

# Feminist Tech principles

The Feminist Tech principles are a set of guidelines for tech policy-making and technology creation.

They are intended as responsive work-in-progress that reflect the evolving nature of our digital world. The principles were drafted in a collaborative process between the team at SUPERRR Lab and a group of activists, policy-makers, writers, designers, technologists, researchers, and educators, that advocate for digital rights and the rights of marginalized groups. Use the QR code to read more about the principles and the contributors, and to download the card deck.



feministtech.org

1.

## Climate action and social equity are interlinked.

Tech solutions are not neutral: what they optimise must be interrogated. The current system follows a political and economic model that privatises gains in the hands of a few and socialises harms on populations and the planet. To optimise for a feminist future centered around equality and sustainability, it is crucial to see and understand the links between climate action, historical and contemporary colonial structures and social equity.

2.

## Equity and visibility along the supply chain.

Today's digital technologies rely upon the extraction of non-renewable resources and labour which numerous processes render invisible and often amounts to modern slavery. This exacerbates social inequalities and global North-South injustice. Supply chains as well as the inequality footprint of our technology must be made visible. Exploitative working conditions must end and profits must be shared equitably along the chain of production.

3.

## Sustain, maintain and share.

Innovation should not come at any cost. We should move away from short-term innovation cycles, towards longevity and openness. This is paramount to creating tech that functions within planetary boundaries. The appreciation of, and value accorded to, maintenance and interoperability must increase.

4.

## Healing and empowerment over profit maximisation and tech-solutionism.

Algorithmic decision-making systems and facial recognition tools used by governments and industries currently obscure and reinforce existing injustices. Instead of creating safer spaces for discourse and exchange, social media networks capitalise on trauma and hate speech. More broadly, digital technologies surveil, control and radicalise their users. To ensure collective and individual well-being and flourishing, technologies must center around the needs of communities rather than prioritising profit maximisation above all.

5.

## Accessibility, equitable participation and representation.

Accessibility is not a »nice to have«. It is a human right. Marginalised groups must be active stakeholders at all stages of design and policy processes. Building *with* marginalized people, not *for* them.

6.

## No to progress at any cost.

Some technologies are simply too harmful to be deployed in the first place. Red lines on harmful technological practices must be set and more research must be conducted on the potential harm of emerging technologies on communities at the margins. Processes for feedback, evaluation and veto must be established.

7.

## Name, acknowledge and share.

The work, concepts and ideas that new digital technology is being built upon must be credited. We must demystify technology's founding narratives. »The first unavoidable step into a feminist internet is the act of naming all creators, inventors that nurture the infrastructure and the code.«  
— Valentina Pelizzer Hvale

8.

## Publicly-financed software should be open source.

In this way, anyone can build upon public investment and create something new. Public funders have to value maintenance and care for critical systems at least as much as innovation.

9.

## Creating safer spaces online is an ongoing relational negotiation process.

In order to create safer spaces online, technology must be designed to counter hate speech, dis- and misinformation. Effective, trauma-informed mechanisms to report and analyse abuse or harmful flaws in tech must become mandatory. Creating online spaces for collaboration and exchange where people have support, and feel empowered to speak freely is an ongoing and relational negotiation process.

10.

## Design for informed consent.

Asking for and obtaining consent respects a person's right to autonomy and agency. For consent to be valid, it must be voluntary, informed and reversible. However, individuals should not be burdened with every decision. We also need strong policies that protect the privacy of individuals and groups.

11.

## Your (digital) identity is yours to define.

Our identities are not static and this must be reflected in the digital realm. We need mechanisms that allow for digital identities to be fluid, to change over time, embrace non-binary concepts and defy established categorisations. Self-determination must be at the core of digital identity.

12.

## Privacy by default, not surveillance.

Self-governance of data is fundamental to the equitable functioning of the internet. We must all have the agency to determine how, for what purposes, when and for how long our data is used, shared and saved.



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