


SEEKING OUT TALENTED **TECHNOLOGY FEMALES, READY OR NOT**

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Recently I found myself observing young children playing a game of hide-and-seek at home, a popular game that many of us played as children, where several players conceal themselves to try and avoid being found by the nominated seeker.

The nominated seeker counts to a predetermined number with eyes closed while the other players race to hide. After reaching the agreed number, the seeker calls out loudly “Ready or not, here I come!” or “Coming, ready or not!” and then attempts to locate all concealed players.

In today’s digital era children’s games are quite different. Even young children tend to be entranced by a mobile device. Whilst it is good to see some games have retained their original format, we also must acknowledge that science and technology are essential ingredients of modern life, and that

technology touches the lives of everyone, more so than ever in this data-driven era.

Change means to make someone or something different: to alter or modify. When I think of a modern version of hide and seek my mind turns to Pokémon Go. Change is our one constant and something that is either resisted or embraced. In today’s digital era, change has become more rapid and more intrusive, penetrating every aspect of modern life.

So, what are the roles and the opportunities for females in technology, in security, privacy, identity and regulatory technology? Are employers still having to seek out female technology talent hiding in the corners of government and business organisations? Or is it simply time to acknowledge the roles females perform today and for them to step up and become more prominent and more vocal?

Females can be found in all technology sectors, working away as quiet achievers in various roles.

Females can close the gender gap in the tech sector at a time where digital transformation is accelerating. I for one am in awe of the outstanding CISOs, regulatory experts, identity architects, policy setters, systems administrators, project managers, designers, and the vast variety of so called “girl geeks” I encounter in my role as a tech company founder.

Policy and governance frameworks will dictate how today’s digital technologies are legislated. If they are not to be divisive, culturally selective or gender specific, the female perspective will be critical.

For example, the design of data, fraud and identity protection systems needs to take account of user needs from the get-go. Take a Fitbit watch for example. It may have a strap colour or a face design to suit a particular market, but what about the functionality of the watch and the applications it supports? Are females consulted or involved in the design processes and specifications development so as to effectively capture the female market? Females do not need to be part of a coding team to specify key functionality and other aspects of the finished product.

When you start to deconstruct mainstream products and services you realise how important female touchpoints are in product and service development, and in post-sales support.

With digital transformation creating a tectonic shift across all sectors, females must step forward to play leadership roles in addressing social and ethical aspects.

So stop hiding ladies, let’s start to demystify the roles females play in technology, seek acclaim and recognition for the brilliant work we are doing, and inspire others to follow.

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