

Feminist Principles of the Internet

An Evolving Document

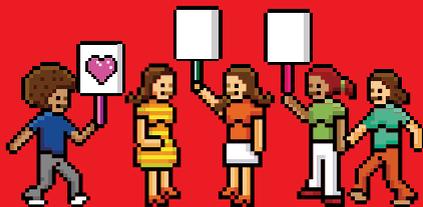
In April 2014, the Association for Progressive Communications, APC, organized a Global Meeting on Gender, Sexuality, and the Internet in Malaysia, with 50 participants from six continents comprising gender & women's rights activists, LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and intersex) movements, internet and technology rights organizations, and human rights advocates. The goal of the meeting was to bridge the gap between feminist movements and internet rights movements and look at intersections and strategic opportunities to work together as allies and partners.

The Global Meeting used a collaborative process to ask the question:
"As feminists, what kind of internet do we want
and what will it take for us to achieve it?"

Participants discussed and debated intersections of gender, sexuality, and the internet – not only as a tool – but as a new public space and, in thinking through these issues, developed a set of 15 feminist principles of the internet. These are designed to be an evolving document that informs our work on gender and technology, as well as influences our policy-making discussions when it comes to internet governance.

We invite you to join the discussion and debate on our evolving set of principles by getting in touch on <http://erotics.apc.org>

#ImagineaFeministInternet



://EROTICS

Sex, rights and the internet

Developed at the
Gender, Sexuality, and Internet Meeting

organized by the
Association for Progressive Communications
13-15 April, 2014 • Malaysia

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1. A feminist internet starts with and works towards empowering more women and queer persons – in all our diversities – to dismantle patriarchy. This includes universal, affordable, unfettered, unconditional, and equal **access** to the Internet.

2. A feminist internet is an extension, reflection, and continuum of our movements and **resistance** in other spaces, public and private. Our agency lies in us deciding as individuals and collectives what aspects of our lives to politicize and/or publicize on the internet.

3. The internet is a **transformative** public and political space. It facilitates new forms of citizenship that enable individuals to claim, construct, and express our selves, genders, sexualities. This includes connections across territories, demands for accountability and transparency, and significant opportunities for feminist movement-building.

4. **Violence** online and tech-related violence are part of the continuum of gender-based violence. The misogynistic attacks, threats, intimidation, and policing experienced by women and LGBTQI people are real, harmful, and alarming. It is our collective responsibility as various internet stakeholders to prevent, respond to, and resist this violence.

5. There is a need to resist the religious right, along with other extremist forces, and the state, in monopolizing their claim over morality and silencing feminist voices at national and international levels. We must claim the power of the internet to **amplify** alternative and diverse narratives of women's lived realities.

6. As feminist activists, we believe in challenging the patriarchal spaces that currently control the internet and putting more feminists and LGBTQI people at **decision-making** tables. We believe in democratizing the legislation and regulation of the internet as well as diffusing ownership and power of global and local networks.

7. Feminist interrogation of neoliberal capitalist logic that drives the internet is critical to destabilize, dismantle, and create alternative forms of **economic power** that are grounded on principles of the collective, solidarity, and openness.

8. As feminist activists, we are politically committed to creating and experimenting with technology utilizing **open source** tools and platforms. Promoting, disseminating, and sharing knowledge about the use of such tools is central to our praxis.

9. The internet's role in enabling access to critical **information** - including conversations on health, pleasure, and risks - is essential, and must be supported and protected.

10. Surveillance by default is the tool of patriarchy to control and restrict rights both online and offline. The right to **privacy** is a critical principle for a safer, open internet for all. Equal attention needs to be paid to surveillance practices by individuals against each other, as well as the private sector and non-state actors, in addition to the state.

11. We have the right to access all our personal **data** online and to be able to exercise control, which includes knowing who has access to the data and under what conditions and being able to delete it forever. However, this right needs to be balanced against the right to access public information, transparency, and accountability.

12. We strongly object to the efforts of state and non-state actors to control, **regulate** and restrict the sexual lives of consenting people and how this is expressed and practiced on the internet. We recognize this as part of the larger political project of moral policing, censorship and hierarchization of citizenship and rights.

13. We recognize our role as feminists and internet rights advocates in securing a safe, healthy, and informative internet for **children** and young people. This includes promoting digital and social safety practices. At the same time, we acknowledge children's rights to healthy development, which includes access to positive information about sexuality at critical times in their development. We believe in including the voices and experiences of young people in the decisions made about harmful content.

14. We recognize that the issue of **pornography** online is a human rights and labor issue, and has to do with agency, consent, autonomy, and choice. We reject simple causal linkages made between consumption of pornographic content and violence against women. We also reject the umbrella term of pornographic content labeled to any sexuality content such as educational material, SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression) content, and expression related to women's sexuality.

15. It is our inalienable right to choose, express, and experiment with our diverse sexualities on the internet. **Anonymity** enables this.