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Women Programmers' Interviews

What is this?

Women software engineers' at CERN and Fermilab initiative to share their work experience.

In preparation for the next year UN celebration of "Women in Science Day" on February 11th, 2018 we propose to collect stories of female computer scientists working at CERN and Fermilab. Our motivation is to increase awareness of this profession and attract the interest of younger generation. The number of women in computing has decreased drastically since early eighties, which is not the case for other scientific fields. Some of the problems are outlined in the recent documentary "Code: debugging the Gender Gap" (<https://www.codedoc.co/>) We would like to discuss the advantage of this profession: creativity, challenges, gratification, constant learning of new things and good salary. Women somehow are getting robbed of all these things because the profession is not promoted enough in high schools and colleges. It also creates a socially unbalanced environment at work. We would also encourage to speak up about profession challenges and the strains. An idea by Tanya Levshina, IT manager at FNAL (tleвшin at fnal dot gov). The idea arose from multiple discussions with colleagues at CERN and Fermilab, abovementioned movie and CHEP 2016 presentation about a gender gap in the HEP community.

Clarifications needed

Preparation notes here after consulting the CERN IT Communications Officer Mellissa Gaillard (melissa dot gaillard at cern dot ch).

- Will the workplace of the programmer appear in the interview? This has to be decided early as it will influence the video editing and the management involvement.
- Do they have to be programmers today or ex-programmers are ok? If yes, should we ask in the interview why they stopped programming? This is a common thread across management positions but also very present in women's careers.
- Can the **interviewers** be male colleagues?

What is the end product?

- 30 - 40 minutes YouTube clip. Two participating institutions (or more?) CERN and Fermilab.
- Two invisible interviewers, interviewing 10 (5/5) women.
- Women ages 20, 30, 40, 50, 60
- Specialization : distributing computing, web application, sys admin, scientific algorithm, database admin, software architect
- Ethnically as diverse as possible
- People who enjoy what they are doing

Interview Questions (draft):

1. Introduction
2. Did your family encourage you?
3. What was your favorite subject in school/ college
4. Is computing was your first choice or you decided that you would like to do it later in your carrier
5. Which challenges did you meet in your work?
6. What makes you love your job and stay in the profession?
7. Why would you recommend this profession to other people?

How to organise the event

1. make mailing lists of the guessable format *wit-matters at institute dot domain* in collaborating institutes (also companies ?)
2. organise interview contents, rehearsals and duration measurements via the WIT at CERN vidyo room.
 - ◆ Maria Dimou checked with the audiovisual experts on 20170222. Recording a vidyo session is technically possible, image (many also sound) quality is sub-optimal. Best approach is to record the interviews at the individual labs and institutes, send them to CERN as .mp4 and do the editing here for the final movie.
3. record the final interviews' collage in CDS and the CERNTV youtube channel.
4. publicise at the 11 February UN Day for Women in Science

Make the list of who to interview.

1. *wit-matters at cern dot ch* members.
2. *wit-matters at fnal dot gov* members (this list doesn't exist yet).
3. what about ex-collaborators who moved on? Examples: M.Marinucci[☞], M.Limper[☞] but many MANY more!

Events during the planning period

- Meeting kick-off <https://indico.cern.ch/event/624241/>[☞]

Comments

Put your comments in this field. Thanks! As a bonus, check the picture attached to this twiki 😊 -- .
Maria Dimou - 2017-02-23

Could we involve male allies in some way? Perhaps as some of the interviewers?

-- . Hannah Margaret Short - 2017-02-24

My position in every activity is cross-gender, cross-cultural, cross-discipline. We discussed this point with Tanya, long in email before forming this proposal. She sees a priority in inspiring women to follow a career in computing by showing role models. I definitely support the idea of men interviewers.

-- . Maria Dimou - 2017-02-24

-- . Tanya Levshina - 2017-02-24

We have a long discussion with Maria. I think we could benefit by narrowing the topic and explore it in depth. If we just want to talk about science and work environment at CERN and Fermilab it should be a different movie. I have nothing against male interviewers but I don't understand why it matters.

-- . Tanya Levshina - 2017-02-24

Some interesting stats:

<http://fortune.com/2015/03/26/report-the-number-of-women-entering-computing-took-a-nosedive/>[☞]

-- . Tanya Levshina - 2017-02-26

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Thank you very much for these contributions! Can you, all, give your opinion in this 'Comments' area about my questions in section "Clarifications needed" above? I understand the purpose is to encourage young **LADIES** to choose a career in computing. This doesn't **automatically** answer the question on the gender of the interviewers.

-- . Maria Dimou - 2017-02-27

We need to decide what qualifications an interviewer needs. In my opinion the gender is irrelevant.

-- . Tanya Levshina - 2017-02-28

If people put here "interviewers' qualifications" and "candidate women to be interviewed" I am happy to make a list in this twiki. Also, remember to comment on the list of questions. We should prepare well to reduce rehearsal time.

-- . Maria Dimou - 2017-03-14

I had a long discussion with Katie Yurkewicz (Fermilab Assistant Director for Communication) and Marcia Teckenbrock (Computing Division Communication). They are really enthusiastic about the project but pointed we have a lot of work to do before we could start making the video. Good news that they are interested in doing and ready to collaborate with CERN. Some outcome of the meeting: 1. Define audience 2. Understand what actions/thoughts you want your audience to have after they watch the video 3. Max recommended length of the movie is 5 min from each site (10 min is pushing it - requires too much work) 4. We could have "installments" - release X (<3) min video every month but it could too much load on video team 5. If our message to attract young women to this profession we should not have male as "leading" interviewer 6. It doesn't make sense to ask the same questions, so we don't really need an interviewer. We need some people who discuss the purpose of the video and introduce the topics for it. 7. When we are ready, we should have a meeting with CERN & Fermilab video teams

-- . Tanya Levshina - 2017-03-14

-- MariaDimou - 2017-03-22

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