

”Free as in sexist?”: Free culture and the gender gap

Author

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1 Introduction

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In the summer of 2010, David Fincher and Aaron Sorkin’s film about the beginnings of Facebook (“The Social Network”) attracted much discussion about the portrayal of women. Tracy Clark-Flory [2], writing for *Salon*, asked why “women in one of the greatest Web innovations” were “one-dimensional characters playing gold-diggers, drunken floozies and that ‘bitch’ who got away?” This popular discussion about female participation and representation paralleled recent discourse in the Free/Libre and Open Source Software movement (FLOSS or FOSS). Skud [6], a blogger at *Geek Feminism*, noted that 2009 was “shaping up to be a watershed year for women in open source. We have seen numerous high profile incidents where men have made remarks in conference presentations which have dismissed, marginalised, or upset women.” In late 2010, the conversation moved beyond offensive presentations to active discrimination, harassment, and assault among conference participants [5, 1]. At the start of 2011, popular attention returned to the question of female participation by way of a *New York Times* article about Wikipedia’s gender gap [4, 3].

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