

CAN THE NEW AGE OF TECH LEAD TO MORE WOMEN IN STEM?

BY GRACE TATTERSALL

Since the dawn of time, there has never been a shortage of challenges for parents raising girls. However, as a mother with two young girls in this era, I can confirm that my biggest worries come from access to technology, social media and the internet as a whole.

But exposure to technology isn't always bad; I'm confident my girls will maintain the ability to understand new tech quickly. I sometimes find that my five-year-old is more computer literate than I am. My eleven-year-old maintains several (carefully monitored) YouTube channels where she can explore topics she is passionate about, learn how to network with others with similar interests and use her commercial acumen to gain followers.

So, in an age where technology is essential, I see this as a positive step towards encouraging more girls into technology from a young age. Hopefully, leading them into STEM based careers to enhance the workforce and achieve greater equality.

Women account for only 16% of senior level tech jobs and 10% of executive positions, according to the "Quantifying the Gender Gap" study by Entelo in December 2022. According to government-funded growth network Tech Nation, nearly three million people, or 9% of the UK workforce, are employed in the UK tech industry. Just 26% of those in the tech workforce are women. I work across the public sector, where the figures are higher (perhaps due to a better work-life balance and family-friendly culture), but there is still noticeable gender inequality. And while I hope this will change by the time my daughters join the workforce, that is quite a long time to wait, so what can we do about it now?

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One of the themes of International Women's Day (IWD) this year was 'to elevate and advance gender parity in technology and celebrate the women forging innovation'. There is even a subsection on how YouTube is one of the best avenues to get more girls interested in tech.

Currently, men run the majority of the biggest YouTube channels. Still, a strong and ever-growing community of women and girls is creating content that appeals to them, from tech knowledge to innovations to user-friendly tutorials and even positive body image videos.

Will my daughters grow up to be Tech influencers? Only time will tell, but if my eldest can run three Youtube channels by eleven, I know she can continue to learn and create so much more as she grows up.

The world of tech must become more diverse and inclusive. Historically, girls have not seen themselves represented in STEM careers or even had an outlet for their technological curiosity, and this needs to change if we are to see women pursuing and achieving their technology leadership ambitions.



Grace specialises in executive search and selection for C-level and senior technology leadership appointments within the public and Not for Profit sectors. Actively supporting clients to reduce barriers to recruitment and to promote diversity in the workplace, Grace brings tailored solutions for both permanent and interim leadership roles and works with personal integrity, vision, energy, and passion to support her clients and candidates through the recruitment process and beyond

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