



Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of GST in 2013, a little later than usual but Spring in the UK has been exceptionally late this year, so we feel that at least we are in tune with the seasons!

This issue sees the launch of an exciting new development for GST with our first ever podcast, and we anticipate that this will become a regular feature. The podcast, produced by Marcus Brodeur, takes the form of [an interview with Moira O’Keeffe](#), one of our authors in this issue. The intention is to enable the author to set the paper in context and introduce some of the key concepts. We hope you like it and look forward to future encounters with authors.

O’Keeffe’s paper, [Lieutenant Uhura and the Drench Hypothesis](#), has an intriguing title which is sure to be of interest to anyone who has ever been a Star Trek fan. The huge impact of Lieutenant Uhura (played by Nichelle Nichols) as the first visible African American female technical officer in the 1960s series of Star Trek, is of course well known. O’Keeffe argues that one strong and influential role model – such as Uhura – can override negative (or absence of positive) figures. She uses the Drench hypothesis (Greenberg, 1988) to show how Uhura’s fictional presence contributed to a shift in public perceptions about the role of ‘real life’ women and minorities as well as influencing the policies and practices of contemporary American politics and the global entertainment industry.

Still on the theme of media, but this time new rather than traditional forms of communication, Jocelyn Steinke’s paper, [In Her Own Voice](#), is a study of blogs by women scientists in which she uses social identity theory to examine how women perceive the gendered cultures in the places they work. As well as highlighting key issues such as job opportunities, workload, research funding, resources/equipment, networking opportunities, professional recognition and respect, and work-family balance, Steinke describes how the women in her study experienced identity interference that led them to view the scientific workplace culture as hostile to women.



For these women bloggers, the use of social media was important in being able to articulate their concerns. Whether such activities can have any wider impact on the retention of women in science remains to be seen.

The use of social media such as blogs, Twitter and other platforms is becoming increasingly important in making research and academic scholarship visible. There is increasing pressure for those of us working in academia to demonstrate the impact of our research and to engage the public with our findings. We hope this journal is contributing to this, by being completely open access so anyone can read articles for free, and by experimenting with new media such as our new podcast feature. We work hard to find ways to increase our readership and the number of citations that our authors get to their work. These are some of the indicators of impact. Indeed, when we started up the journal one of our main intentions was to bridge the gap between policy, practice and research in gender and SET. We see ourselves as translators and mediators between these three areas, albeit with an awareness that these communities overlap and many individuals inhabit more than one of these arenas.

Our case study in this issue focuses on higher education. Powell and Ah King's study in a Swedish university is described in [Integrating gender perspectives on teaching and subject content](#). They present a case study of how one university has tackled gender inequality through a holistic intervention in teaching and curriculum within the natural sciences.

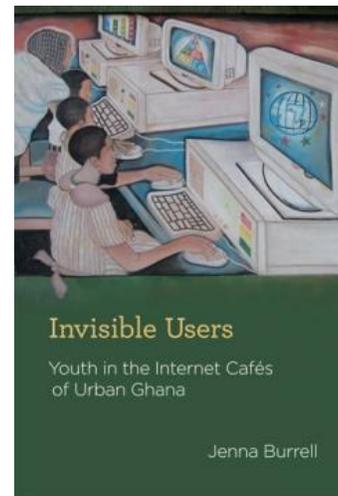
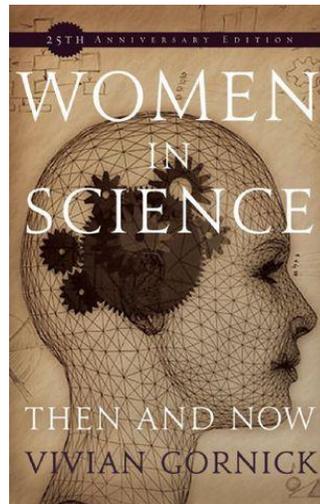
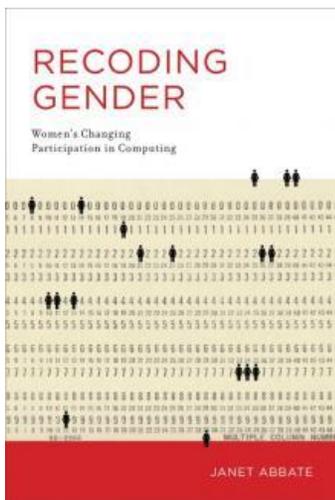
This is highly topical for the editorial group at the moment because we are delighted that our University has just been awarded the Athena SWAN Bronze Award. This is a UK scheme that recognises good practice in supporting the careers of women academics in STEM. This year the [Athena SWAN scheme](#) had nearly 100 applications from universities and individual departments who were aiming to gain recognition for the work they do to support women in STEM. The scheme provides an excellent and holistic way to embed culture change within organisations, requiring a lengthy self-examination process and robust action plan that involves all levels of staff. Whilst this is an initiative for the UK, there are many examples in other countries of how universities and companies are implementing change projects and we would welcome more case studies of other initiatives that have taken place.

In their conference review, [Crossing Boundaries: Gender, STEM and Employability Reconsidered](#), Pegg and Herman also highlight examples of initiatives by higher education institutions, in this case aiming to improve employability for women STEM students especially on the transition from education into work, a point at which many women opt not to pursue a STEM career.

In our book review section, Carol Colatrella reviews [Recoding Gender: Women's Changing Participation in Computing](#) by Janet Abbate, a fascinating account of the history of women in computer science and programming starting with the Second World War code-breakers at Bletchley Park and their American counterparts in the ENIAC programme. She illustrates how gender bias became subsequently

embedded within computer science but also celebrates the women who have succeeded in computing despite these barriers.

A similar historical perspective is also offered by Vivian Gornick's book [Women in Science: Then and Now](#) which is a follow up to her original study written in 1980 and reviewed here by Luciana Klanowicz. Sadly many of the issues highlighted three decades ago hardly seem to have changed, but she concludes more optimistically by asserting that women have become aware of their own political power in the scientific and academic areas, and this is leading to fundamental changes.



Finally, Jenna Burrell's ethnographic study [Invisible Users - Youth in the Internet Cafés of Urban Ghana](#) is reviewed by José B. Loureiro de Oliveira and explores how young marginalized people in Accra are using recycled computers to gain access to and engage with international networks and how they integrate tradition and modernity in their conceptualisation of the Internet.

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