



## Editorial

Welcome to the Summer 2011 edition of GST, which includes a Special Issue on Women in ICT: international research from a lifecourse perspective. The underrepresentation of women in computing/ IT/ ICT has been of concern to researchers, practitioners and policy makers over many years and yet achieving gender equality in this area seems as elusive as it has ever been. However this special issue, produced in partnership with the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute, Open University of Catalonia, takes a different approach, bringing a life course perspective that highlights key issues at different stages of women's lives. As Webster and Castaño review the special issue papers in their own [Editorial](#), the rest of this Editorial focuses on other papers and reviews in this edition.

The first paper, [Exploring the Gender Gap in Computer Science Education in Uganda](#) by James Ochwa-Echel illustrates both the ubiquity as well as the cultural specificity of many of the issues and discourses highlighted by previous research in other countries. The need for financial support/scholarships, for single sex schools, the proliferation of initiatives, and perceptions that computer science is not suitable for women, are all themes that have been identified elsewhere. However other issues such as social attitudes to women's and girls' education, and rural/urban divisions are factors that can and should be tackled by policy interventions. Ochwa-Echel's paper serves as a reminder that we must always contextualise issues about gender and ICT as the local environment often has its own specific influence.

The next two papers look at cultures within engineering workplaces, in two quite different national contexts, namely Sweden and Australia. Holth and Mellstrom's paper [Revisiting Engineering, Masculinity and Technology Studies: Old Structures with New Openings](#) explores gendered change and stability in the engineering work force in Sweden, focusing on the impact of new parenting and fatherhood discourses on paradigms of masculinity and technology. Using longitudinal data to compare attitudes between engineers in the 1990s and present day students, they stress the importance of social policy in supporting men's involvement in parenting, which they conclude is leading to changing gendered relations in the engineering workforce.

In [Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Women in Professional Engineering in Australia](#), the authors Mary Ayre, Julie Mills and Judith Gill explore how progress made in the provision of family friendly work practices in many Australian engineering companies has not yet had any impact on changing cultures within the sector, with issues such as retention, gender pay gaps and overt discrimination still prevalent.



The book *Gender Inclusive Engineering Education* by the same authors, is [reviewed in this issue by Lynette Willoughby](#) and argues for a radical overhaul of the engineering curriculum in universities as well as the learning environment itself. Aimed at educational practitioners, the book gives practical suggestions for implementing change and embedding inclusivity within institutions which, as Willoughby concludes, offers a strong argument for a holistic approach and a different way of doing engineering education.

Still within the engineering sector, *Women Engineers in Turkey: Gender, Technology, Education and Professional Life* by Berna Zengin, [reviewed by Selda Koydemir and Canan Blake](#), reports on a research study of the experiences of engineering women in Turkey. Women's participation in engineering is relatively high when compared to some Western developed countries. The authors explore possible reasons for this as well as highlighting differentials between various engineering disciplines.

We have one case study in this issue entitled [WomenLEAD: Leadership Development for Female Faculty in Business and Engineering](#) by Julia Hodges, Allison Pearson, and Donna Reese. This paper reports on a leadership development programme at Mississippi State University, which aimed to encourage more women into leadership and decision making positions. Following the success of the programme, future interventions are planned including creating a women's network and providing mentoring and professional development.

Two more book reviews in this issue return to the issue of technology, but from the diverse perspectives of everyday life and entrepreneurship.

*Technology, Culture, Family: Influences on Home Life* by Elizabeth B. Silva is [reviewed here by Deirdre Hynes](#) who outlines the rich theoretical and empirical work in this book. Silva uses life history narratives to explore the role of technologies in everyday life, ranging from cooking, cleaning and caring to sexual life, and provides a critical analysis of how technology shapes and transforms the social life of households.

In her review of *Innovating Women: Contributions to Technological Advancement* (Editors: Susan Marlow and Pooran Wynarczyk), [Anne Laure Humbert describes](#) how the book challenges myths of the male entrepreneur, offering a powerful account of innovating women. It includes several case studies as well as discussion from a gender perspective of issues such as patents, business incubators and (perhaps bringing us back to the theme of our Special Issue) the importance of ICT skills for entrepreneurs.

Finally can I take this opportunity to remind you to visit our [Engage](#) pages, and to respond to the comments and postings with your own thoughts and perspectives. We want this to be a space for communication not just from us to you, but between you all as readers of the journal. So don't be shy!

*Clem Herman, on behalf of the editorial executive: Jenni Carr, Helen Donelan, Barbara Hodgson, Gill Kirkup, Elizabeth Whitelegg*