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COIN 325

16 April 2015

Gender Stereotypes in Computer Science

The lack of job opportunities for women has always been an issue. In the field of computers and technology however it seems to be a far greater problem. The gender spread of some of the leading technology companies like Google and Facebook for example are roughly between 70-80% male. This is cause for concern. This lack of diversity is problematic for companies and strides need to be made to amend it.

I believe that the reason for why the percentage of females in technology fields is so low is because they are discouraged from an early age to pursue such careers. Yansen and Zukerfeld write that “[t]here is room to assume that during early childhood, although not exclusively in this period, the lack of media transmission of female role models associated with innovative behaviour when using technology might be a relevant factor” (310-311). Young boys are also more commonly placed under the stereotype of playing video games than girls are. For many boys video games are their first interaction with computers (Yansen and Zukerfeld p. 312). The early encounter that boys have with video games is a factor in why they choose to take up jobs in computers later on in life. Girls are stereotypically far less like to play video games and therefore do not get as much exposure to computers as boys do.

The ramifications for the gender gap can bring forth problems for companies. With technology companies being so heavily male dominated, they lose their ability to connect to their clients or customers. Having a diverse make up of employees allows companies to be better able to cater to those they sell their services or products too. This lack of representation can cause the way these companies conduct business and how they make their products to be ineffective in reaching out to those who are different in some way than the employees at such companies.

Such a gender gap also brings forth moral questions. The ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct contains a section called moral imperatives, one of these states that “In a fair society, all individuals would have equal opportunity to participate in, or benefit from, the use of computer resources regardless of race, sex, religion, age, disability, national origin or other such similar factors.” The gender gap issue currently facing the computer field calls into question the morality of these companies in selecting employees.

To correct this issue, companies need to reform their hiring process and the education system needs to expose females to computers more at early ages. Schools should give both males and females an equal number of computer classes and try to keep the male to female ratio in these classes as close as possible. Another way to increase the number of women in the computer field is to amend the way computer professionals are hired. Interviewers for positions at such companies should be the same gender as the person they are interviewing, to reduce bias in the selection process.

Overall there is a big problem concerning gender difference in top technology companies. The problem starts early in life where girls are not given as much exposure to computers. The stereotypes that society places on young girls discourage them from being interested in computers. The Bible speaks to this, saying that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (*English Standard Version Bible*, Gal 3.28). These top companies suffer criticism due to their lack of gender equality. Their image gets smeared. They also lack appropriate means to connect and reach out to all varieties of people when selling the goods or services they offer. To reduce the gender gap school systems need to encourage girls more to learn about computers and give them more experience with them and those the way that these companies go about hiring new employees needs to change too.

Works Cited

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