ACM **SIGGRAPH** IRC
International Resources Committee

Women in Computer Graphics- Perspectives

Is quality of life the same across all segments of the industry? Panelists address opportunities and challenges in creative entrepreneurship, massive online education, think tanks, indie games, and advocacy organizations like ACM SIGGRAPH. How can we hire? How can we retain? How can we promote? Plus a brief introduction to ACM-W (W= Women) and its year-round activities.

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ACM SIGGRAPH International Resources Committee

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Introduction

[Sandro Alberti]- Before opening this panel, I wanted to provide a brief overview of ACM-W, which is the primary entity within the ACM to focus on empowering women in computing. Unfortunately no one from ACM-W was able to attend the SIGGRAPH conference, so I am providing this introduction in their stead. As you can see from their website on screen, their main areas of focus are listed on the tabs above: Chapters, Celebrations, International initiatives, Scholarships and Awards.

- Just like ACM SIGGRAPH, ACM-W has a network of Student Chapters at various schools (over 90 worldwide).

- Celebrations are self-sustaining small conferences, for which ACM-W provides $2000, and also raises and disburses corporate sponsorship.

- ACM-W is expanding into focused international regions, by establishing councils such as ACM-W Europe and ACM-W India.

- ACM-W provides support for women undergraduate and graduate students in Computer Science and related programs to attend research conferences.

- The ACM-W Athena Lecturer Award celebrates outstanding women researchers who have made fundamental contributions to computer science. The award includes travel expenses to the meeting and a $25000 honorarium.

I will read their mission statement, because I feel it is important:

ACM-W supports, celebrates, and advocates internationally for the full engagement of women in all aspects of the computing field, providing a wide range of programs and services to ACM members and working in the larger community to advance the contributions of technical women.

I hope you take advantage of this great resource, and, in the coming years, I hope that this space, and this conversation, can act as an interface between ACM-W at the greater organizational level, and more refined 'computer graphics' focus at the SIGGRAPH level.

The Educational System

[Melissa Brown]- So, one of the things that we were discussing just as we were sitting down for the panel, is how little the educational side of things has changed. For every one of us, when we went through college, the engineering fields were completely full of men, with very few women in them. I'd like to have our panelists who are actually teaching at university level, try and discuss some of the things that have happened there. Aruquia, maybe we can start with you.

[Aruquia Peixoto]- Back at my school in January, when I talked about 'Women in CG', the students looked at me wondering "what is that?". I looked at them and asked: "Let me know, how many women do we have in this classroom?" There was only one girl, and me, the professor. So the students looked at me and said: "two". Maybe something's wrong; Because… two women? We don't have women in this field! It is typically our brothers who are encouraged to go into college and then onto an academic career or find work in the field.

[Machiko Kusahara]- Well, it's a bit difficult to summarize in very short form. When I used to teach at the School of Engineering at Kobe University, out of 10 undergraduate students, usually only one student was a girl. And I don't think this ratio has changed so much in the schools. Now I teach at the School Of Humanities, where basically more than half of the students are girls. There, when I give lectures and talk about computer graphics and bio-art, and mention: "Actually my background is in science"- people say "Oh". There is still this kind of idea that exists [that it is odd for women to be in science] Some of the students in my lab are girls. They take jobs in the IT industry like Systems Engineering, but are formerly video artists. Very often these girls fail. They thought of studying in Science or Engineering departments but were not sure of themselves. I think there is an atmosphere surrounding girls in Japan.

[Linda Sellheim]- I'll just come in a little bit from the Art and Animation side. Having run programs at different schools in Southern California, there's

always a dominance of male students in those programs. We're seeing more and more girls come into them, particularly in Games. But I think one of the things we're missing is more role models; more older women in the workforce. And if you look at things, particularly in Games, I think they really have made a mistake in not embracing career-changers and people that were interested within the industry, who could have come in and brought knowledge to a very male-dominated business.

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[Melissa Brown]- That's interesting that you mention that, because we just had a conversation within another round table on video games, about how many few women are put in management positions as CEO or any kind of a Studio Head type of role, even though they're doing the exact same work as the males in the production side of things. They just aren't seen as being capable of leading the entire studio. And so we see that in video games as well. Rebecca, from your point of view, you must have been one of just a few female students within your discipline. What kept you in school? What is it that made you continue going through, with the program?

[Rebecca Perry]- Well, first, I was in school a few times. And I think that education should be a lifelong thing. And you come to different periods when you want to engage in education more formally, and sometimes when it's just informal, continuous learning, as we all do in fast-changing fields like this (we are continually learning). But in terms of formal education, I went out of curiosity, and I stayed, really, because I met people that were mentors. And I think mentoring is a very important part of this picture. I met people who I could see as models for scholars, and models for women scholars, and it encouraged me quite a bit. My initial impetus was "I'm ready to learn something right now. I'm interested. I have some questions" And I felt that it was the right time to pursue those. I just went back to my PhD 7 years ago. It generally takes 7 years to get one of those Humanities degrees. And a lot of people said: "Well, that's kind of crazy". I was working full time, employed as an artist… And I said: "But this is the time when I am

interested in learning something, right now; and this is the right time to do it".

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Mentoring

[Melissa Brown]- Thank you for bringing up the topic of mentors. In the audience: How many of you have mentors within the industry that you work within? How many of you have older women or men that support in your field? If you could just stand up if you feel like it's made a difference to the retention of you staying and doing what you're doing. [many people stand up] So that's a lot, you guys, look around. Think about what you have to offer to the people that are around you, and think about what mentoring you can do to make a difference to help other people. That's one of the solutions.

[Rebecca Perry]- I just want to add that one of my mentors was on my dissertation committee, Sherry Turkle. I don't know if any of you have heard of her. She's a very strong, powerful person, but she told me, in the early days she found it difficult to get tenure. And she had to do some very strong negotiating to get tenure. And now she's an incredibly well respected, with worldwide reputation for her scholarly work. But even she found it difficult. It was encouraging for me to hear those stories from her.

[Melissa Brown]- Thank you. Does anybody else want to share mentoring stories? Something that happened with you early on or even recently?

[Linda Sellheim]- Rebecca and I are good friends and have had conversations about this. I went back and did my MFA at 50, to do experimental games research while I was teaching. A lot of people were very helpful. I can't say so much that I had 'official mentors'. But you know, reaching out in the industry and connecting with people, and people were really generous with giving of their time and information. You can change your life at any time if you choose.

[Machiko Kusahara]- It's interesting that we share a similar story. I also got my PhD in Engineering much later; many years after I graduated. And I worked as a Curator in Computer Graphics and Media Art. In Japan, in Information Science, and in my field/community (Virtual Reality), men were very nice and very often their wives were also researchers in the field. In my case, I was invited, through some people from the University of Tokyo, to do my dissertation. They knew that I could achieve a career.

[Aruquia Peixoto]- In my field I only had advisers who were men. But I had one adviser in a graduate course who was just amazing. The way he encouraged me is exactly the way he would with 'the guys'. If I had many-many-many-many questions, he would have many-many-many-many answers. And I really feel that he encouraged me to go ahead, ask my questions, to make a career.

The Wage Gap

[Melissa Brown]- I think that's a key point: that term: "go ahead". So, for a lot of us, as we move throughout our careers, it's a simple choice of: Do you go ahead, or don't you? Which actually brings me to the next, fairly incendiary topic, which is the wage gap. I remember clearly, the 1st time I realized that I was getting paid less than the men I was working with. Doing the exact same job- no difference, exact same education and responsibilities. And one of them made a comment about their take-home pay being wrong. And it made me realize that I was only making about 70% of what they were making. And I had no idea; no clue whatsoever what to do in order to change this. Have any of you experienced this type of situation? How have you handled it?

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[Machiko Kusahara]- Well, it's not my own experience. But in Japanese society, this is very much related to the structure of society itself. Very different from America, in the traditional system, you are paid according to your age, and you join a company soon after graduating, and continue for life-long employment. In this system, in traditional companies, women have

much fewer chances because after having children, it's difficult to continue working full-time or obtain child care and return to the same job. Computer graphics studios and gaming industries are much better places, it seems, for women, because they are newer and don't follow that traditional model. And they hire for specific skills (good painters and that kind of thing).

[Melissa Brown]- So when women do come back after maternity leave, are they given the same amount of years of service? Is that allowed to count? Or do they have to start over?

[Machiko Kusahara]- I think it really depends on the company.

[Aruquia Peixoto]- In Brazil professors have a license for 7 months and the professor is free of class duties but have to maintain research and labs. I think they are superwomen in Brazil!

[Rebecca Perry]- I just want to respond to something you said when you introduced this question: you had just found out accidentally what someone else was making. I think that secrecy is one of the biggest ways that these kinds of systems are maintained. When I was in journalism, I remember too, when raises came around, everyone was told specifically by management not to discuss it with their co-workers. And I was going around saying: "That makes no sense. We're all doing the same job. Why shouldn't we discuss what we just got? And if it's a problem, why shouldn't we bring it as a group to management". But there's a strong resistance. They sort of inculcate you with the idea that "Oh it's private; you don't really want to discuss it, do you?" It creates an atmosphere where people don't discuss those types of things, and that is a problem, if you can be more transparent. In jobs that are union, there is a wage for a given job and a given experience level. And in fields where that is much less solidified, secrecy is definitely used as a tool to keep people from asking too many questions.

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[Machiko Kusahara]- Generally speaking, in Japan, overtime work is a major opportunity for earning additional money. And, of course, men can work much longer than women, especially mothers. And that makes a distinguishable difference in wages.

[Linda Sellheim]- I'll just add that it's harder for women who make a transition or change. Like if you move out of a field and come back. I just think it's harder for women.

[Melissa Brown]- So, of everyone in the audience, how many of you are comfortable discussing wages with coworkers? [several people raise hands] Nice! I want to work where you work. So, I think that's improving. Are you finding that the pay gap is changing? If so feel free to raise your hand 'yes'. [no hands raised] No. Actually, there's a study that came out not too long ago that said that women programmers were making more money than male programmers. I'd love to hear some sort of corroboration and find out if that is true or not. Because of some of the initiatives that have been going on, we're starting to approach women in a manner that makes it enticing to be and stay in a workplace. So if any of you finds that information, please share that with us at the end. That would be great.

Related links:

bit.ly/female-computer-scientists-make-same-salary

bit.ly/women-make-more-than-men

bit.ly/women-dont-make-less-money

[Melissa Brown]- Ahmm, what was our next topic? [laughter]

[audience question]

[Melissa Brown]- For those of you who couldn't hear what she said, she mentioned GlassDoor, a website/app that has great information about companies in the US. I'm not sure about the rest of the world. So if you are getting an interview at a company, you can see what your position at that company typically gets paid, so you don't have to go ask around. And she also mentioned that maybe people aren't comfortable talking about what they negotiated. If I get a really good deal, I don't want to rub it in somebody's face: "Oh, sorry you don't get paid that much. Out." So you can go there and see if you're getting paid a reasonable rate for where you're at, or if you are asking a reasonable amount for where you are going. That's a great tip. Thank you.

Related links:

www.glassdoor.com

[Melissa Brown]- So, again, for those who couldn't hear, the employment division for each state. Like, in California it's called the EDD, I think it's different from state to state. It will give you last year's wages for specific jobs within your area/industry. The only thing that it doesn't take into account are contractors. And we are more and more moving toward a contractor society throughout technical fields. I know, me, most of my employment is contract-based, so it makes it very hard to know for sure, but at least you can get a range. At least you know what employees are making through actual statistics from the government.

Related links:

www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov

[Melissa Brown]- So, have we come up with our next topic yet? I've drawn a complete blank. [laughter]

How to Get Ahead

[Melissa Brown]- That is an absolutely fantastic topic. So we talked a little bit about that, with the discussion about women in Japan not being able to progress as much, because they stop and have families, or they have other reasons for not working long hours. The glass ceiling, as we've called it for a number years, is very very real, with women not being able to move into management positions, even though they're trying, even though they're asking. Another thing that we were discussing before the panel, is the lean-in mentality. How much that has worked, how much that hasn't worked. How individual we are in our approach to getting raises and promotions. So, actually, that is a great topic to move on to. What are some of the ways each of you have pushed yourselves for promotions, or worked the system that you're within, to get promotions or raises or those types of things? Linda, we'll start with you.

[Linda Sellheim]- I mean, obviously, working on a high-profile project that gets publicity. At Autodesk we worked on a really interesting project called Digital Steam for K-12, which was the first thing they had done to bring

STEAM into that segment of education. I think it only got me so far, but… kind of back to what you were talking about, I think there are very much Boys Clubs in management in unsaid companies. Even at my age (I don't really much care), there is a point where, if you are not comfortable to want to reach that level and spend your time with those people, then it doesn't matter what comes with it.

[Machiko Kusahara]- Well, in my case, I came into this field very early, lucky enough (back then I would say "CG" and people would ask: "car graphics?", because they didn't even know 'computer graphics'). I started, not only in computer graphics, but also writing and curating, because there was no one who could curate computer graphics or write in design journals. In that sense, it was a niche field; there was no one else. There were not so many media curators. Men were not interested in this field. So if you start working in something very new, you have more chances. I also found some statistics about the percentage of women in Japan, in gaming and 3d graphics areas. It seems that in major CG studios, women are in coordination, process control; clearly good in management. Women are getting major positions. In the games industry, today there are few gaming companies established by women, and there is more need for women animators/illustrators because now, in Japan, mobile games for girls are getting very popular. But, still, in many cases women are working in base jobs like designers, illustrators, animators. But major positions like game designers or producers are often held by men.

[Aruquia Peixoto]- Well, in my field, General Computer Graphics and Mathematics, as I've told you, I've never had a woman adviser. It's basically a men's field that women are entering. As a professor I encourage all my students equally, and now I have former female students that are professors and I am so proud. I think: "They know that this space is not just for men; it is our space, and they take this space".

[Rebecca Perry]- I think it's interesting, since we are at SIGGRAPH. There are so many different kinds of jobs and it's very hard to generalize in some ways. Just look at the panels and the names of the panels. There's millions of different types of ways in which you could be affiliated with this industry, and each of those aspects of industry have their own particular structures and their own particular issues. And I would say, too, that women are very different from one another. I hesitate to generalize about women in general. Women are individuals and have their own strengths and weaknesses and whatever. But I will say that, if you're going to generalize about succeeding in any workplace, including Computer Graphics, you have to think of yourself as a business. Most people are involved in this business because they love it. They love doing what they're doing, they love associating with

other people in the field, and it's sometimes hard to step back and think of yourself really as a business. And to form strategic alliances in the workplace with people who are going to be supportive of you, and to sort of choose your friends and your helpful people, and find those people. That's something that has worked for me in a couple of situations. Setting aside your love of the business and just remembering: it is a business. They're making money and you have the same right to make money as they do. Just be a little bit more analytical about your own financial needs… But I'm not saying it's easy.

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[Linda Sellheim]- I was going to say, not just because I work at LinkedIn, but the ability to network today is so different than it was 10 years ago. LinkedIn started that fabulous education area: University, where you can go to and look up the colleges and look up all the alumni. The ability to reach out to people and talk to them and compare notes in different ways than we've been able to. I think that's going to start to change the culture a lot in the next 10-15 years because you can really start to build that support network.

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[Machiko Kusahara]- I was kind of surprised, when I was invited to this panel, to know that you still have this problem in America. Because in Japan that used to be a classic problem. I think it was 1993-94, when I came here, for SIGGRAPH, and I just happened to share a taxi with a man, who held a high position in Japanese male industry, and he asked me: "What are you doing?" And I answered: "I work in computer graphics." And his comment

was: "Huh, a woman, I computer graphics!?!" Nothing affirmative. And also, in the early 80s, I was taking care of the Tokyo SIGGRAPH office. I would answer the phone: "SIGGRAPH Tokyo office". Once a man called, and after I answered he asked: "Huh, isn't there anyone?" I was no one. Compared to those times, it's much better, but it seems that we still have a long way to go.

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Working Twice as Hard

[Melissa Brown]- We do. We have a long way to go. How many of you have had similar experiences? I actually had one yesterday when I said I was going to SIGGRAPH and they are like: "Why would you go to that?" "Well, because I'm part of that community." We're not seen in the same light, necessarily. One of the things that we talk about quite a bit is having to prove ourselves. Having to work twice as hard in order to get as far. Is that something you guys are dealing with? Is that something you feel on a daily basis? I see a lot of nods in the audience. So back to our panel; How has that affected you? I'll start on this end this time; give Linda a chance to think. How do you feel like you work twice as hard, or extra hard, to get the same amount of recognition or influence that your male counterparts or other people within the industry are getting?

[Rebecca Perry]- I definitely feel that is a persistent issue. One of the things that someone said to me at this conference, which was interesting: it was that in the company they were with (they are a recruiter), people at the top had been there for many years, and they are the still ones who continue to make the main decisions and filter down. There's a generational change coming, and I think that in the not-too-distant future we'll be able to see some management changes, as some of those people retire and cycle out. It's hard to change the minds of some of the people that have been around forever. And as a new generation comes in and starts to fill some of those

roles and starts to move up, I think things will get a little bit better. But, I mean, I've definitely felt it, for sure.

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[Machiko Kusahara]- I have a slightly different view, maybe, about 'working hard': that all women should work harder to achieve something… because it's really unfair. Women have to take care of the house work, take care of their children, and parents, much more than men, in Japan, who don't help much (it's statistically true). So we already have a handicap. And if we have to work harder to earn the same wage and gain the same status, it's impossible; we shouldn't need to do it.

[Linda Sellheim]- I don't know if I really think that women always have to work harder to get the same notoriety. I think that we tend to work harder. We're managers. We work differently than men do, so… I had my own business for a lot of years. I started my career freelancing and I've sort of carried that through to everything I've done; I'm still sort of like an independent business.

[Melissa Brown]- Then that goes back to Rebecca's earlier point about how we do need to treat, whether we are W2 employees or 1099 employees,… we need to treat ourselves like a business. That was an excellent point that you made.

[Aruquia Peixoto]- Something that I was thinking: Many men in my field work really hard to make a career, and sometimes I think that they don't understand why we "complain", because they themselves work so hard. In society, traditionally, women take care of the family and men bring in the money. But now we have a situation in which women bring in money and also take care of the family, and men are a little lost. We are in a moment of overall change. Here in this audience it is great that we have women come together, but men are affected too. The position of women in society is not just about us women. It's good for everybody.

Family Life

[Melissa Brown]- That's a great point: As we increase the way women are treated, we also help the men in the same industry. We're going to talk now about the elephant in the room, which is family life. We did save it until the end on purpose because it is a big big topic and it affects most of us. Transitioning into Aruquia's conversation of men helping women succeed: How many of you feel like your partners, if you have family... that your partners are helping you with your family obligations? [many hands raised] That's awesome. How many of you feel like you have a lot of obligations that are just kind of all over the map and that you have to take care of, no matter what? I had a very 'enjoyable' experience right before a big gaming conference, where I was leaving for the week, which means, for my kids I prepare everything in advance food-wise and stick it in the fridge and freezer and they just pull out their individual portions, and that's what they eat all week. And then I had to do my own laundry and a little bit of housework so the health department didn't come and take the kids away while I was gone. And I got all of this done and I got in the car and I got to the airport as fast as I could and made my flight and I get off on the other end my male co-worker says: "Ah, I just love sitting in the lounge. It's so nice to get to the airport early and just being able to relax and just get my brain around the conference". I said: "I'm going to walk away before I strangle you; I'm walking away". And it occurred to me that they... those people I was working with, in particular, didn't actually understand what it took for me to get out the door for travel, because it was a completely different experience for them. So when we talk about family, there's a whole bunch of different aspects to it. As Machiko mentioned, some people are taking care of elderly parents. Some people are taking care of children. Some people are taking care of spouses, or other partners. How does that affect us in our daily life? How do we make sure that our work life is still treated like a business, and given the priority it needs to be given, while taking care of the obligations that we don't want to get rid of? So that's something that I'd kind of like to touch on a little bit, if anybody has thoughts right off on that?

[Rebecca Perry]- I just want to say that I personally jettisoned the housework as soon as possible. Hey, people walking around, they dust the floor with their socks.

[Linda Sellheim]- I don't have kids, so I'm not, you know, part of that world, but I think we tend to take on too much sometimes, and some of the things we do, if we don't do them, life will be ok. You learn as you get older that

what's really important… Would I rather get to the airport 2 hours early and have a cocktail and think about the conference, and tell my husband that he has to make the frozen food. You know? We take on more than we need to. Save that for something else that's more important.

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[Melissa Brown]- The kids can probably eat out and it probably wouldn't kill them.

[Machiko Kusahara]- Yes, I agree. We have the tendency to take care of too many things. But I think, at least in Japan, it's the way girls are raised. And that's one of the problems.

[Aruquia Peixoto]- Maybe in Brazil they're raised the same way as in Japan.

[Melissa Brown]- I come from a very conservative background as well. So it was very much… I was supposed to take care of the house and the kids. He was going to go to work. We were in the same industry, the same field, doing a lot of the same stuff. He went to every conference. I stayed home and took care of the kids, because we couldn't afford for both of us to be gone; we couldn't afford the childcare for it. And, for me, that did limit my career. Well, now my kids are older and it doesn't matter. I can do whatever I went, as long as I'm willing to put food in the freezer, because apparently I'm neurotic about that. But at the time it was very frustrating. So, again, what are some of the solutions to this? I love the 'getting rid of things that don't matter'. I also don't do housework; don't tell my mom, please.

[Machiko Kusahara]- Actually, I have one solution. Because when I was talking to someone from a very high quality computer graphics studio in Japan, he said that he actually saw that in roles where people take care of procedure details, women do a much better job than men. Probably because we are trained in such a way, through experience with children, through things like that, to really see details in timelines. So if there are more chances for women after they quit and then come back, this kind of experience can really help in these roles in companies.

[Melissa Brown]- I had someone actually tell me once that, for women in technical fields, they generally have to choose if they have family early, and

then careers. Or if they have careers early and then family. And that was something kind of profound for me. I didn't actually mean to have my family early, so it worked really well that I did, because I was able to come back into a career, as you said, and can do a lot of the management stuff that I actually learned in the home. But I had to learn to sell that. I had to sell to people: "yeah, I've been out of the workplace, but I've been managing a small army for the last 10 years. I'm well suited to managing all of your different personalities in your office". I think that's something to keep in mind as we move forward. How do we sell our skillset? (that we're learning, not just on the job)

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[Linda Sellheim]- In relationship to what you just said, about stepping away, I think it's not just having children. I my career I've made transitions and at some point I was doing costuming and put on a clothing line, big business, 20 employees, big stores. When I quit that, and tried to come back to the things that I had done before (I had worked in arts and animation and stuff), I might as well have had no skills. I might as well have just come out of high school and been handicapped. It was… That's when I started to rethink what I was going to do, and I took a lot of online courses, extension courses, and eventually went back to grad school. It was like I came with nothing. That nothing I had done over that period of time counted. So, I think sort of reframing how people look at coming back into the workforce is important.

[Rebecca Perry]- You bring a really good point, that to redefine yourself and have the courage to make a career change, is really important. You need to have some security and it's good to have a mentor to encourage to make those kinds of changes; someone who can be a mirror, a sounding board.

[Machiko Kusahara]- I recently asked someone who works in a game company; I asked: "how is the situation with girls working there?" He said: "Well, I think many of them are just happy because they can paint and what they create becomes part of the animation". But do women want to go ahead and proceed to producer and director levels, or are they really just content to stay at their level?

[Aruquia Peixoto]- We started this panel last year as part of our 'CG in Europe' session, but now it's so big and there are so many things to discuss. I hope that this is the 1st meeting of many, because we have so many things to talk about.

[Melissa Brown]- I went through one moment in my life, with men who were being generally oppressive toward women… As we talked about it as a group, we realized there were not enough women in the venue, to stop the behavior. And as soon as we started going out as a pack, and networking as a pack, the behavior largely stopped. Not entirely, but largely stopped, because there were too many people paying attention. They couldn't get away with it anymore. So I think it is important to point that now that we're all in this together, we all need to be very good about networking right after this, making sure that we're keeping in touch with the other people that are doing the things we're doing, and having the experiences we're having. Because we are as good as a whole. That will be what makes the difference. So I want to read ACM-W's mission statement one more time and then I'm going to open things up to questions:

ACM-W supports, celebrates, and advocates internationally for the full engagement of women in all aspects of the computing field, providing a wide range of programs and services to ACM members and working in the larger community to advance the contributions of technical women.

That's a really powerful statement. That's something that we all need to be supporting, because, as we support ACM-W, we actually are increasing our own abilities to succeed. And now it's open to you guys for questions. Anything for the panelists that you want to bring up?

> *"As we support ACM-W, we actually are increasing our own abilities to succeed."*

Final Questions

[Linda Sellheim]- We live in a culture of lifelong learning, particularly those of us who are sitting in a technology conference. So, you know, I doubt that you would stop doing absolutely everything. And there are opportunities to continue learning and being involved with things that interest you, whether it's career related or you just want to take a course in something like biology, some strange thing you never thought you would be interested in.

So that's what is so great now, and I think that changes the paradigm a little too.

[audience question]

[Melissa Brown]- How do we encourage more women to either join the group or go out with us or whatever it happens to be? I'm always the last woman at any event because that's where I get my networking and my business done. How do I get more women to be a part of that networking? For me, I do have more women in the industry that just don't come out, whereas for you, it seems to be that you're the sole person in that area, maybe in that region. And that's a different set of things; that's more of a pipeline issue. How do we get and retain women in the industries that we work with?

[audience member: Thinking about work-life balance: At work, I come in early and am the last one to leave. But I always made sure that I never told them that I had 2 little girls. It was just a matter of: "You want them to see you" and I just never wanted to put my husband and my kids on the platform, so I just never put it out there. And then one day someone asked : "You have kids?" and I answered: "Yeah, I have kids." But I didn't want to just go there and just wanted to do my job and not put it out there, because then, as a woman, I was the only woman in that department, overseeing 4 men. I didn't want that to have a negative effect. I don't know if that's good or bad.]

[Melissa Brown]- I think every woman is individual, and how we interact in our workplace is what works best for us. So there's no 'good' or 'bad'; there just 'is'. That's what you needed to do, and it worked for you. That's great.

[audience member: I find that, for an industry that's so innovative in so many different ways, that there is a lot of innovation when it comes to finding creative solutions to be with your family, or creating a benefit for family. So, for instance, in San Francisco, the Gap and Banana Republic have on-site daycare, but that's a benefit to a father or a mother. But if you created that scenario, or created dynamic environment that would encourage men to get more involved because that would be a benefit, like having lunches with their children. But here you have a scenario where you're working a lot of hours; all the hours in games and all the hours in animation. Why aren't they creating a scenario where it keeps the family a little bit closer together, especially in the younger years, when that development is so important, and it creates an employee that is much happier; so you are creating a dynamic of innovation on many levels.]

[Melissa Brown]- Great point. Someone else?

[audience member: Have there actually been instances where one man was hired over a women even though they were equally qualified?]

[Melissa Brown]- I'll give you one specifically. I actually had a job interview for a full-time job, which I don't normally do, but it was a really good opportunity. And I had an 'in' in the company; somebody that knew all the people involved and said: "You should totally apply, you should totally apply!" Went in for the interview, came home afterward. The guy called me and said: "I can only tell you this off the record, but they didn't hire you because they were afraid that you wouldn't be able to balance your family with the workload." I hadn't talked about my family. People in the industry/ in that job knew me. As part of the industry we'd been together at conferences and whatever, so people knew I had kids, but it was never mentioned in the interview whatsoever. But that was their determination: a man would have more flexibility than I would, so they would hire him. And it's probably not true. I suspect, knowing who they hired, I suspect that he actually will be able to travel a lot less than I can travel. So yes, that happens. How many people have had stories like that? [several hands raised] it definitely happens. The question is not: "Is it a problem?" but "how do we approach it?" And again, that's kind of what we're wrestling with in all of these panels: how do we help? We've been in these industries a long time. How do we help you, coming into the industry, coming into your field of expertise, not having experienced some of the same things we've experienced? And we're going to wrestle with that a long time. That's not something we can solve in an hour. Any input from you guys on that? Anything that you want to share?

"The guy called me and said: "I can only tell you this off the record, but they didn't hire you because they were afraid that you wouldn't be able to balance your family with the workload"… People knew I had kids, but it was never mentioned in the interview whatsoever. But that was their determination: a man would have more flexibility than I would, so they would hire him. And it's probably not true. I suspect, knowing who they hired, I suspect that he actually will be able to travel a lot less than I can travel."

[audience member: So this last week, I spent 6 hours shopping for clothes and getting ready because I had a job interview, and then I got there and the women are well put together, but most of the men are wearing jeans and t-shirts!]

[Melissa Brown]- Well I think that's all the time we have, but one more question, very quickly.

[audience member: I want to counsel the girls over there who asked the question earlier. During the Technical-Papers Fast Forward, technical papers that were accepted, we were only 5 women there. The 1st thing that you must do is to challenge yourself, step forward, like those women in the panel have done with their lives. A lot of time I've been on that side of the table and thinking: "Am I here just because I'm a woman? I want people to know that I'm a woman challenging myself" So, for you, my advice is to jump. I'm really glad that there is this group of women talking about this and I hope it continues to evolve to include women who show how they are great women.]

[Melissa Brown]- I love it! Thank you for joining us. Again, if you have any questions and you can connect afterward, feel free to mingle just a little bit and… let's get to know each other better! Thank you for coming. [applause]