessed while being romantically embraced seems to have found a hardcore porn equivalent to the (not so) tame romance novels. But the ability to publicly, shamelessly and fearlessly express how pornographic narratives make them feel is new, and a feature of the internet medium. From the point of view of women's human rights and freedom of expression, this is a welcoming phenomenon, which should be recognized and nurtured. What is interesting about the Deen fans is that we can see women's opinions about their tastes being explicitly stated, on their own initiative. That these women feel safe enough online to express themselves in this way is of paramount importance. It is refreshing to see this diversity of perspectives on porn and sexuality blooming online.

The phenomenon observed in this article about women openly commenting on and sharing porn that they enjoy can enrich a dialogue with feminist theory about the consequences and effects of a solely victimization perspective, since meaningful feminine agency on the internet can be perceived in the examples given. The next steps is to ask ourselves what can be done to enhance online safety that stimulates this agency, through a secure use of forms and mediums of production and exchange of sexual expression, and how to further the understanding of how control policies exert power over these women's agency; in other words, what are the effects of vigilantism, censorship, and regulation on women's sexuality online.

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THE INTERNET, DEMOCRACY AND THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

by Anja Kovacs
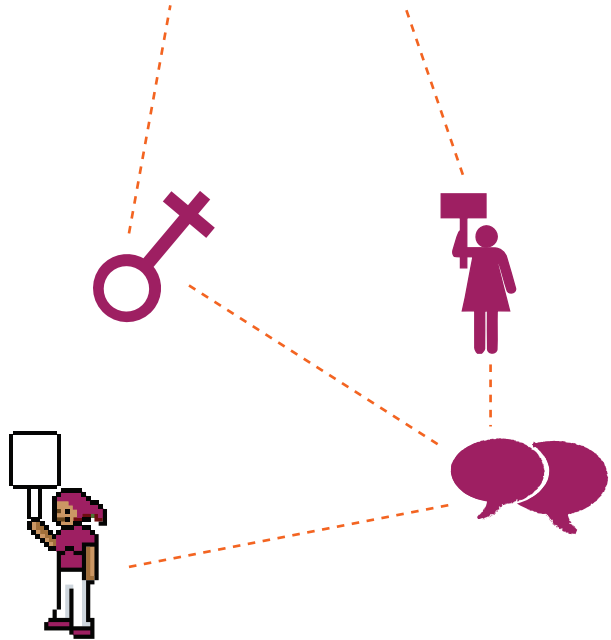
With both online censorship and surveillance dramatically on the rise worldwide, it is increasingly clear that we are witnessing a hollowing out not only of the empowering potential of the internet but also of democracy as a political system. To reverse these intertwined trends, they urgently require sustained and systematic attention. Feminists are uniquely placed to weigh in on these debates thanks to their rich insight in and long and intimate engagement with theories and practices of democracy. Feminists' contributions to internet governance are essential if we are to prevent the empowering potential of the internet – which is real – from largely evaporating in mistaken policy choices over the next decade.

WHY INTERNET GOVERNANCE MATTERS

So far, feminists have not closely engaged with questions of how the internet is transforming our societies, or with the arenas where answers to these questions are being shaped. For example, in October 2011, I had the privilege of being part of a national consultation on the Indian women's movement and technology. The meeting brought together seasoned feminists – all experts in the broad area of gender, science and technology – from all over the country. But when I asked how many people in the room had heard of 'internet governance' and had some sense of what it might mean, only two of the over twenty participants raised their hand. When I then asked how many of them were internet users, everybody burst into laughter: they all were. This short interaction clearly brought out the lack of engagement of the women in the room with internet governance (as well as their good humour in acknowledging this). But this is hardly

limited to the Indian feminist movement, nor just to feminists. Although many human rights defenders and other activists are internet users, they have shown relatively little interest in engaging with the arena of internet governance in a sustained and systematic fashion.

This is cause for both surprise and worry. It is by now widely accepted that the internet, and new technologies more broadly, are reconfiguring the fabric of our societies. Critical voices (perhaps most notably Evgeny Morozov's[1]) have pointed out that the internet and democracy are not necessarily linked: that the internet can be used to strengthen dictatorships as easily as to improve democratic elections, to increase surveillance as easily as to enhance freedom of speech. But the consequences of this multi-faceted nature of the internet's potential have mostly been examined for their impact under authoritarian regimes. What is important to understand is that the internet and the new possibilities it enables – both good and bad – equally affect democracy as a system, as a practice. Surely few were surprised that Reporters Without Borders included Belarus and Libya as 'countries under surveillance' in its 2011 'Enemies of the Internet' report, but what does it mean that Australia found a place on that list as well? That when riots hit the country's capital, UK Prime Minister David Cameron suggested a clampdown on social networking sites? That France has a law that cuts its citizens from the internet if they have violated copyright provisions three times, in clear contravention of the obligation states have to make the internet available and accessible for all as highlighted by UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression Frank La Rue?

What does the internet currently do to democracy in places where democracy as a political system has already been put into place? And if the internet irrevocably changes democracy, too, what does that mean for our struggles and visions for

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1. **Evgeny Morozov** *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* **(New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), 448.**

social change? It is high time that feminists started engaging with these questions. What, then, could be some of the entry points for feminists into these debates?

BALANCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE INTERNET AGE

The changes that are being wrought to our societies by the internet and related technologies take place on two levels. First, internet governance frequently has a direct bearing on issues of core concern to feminism. For example, the internet, and new technologies more broadly, have made possible new ways of committing violence against women. Both intimidation and action can now be initiated from a distance. The possibilities for violating women's privacy, blackmailing them, or unauthorised distribution of their images have increased dramatically[2]. Such threats are real and it is crucial to women's well-being that actual instances of abuse are taken seriously and are responded to immediate and effectively.

Yet what does an effective response entail? While this issue has always divided feminists, in the past censorship of what were considered 'derogatory' images of women was seen as an appropriate strategy to battle such representations by at least sections of the feminist movement. For example, in India, feminists were instrumental in getting the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, passed in the Indian Parliament. But if such strategies have always been controversial, in the radically altered communicative context provided by the internet they have simply become untenable.

For one thing, the efficacy of censorship is undermined by the ease and speed with which content can now travel: by the time an obscene picture has been taken down by Facebook, for example, it may already have been uploaded on various blogs and websites. Effectively removing content across the internet is, thus, a near-impossible task. In addition, as the internet has made it easier for people to make their voices heard, both a larger number and a far wider range of opinions are now freely expressed in the public sphere. For governments, it has thus become increasingly difficult to maintain the same levels of control over speech and content that they had earlier, and any efforts to retain such control will by necessity increasingly involve the active chilling of free speech on their part.

Such efforts should therefore strike terror in the hearts of anyone concerned with substantive democracy. But as feminists have remained aloof from the debate, it is precisely the 'protection' of women and children that has emerged as a favourite justification of governments across the world to restrict the right to freedom of expression – or the right to seek, receive and impart information – online. And in the process, governments' powers to control and curtail that right have often expanded across the board.

Let me give an example. In April 2011, a set of rules were issued in India to regulate the registration and management of cyber cafes and their users. The rules contain detailed prescriptions on the identification of users, making impossible the anonymous use of a cyber cafe, and on the maintenance of user logs, to be stored for a minimum of one year. They also lay out a set of rules for the design of a cyber cafe. For example, if the cyber cafe has cubicles, these 'shall not exceed four and a half feet in height from the floor level'. If there are no cubicles, the screens of all computers 'shall face the common space of the cyber cafe'. Moreover, 'any cyber cafe having cubicles or partitions shall not allow minors to use any computer resource in cubicles or partitions except when they are accompanied by their guardians or parents'. And every cyber cafe shall also 'display a board, clearly visible to the users, prohibiting them from using pornographic sites as well as copying or downloading information which is prohibited under law'[3].

These detailed prescriptions may well contain the consumption of pornography in what could be argued are public spaces. But by not leaving such regulation to the market (and to differentiation among cyber cafes according to the different levels of privacy that their physical lay-outs provide, which has spontaneously emerged over the years), many of the capabilities that internet use can engender have been eliminated – or at least severely restricted. As a consequence of the new regulations, minors and adults alike can no longer enjoy any kind of privacy in cyber cafes. Thus, while it has been shown that the internet has become an important avenue for women to access sensitive information, which woman would look up information on support groups for lesbians in her area when she knows everyone may be watching her, particularly in a country where women's sexuality is highly regulated? While the new rules may have been put into place to protect women, they also significantly undermine the potential of the internet to help women take greater control over their lives. It

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2. Jan Moolman, "Violence Against Women and ICT" (presentation made at the Internet Governance and Women's Rights Workshop, Nairobi, Keny, 24-25 September 2011).

3. Information Technology (Guidelines for Cyber Cafe) Rules, 2011.

could even be argued that the rules do the opposite of what they intend – that they actually provide new avenues for the harassment of women, as cyber cafes are required to keep scanned copies of all users' IDs, and thus of their details, on record, and are authorised to take and include in the record a picture of every user. Seeing that cyber cafes continue to be the most important internet access point in India[4], these are tremendously worrying trends.

Discourses and practices related to online surveillance and security, while drawing on the protection of women for their justification, are also frequently used to support broader agendas that decisively work against women's interests. In India, Google's Transparency Report listed government criticism as the single most important ground for requests from the government for the removal of content between January and June 2011. Two hundred and fifty five out of three hundred and fifty eight items fell in this category. Only three items were asked to be removed for being pornographic[5]. Further, in December 2011 reports were leaked that Minister of Communications and Information Technology wanted large social networks in the country to pre-censor content. It soon became obvious that this, too, was at least partly driven by a desire to contain political criticism. At the same time, reports emerged claiming that new technologies were 'feeding a surge in political espionage' by India's Intelligence Bureau[6]. While the safety and security of individual citizens may be the official justification of censorship and surveillance measures, all this clearly begs the question of what is really at play here. Whose security and safety are these policies actually attempting to ensure? Feminist analyses and critiques of what is denoted by the term 'security' in the internet governance arena are urgently required.

The lack of involvement of feminists in debates on content control is therefore problematic on many levels. It not only leaves uncontested implicit and explicit definitions of content that is 'harmful' to women, but also, as I hope the above examples makes clear, allows for the uncontested emergence of a culture of online surveillance and control that ultimately will do little to empower women and may do them much harm. By allowing for broad-based restrictions on the use of technology, we may be helping to perpetuate myths that ultimately do not serve women.

THE INTERNET AND GOVERNANCE MODELS

While most feminists may agree that the above concerns are important, these are unlikely, however, to be equally relevant to every field of work, and for that reason they perhaps remain a weak ground to inspire greater feminist participation in internet governance. But the internet poses another challenge to democracy at present, and that is with regard to governance models in general. By not paying much attention to the question of what kind of world is being created through new technologies and new uses of technologies, we have created an environment in which many governments can talk about participation purely in terms of participation in top-down, usually government planned and initiated, projects. Thus, we see ample attention on government transparency and accountability. But these laudable concerns are not matched by equal attention for questions of citizen's freedom of expression – an essential cornerstone of any democratic society. Implicitly or explicitly, what is being promoted here is not people's empowerment through democratic participation, but a technocratic, patronising state – the Singapore model. And this affects all of us, whether we are online or not.

The lack of balance is perhaps especially true in the large parts of the Global South where access continues to be a major issue and thus can easily be dismissed as an 'elite' concern. At times, in these countries, access to the internet and its benefits is curtailed by issues that are are not necessarily in the hands of their governments. For example, many measures in the area of intellectual property rights proposed by developed country governments have considerable impact on the access to knowledge of people in developing countries. Yet although such measures are designed to maintain pricing structures based on developed country income levels and standards of living, developing country governments are not able to counter them. In fact, through instruments such as bilateral trade agreements, the pressure on developing country governments to inscribe such measures into their own laws is increasing, effectively undermining the value internet access could have for most of the world's population.

But governments of the developing world also carry responsibility for creating these imbalances. Thus, for example, the internet penetration rate in India remains disappointingly low, at around eight percent. This means that the important

4. Internet and Mobile Association of India and IMRB I-Cube 2009-2010: Internet in India (Mumbai: Internet and Mobile Association of India, 2010), 16

5. Google, "Google Transparency Report: India – January to June 2011" last accessed 12 December 2011 www.google.com/transparencyreport/governmentrequests/IN/

6. Praveen Swami, "New Intelligence Technology Feeding Surge in Political Espionage" www.thehindu.com 5 December 2011 http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2687373.ece

new possibilities for freedom of expression that the internet offers are withheld from large parts of the population. In sharp contrast to this, the surveillance measures that have become commonplace online and that are by and large quietly accepted as 'inevitable' have been effectively exported offline: for example, India's Unique ID, Aadhaar, allows the government to track the movements of people within its borders (including its large population of poor migrants) in ways that were unimaginable before. And the growing levels of surveillance and control contribute to a climate in which increasing pressures on freedom of expression may be acknowledged, but they are not questioned. By keeping quiet, we help create styles of governance that we have no stake in.

To some extent, it could be argued that the reluctance on the part of feminists to engage comes precisely from sensing and understanding these tensions and a consequent healthy scepticism as to what the internet as a medium really has to offer all of us. Refusal, then, becomes a strategy. Yet as I hope the above examples make clear, this is a counter-productive strategy. If technology is effectively rewiring many of the structures and practices we hold dear, it is essential that we try to direct these changes, to ensure that the outcomes support, rather than contradict, feminist visions. Moreover, while the directions internet governance is taking at present are problematic in many ways, it also offers – through the promotion of multistakeholder models of governance – spaces to experiment with new ways of doing. Can we afford not to be part of the solution?

WOMEN, PRIVACY AND ANONYMITY: MORE THAN DATA PROTECTION

Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB)
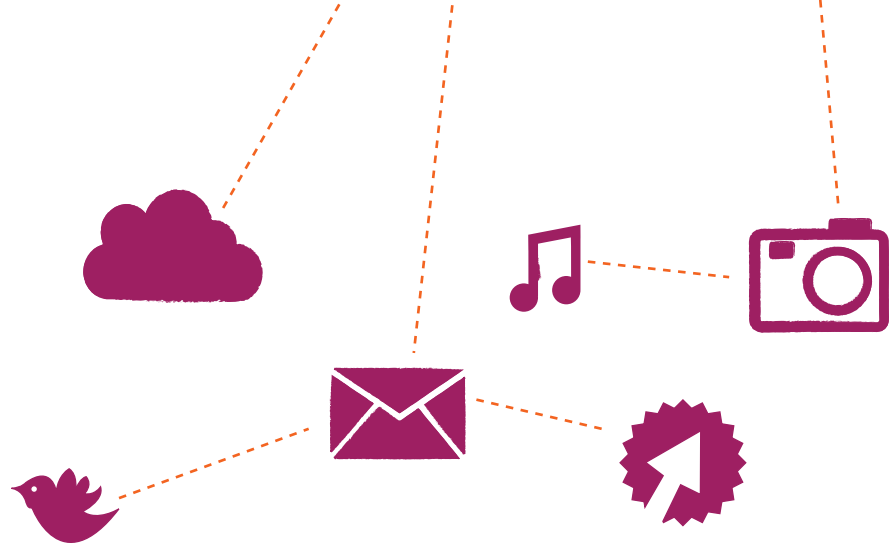
INTRODUCTION

Information and communications technologies or ICTs[1] have the potential to help bring about substantial changes in women's lives and women's rights. The swift rise of technology has brought to the fore new frontiers of women's participation, expression and empowerment. Issues of women's privacy and anonymity have also gained in importance, with different opportunities and vulnerabilities made possible by the vast, intractable and borderless nature of the new ICTs. Technology offers space for women's participation and exercise of freedom, sexuality and self-expression. Alongside these opportunities, however, emerging issues on harms and risks for women call for serious attention and discussion.

CONTINUUM OF VAW AND EMPOWERMENT

Violence against women (VAW) is a gender based violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately and includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty[2]. ICTs have become a new space where VAW is committed, as evidenced by reported incidence of technology-related VAW, though there is still no standard way of documenting these violations. Based on studies, discourses and documented cases, the forms of technology-related VAW can be broadly classified in to three[3] namely, a.) cyberharassment which refers to acts in cyberspace that aim to harass a target; b.)

cyberpornography which is the act of using cyberspace to create, display, distribute, import, or publish pornography or obscene materials; and c.) cybertrafficking which is about the illicit trade of women and children in cyberspace for the purpose of profit.

Technology-related VAW is no different from the traditionally known VAW, or VAW which presumes physicality. Technology-related VAW is still rooted in the historically unequal power relations between women and men in public and private life, patriarchy and men's control over women's sexuality. Unlike offline VAW which is committed in the 'real world' with direct physical contact or appearance, technology-related VAW is perpetuated through virtual and digital spaces, through cyberspace, in the online realm. Technology-related VAW still harms women and at times is even more vicious because of the manner in which ICT transcends time and space thus aggravating the effects of violence.

VAW is not fragmented, it is a continuum. In the continuum of violence, ICT can play a significant part in the reality of women's oppression. In technology-related VAW, VAW is not necessarily deviant and episodic but rather an everyday context in the lives and experiences of women and girls all over the world. Online VAW is a continuation of offline VAW. This can be illustrated by cases such as intimate pictures or videos of women uploaded on the internet by disgruntled former partners or a woman getting raped by stranger due to fake ads posted. This also demonstrates how the invasion of privacy of women crosses cyberspace.

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1. Technology and tools that people use to share, distribute, and gather information; to communicate with one another, one on one or in groups. ICT in this paper refers to computers, telecommunication technologies. mobile phones; networking technologies or internet, satellite communications

2. As defined by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

3. This categorization has been largely based on the study of the Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau on the Study on ICT, VAW and Sexuality: A Policy Advocacy which compiled different forms of technology-related VAW. The identification of the three main forms was the result of the literature review where the different harmful acts were categorized as such: cyberharrassment, cyberpornography, cybertrafficking

On the other hand, ICT provides an alternative space to assert rights and identities. ICT also facilitates the dissemination of information and consciousness raising on issues concerning women. The many online campaigns and petitions supporting women's causes are testaments to this. Through ICT, a new mode of citizen participation for political and social activism and reform opens up to women, as seen during the Arab uprising[4]. Other avenues of empowerment provided by ICT are e-commerce which can grant women direct access to global markets and e-governance programs which can make government services and programmes more accessible to women. The list is certainly not exhaustive. The opportunities and avenues for women's participation, self-expression and advocacies significantly illustrate that alongside the continuum of VAW in ICT, is a continuum of empowerment for women.

For instance, in one study in the Philippines about the existing laws and jurisprudence relating to ICT, VAW and sexuality, it was found that responses in confronting VAW tend to be protectionist and reactionary. This kind of approach limits women's empowerment and undermines the intricacies of VAW. The nature of ICT e.g. its intractability[5], its borderlessness, the absence of physicality and the anonymity it affords, makes prosecution of VAW difficult. It also raises several questions such as how will one recognize the different identities established by a person on the internet or how is the citizenship of a person on the internet to be defined?

The following section will show why it is necessary to examine the intersection of ICT, VAW and women's rights; how VAW can be addressed beyond criminalization, recognizing the distinctive characteristics of ICT in confronting VAW; the need to safeguard certain women's activities on the internet especially their exercise of rights and freedoms; and preventive as well as self-help measures in ensuring women's protection from technology-related VAW.

ICTS AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS: HOW DOES ONLINE VAW AFFECTS WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The nature of ICTs affects the manner by which VAW is perpetuated and how VAW is prosecuted. It has also changed women's issues and concerns on safety and security.

ICTs took violence and oppression of women beyond the confines of the streets, workplaces and bedrooms where one could easily name the perpetrator. The borderless nature of ICTs means that it possible for the victim and perpetrator to be in different geographical locations thus making it more difficult to ascertain the incidence of violence and determine the commission of a crime. For example, the case of cybersex den operators who locate their servers in countries where laws are less restrictive to avoid regulation and/ or criminal persecution. This makes it difficult to identify perpetrators and pursue VAW cases. The anonymity provided by ICTs further makes violators difficult to prosecute as one can create multiple identities, e.g. by having different online accounts.

At the same time, ICT can provide safe spaces for women who can find comfort and privacy in the anonymity that online space provides. Pseudonyms can be used in blogging and online activism. Fictitious names provide distance from the writer's real identity, making her physically safe from surveillance and censorship. Cyberspace can offer safe spaces for women's participation, freedom of expression, exercise of sexual rights and empowerment.

ICT is a tool in itself in making women physically more safe. Cellular phones, thru text messaging, in particular have made possible the rescue of women domestic workers from abusive employers[6]. It has also been reported that women feel safer and independent because of their mobile phone[7].

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4. http://www.apc.org/es/node/13391

5. The anonymity offered by digital and virtual spaces has made technology-related VAW intractable; it has effectively exacerbated the effects of VAW and increased the difficulty of prosecuting the same. Identity has become very difficult to establish in online spaces. Digital personhood, the identity taken on by a person as he/she goes on line, which may include his/her age or his/her gender, may be totally different from his/her real identity. . There exists an

intractability of identity in digital spaces, such that a woman may become a victim of cyber pornography, cyberstalking or of blackmail without necessarily seeing or knowing who or where the perpetrator is. This makes the prosecution of technology-related VAW more difficult.

6. http://www.pinoy-abroad.net/img_upload/025b967d5657e4bcc3cb374d7eb58846/COWA_report_Saudi.pdf

7. http://www.mwomen.org/wiki/Women_-amp-_Mobile_Report

BODILY INTEGRITY

Another distinct characteristic of ICT is the absence of physicality. In online spaces there is no physical body to speak of. Does this mean that women's bodily integrity and privacy is not violated when VAW occurs online?

What would bodily integrity be in online spaces when there is no physical body to speak of? Bodily integrity speaks of a woman's fundamental right to control her body, identity and sexuality. It includes the freedom to decide on her body, on matters related to her sexuality. Bodily integrity does not cover only the physical body, it also embraces representations and how a woman understands herself. This is a human right recognized under the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and considered an integral part for full development and empowerment of women.

Taking a picture of a woman in an act of sexual intimacy and uploading it over a social network without her consent violates her privacy and disrespects her bodily integrity. When cyber obscenity, flaming and hate speech take place, the body is not irrelevant.

The absence of the body in online spaces does not make technology-related VAW less damaging. In fact, the effects could be graver. Women victims of nude photos and sex video scandals will always be haunted by images of their past. Information posted and uploaded online can never be completely removed. The multiple platforms provided by internet for collecting and sharing information made it possible to upload, download, save and redistribute pictures and videos in the least time and across wide geographical area. While authorities can demand removal of malicious content from websites, such action is limited since relevant laws governing ICT have jurisdictions within respective countries. This has been found limiting and insufficient to address the transborder nature of ICTs. Governments cannot run after home/individual computers who have saved and circulated data or information via other channels such as Multi Media Messaging (MMS) in mobile phones. The result is that there are people who have copies of sex video scandals that happened years ago. The absence of policy relating to the borderless nature of ICT made internet service providers unaccountable for the circulation these pictures/videos. It further makes it possible for syndicates to commit crimes across and beyond national boundaries such as cyberpornography, cybertrafficking, cyber sex dens, sex tourism, among other crimes targeting women, which to this day remain unrestricted with the absence and limitations of laws, compounding harm on a grand scale.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND SEXUALITY

The nature of ICT allows women to find an alternative space to express themselves and their sexuality without being stigmatized and incarcerated.

In countries with repressive regimes and in conservative societies, online spaces enable women and girls to challenge restrictive gendered norms and morals. Aliaa Magda Elmahdy[8] for one created an uproar and outrage in Egypt when she posted a photo of herself on Twitter wearing nothing but a pair of black stocking and red shoes to show that she is not shy of being a woman. In a repressive regime this constitutes a dangerous act, but Elmahdy to the time of writing remains free and untraceable.

In Brazil, online social networking sites serve as a privileged means of communication for the LGBT community[9]. The internet has become a platform to socialize without discrimination for people whose sexual orientations, experiences or identities do not conform to prevailing norms. The same holds true in Lebanon where ICTs are used in organizing the LGBT community within the Arab blogsphere[10].

Women's long tradition of political, economic and social subordination has subjected them to sexual repression, denying them control over their body. But with the arrival of the internet, women found another medium to claim ownership over their bodies. Online spaces give women the opportunity to question matters relating to their own health and sexual practices. The World Wide Web is a library of information women can access to get information on issues ranging from reproductive health, infections and diseases to improve the quality of their sex lives.

SAFE PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

ICTs pose new challenges to the safety and privacy of women and girls. The multiple platforms for posting and reposting information in social networks make it hard to control and regulate the personal data women want to share. Viral circulation of private pictures and videos is a common problem in social networking along with unwanted comments, sexual

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8. Fahmy, Mohamed Fadel. Egyptian blogger Aliaa Elmahdy: Why I posed naked. http://edition.cnn.com/2011/11/19/world/meast/nude-blogger-aliaa-magda-elmahdy/index.html?iref=allsearch

9. Jac sm Kee "Erotics: Exploratory Research on Sexuality and the Internet" http://www.apc.org/en/node/11958/

10. Ibid

solicitation, obscenity and stalking. With these, how can women and girls ensure safe participation in social networks?

Safe participation in social networks requires the involvement of all ICT users, internet intermediaries, organizations, the state and the media. For women, the first defense in protecting privacy and identity online is to know their rights as ICT users and as women. Women should be aware that whether in an online or offline environment they are entitled to have their human rights respected, protected and fulfilled. These include the right to access a secure internet connection, the right to express and associate themselves on the internet without interference and discrimination, the right to control personal data disclosure, and the right to remedy, among others.

Practically, however, it is important that women are responsible ICT users. There are precautionary measures women can take when engaging online, such as: keeping their passwords safe; deleting the history of sites visited, temporary files cookies, form entries and passwords after browsing as these are often used to keep track of internet activities; checking privacy and security settings and making sure they are activated whenever and wherever; making sure to log out of any accounts when finished surfing the net, rather than just closing the browser; and using safety tools that are freely available online such as firewalls[11].

Safe participation in social network is not the sole responsibility of ICT users. Internet and mobile providers have a responsibility in ensuring the privacy and safety of women using their services. It is imperative that they adequately inform users of available safety features such as privacy mechanisms. There should also be an effective redress mechanism that allows users to report violations they experience in social networks and that women should be involved in developing such a mechanism.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: TOWARDS WOMEN'S ENJOYMENT OF RIGHTS IN ICTS

The ICT arena has become a site of continuing gender inequality. Different forms of violence are committed against women with the use and within the realm of ICTs. Conversely, it has been shown that ICTs can be a platform for women's empowerment. ICTs not only provide women with information and education, they can also provide women with spaces for self-expression, freedom of association and enjoyment of sexual rights. Within ICTs are stories not only of violence against women, but also of agency and spaces for empowerment.

The question then is how to respond to technology-related VAW while at the same time harnessing the empowering capacity of ICTs for women. Mere legislation is not a sufficient guarantee to combat violence against women. Preventing VAW requires changing attitudes and behaviours within society. This involves addressing the underlying structural inequalities within the ICT system and engendering the ICT processes and policies.

The ICT arena needs to be transformed into an enabling environment for women so that they can access and enjoy the benefits and empowering nature of ICTs. Promoting gender equality and women empowerment in the ICT arena necessitates participation and involvement of all and at all levels.

First, there is a need for recognition and serious attention to the incidence of technology-related VAW. Cases of technology-related VAW such as cyberstalking or cyberpornography, have long targeted and gravely stigmatize women. Despite the harms and violations against women perpetrated through and within ICTs, technology-related VAW has been, for the most part, seen as trivial – lacking adequate and appropriate response from the different actors – the state, the private sector, the civil society and even women themselves.

Second, women must challenge power relations between men and women by using ICTs for activism to combat violence against women. Women should take actions to take back and control technology and change the ICT field through actions such as:

- be aware of their rights and know that these rights are to be respected, protected and fulfilled even in an online environment;

- remain vigilant when participating online to ensure safety and privacy;

- build and join networks and organize online campaigns to fight violence against women;

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11. Complete details on how to be safe online can be found at http://www.takebackthetech.net/be-safe/online-safety

- form task forces or watch groups to monitor violations online;

- document and report violations, and encourage friends, family members and others to do the same;

- engage and urge governments and concerned authorities to implement measures in preventing and ending violence against women;

- and create hotlines and set up interactive websites where women can ask and answer questions and respond to victims of violence.

Lastly, the government must fulfill its obligations to respect, protect, and promote women's human rights. The state response must not be reactionary or protectionist, a response which might curtail freedoms and deny the rights of women. There must be recognition of women's agency in ICTs. In coming up with responses to technology-related VAW, the state should consistently engage with women's rights groups and advocates, civil society, ICT experts and other relevant stakeholders. Policy formulation should have a strong gender perspective with understanding of the continuum of VAW and women's agency and empowerment. More importantly, far reaching changes require the vigilance of women, involvement of the state, the private sector and the civil society.

ENDNOTE:

This paper is based on WLB research titled **Study on ICT, VAW and Sexuality: A Policy Advocacy** which reviewed the legal perspectives on women's sexuality, ICT and VAW and their implications for the protection and promotion of women's human rights. The research aimed to provide clarity on the link between VAW and ICT and exposed the gaps and limitations of the existing laws.

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http://internetrightsandprinciples.org/node/397

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http://www.takebackthetech.net/be-safe/online-safety
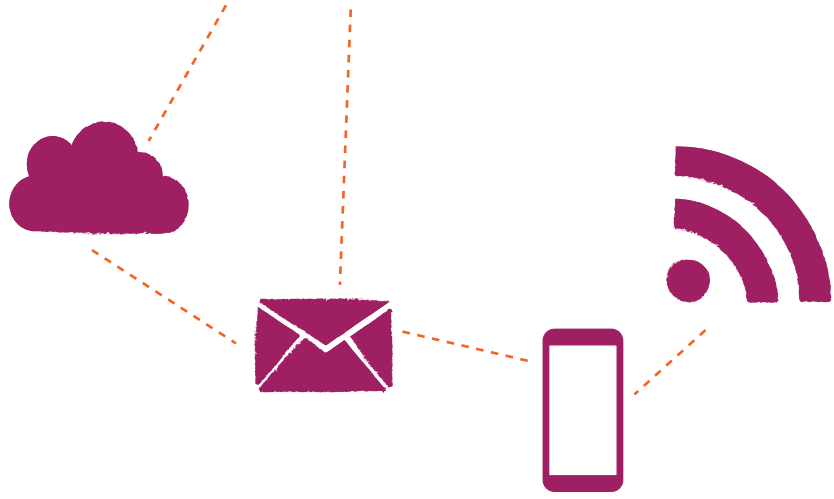
RESOURCES

This section of the policy toolkit gives a summary of relevant resources on websites linked to the Association for Progressive Communications, primarily www.apc.org and www.genderit.org. It is by no means comprehensive, not least because the sites themselves are growing and evolving over time, but it should give a fairly thorough grounding to anyone interested in finding out more about the issues presented in the papers above.

SECTION ONE: INTERNET GOVERNANCE AND GENDER ISSUES

This section looks at resources related to what internet governance is, who is involved, and the gender dimension of debates on internet governance. This 'gender dimension' includes reasons why women need to be present in debates on internet governance, obstacles they face, where they are in the discussions and debates, and case studies on reasons for being there, reasons for frustration and reasons for hope. It is divided into five sub-sections. The first looks at how governance of the internet works, who makes the decisions and how those decisions are reached; the second why it is important to include women's issues in internet governance and it includes a few case studies; the third section looks at why internet governance itself is a women's issue (or needs to be seen as one!); the fourth section looks specifically at the Internet Governance Forum and how it works; and the last section looks at some of the major issues discussed at the IGF, from a gender perspective.

(A) INTERNET GOVERNANCE: HOW IT WORKS

Fascendini, F. & Fialova, K., 2011, Stripping the IGF bare: Where are women's rights?
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/stripping-igf-bare-where-are-women-s-rights

Even though the Sixth Internet Governance Forum in Kenya gave greater emphasis to discussions around rights in certain spaces, APC WNSP members attending maintained that women's rights should be more visible in those discussions and raised as a particular theme. This memorable interview by GenderIT.org team members, Flavia Fascendini and Katerina Fialova, with Chat García Ramilo, Dafne Sabanes Plou, Jac sm Kee, Jan Moolman, and Jennifer Radloff from the APC Women´s Programme, offers insights regarding gender balance and the presence of women's rights in the 2011 IGF agenda.

Fascendini, F., 2007, Feminist theory, practices and action can lead to innovative solutions on internet governance
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/feminist-theory-practices-and-actions-can-lead-innovative-solutions-internet-governance

Civil society entities, academic figures and government officials met in Sao Paulo during the first few days of July 2007 to participate in the first seminar of the preparatory process for the meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, with the aim of developing proposals to take to that forum next November. Amongst the presentations, the talk "Internet governance and issues of gender" by gender and ICT expert

Magaly Pazello stood out. Gender IT.org interviewed her about the political challenges women face regarding access to ICT infrastructure, as well as the landscape for the IGF meeting, held that November.

Maciel, M. & de Souza, C.A.P., 2011, Multi-stakeholder participation on internet governance: An analysis from a developing country, civil society perspective
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/system/files/NoN_Multistakeholder_InternetGovernance.pdf

The need for civil society engagement in international UN-driven processes is often clear to NGOs but obscure to governments. The mechanisms for governing the internet have allowed civil society a greater prominence than almost any other multi-stakeholder forum, but these are subject to ongoing contestation, particularly by governments. This paper examines the basis for civil society participation in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and its successors the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the Commission on Science and Technology (CSTD). It focuses on the obstacles and opportunities for the engagement of civil society analysing the controversy over multisectorialism and multi-stakeholderism. These principles were presented in the Tunis Agenda of the WSIS, where they were agreed upon as vital to maintaining the vitality and openness of the internet.

Complementing this is the debate over a differentiation between openness and inclusion on political processes. The mechanism for enhanced cooperation on issues pertaining to internet governance is also addressed, concluding with some experiences in the national level, focusing on the Brazilian Civil Rights Framework Initiative, a bill of law on the internet that resulted from an open and collaborative online environment.

Germano, G.G., 2007, Digital television and radio: Democratisation or greater concentration?
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/node/2708

The digitisation of the airwaves is an opportunity for greater community access to the airwaves, allowing a plurality of voices on both television and radio. However, as the model from, for example, Australia shows, it can also be used to increase the concentration of media ownership. This paper looks at why activists need to be concerned about policy on digital television and radio which in most countries, particularly in the global South, offers an unprecedented opportunity to intervene in media regulation. While there is no analysis of the gender implications of these arguments, the paper offers

an overview of the major issues, the technical limitations and concerns about the various stages of rolling out digitisation.

Gross, R., 2011, Civil society involvement in ICANN: Strengthening future civil society influence in ICANN policy-making
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/issue/governance/civil-society-involvement-icann-strengthening-futu

With an exciting history of the battles over representation at the various levels of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), this paper not only policy is made on domain names, it also shows the power of entrenched corporate interests to subvert the ICANN's stated aim of representing a variety of stakeholders.

ICANN was established in 1998 by the United States Department of Commerce to oversee a number of internet-related tasks. One of its core duties is to manage the Internet Assigned Names Authority (IANA), which allocates IP addresses to various regional asigning bodies. The corporation occupies a unique role in that it manages a global public resource (the internet's domain name addressing space), but it shares this responsibility between businesses, governments, and civil society participants from many nations.

It represents a unique blend of "multi-stakeholderism" governance: the different parties that will be impacted participate in the decision-making process, and policies are determined based on consensus.

This paper investigates ICANN's processes, the role of civil society within decision-making, and highlights lessons learned from this multi-stakeholderism experiment as well as reccomendations for future similar initiatives.

Kee, J. sm, 2011, Women's rights and the internet at the Human Rights Council
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/womens-rights-and-internet-human-rights-council

The increasing importance of the internet in all aspect of our lives is becoming impossible to ignore, nor that it is increasingly pivotal in the realisation of our fundamental rights and freedoms. In 2011, at the same session of the UN Human Rights Council where the role of the internet on the right to freedom of opinion and expression was reported by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression for the first time, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence

against women also presented her report on violence against women, its causes and consequences. The synchronicity of both reports, especially given that human rights are universal, interdependent and indivisible, calls for a close reading to identify the points of connection that can be built in the effort to recognise, analyse and address violations that affect the recognition, protection and fulfilment of women's human rights.

Light, E., Open spectrum for development: Policy brief
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/issue/open-spectrum-development-policy-brief

Spectrum, the electromagnetic waves used for radio and television signals, satellite signals, cellular telephone signals, wireless internet signals and various other things, is necessary for the world's daily communications needs. A number of important technological debates and developments are currently taking place that are shaping the future of spectrum-based communication and the potential for introducing open spectrum management.

This brief offers a concise description of some of the issues and implications of the ways in which airwaves, or spectrum, is allocated. While it does not specifically look at the gender dimension of the policy decisions that are taken in spectrum allocation, it does look at how particular models of allocation can benefit vested interests, busts some myths around open spectrum and gives useful links for further information and ideas for concrete action.

Plou, D. S., 2011, Women activists and internet governance: Let's open the debate
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/women-activists-and-internet-governance-lets-open-debate

Women activists in different countries and regions are paying attention to information and communication technologies (ICT) and interneti development as tools to exercise their rights and participate in political discussions to drive social change. During the past decade, these tools have helped them to spark a fluent exchange of ideas that has granted a fresh impetus to women's activism in diverse global social movements. Just before the 2011 Internet Governance Forum (IGF) , around 20 women from different countries and backgrounds came together to share their experiences in policy advocacy and to strategise around putting women's rights in the internet governance agenda. This article shares the critical questions raised by participants.

(B) THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER

Barbosa, Lourdes, 2010, "The right to information: a gender perspective". 3 short videos of Barbosa's presentantion at the Feminist Tech Exchange, Mexico, 2010, in Spanish https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IyisNKDVFpw&feature=related

Barbosa's presentation analyses women's rights to information and its relation to activism and women's intervention in policy-making. Barbosa is the director of the Citizens' Council for Gender Equity in the Media, Mexico.

Fascendini, F., 2008, "We are in the process of constructing a new political field, and this is just the beginning"
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/%E2%80%9Cwe-are-process-constructing-new-political-field-and-just-beginning%E2%80%9D

Magaly Pazello is a Brazilian researcher and consultant in gender and information and communication technologies (ICTi) and a member of the g2g group. She was the only woman from Brazil to participate in the entire World Summit on the Information Societyi (WSIS) process. In an exclusive interview with GenderIT.orgi, Magaly highlights the debates about the reduction in international funding for Latin America, and observes that the search for new partnerships and creation of innovative projects are fundamental steps for moving forwards in constructing this new political field. But also, that "this is just the beginning" of the process.

Fernández-Diaz, N., 2007, New technologies and women in Arab countries: A forest of concepts, a complex reality
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/new-technologies-and-women-arab-countries-forest-concepts-complex-reality

Natalia Fernández-Diaz identifies the difficulties of understanding feminist concerns regarding the needs and potential benefits of emerging technologies in what is usually known as 'Arab countries'. Locating the relationship between women and ICTs in women's movements, Fernández-Diaz interrogates the concepts of technologists, producers, users, victims and indirect beneficiaries in this complex political, geographical and imaginary terrain.

Fialova, K., 2006, E-government: When the gender lens is missing
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/e-government-when-gender-lens-missing

In the middle of 2005, the European team of APC WNSP took on a daunting task: to inject gender awareness into a regional conference focussing on the internet in public administrations . The annual e-government conference taking place in the Czech Republic celebrated its ninth year of existence in 2006. Yet, for the first time in its history, equal opportunity for women and men was put on the agenda. The following is a report by Katerina Fialova - an advocate for women's rights - about her experience in attending and co-organising a panel on gender and ICTs at this year's e-government meeting in April 2006.

Gordano, C., 2007, Demanding our reproductive rights on the web: A Uruguayan experience
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/demanding-our-reproductive-rights-web-uruguayan-experience

When it was reported in mid-May 2007 that a Uruguayan woman was being put on trial for having an abortion, many people paid little notice. After all, abortion has been classified as a crime in the country's criminal code since 1938. Others, however, were outraged by the news and turned to information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a tool for organising, protesting, and putting the contradictions of a legal and sociocultural system that systematically violates women's reproductive rights back on the political agenda.

Hand, M., 2005, ICTs for grassroots: Women from South Asia
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/icts-grassroots-women-south-asia

This article demonstrates through cast studies how communications technologies, from a phone line to wireless networks, makes a real difference to rural women's lives – particularly when technology is installed to meet the demands of those affected.

Johnson, G., 2011, Secure communications essential to women's rights defenders
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/secure-communications-essential-womens-rights-defenders

Grady Johnson speaks to women's human rights defenders from India and Philippines who use ICTs in their work. They share their views how the right to freedom of association is exercised by women through ICTs. Speaking from their own experience, they dispelled some of the common myths surrounding the internet and ICTs use.

Kee, J. sm, 2006, Women, media & ICTs: Where do we go from here?
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/women-media-icts-where-do-we-go-here

This article examines the progress made on the issue of Women, Media and ICTs at the level of international advocacy, particularly in relation to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. Questioning the disconnection between the fields of ICTs and women's rights, it looks at strategies of gender mainstreaming, and the need to have women in decision-making positions, particularly in light of the UN reform process.

Kee, J. sm, 2005, Politicizing ICTs in the women's rights movement – Interview with Lydia Alpízar Durán
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/politicising-icts-womens-rights-movement-interview-lydia-alp%C3%ADzar-dur%C3%A1n

Jac Kee explores why it is important for feminists to be involved in ICT policy making, and why there has been so much resistance to getting involved. She and Lydia Duran also grapple with whether ICTs are an elite concern.

Kee, J. sm, 2005, Probing the texture of silence in communications and media at B+10
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/probing-texture-silence-communications-and-media-b-10

This article explores the contradictory silence surrounding Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action that relates to issues of women and the media at this years Beijing + 10. Through this, it examines the possible reasons to the lack of vocalisation on this issue, even as women's movements working on various issues recognise the impact and power of the media in their work.

Modemmujer and LaNeta, Mexico, 2011, "Feminist reflections on ICT use and development", in Spanish
http://modemmujer.org/odm3/docs/tecnicas_reflexiones_feministas.pdf

Feminist analysis that includes strategies for ICT use from a feminist perspective. This paper is a result of the discussions during two Feminist Tech Exchanges that took place in Mexico D.F in 2010 and 2011.

Radloff, J., 2005, What's gender got to do with IT?
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/what%E2%80%99s-gender-got-do-it

Looking from the perspective of the needs of poor, rural women – who make up the majority of the world's poor – this article argues that ICT policy is a feminist issue, and that feminists need to be involved in policy-making.

Somera, N., 2007, Women and Philippine media: At the fringes of freedom
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/women-and-philippine-media-fringes-freedom

Where are women located in the struggle for freedoms to express, create and disseminate information through ICTs as media? Censorship comes in multiple forms in the Philippines. The country has one of the highest counts of media practitioners who are killed in the course of their work in the region. Yet, it retains a conflicting standing as one of the open media landscape in South East Asia. Whichever the reality, gendered expectations and roles seem to play out in this field, from 'old' tech, to the new. As the Church, the President, democratic and economic mechanisms struggle for authority through control of what can or cannot be said in various media, female sexuality becomes a site for contestation and (re)appropriation.

Zulu, B., 2006, Gender, trade and the role of ICTs in growth
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/gender-trade-and-role-icts-economic-growth

Looking at African countries, Brenda Zulu interviews Ngone Diop about the critical role that ICTs can play in levelling the playing field for women when it comes to trade policy.

(C) WHY INTERNET GOVERNANCE IS A WOMEN'S RIGHTS ISSUE

APC, 2010, Collected news stories on the impact of the Gender Evaluation Mechanism
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/research/collected-news-stories-impact-apc-gender-evaluatio

GEM is an evaluation methodology that integrates a gender analysis into evaluations of initiatives that use information and communication technologies (ICTs) for social change. It provides a means for determining whether ICTs are worsening or really improving women's lives and gender relations, as well as for promoting positive change at the individual, institutional, community and broader social levels.

By using the GEM methodology, practitioners in Africa, Latin America and Asia uncovered results they would not have obtained if they had not included gender in their project planing and research. A series of articles demonstrates how GEM is changing the lives of women and the development of inclusive ICT practices.

Kee, J. sm., 2005, Cultivating violence through technology? APC/ GenderIT.org, 2010, Violence against women and ICTS: Reports from 10 countries
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/research/violence-against-women-and-icts-reports-12-countri

Just as women are disproportionately the victims of violence worldwide, the situation is just as bad online. The UN estimates that 95% of aggressive behaviour, harassment, abusive language and denigrating images in online spaces are aimed at women and come from partners or former male partners. Other surveys show that the victims of cyberstalking are predominantly female. As part of the Take Back the Tech! to end violence against women project, APC and partners have carried out studies of the current situation of violence against women and ICTs in ten countries and how the legislation or lack of legislation connected to both hinders or helps women. The reports cover Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malaysia, Philippines, South Africa and Uganda.

APC, 2010, How technology is used to perpetrate violence against women – and to fight it
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/research/how-technology-being-used-perpetrate-violence-agai

This short pamphlet highlights problems women face online, using concrete examples from recent research. For example, that the UN estimates that 95% of aggressive behaviour, harassment, abusive language and denigrating images in online spaces are aimed at women and come from partners or former male partners. It goes on to look at initiatives that aim to combat online VAW.

APC/ WNSP et al, 2010, Internet governance issues on sexuality and women's rights
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/internet-governance-issues-sexuality-and-womens-rights

The IGF has been a challenging space for both women's rights advocates and for broader constituencies engaged in advocacy for gender equality and sexuality related rights. In the fifth and final year of the forum's mandate, women's rights were dwarfed as a critical issue to be debated in this arena, while sexuality issues, although present, were not seen as a matter of rights. APC Women's Networking Support Programme together with key partners have organised workshops and raised the gender and sexuality dimension of internet policy through the thematic area of openness, privacy and security. This includes discussions on women's participation in policy processes, violence against women and sexual rights. This paper explores this area through the sessions on this thematic area, one of the few places where the gender and sexual rights dimension of internet governance was tackled head-on at the IGF.

Corrêa, S. et at, 2010, Internet regulation and the Brazilian EroTICs context
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/internet-regulation-and-brazilian-erotics-context

Authors Sonia Corrêa, Marina Maria and Jandira Queiroz document how gender and sexuality have been at the heart of internet regulation debates in Brazil. However, this centrality does not necessarily translate to the discourses, analysis and the political claims of social actors involved in sexual politics, on the one hand, and digital politics, on the other. In the authors' view, there is no clarity or positioning among feminists and LGBT activists regarding the ways in which gender and sexuality issues are at play in the political

dynamics of internet regulation. Further no strong interaction exists between communication rights advocates and the world of sexual politics. Nevertheless the authors perceive cyber activists' commitment to privacy rights as very auspicious for sexual and reproductive rights.

Kee, J. sm, 2005, Cultivating violence through technology?
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/issue/gender/all/cultivating-violence-through-technology

Jac sm Kee explores the key issues of why feminists should engage with debates and developments in ICTs and technology. While a number of issues (such as concerns about privacy and mapping, the use of Smartphone apps for stalking etc) have arisen since this paper was written, the main issues that are raised, and the feminist arguments for engaging in this field remain pertinent – and it is still a matter of urgency to convince feminists of all shades that they need to see technology as not just a tool but a major arena for policy advocacy. The paper covers how ICTs can be used as tools to perpetrate VAW, how women have engaged with ICTs historically (since the advent of the telephone!), the relationships that have developed between women and technology and how ICTs can be used as tools of empowerment.

ENDA (APC), 2010, Without excision and with the youth: Towards an informed African citizenship
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/research/without-excision-and-youth-towards-informed-africa

Enlightened by the results of research project which looked at how ICTs could be used to transform attitudes and practices on female genital mutilation (FGM), this brochure recommends an innovative approach of social intervention policies and strategies. These recommendations are intended for political and institutional managers responsible for directing intervention policies and initiatives on issues related to gender, youth, citizenship, African integration, ICTs and development, excision and innovation.

Malhotra, N., The World Wide Web of desire: Content regulation on the internet
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/issue/gender/all/world-wide-web-desire-content-regulation-internet

In this paper, Namita Malhotra examines the gender dimensions of internet governance, focusing on debates around content regulation and censorship. She challenges the

notion that governments and states are primarily interested in minimising harm when it comes to regulating content such as child pornography, instead placing this on a continuum with the lack of women's representation at internet governance meetings, the lack of a feminist agenda in these meetings and the willingness to target the autonomy and agency of those least able to be present and vocal at these meetings – women and children.

Modemmujer and LaNeta, 2011, "Cyberactivism and gender violence", in Spanish
http://www.modemmujer.org/odm3/publicacion/antecedentes.html

This document discusses the intersection of ICTs and violence against women (VAW), addresses women's activism against gender violence and ICT use, and provides a guide on the use of ICT tools and cyberspace to eradicate VAW. It is a result of two and a half years work with Mexican women's organisations in the framework of an MDG3 project to strengthen women's organisations in ICT use to prevent and eradicate VAW.

Shaheed, A.L., 2011, Why women's movements should take a deep breath... and get involved in a new area of public policy
URL: http://www.genderit.org/feminist-talk/why-womens-movements-should-take-deep-breath-and-get-involved-new-arena-public-policy

Aisha Shaheed argues that all rights that women's rights activists discuss are concurrently being played out on the internet: accessibility for differently-abled people; opening up information on sexual rights; barriers to participation by poor, marginalised and/or minority communities; and the ability of citizens in different contexts to exercise their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. She discusses why both online and offline arenas are important arena for women's rights activists.

Taller Permanente de la Mujer, 2011, "Violence against women and ICTs: issues and challenges", in Spanish
http://www.genderit.org/es/node/3532/

This is a report of a workshop that took place in Buenos Aires, December 2011, to evaluate activities during the Take Back The Tech Campaign 2011. It includes a synthesis of panelists' presentations, experiences of women's groups using ICTs to prevent VAW and the main ideas shared by participants. It includes photos of the event.

(D) THE IGF: PROCESSES AND PEOPLE

Beckedahl, M., 2005, WSIS Tunis: In the face of police repression, civil society cancels activities
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/wsis-tunis-face-police-repression-civil-society-cancels-activities

Many international NGOs taking part in the World Summit on the Information Societyi (WSIS) have collectively decided to cancel their activities planned for today, November 15, at WSIS. This measure is to make governmenti, private sector and civil society delegates aware of the human rightsi violations that have been adding up over the last two days including beatings of journalists by police and the breaking-up of meetings since November 13. It is also a clear showing of solidarity with all independent NGOs in Tunisia who seem to have to put up with police repression on a daily basis. Markus Beckedahl interviewed APC's Anriette Esterhuysen on the reasons for this drastic decision. Listen to the interview.

Cabrera-Balleza, M., 2008, Finding a difficult balance: Human rights, law enforcement and cyber violence against women
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/finding-difficult-balance-human-rights-law-enforcement-and-cyber-violence-against-women

GenderIT writer Mavic Cabrera-Balleza probed on new analytical frameworks of violence against women taking into account cyber violence and the challenges and dilemmas women activists confront as they struggle to address this relatively new dimension of gender injustice. She spoke with two women activists who are at the forefront of advocacy on violence against women at the national and international levels - Lesley Ann Foster, founder and Executive Director of Masimanye Women's Support Network in South Africa and Charlotte Bunch, founder and Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University in New Jersey, USA.

Council of Europe, UNECE & APC, 2010, Code of good practice, participation and transparency in internet governance
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/research/code-good-practice-information-participation-and-t

A quick guide that outlines what we should be demanding in the processes that govern the internet, based upon what was agreed in the Tunis agenda.

Fialova, K., 2010, Fatimata Seye Sylla: Not having others speak for us (video)
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/fatimata-seye-sylla-not-have-others-speaking-us-video

Fatimata Seye Sylla is a key figure in the Senegalese internet community. She worked for ten years within the Senegalese government, and for nine years in the private sector. She conducted the first national project to introduce ICT in the educational system. Fatimata shares with GenderIT.org why she came to Vilnius and what the IGF means to her personally and to women's rights.

Gustainiene, A., 2005, Gender-focussed ICT policy-making
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/gender-focussed-ict-policy-making

Albania's national ICT strategy is one of its kind in Central and Eastern Europe, with a marked effort to include women's needs and views. Gender incorporation in ICTs was part of Albania's attempt to address growing disparities in income, gender and geographical location. What can we learn from their experience for future gender-sensitive ICT policy framing?

Jagun, A., 2008, Building consensus on internet access at the IGF
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/issue/building-consensus-internet-access-igf

Taking readers through the process of workshops in the IGF, and then looking at how the workshop discussions were reflected in the plenary sessions and decisions or 'consensus' reached at the second IGF in 2007, Abiodun Jagun helps to both clarify some of the processes of the IGF and impart some of energy that was present at these meetings. The issue paper brings up recommendations for the IGF – reflecting the concerns of civil society and giving readers both ideas on how the processes governing the internet can be improved,

and making some of the issues surrounding that governance clearer.

Melo Jacira, Iraci, Nilsa and Vieira, Vera, 2009, "Fazendo Lobby", guide to participate in policy discussion at the I National Conference on Communications, in Portuguese
http://www.redemulher.org.br/publicacoes/Fazendo%20Lobby.pdf

This guide was produced by three women's organisations to train and inform NGO delegates to the I National Conference on Communications, in Brazil, 2009. The conference's theme was "Communications: media to build citizen's rights in the digital age". It includes a section on gender, race and communications issues.

Souter, D., 2006, Whose information society? Developing country and civil society voices at the World Summit on the Information Society
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/issue/whose-information-society-developing-country-and-c

While WSIS has been superseded by the IGF and the CSTD, this paper was written for the APC to study developing country and civil society participation and influence in WSIS. It analyses participation, looks at the impact of WSIS on international ICT decision-making in general and makes recommendations to all main actors about how future decision-making might become more inclusive of developing countries, non-governmental actors and their concerns. In particular, it revisits the conclusions of the Louder Voices report1 on developing country involvement in decision- making, published at the G8 summit in 2002, which identified a series of weaknesses in both international organisations and national policymaking processes which contributed to poor participation – and it asks how these have and have not changed as a result of WSIS.

(E) ISSUES

Jensen, H., 2005, Gender equality may constitute a normative consensus, but political will is lacking
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/gender-equality-may-constitute-normative-consensus-political-will-lacking

Heike Jensen, researcher and lecturer at the Department of Gender Studies of Humboldt University in Berlin, (Germany),

is one of those hardworking gender advocates, whose "effort and time spent gathering information, sleepless nights, many cups of coffee , talking, training, skills sharing, lobbying and writing" focussed on integrating gender as a relevant dimension of WSIS process and outcomes. She has been involved in the process almost since the beginning, worked as member of the German Civil Society Coordinating Group, the NGO Gender Strategies Working Group and the WSIS Gender Caucus, where she is a member of the Steering Committee. In contrast to GenderIT.org writer Jac sm Kee, she sees the results of seven years advocacy more optimistically. Here is her initial assessment of the achievements in terms of gender written few days after the conclusion of WSIS process.

Lemle, M., 2005, Brazilian women climb in science, but few reach the top
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/brazilian-women-climb-science-few-reach-top

Gender equalityi in Brazilian science is increasing up to doctorate level but few women hold senior scientific posts, according to figures released by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP).

Maltzahn, K., 2006, Digital dangers: Information and communication technologies and trafficking in women
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/issue/gender/all/digital-dangers-information-communication-technolo

Kathleen Maltzahn explores how ICTs are being used in the trafficking of women, whether they change what it means to traffick in women – for example, whether the trafficking in images is in any way similar to trafficking in 'real' women – and whether feminists should get involved in the policy debates on trafficking. While this paper was written some time back, and much has been written in the meantime, the debates and questions it raises are still relevant.

Moullin-Sylla, M-H, 2006, The gender digital divide in Francophone Africa: A harsh reality
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/manuals/gender/africa/gender-digital-divide-francophone-africa-harsh-rea

The "Gender Digital Divide in Francophone Africa" research project, undertaken by the Gender and ICT Network, found that women overall have one chance in three less than men

of benefiting from the African Information Society in the six countries included in the study (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal). Furthermore, any connection between gender and ICT issues is largely unrecognised. The quantitative and qualitative evidence presented by the research, which justifies the alarms raised by gender specialists within the information society, appeals to public and civil society policymakers to implement actions towards a fairer and more inclusive society in terms of gender.

The research results are hard-hitting in that they show the gender digital divide to be a harsh reality in terms of control, content and capacities. Only young girls with a secondary school education seem exempt from these gender disparities, but these women of tomorrow are still only being prepared for a secondary role as consumers and "helping hands" in the information society.

Plou, D.S., 2005, After sessions ending at 4am, do gender issues count?
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/after-sessions-ending-4-am-do-gender-issues-count

Gender issues don't count when it comes to discussing telecommunications policies. Or so it seems, with most still believing that these technologies are gender-neutral. So why at all, their approach suggests, should one have all these women talking of gender issues while analysing the growth of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their impact on society, culture, economics and policy-making?

Rens, A., 2010, Report on fundamental rights, and global copyright legislative best practice for access to knowledge in South Africa
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/research/report-fundamental-rights-and-global-copyright-leg

This best practices paper by Andrew Rens – commissioned by the APC – is meant to serve as a resource to support civil society's access to knowledge (A2K) advocacy with respect to the upcoming South African copyright law reform process. With the South African National Council for the Blind at the helm, South African A2K advocates in civil society had some important gains in engagement with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The idea of the paper on model A2K legislation is to build on the current civil society engagement with the DTI, and to bring examples of legislation that can support arguments to strengthen the A2K provisions in a revised copyright law. While this report is directed at South

Africa, and while it lacks specific reference to gender, the issues raised here are particularly pertinent to women in the global South (see xxx).

Toro, M.S., 2005, Where is women's "J" spot?
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/where-women%C2%B4s-%E2%80%9Cj%E2%80%9D-spot-0

As the international community prepares to join the United Nation's 49th Session of the Commission on the Status on Women (CSW), women media practitioners are asking: where is women's "J" spot? Despite the fact that the latform for Action (PFA) contemplates Section "J" in Chapter 3, about Women and Media, the issue is hardly found in the provisional agenda for the evaluationi process. The U.N. Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) has also ignored "Women and media" in its web page discussion topics towards the process.

Zulu, B., 2005, OAFLA to use ICTs for social justice
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/oafla-use-icts-social-justice

The Organisation of African First Ladies against AIDS (OAFLA) has embraced information communication technologies (ICTs) as a tool to advocate for social justice especially in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

SECTION TWO: WOMEN, PRIVACY AND ANONYMITY: MORE THAN DATA PROTECTION

This section takes up some of the issues discussed at WSIS and IGF that have a clear gender dimension, but which still require stronger feminist intervention and analysis. This section also has five sub-sections: safety and security; bodily integrity (looking at both physical and virtual bodies); freedom of expression and sexuality; violence against women online and how it affects women's equality and participation; and safe participation in social networks, which looks at both challenges and strategies for overcoming them.

(A) SAFETY AND SECURITY

Cabrera-Balleza, M., 2011, ICT skills gap = online security risks
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/ict-skills-gap-online-security-risks

GenderIT.org contributor Mavic Cabrera-Balleza interviews Mary Jane Real, outgoing coordinator of the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition about the use of internet and information and communication technologies by women human rights defenders, the opportunities they present as well as the digital security risks women human rights defenders confront. Real goes on to share her ideas on how the risks could be minimized or eliminated.

Naskiye, E., 2010, South Africa: Privacy and domestic violence online and off
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/south-africa-privacy-and-domestic-violence-online-and

While women's rights activists have been at the forefront of making the private crimes that occur at home - domestic violence, marital rape - public, new technologies are making the private public in ways that disenfranchise, alienate and violate women. Esther Nasikye and Sally-Jean Shackleton explore how ICTs, privacy and domestic violence in South Africa are showing up problems in both policy and practice.

2005, Online safety for women
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/online-safety-women

Online harassment (aka cyber stalking) and related threatening behaviours are violent acts that are increasing towards women who use the internet to access information or communicate online. Cyberstalking and related threatening behaviours are significantly affecting women's every day lives. The stigma and shame women survivors face compound the isolation and perpetuation of violence against women. This looks at a project aiming to address these issues.

Othman, D., 2011, From Clock Square to StreetWatch: Mapping sexual harassment in Palestina
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/clock-square-streetwatch-mapping-sexual-harassment-palestina

Dalia Othman, a researcher and human rightsi activist, reports on a new initiative in Ramallah, Palestina, that uses online mapping and mobile phone technology to allow women to combat sexual harassment in the streets.

Randhawa, S., 2011, Mapping the intersection of technology and violence against women
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/mapping-intersection-technology-and-gender-based-violence

On 25 November 2011, Take Back The Tech! campaign has launched an interactive map based that allows internet users to share their stories, local news and personal experiences of gender-based violence they faced online or through the use of mobile phone technologies. As of 7 December, it has recorded 103 stories from across the globe, with the majority of stories coming from Africa, Latin America and Asia. Sonia Randhawa draws on the data collected through the mapping platform and looking at some trends these data reveal to us about the technology-related violence against women.

(B) BODILY INTEGRITY

Cabrera-Balleza, M., 2007, Birthing choices and challenges - understanding new reproductive technologies
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/birthing-choices-and-challenges%E2%80%94understanding-new-reproductive-technologies

Kim Surkan is a gender studies professor. She recently gave birth to her son who was conceived through in-vitro fertilization. GenderIT.org writer, Mavic Cabrera-Balleza speaks with Kim about some controversies surrounding the use of new reproductive technologies and genetic selection. They also discuss the role of the information and communication technologies in new reproductive practices manipulated by technologies and genetics.

Cabrera-Balleza, M., 2006, Reclaiming women's space at the peace table: the Peacebuilding Cyberdialogue as a model of using ICTs for peacebuilding
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/reclaiming-women%E2%80%99s-space-peace-table-peacebuilding-cyberdialogue-model-using-icts-peacebuild

Women are particularly impacted by war and violent conflicts - both as survivors as well as, crucially, being at the forefront of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building. Mavic Cabrera-Balleza shares the Peacebuilding Cyberdialogue, a collaborative effort between the International Women's Tribune Centre and Isis WICCE, that brings together 40 women's organisations all over the world through a "'real time global town hall meeting' using Internet chat with voice and video/visual contact". Such an initiative not only linked advocates who were working on this issue together, but was also important in making the connection between policies proposed at international levels with the realities of women working on the ground. The article ends with some reflections on challenges and recommendations on the effective use of ICTs in peacebuilding.

Fernandez-Diaz, N., 2007, Integration of ICTs into the health system: Basic services and risks to privacy
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/integration-icts-health-system-basic-services-and-risks-privacy

How can a health care system respond to the gender-specificities in terms of providing accurate and timely information & services? And in what way can ICTs augment or challenge this effort? Natalia Fernandez presents a summary overview of various approaches by governments in different regions in adopting ICTs in health care, and highlights the potential risks to privacy that they can potentially create.

Jones, R., 2005, HIV/ AIDS and mobile technology: sms saving lives in Africa
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/hivaids-and-mobile-technology-sms-saving-lives-africa

With overburdened health care systems and a shortage of doctors, South Africa and Kenya face an uphill battle with HIV/AIDS. Women are the majority of the poor people in the world and therefore are drastically affected by the pricing and availability of essential medicines. In addition, the burden of care for the sick and elderly, as well as the rise in orphans, have increased drastically and have fallen on women who have little or no access to the essential medicines needed to treat sick people both in their homes and in their communities.

Niombo, S., 2007, The fight against female circumcision in West Africa transposed onto the internet
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/fight-against-female-circumcision-west-africa-transposed-internet

Sylvie Niombo, APC-Africa-Women Co-Coordinator, examines a role of information and communication technologies in the fight against female circumcision, a harmful practice carried out on over a hundred million girls and women in West African

countries. She explores 'shadow areas' through a closer look at thus launched a research programme "Contribution of information and communications technologies (ICTs) towards the discontinuation of female genital mutilation in Francophone Africa: civic role of the youth" by Enda Third World of Senegal, a member organisation of the Association for Progressive Communications network.

Shackleton, S-J., 2010, South Africa: Pornography and the internet – justifiable protection or entrenching patriarchy?
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/south-africa-pornography-and-internet-justifiable-protection-or-entrenching-patriarchy

A draft Bill proposing a ban on sexual content on the internet and cellphones submitted to the South African Department of Home Affairs in May 2010 claims to have the best interests of women and children in mind. The Bill was submitted to the Department, which oversees the Film and Publications Board, by a non-profit organisation called Justice Alliance of South Africa (JASA).

(C)FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND SEXUALITY

Bossio, J., 2007, The contented and the discontented: Internet content regulation
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/contented-and-discontented-internet-content-regulation

What does it take to regulate content on the internet? The apparently unruly character and development of the internet and accompanying technologies have been argued as defeating any efforts to truly govern how content is circulated in this space. Nonetheless, censorship and regulation is real. Here, Jorge Bossio examines various categorisations of content that enables their regulation, as well as strategies implemented in Peru, calling for greater individual responsibility and awareness in the constitution of harm.

Cabrera-Balleza, M., 2007, Mommy knows best, or perhaps the church, or maybe the school? A conversation on online content regulation
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/mommy-knows-best-or-perhaps-church-or-maybe-school-conversation-online-content-regulation

Who decides on what we should see and not see online? Should parents decide on behalf of their children? Or should it be the church? Or the school? Are women and children better left alone? Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, Senior Programme Associate of the International Women's Tribune Centre and a member of the GenderIT blogging team at the first Internet Governance Forum (IGF) that took place in Athens, Greece from October 30- November 2, 2006 spoke with two other IGF participants—Caroline Wamala from Uganda and Itir Akdogan from Turkey on gender issues in internet governance and online content regulation. The article comprises excerpts from their conversation.

Giordano, C., 2007, Content, contingencies and conflict on the internet
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/content-contingencies-and-conflict-internet

As both a mirror and an extension of social relationships, the internet's virtual space differentiates itself from traditional media by its decentralised and open architecture. This subverts power relationships between citizens, institutions, governments and markets. Confusion. Impunity. Unbounded freedom. Can and should this anthill be organised? What is the ethical reach of doing so? This article proposes to take up some of the important issues regarding the content that circulates through the network. To this end, this article presents the qualified opinion of two Uruguayan professionals from government and academia.

Higgs, K. & Flavin, A., 2011, New research on sexuality and the internet is an "eye-opener"
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/new-research-sexuality-and-internet-eye-opener

Gus Hossein, Director of Privacy International, speaks candidly of his take on the EROTICS research project and its potential impact and value on the work on privacy rights.

Jensen, H. et al, 2010, How to look at censorship with a gender lens
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/how-look-censorship-gender-lens

Heike Jensen and Sonia Randhawa, APC WNSP members participating in a gender iteam of the OpenNet Initiative in Asia (ONI-Asia), talk about how censorship and gender interrelate. Since 2006, APC WNSP has taken a closer look at internet censorship and surveillance practices from a gender

perspective in order to develop a gender research framework for examining freedom of expression, security and privacy for ONI project partners in Asia, as well as future research initiatives that are looking into the area of content regulation. ONI-Asia is part of a larger OpenNet Initiative, a collaborative project that aims to investigate, expose and analyse internet filtering and surveillance practices.

Kee, J. sm, 2011, Erotics: Exploratory research on sexuality and the internet
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/node/11958

This collection of executive summaries examines critical intersections between the internet and sexuality in Brazil, India, Lebanon, South Africa and the United States. It aims to bridge the gap between policy and legislative measures that regulate content and practice on the internet, and the actual lived practices, experiences and concerns of internet users in the exercise of their sexual rights. It aims to promote evidence-based policy making by engaging in on-the-ground research with a range of internet users - especially those most affected by internet regulation measures, including young women and people of diverse sexualities - to inform and guide policy making for a more accountable process of decision-making. The research proceeds from the concern that efforts to regulate the free flow of information, expression and practices online are argued from the need to regulate and preserve gender and sexual norms. This is also supported by conservative forces that often act from a moralist standpoint. The most familiar forms of restricted content and high-risk activities online centre around pornography, and increasingly, the protection of children from sexual harm. However, policy debates and developments rarely take into account the perspectives of these intended beneficiaries.

The full EROTICS report is available at http://www.apc.org/en/system/files/EROTICS.pdf

Moawad, N., 2010, Who's afraid of the big, bad internet?
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/who%E2%80%99s-afraid-big-bad-internet

"Clearly, one cannot speak of sexual rights activism in Lebanon without speaking at length about internet usage, as both are tied together at levels from personal identity and relationships to political activism and mobilization," claims Nadine Moawad, the APC's EroTICs project partner. In this article, she assesses the role of the internet in the rise of sexual rights activism in Lebanon, and explores connections between internet regulations and attitudes towards sexuality.

APC, Media brief: Censorship, sexuality and the internet
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/node/10262

A short piece, with lots of links for further information, on why we need to be vigilant about government attempts to regulate sexuality online, taken from a sexuality rights perspective.

Randhawa, S., 2010, Sexual rights, openness and regulatory systems
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/sexual-rights-openness-and-regulatory-systems

The summary of the 'Sexual rights, openness and regulatory systems' workshop co-organized by APC WNSP, Centre for Internet and Society and Alternative Law Forum at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Vilnius, Lithuania on September 14 2010. T.Q. from the Lebanon EroTICs team speaks about the history of the local queer movement which correlates with the development of the internet in Lebanon. Clarissa Smith, a UK-based researcher representing the Onscenity network, examines sexuality, porn and the internet from the users point of view. Joy Liddicoat, a New Zealand Human Rights commissioner, shares her experiences and views on developing regulatory systems that recognize and realize the rights of sexual and gender minorities.

Shahid, R., 2007, Pakistan's web of censorship
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/pakistan%E2%80%99s-web-censorship

The internet has become a critical space for ordinary citizens in Pakistan to speak their minds, and exchange information. These include women who sharpen their ICTs skills and turn to weblogs as a platform for articulation of their concerns and daily lives, and to engage in conversations sometimes blacked out as 'taboo'. But is this relative 'freedom' under threat? This article presents an overview of the country's internet regulation mechanism, and how a recent banning of blogspot has revealed the multiple attempts by the government to control content in cyberspace.

(D) ONLINE VAW: HOW DOES IT AFFECT WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

APC Policy Monitor in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008, Cybercrime laws are not enough, there is also a need for education
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/cybercrime-laws-are-not-enough-there-also-need-education

The different forms of online violence against women should be covered by criminal legislation to provide adequate protection and redress. However, laws are not enough. There is also a need for education, prevention, the development of defence mechanisms and a legal system that is capable of addressing these issues without subjecting the victims to further victimisation. Carlos Gregorio, a researcher at the Research Institute for Justice (Instituto de Investigación para la Justicia) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, shares his views on a number of issues related to cybercrime.

Niombo, S., 2009, Violence against women and information and communication technologies: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) country report
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/violence-against-women-and-information-communication-technologies-democratic-republic-congo-

In the context of a country with one of the world's worst human rights records, women and girls are the victims of sexual violence perpetrated mostly by combatants from both sides. However, Sylvie Niombo finds in this paper that the intersections between violence against women and girls and ICTs in the DRC are not well established. The internet makes it possible to share experiences and receive information to advance the cause of women's rights but can facilitate violence towards Congolese women and girls. A lack of confidence in the legal system and the strong presence of men in the judiciary make women unlikely to seek help from the courts, but there is growing mobilisation of women and human rights organisations in the fight to end violence against women (VAW) in partnership with the United Nations and international organisations.

Niombo, S., 2009, Violence against women and information and communication technologies: Congo country report
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/violence-against-women-and-information-communication-technologies-congo-country-report

In Congo, Sylvie Niombo explores the intersection of VAW and ICTs, where mobile phone use appears to be the primary vehicle used to perpetrate VAW using ICTs. SMS and phone calls are used by some men to harass women and girls. Male monitoring of women's use of mobile phones leads to blurring of privacy issues and power relations between men and women are reflected by who has the resources to buy cell phones. Mobile phones are also used by young people to disseminate pictures of naked girls.

Soto, J. U., 2009, Violence against women and information and communication technologies: Philippines country report: The nexus of VAW and ICT
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/violence-against-women-and-information-communication-technologies-philippines-country-report

Jessica Umanos Sotos explores why specific law is needed in the Philippines to prosecute perpetrators of violence against women through the use of ICTs or cyberspace. She argues that national ICT institutions and private companies' policies cannot remain blind to the violations to women's rights perpetuated via ICTs in the context of the violation of privacy rights through the illicit production and distribution of private and intimate activities. The violation of privacy rights comes in the form of sex-video scandals via telephony and internet. She also documents how, although there are no available studies on how other forms of violence such as stalking or sexual harassment and even direct threats are figuring as VAW via mobile phones, these violations are believed to be widespread.

Randhawa, S., 2009, Violence against women and ICTs in the Pacific: An overview
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/violence-against-women-and-icts-pacific-islands-region-overview

Sonia Randhawa interviews FemLINK Pacific coordinator Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls to get an overview of violence against women in the Pacific Islands region and to look at how ICTs are contributing to increasing the vulnerability of women and providing new forms of harassment and harm, while at the same time grassroots initiatives such as a mobile community radio station are helping to provide women with tools for building self-confidence and information on what to do in times of crisis.

(E) SAFE PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Fascendini, F., 2011, Who's gonna track me?
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/whos-gonna-track-me

Flavia Fascendini looks at the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders -- which, for the first time in history, focuses on the situation of women's human rights defenders. Drawing on the report's findings, she talks to South-East Asian women's activists about the unique security risks they face online.

Radloff, J. & Running Toddler, 2011, The changing face of women's rights activism: Be careful what you say online
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/changing-face-womens-rights-activism

Jennifer Radloff, GenderIT.org contributor, and Running Toddler, a participant of a recently hosted workshop in secure online communications for women human rights defenders, interviewed the workshop's trainers, c5 and anonymous. In this first part of the interview, the trainers talk about their experience in training activists and human rights defenders to use technology securely, and the challenges inherent in communicating safely as feminists and women's human rights defenders, and the importance of awareness that these technologies can both serve us and put us at risk.

SECTION 3: WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE WEB: WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE?

It isn't always – or even often – clear where responsibility for either the infringement of women's rights or their protection lies. Increasingly private corporations are infringing women's right to privacy, while states are infringing upon rights to information and expression, often in the guise of protecting women and children. This section looks at who needs to be held accountable for the exercise of women's human rights online and is divided into two sub-sections: issues, particularly filtering, censorship, transparency and right to information; and access.

(A) ISSUES: FILTERING, CENSORSHIP, TRANSPARENCY, RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Echols, K. & Ditmore, M., 2010, What is 'Harmful to minors'? US EroTICs partner investigates library search filters
URL: http://www.genderit.org/content/what-harmful-minors-us-erotics-partner-investigates-library-search-filters

In this article, Kevicha Echols and Melissa Ditmore from Sex Work Awareness (SWA), researchers for the APC's EroTICsi project, investigate the use of filters on public library computers with internet access. People in the United States (US) enjoy a great deal of access to informationi in print and online media due to the first amendment of the US constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech, and, thereby, its flip side, access to information. However, many people in the US, particularly youth and the economically disadvantaged (who are disproportionately people of colour), rely on school and library computers to access the internet for information, so legislation affecting information available on these computers affects their ability to access information.

Randhawa, S., 2011, Mapping and privacy: Interview with Privacy International's Gus Hosein
URL: http://www.genderit.org/articles/mapping-and-privacy-interview-privacy-internationals-gus-hosein

Sonia Randhawa spoke with senior fellow at Privacy International Gus Hosein about how mobile devices and their ability to map our movements are intruding on personal privacy and individual autonomy. The interview also examines policy measures, and where the major threats to individual privacy lie.

B) ACCESS TO THE INTERNET

Adam, L., 2008, Policies for equitable access
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/research/policies-equitable-access

This paper and related commentaries debate what policies are required and in what type of regulatory framework to provide access to ICTs for the poor. While the paper takes a geographical perspective, looking at Africa and Latin America in particular, the frameworks advocated and arguments advanced are useful for those looking to overcome the gendered digital divide.

The majority of the world's population is still isolated from the opportunities offered by the global revolution in information

and communications technologies (ICTs) – and the poor are the hardest hit.

This is the view of Ethiopian-based ICT expert Lishan Adam, whose issue paper Policies for equitable access considers policy interventions to rectify the imbalances between rich and poor when it comes to accessing technology. He says governments and regulators have not yet succeeded in delivering affordable communications services to the poor, and, despite the mobile boom in Africa, tariffs remain high. Regulators, who ideally should control the telecommunications industry without political interference, lack independence and specialist expertise, and are often unable to challenge powerful incumbents.

Escudero-Pascual, A., 2008, Tools and technologies for equitable access
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/research/tools-and-technologies-equitable-access

Equitable access to infrastructure requires the combination of policies, technology and human capacity building. This issue paper focuses on technologies and tools for developing regions to improve internet access. The technologies are presented in five major areas:

· Wireless access

· Low-cost and low-power computing

· Open standards, hardware and software

· Local services and content

· Open access and open networks.

The paper provides background for each of these technology areas and refers to practical strategies to ensure equitable access. After reviewing the various issues and strategies, it makes a set of recommendations related to each of the technology areas. The suggested interventions cover a range of issues, including: public access to radio spectrum, open networks, capacity building, the promotion of local services, the use of open standards, and quality control in information and communications technologies (ICTs). While not specifically addressing the needs of women, this shows what is necessary for women to have access to basic ICT infrastructure.

Souter, D., 2008, Capacity building for equitable access
URL: http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/research/capacity-building-equitable-access

To exercise their rights in the web, women must be there – at the moment there is a huge imbalance between male and female participation online. This paper doesn't specifically address women's access to the internet, but the arguments and debates it outlines are relevant to women – and their discussions of where responsibility lies to ensure that there is access for all and how we should be framing debates around ICTs. Policy-makers and regulators "cannot be supermen and superwomen," says African information and communications technology (ICT) policy analyst Professor F.F. Tusubira. Instead, he says, they need to create an environment where "savvy" entrepreneurs can bring value to customers.

While there are many points of agreement on how to understand the key challenges facing policy activists who want to unlock the potential of ICTs more vigorously for the poor, exchanges between experts often raise quite straightforward yet intriguing questions, such as: Do those with entrepreneurial spirit and energy need to be taught, or are they self-taught? Is it patronising for an outsider to intervene? When it comes to ICTs, who are the outsiders? And do remedies for the digital divide ignore similar divide debates that have gone on in other sectors decades ago?

Critically absent: Women's rights in internet governance

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