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## Impact of Social Media on Feminism

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# IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON FEMINISM



# Overview:

Online Feminism

Positives of Social Media

Negatives of Social Media

What Now?

# Online Feminism

"A feminist assessment of social media, then, is an exploration of how communities form and interact in social media spaces as well as if values expressed via these participatory cultures align or misalign with feminist ethical criteria. Digital social media invite participation based on the values of openness, collaboration, and networking, which in theory align with feminist values such as access, cooperation, and inclusion. However, the opportunities social media platforms afford are increasingly shaped by the business models and algorithms behind them, not to mention the material biases users bring with them" (Ott, 2018)



feminist.

# A Feminist Internet

"A feminist internet works towards empowering more women and queer persons – in all our diversities – to fully enjoy our rights, engage in pleasure and play, and dismantle patriarchy. This integrates our different realities, contexts and specificities – including age, disabilities, sexualities, gender identities and expressions, socioeconomic locations, political and religious beliefs, ethnic origins, and racial markers" (APC)



<https://feministinternet.org/en>

# Positives to Social Media

- Fighting Gender-Based Violence
- Change the Conversation
- Social Movements
- Intersection of Technology and Empowerment

# Fighting Gender-Based Violence

- "Harness the power of the internet to convey the realities of women's lives to the world and to ensure freedom of sexual and gender expression. It takes agency and consent seriously, designing them into thinking, planning and technology" (Nagarajan, 2016)
- "Take Back The Tech! is a call to everyone, especially women and girls, to take control of technology to end violence against women. It's a global, collaborative campaign project that highlights the problem of tech-related violence against women, together with research and solutions from different parts of the world" (About take back the tech!, n.d.)

(About take back the tech!, n.d.)



# Change the Conversation

"As Zara Rahman writes, there are a number of tools today that support feminist ideas, from Are Men Talking Too Much, a handy way to check who's dominating the conversation, to Gender Decoder or Textio, which checks bias in job adverts and reveals the language that encourages different people to apply" (Nagarajan, 2016)

## Gender Decoder for Job Ads

Without realising it, we all use language that is subtly 'gender-coded'. Society has certain expectations of what men and women are like, and how they differ, and this seeps into the language we use. Think about "bossy" and "feisty": we almost never use these words to describe men.

This linguistic gender-coding shows up in job adverts as well, and research has shown that it puts women off applying for jobs that are advertised with masculine-coded language.\*

This site is a quick way to check whether a job advert has the kind of subtle linguistic gender-coding that has this discouraging effect. [Find out more about how this works.](#)

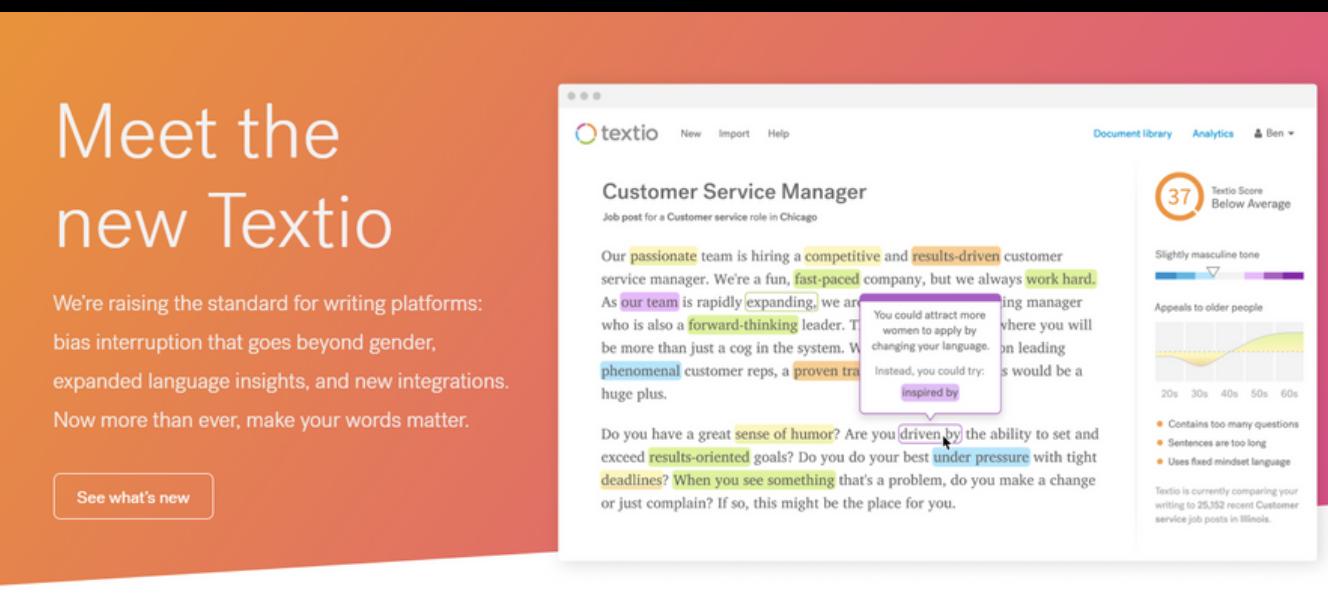
Paste your job ad here



## Meet the new Textio

We're raising the standard for writing platforms: bias interruption that goes beyond gender, expanded language insights, and new integrations. Now more than ever, make your words matter.

See what's new



<http://arentalkingtoomuch.com/>  
<https://www.genderavenger.com/blog/are-men-talking-too-much>  
<http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/>  
<https://textio.com/>

# Social Movements



**THE SLUMFLOWER** @theslumflower · Jan 19

I'm so thankful that the **#SAGGYBOOBSMATTER** movement is benefiting women around the world and I can't wait to see a world where women feel safer in the bodies they were born in! ❤️

A lot of the time, women judge other women for their bodies but we can all learn to unlearn.

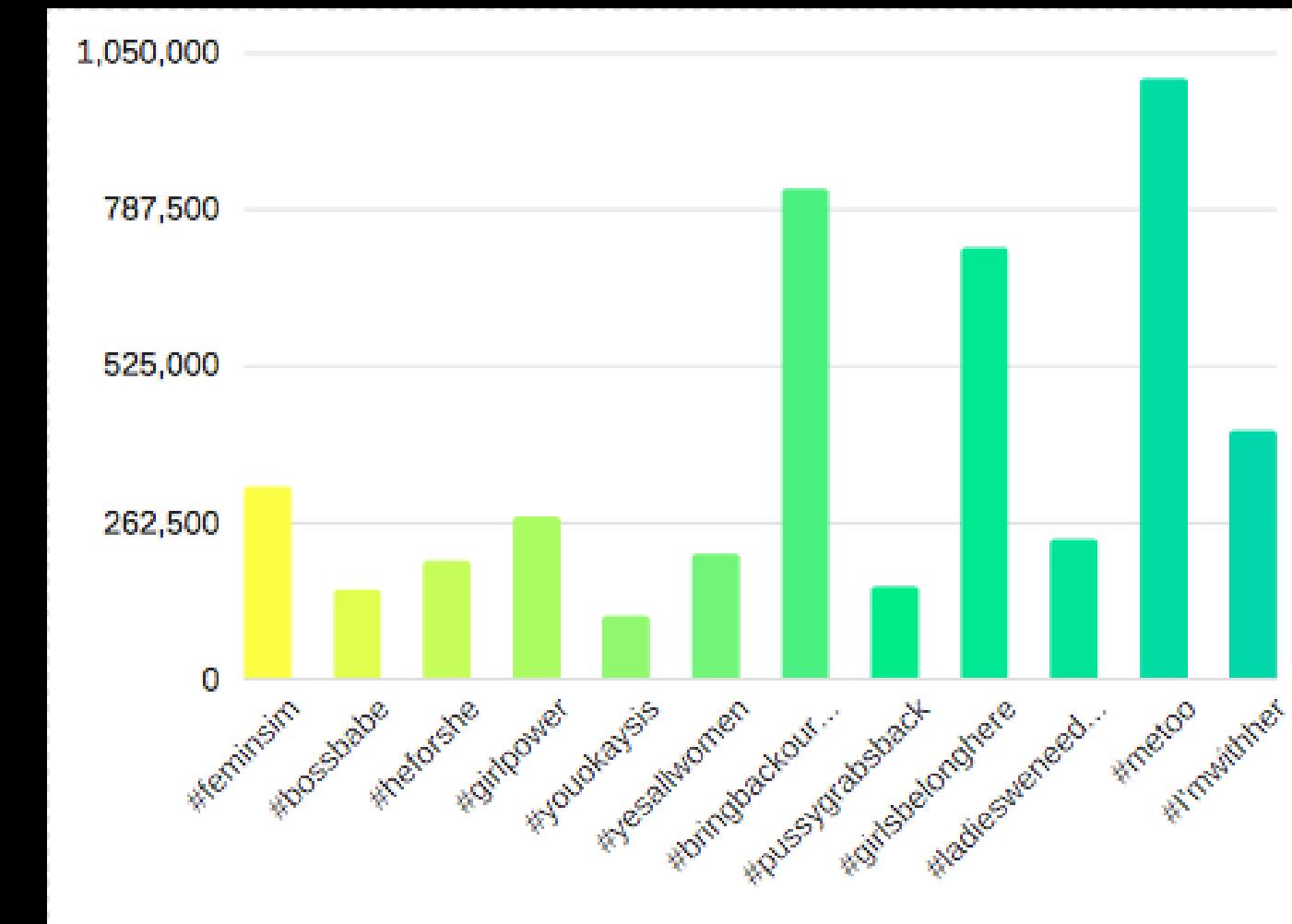


**Freya Hardy** @UrsulaGlitch

**#EverydaySexism** I come up with decent idea in meeting - am ignored. Minutes later man expresses same idea - is congratulated on brilliance.

194 2:39 AM - Apr 16, 2015

119 people are talking about this



<https://www.envimarketing.com/blog-interface/2017/10/31/how-social-media-is-changing-the-feminist-movement>  
[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/21-hashtags-that-changed-the-way-we-talk-about-feminism\\_n\\_56ec0978e4b084c6722000d1](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/21-hashtags-that-changed-the-way-we-talk-about-feminism_n_56ec0978e4b084c6722000d1)  
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-5357189/Woman-applauded-starting-saggyboobmovement.html>  
<https://www.firstpost.com/india/happy-womens-day-2019-metoo-everydaysexism-timesup-and-other-feminist-hashtags-which-empowered-millions-globally-6216591.html>  
<https://www.inlander.com/spokane/indigenous-peoples-march/Slideshow/16118250/16118049>

# Social Movements

"Social media has done many wonderful things for women, and for writers, and for activists, and for women writer activists. It's allowed us to connect. It's given us a virtual soapbox, a ground-up way of taking a stand, making a point and getting our message out when newspapers and magazines might have ignored us. It's let us lead movements from our smartphone" (Weiner, 2015)



<https://www.dailyprincetonian.com/article/2020/04/black-lives-matter-it-must-be-said>

# Intersection of Technology and Empowerment

"We've rescued sex trafficking victims. We've had young women in the United Kingdom receive mentoring help," said Neilson, who added that these feats were accomplished because the technology existed to connect people... The company hosted a hackathon for three days, where coders came from all over Silicon Valley and developed apps such as one to help get vaccinations to rural areas and another to help women who have been victims of sexual abuse on college campuses" (Wallace, 2014)



[https://www.wuwm.com/post/sex-trafficking-milwaukee-crime-doesn't-discriminate#stream/0](https://www.wuwm.com/post/sex-trafficking-milwaukee-crime-doesn-t-discriminate#stream/0)

# Intersection of Technology and Empowerment

Consider the impact social media had on galvanizing international outrage after the horrific and deadly gang rape of a young Indian medical student, or the power of Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan, an advocate for the right of girls to an education, who was targeted and shot by a gunman, and who has since become an international heroine... "I think it's provided a voice for the voiceless, so we wouldn't know some of the things that were going on in countries like India or (in) the Middle East if it wasn't for some of those social networks."(Wallace, 2014)



<https://www.maconferenceforwomen.org/how-malala-finds-and-keeps-finding-her-courage/>



<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20141106-women-protest-against-living-conditions-in-gaza/>

# Negatives to Social Media

- Gender-Based Violence
- "Openness"
- Race
- Filtered data
- Continuously Being "On"

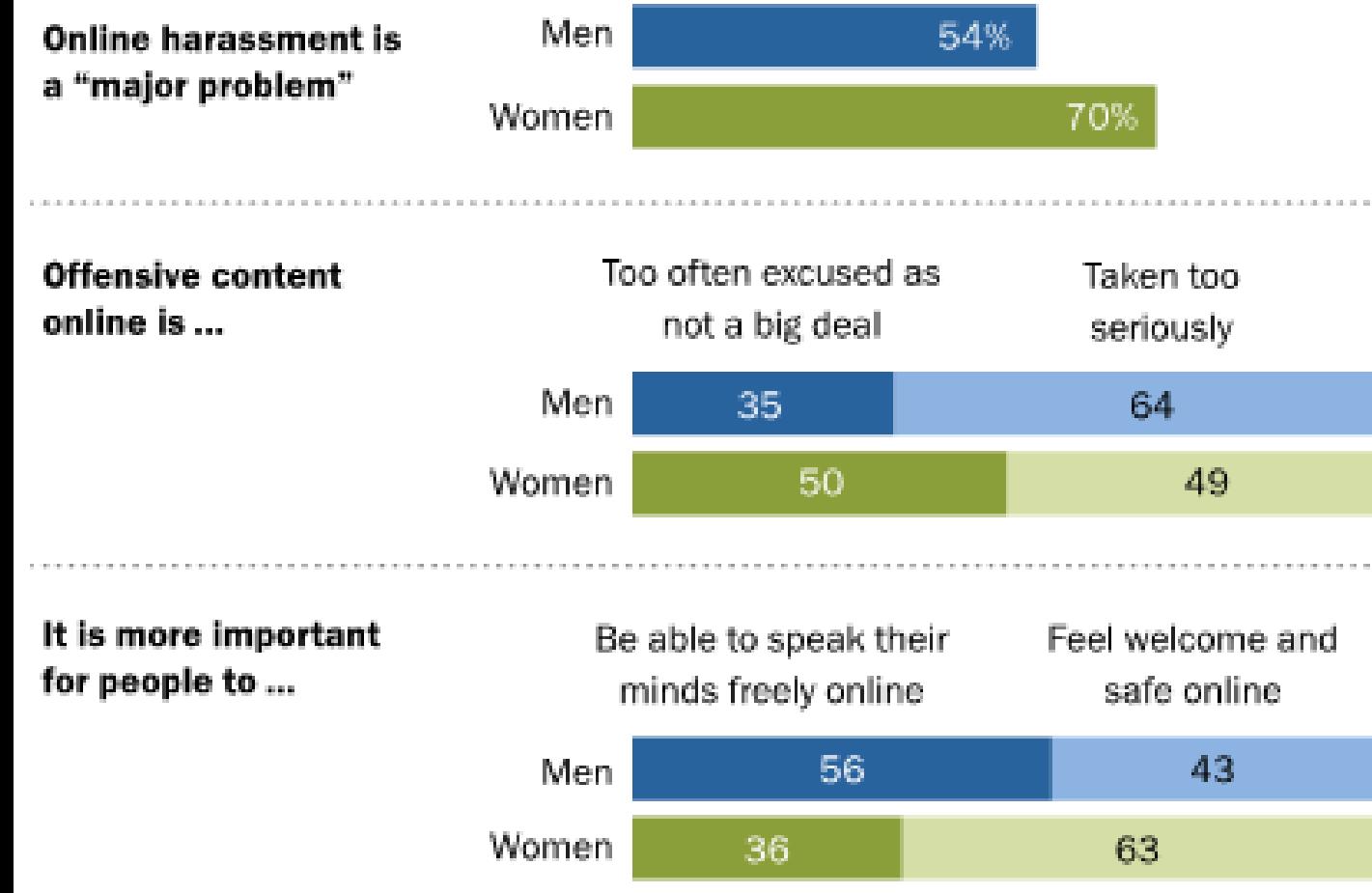
# Gender Based Violence

"A rising trend is the use of the internet, social media and other forms of technology to harass, intimidate, humiliate and control women and girls" (Nagarajan, 2016)

"In the United States, women are more likely to use social media than men across all major platforms except LinkedIn. But despite this, female Twitter users are significantly less likely to be retweeted than male users. According to Adweek, men are retweeted almost twice as often as women. And women are more likely to be subject to cyber abuse on Twitter, according to Amnesty International" (Powell, 2018)

**Women more likely than men to view online harassment as a major problem**

*% of U.S. adults who say ...*

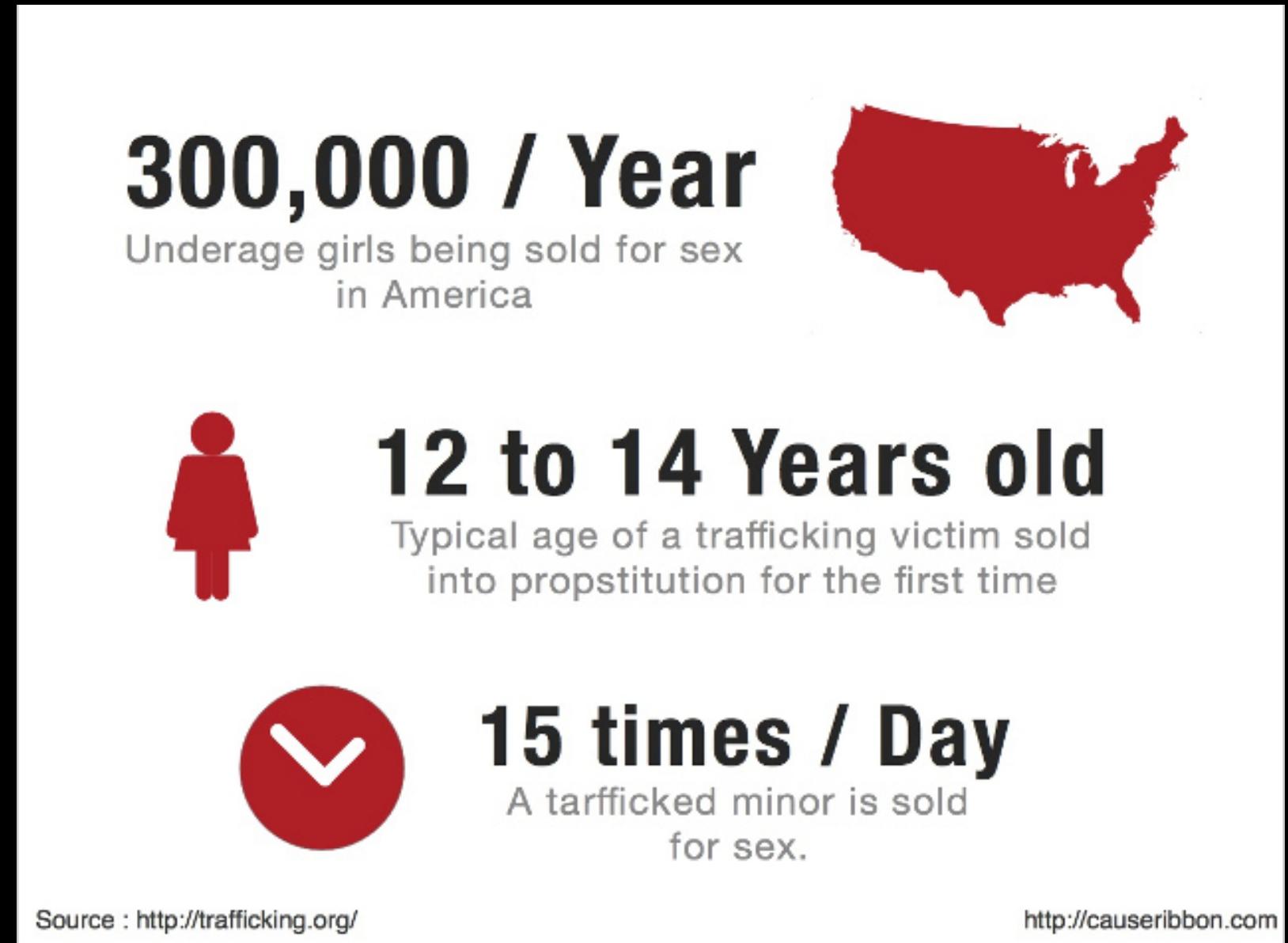


Source: Survey conducted Jan. 9-23, 2017.  
"Online Harassment 2017"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# Gender Based Violence

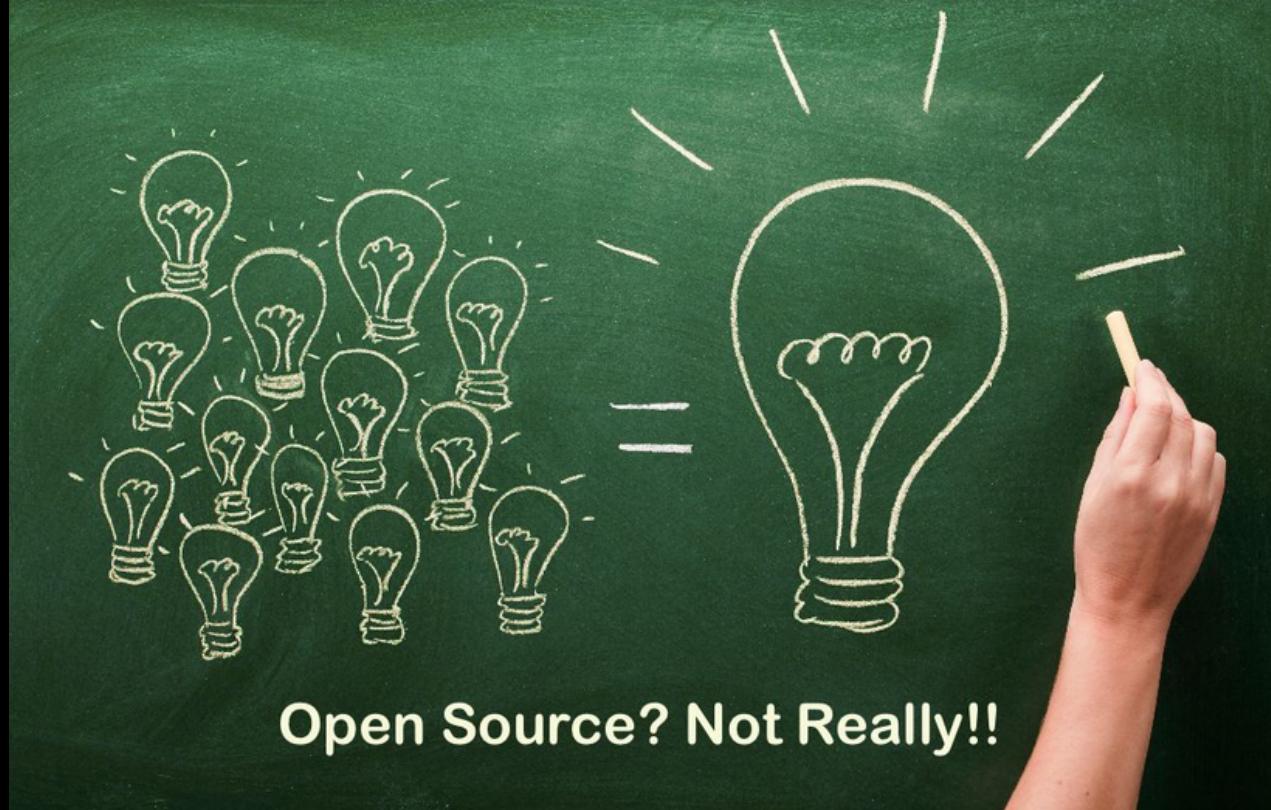
"During her work on sex trafficking, Neilson told me via e-mail, she heard johns discuss how "the combination of mobile phones and online want ad platforms have made it easier to order a girl than a pizza." Girls and women make up 75% of global human trafficking victims, according to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime" (Wallace, 2014)



# "Openness"

"What does it mean when the primary spaces for so many public and private interactions, including activism, are owned by corporations from one part of the world, run by mainly white men?" (Nagarajan, 2016)

"Defining the technology as "open" sets the debate in dichotomous terms as open versus closed without considering what happens in the openness and who is served by it. In other words, users in participatory cultures both bring and create hierarchies in the open space of the Internet" (Ott, 2018)



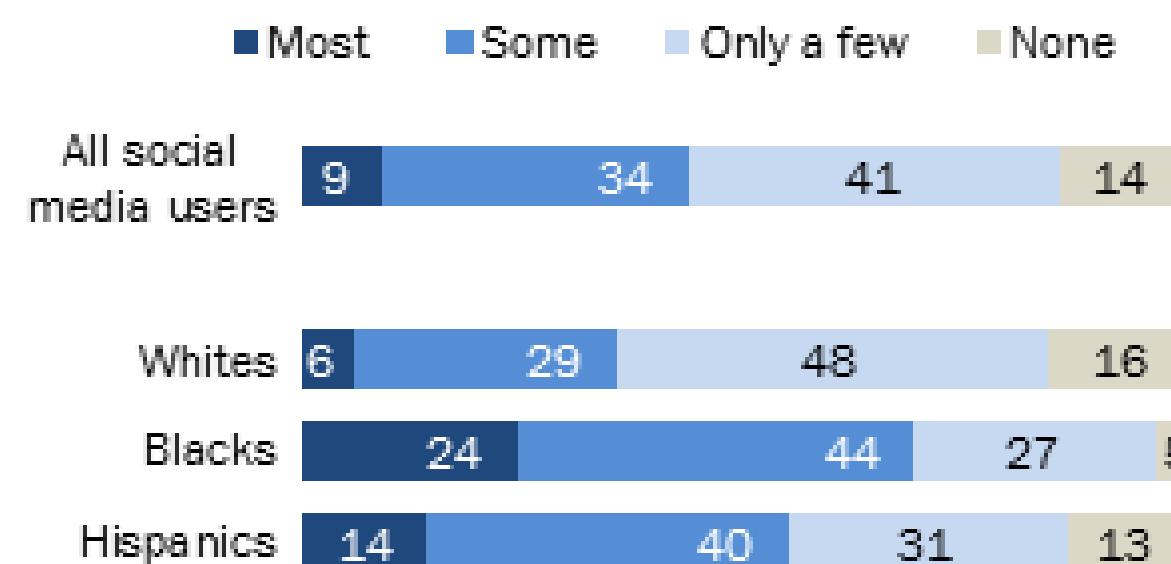
<https://nalakath.com/2017/04/open-source-for-everyone-not-really/>

# Race

"The findings show that white Americans' social networks are 91 percent white; black Americans' social networks are 83 percent black; while Hispanic Americans have the most diverse racial social networks at 64 percent Hispanic, 19 percent white, and 9 percent some other race. Moreover, 75 percent of whites' social networks are completely white. By comparison, 65 percent of blacks have black- only networks, and 46 percent of Hispanics have homogeneous racial social networks" (Ott, 2018)

**Black social media users are much more likely than whites to see posts about race**

*% of social media users who say that \_\_\_ of the posts they see on social networking sites are about race or race relations*



Note: Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. All social media users include adult social media users of all races. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 29-May 8, 2016.

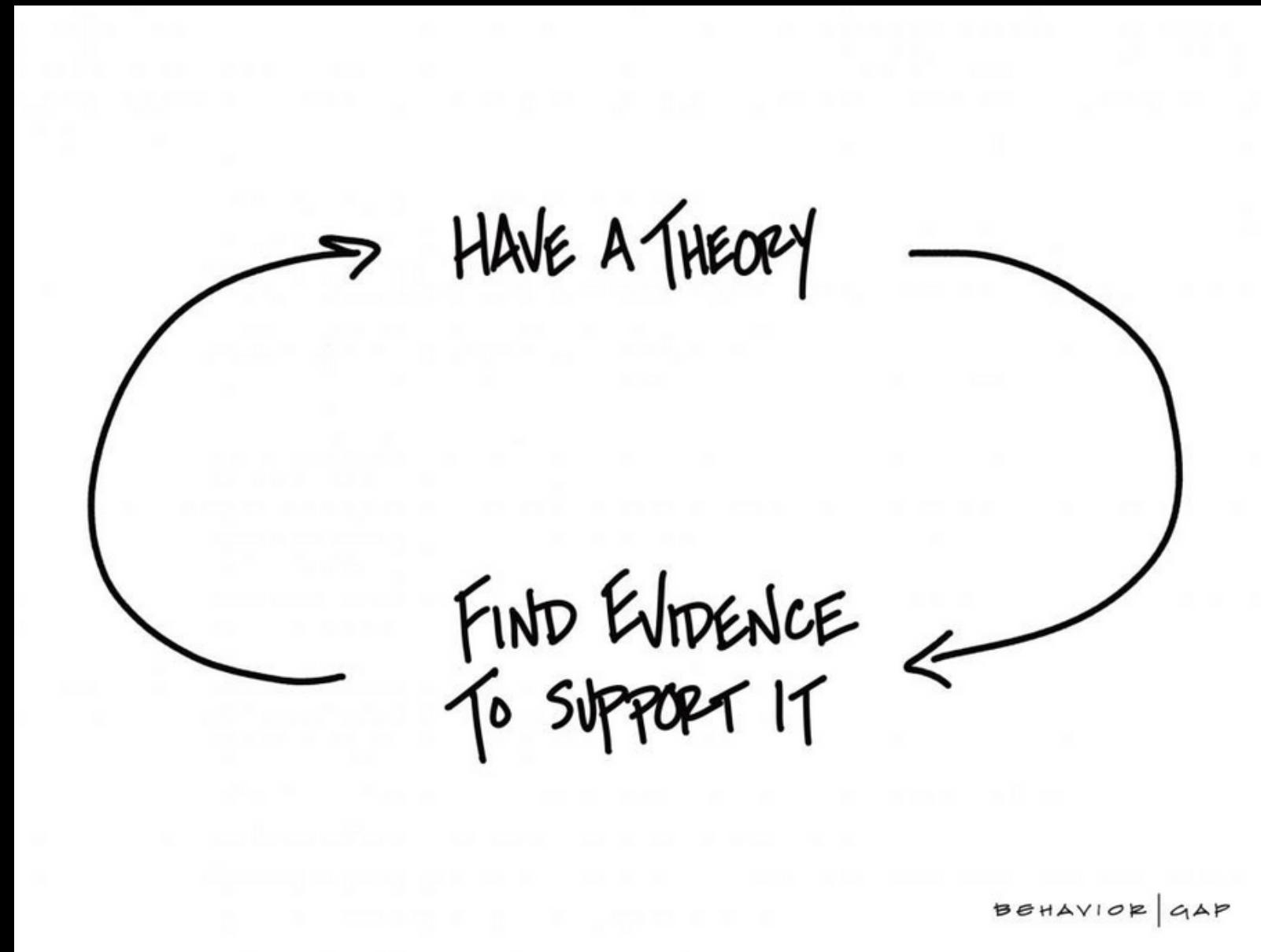
Q13a.

"Social Media Conversations About Race"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# Filtered Data

"However, users are more often than not getting pushed particular data that are popular among their friends or that Google has determined best aligns with their past searches. Filters lead to a personalization that promotes confirmation bias of our own opinion, thus decreasing all kinds of diversity in our networks, which as we know are already significantly racially homogeneous" (Ott, 2018)



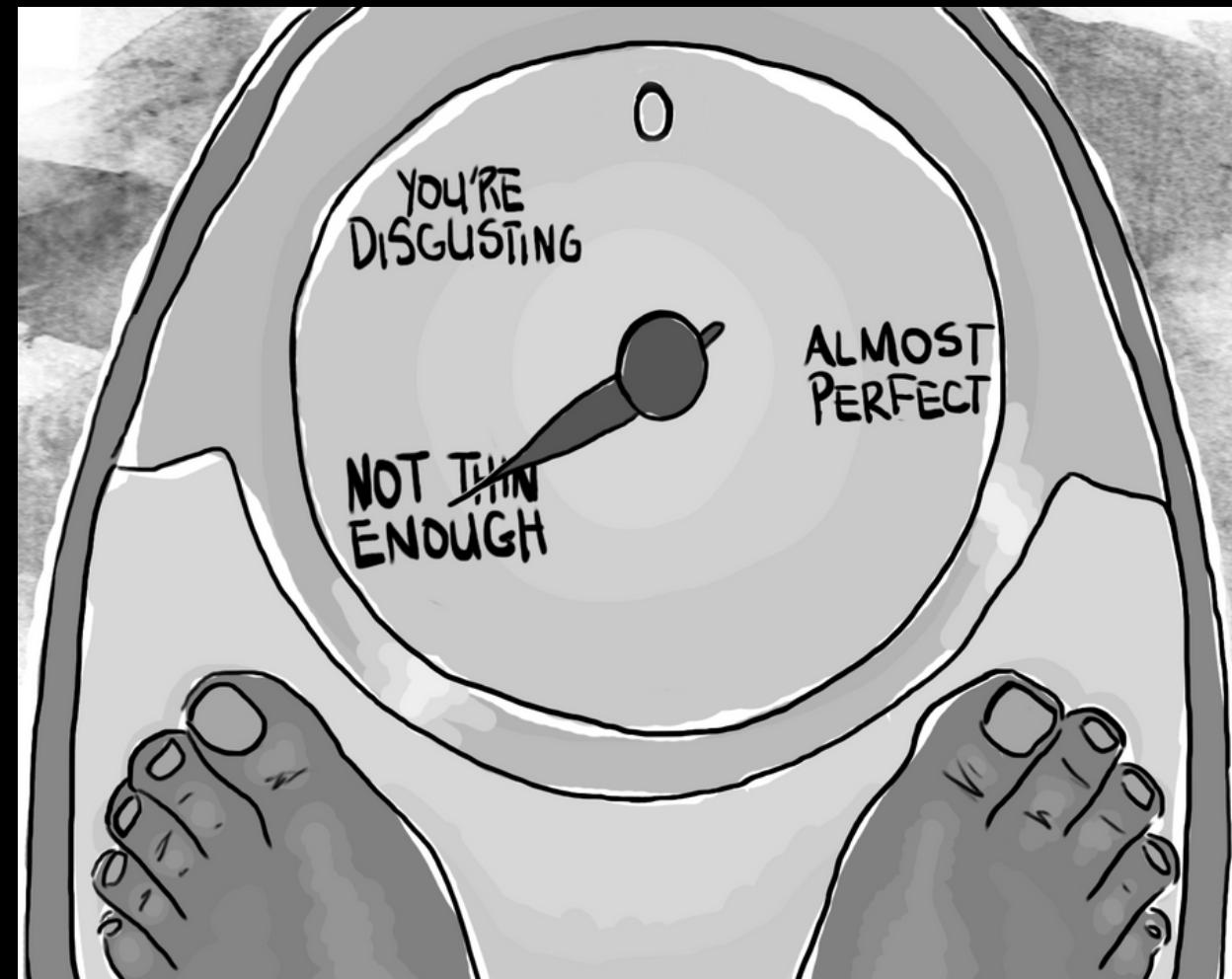
<https://medium.com/@behaviorgap/why-confirmation-bias-is-a-problem-ce8536aae98a>

# Contiously being "On"

"These days, however, the impossible standards are set much closer to home, not by celebrities and models but by classmates and friends... the combined weight of vulnerability, the need for validation, and a desire to compare themselves with peers forms what she describes as a "perfect storm of self-doubt."

(Donna Wick as cited in Jacobson)

*"I knew a girl who had an eating disorder. We all knew it. It got so bad that she ended up going to a treatment center, but when she put pictures up of herself on the beach looking super-thin everyone liked them anyway," says Sasha" (Jacobson)*



<https://thesheaf.com/2014/01/31/you-count-more-than-calories-eating-disorders-illuminated/>

# Contiously being "On"

- A third (36%) of 7-10 year old girls say people make them think that the most important thing about them is how they look.
- A quarter (23%) of girls aged 7-10 feel they need to be perfect.
- Almost one in six (15%) 7-10 year old girls feels embarrassed or ashamed of how they look.
- One in three (38%) at this age feels they are not pretty enough.
- One in three (35%) 7-10 year old girls agree women are judged more on their appearance than their ability.
- 7-10 year old girls say the most important thing to improve their lives now would be to stop judging girls and women on the way they look.

(Girls as young as seven feel pressure to look perfect, 2016)

# Contiously being "On"

Some say this is an attitude that's ingrained in us from childhood and Reshma Saujani, the founder of Girls Who Code, has said: "In other words, we're raising our girls to be perfect, and we're raising our boys to be brave" (Marsh, 2016)



[https://www.ted.com/talks/reshma\\_saujani\\_teach\\_girls\\_bravery\\_not\\_perfection/transcript?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/reshma_saujani_teach_girls_bravery_not_perfection/transcript?language=en)

# What Now?

What do we do now that we see the aspects of media, good and bad?

We have to make a choice about how we want media to be used? For "fun" or for change?

*How do you preach the gospel of body positivity when you're breathless from your Spanx? How can you tell your girls that inner beauty matters when you're texting them the message from your aesthetician's chair? (Weiner, 2015)*

# The Next Step

My hope for you is that you see these things and are inspired to use your privilege, your words, your followers to build a platform that stands up against violence, racism, classism, ableism, harrassment, and anything else that you believe is wrong. You have the power to influnce thsoe around you in your community, but its up to you to take that step forward. Best of luck!

Thank you!

# Bibliography

About take back the tech! (n.d.). Retrieved from take back the tech: <https://www.takebackthetech.net/about>

This source is a website. The About page describes what take back the tech is about, their goals as an organization, and the campaigns they host. This organization wants to empower women and girls to take control of technology and end the violence women often face both on and off the web.

APC. (n.d.). Feminist Principles of the Internet -Version 2.0. Retrieved from: <https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/feminist-principles-internet-version-20>

This source is a website. It lists 17 “rules” for what a feminist internet would look like. They focus on objectives like Access, Movements and public participation, Economy, Expression, and Agency.

Eggerue, C. (2019). How the internet has reshaped feminism. The Telegraph. Retrieved from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/information-age/internet-reshaped-feminism/>

This source is an article. Chidera Eggerue, the creator of the #saggyboobsmatter movement faces online harassment. She shares how she feels empowered to be the face of this movement, how it can be hard to be in the spotlight, especially as a black woman, and how she wouldn't have been able to do this without those feminists who came before her.

Girls as young as seven feel pressure to look perfect. (2016). Girlguiding. Retrieved from: [https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/our-stories-and-news/news/girls-as-young-as-seven-feelpressure-to-look-perfect/](https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/our-stories-and-news/news/girls-as-young-as-seven-feel-pressure-to-look-perfect/)

This source is an article. It highlighting the research done in the UK, a girlguiding girl's attitude survey from 2016. It highlights statists found from this study done as well as included quotes by the participants. It shares the research methods used to collect this data.

# Bibliography

Jacobson, R. (n.d.). Social Media and Self-Doubt. Child Mind Institute. Retrieved from <https://childmind.org/article/social-media-and-self-doubt/>

This source is an article. It highlights the story of Sasha, a 16-year-old. She feels pressured by the internet and her peers to be perfect all the time. She recognizes the ways in which she helps perpetuate the stereotypes and the negative consequences of this lifestyle. At the end, the author writes to the partners of this age and urges them to take time to talk to their teenagers.

Marsh, S. (2016). Young women – do you feel the pressure to be perfect? The Guardian. Retrieved from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/01/young-women-pressure-perfect-educationlooks-work-relationships-social-media>

This source is an article. It asks its readers how they feel about social media and how it affects their confidence. The author shares statistics from the US and the UK about how girls perceive themselves. Then they ask the audience to fill out a form so they can hear their stories.

Nagarajan, C. (2016). What does a feminist internet look like? The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/12/feminist-internet-empoweringonline-harassment>

This source is an article. The author brings up reports from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to show the impact of technology on young girls. She also shows how in the UK women are found to be the targets of negative/aggressive tweets. She shares from her experience attending an international forum and how it encouraged her to challenge the internet to be more feminist. She also shares how women are less likely to be creating the technology and software and how this could contribute to the problem.

Ott, K. (2018). Social Media and Feminist Values: Aligned or Maligned? *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 39(1), 93-111. Retrieved from:

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/690811/pdf>

This source is a scientific article. The author describes how social media has changed since its inception. The article highlights the ways in which social media has feminist values and the ways in which it goes against those values. One big aspect is digital participation, especially across races in relation to gender. Another is facing the challenges of a capitalistic social media and how we can create a more feminist vision.

# Bibliography

Powell, C. (2018). How Social Media has Reshaped Feminism. Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/how-social-media-has-reshaped-feminism>

This source is an article. It highlights the 2017 report - Women's Media center and how women are underrepresented. A Qatar Computing Research study was cited and used to show women's online presence. Women are less likely to be retweeted, according to a study by Amnesty International. She finishes with things she believes will help women be seen in media.

Wallace, K. (2014). Technology is feminism's friend and foe. CNN. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2014/03/18/living/technology-empowering-women-identity/index.html>

This source is an article. The author shares the beginning of the feminist movement and how the internet could have provided such a larger platform to reach individuals. She shares the feminism 2.0 meaning and examples. She shares social issues, some which have been brought to light and changed while others are still huge issues. The author ends saying more women should be in technology jobs.

Weiner, J. (2015). The Pressure to Look Good. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/31/opinion/sunday/jennifer-weiner-the-pressure-to-lookgood.html>

This source is an article. The author writes about a power piece she did earlier, encouraging women to look beyond their beauty to their hearts and souls. This article highlights how we tell women to be themselves, then personally change how we look. We question the things society is telling us, then complying with their rules. She questions herself and others who say encouraging words but then do actions that say something different.