

Birds of a Feather – It doesn't have to be pink! Designing for women

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INTRODUCTION

While women represent just under 50% of the world population and influence 85% of the consumer purchases in the US [1], most technical products are disproportionately designed by men. The technologies surrounding us not only influence our everyday behavior but also shape the way we perceive ourselves and our surroundings. We argue that including women in the process of design and in creating technical products targeted towards women would not only increase sales but would tremendously improve women's lifestyle.

Our goal for this Birds of a Feather (BOF) session is to bring together GHC attendees with practitioners, and academics working on creation of, and research about technological products, to interactively address some of the outstanding questions such as:

- How and when do the current technological tools, both software and hardware, fail to meet some fundamental needs of women?
- What are the areas of improvement in terms of feature design and usability for products designed for women?
- What are some value assumptions engrained in current software and hardware designs that are unfavorable for female consumers and their images in today's society?

We expect all GHC participants to be able to relate and get involved in interactive discussions around at least one of those topics. We thrive to gather a diverse group of attendees, consisting of students, academics, researchers, in all stages of their careers. We believe the issue of designing for women is not only relevant to women but also to the men who might be attending.

PROGRAM

This session will start with a series of presentations from a panel of specialists. We then propose to divide the participants in small groups for some interactive discussions around a choice of topics such as communication, education, and everyday life.

Each group will be performing exciting activities that will help the participants reflect on the role of technology and design for their chosen topics.

We will be using social media throughout the session in order to easily facilitate real-time sharing of insights between participants, and even those who are following the conference remotely.

The findings of the group work will then be discussed at the end of the BOF.

OUTCOMES

We expect that attendees will have a chance to reflect upon all the technology we now have available within themes highlighted above, whether this technology is supporting women, and if not think about how and when in the design process this can be addressed. We hope discussions raised in this BOF will help attendees think differently about technology they face. Through the invited talks as well as by facilitating group interaction, we hope the participants will leave the BOF with renewed faith that not only women can be empowered through technology but also that as techMakers they have the opportunity to conduct change and create new products-new options for other girls and women.

FACILITATORS

We are four facilitators for this workshop with a variety of backgrounds and experience.

- Dr. **Jessica Cauchard** is a postdoctoral researcher in HCI working on Mobile and Ubiquitous computing at Cornell Tech and soon to be at Stanford University.
- **Funda Kivran-Swaine** doctoral candidate at Rutgers University, School of Communication and Information, and a research collaborator at Facebook.
- **Sarah Esper** is Co-Founder and CTO of ThoughtSTEM, and PhD Candidate at UCSD studying Computer Engineering with an emphasis on CS Education.
- Dr. **Yael Kliper**, MD with a strong background in cognitive sciences. She is interested in the application of technology into the health and medical systems.

SPEAKERS

- **Hannah Pileggi** is the lead researcher for the Photos Team at Facebook.
- **Katie McCollough** is a PhD candidate and feminist media studies scholar from Rutgers University.
- **Dr. Daniela Busse** is Director of Consumer Insight at ItsOn, Inc., one of the top 15 privately-held wireless companies in the US.
- **Allie McGonagle Glinski** is a Gender and Development Specialist at the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).

REFERENCE

[1]: <http://www.she-economy.com/report/marketing-to-women-quick-facts>