

# I AM NOT A CULTURAL FIT

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*One Black Woman's Journey Through Tech*

# ASH COLEMAN

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*From the beginning*



**THERE I WAS, A YOUNG TESTER, READY TO CHANGE THE WORLD!**

A reproduction of Edvard Munch's painting "The Scream". It depicts a figure with their hands clasped near their head, looking out over a city at night. The sky is filled with swirling, dark red and orange clouds, suggesting a sense of despair or anxiety. In the background, a bridge and buildings are visible under a pale moonlight.

**WAS I SURPRISED AT THE  
LACK OF DIVERSITY I WAS  
EXPERIENCING IN MY ORG?**

**YEP!**

**BUT WAS THE LACK OF  
DIVERSITY IN TECH  
UNCOMMON?**

**NOPE!**

**IN FACT, IT WAS SO COMMON, I COULD LOOK IT UP.**

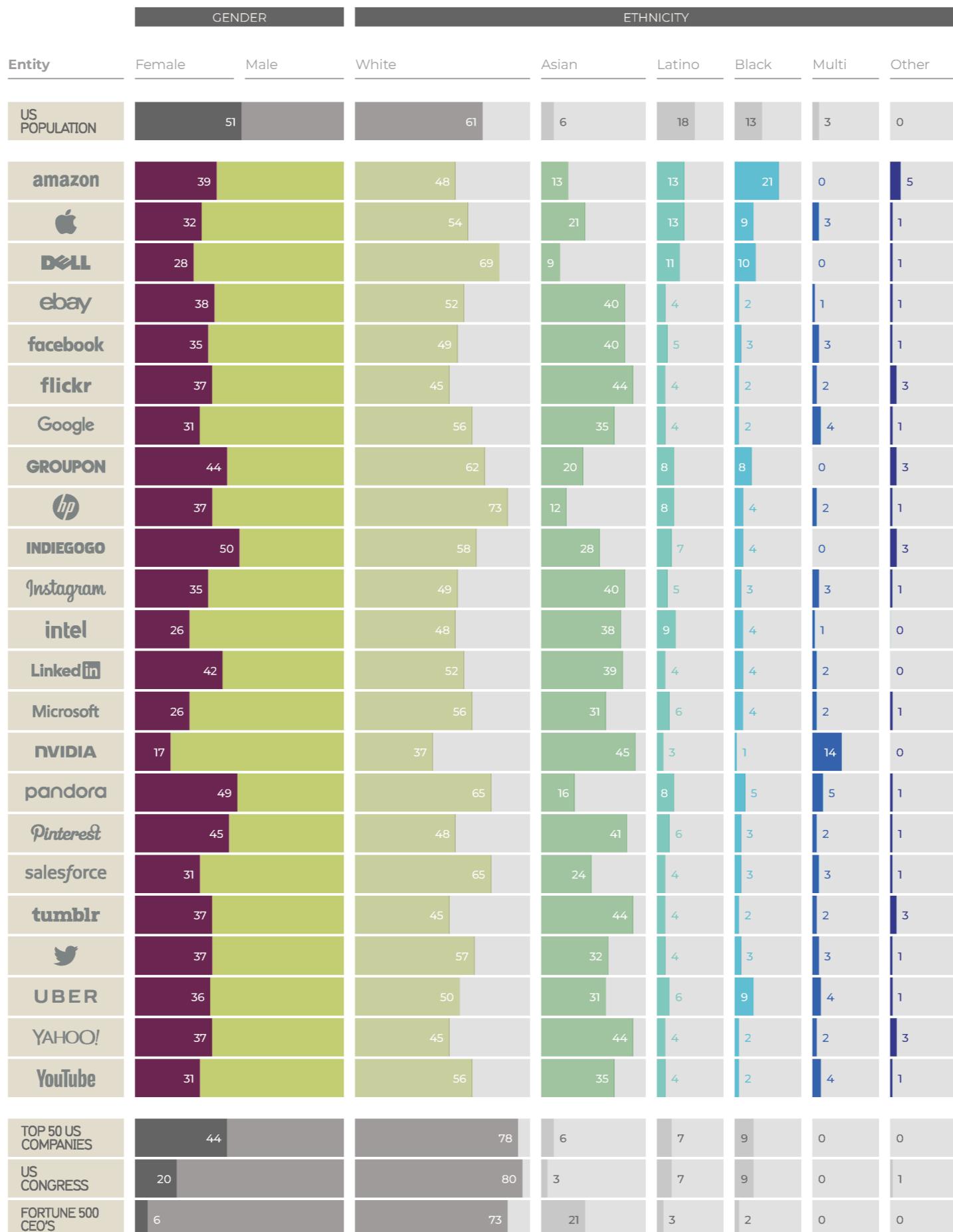
# Diversity in Tech

Employee breakdown of key technology companies

year on year change

YEAR: 2014 2015 2016 2017

sort by



**SO, I DID WHAT ANY OTHER TESTER WOULD DO, I DOVE DEEPER.**

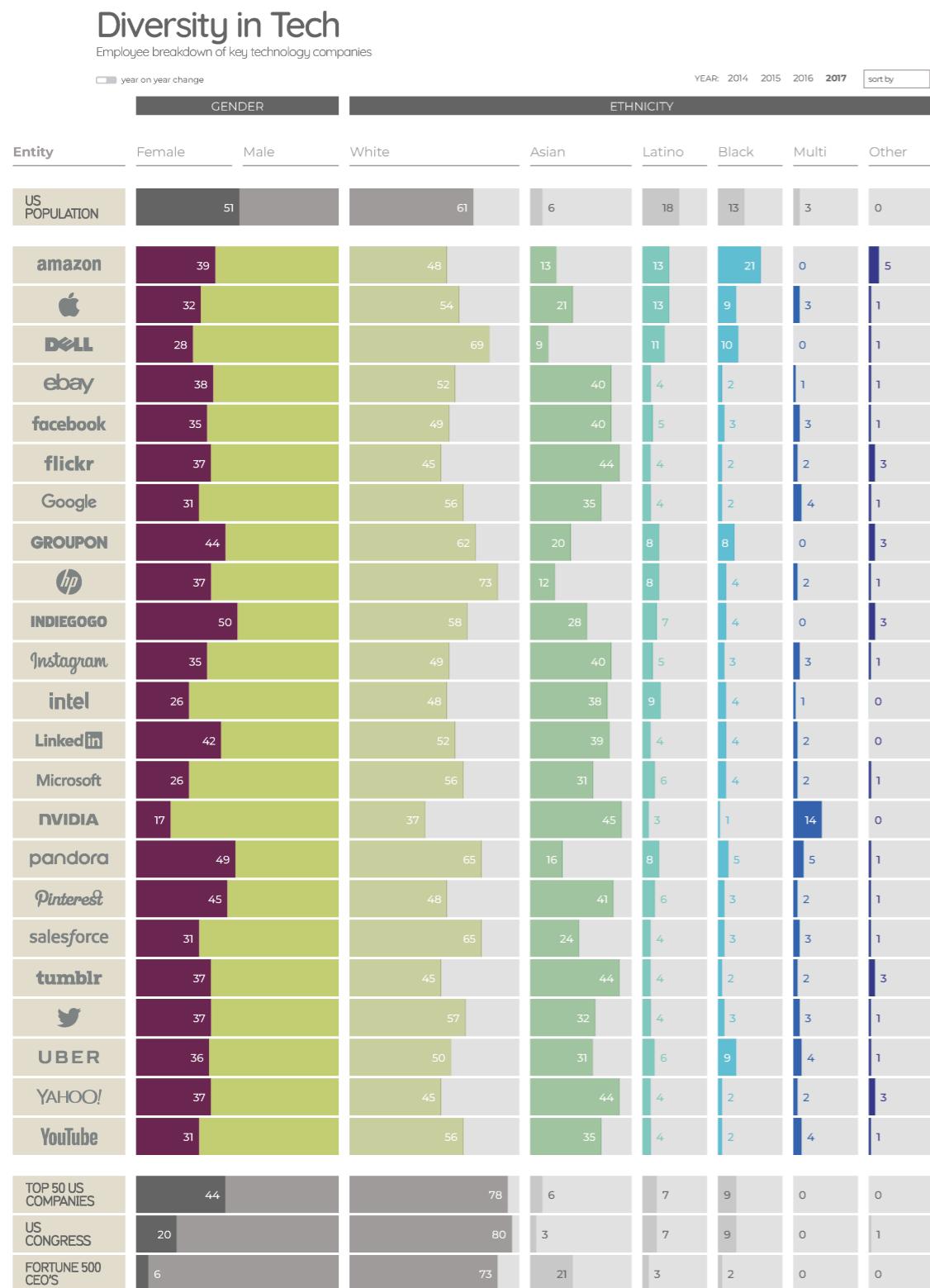
# THE CULTURE OF TECHNOLOGY IS A PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED (US)

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- Upwards of 55% of tech is male with numbers reaching 80% + in some organizations
- Race representation displays disparity from geographic location
- Talent is scoped from top 25 schools, preferring CS Degrees
- “Young people are just smarter.” -Mark Zuckerberg
- Opportunities once hired are low, leading to attrition at high rates for the underrepresented
- Tech Culture showing preferential for the represented

I AM NOT A CULTURE FIT.

# DIVERSITY PROBLEM STATEMENT



- Tech is diverse and inclusive when the populations of the public are indicative of the teams who create their products.

**AND SO, MY JOURNEY BEGAN.**

A black and white photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a white tank top. She is speaking into a microphone. The background is dark.

**THE ONLY THING THAT SEPARATES WOMEN OF  
COLOUR FROM ANYONE ELSE, IS OPPORTUNITY.**

**I STARTED TO SEEK OUT DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITIES**

# LIGHTBULB MOMENT

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When you work for an organization that doesn't represent who you are, there is less awareness of what your needs are.

- Less opportunities for promotion
- Less acknowledgement of your work
  - More work
- Discrimination
- Microaggressions



# I QUIT

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*I became a consultant to  
explore*

# TECH NEEDS DIVERSITY

**TITLE: A FULLY DIVERSE TECH TEAM**

**DESCRIPTION: FINDING PARITY IN GENDER, RACE, AGE, BACKGROUND, AND SKILL**

**VALUE STATEMENT: DIVERSE TEAMS BUILD ROBUST AND RESILIENT PRODUCTS**

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Acceptance Criteria:

- Gender 50/50
- Race resembles that of geographic population
- Age representation of those >34 years equivalent to that <35
- 20% or higher representation from each University, Bootcamps, and Nontraditional backgrounds
- \*Intersectional: LBGTQIA, Accessibility, Neuro
- Culture of Values not Characteristics

# HOW DO WE TEST FOR THIS?

**AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHO OWNS THE FIX?**

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The fascinating part about diversity is  
you not only get to test it, you are  
also the one to fix.

*-Jon Bach*

WE TALK ABOUT QUALITY BEING  
EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.

WELL, DIVERSITY IS  
EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.



@AshColeman30

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS TALK IS NOT TO PICK ON ANYONE,**

**IT'S TO BUILD AWARENESS. . .**

**AND ENCOURAGE ACTION.**

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Once you know some things, you can't unknow them. It's a burden that can never be given away.

-Alice Hoffman

# THANK YOU.

*@AshColeman30*