Just us boys : diversity in the GNU project as measured by mailing list activity.

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Abstract

Structure and patterns of a male-dominated culture. Statistics measured over a period of one year (leading up to, including September 2019).

1 Introduction : GNU is not...

In the following we measure diversity in the GNU project by using mailing list activity, as proxy[1].

Specifically, we chose `info-gnu`, where announcements relating to the GNU project are posted.

All the major figures (e.g. Richard Stallman, Werner Koch, Alexandre Oliva...) of this free software project – arguably the most important of all – make regular appearances here and release information regarding their respective areas, or software.

These encompass the well-known ones : `GNU` itself, `GPG`, `Linux-Libre`, `GCC`, `GDB`, `coreutils`, etc.

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GNU is not for women – such would be the conclusion of anyone going through our statistics.

And, if the mostly passive attitudes adopted so far have led to such results, surely they can no longer be considered enough.

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At the turn of the last century, men formed peculiar circles, still, in and around universities.

The more prestigious these places, the longer it took them to admit women inside their walls – and longer still to admit them as equals.[2]

In the novels of Waugh and Forster, where the old, male-exclusive university system still exists, undisturbed by the advances of times, the absence of women goes largely unnoticed : unproblematic.

"*This is just how things are*", "*They've always been this way*" – so went their inner lives.

Lise Meitner (who ended up finding a place within academia) or Emmy Noether had no place in these novels, no more than they had in the times they depict...

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As to the satisfaction of their pleasures, these gentlemen, knowledgeable as they were about ancient Greek texts, had long found solutions of their own.

To heterosexual casuistics[3] of old days correspond now intricate rationalizations to make up for the absence of women and minorities of various kinds :

They blame schools, they blame society, even the weather or the stars if they could – so long as not themselves.

And, so, they continue to live peaceful lives, not unlike the eternal Cambridge and Oxford of aforementioned novels... "*Just us boys*" is their motto – now as it was then.

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[1] Other proxies (i.e. approximations) can be used.

[2] This is consistent with phenomena in other areas; the greatest inequalities are usually found at the top, never at the bottom : board of directors, executives and CEO's, software engineer positions, etc.. Or project leaders, as in this case.

[3] Casuistics were (largely obscure, if not irrational) conditional statements that formed complex moral and philosophical systems amongst Medieval scholars such as those of Christianity – though, certainly, not only them.

2 Raw data

Project	Author	Gender
− September 2019		
GNU Project	Richard Stallman	m
Texinfo	Gavin Smith	m
GDB	Joel Brobecker	m
GNU Datamash	Assaf Gordon	m
GNU Linux−libre	Alexandre Oliva	m
Bison	Akim Demaille	m
GNU Mes	Jan Nieuwenhuizen	m
GNU Wget2	Tim Ruhsen	m
GNU gama	Ales Cepek	m
− August		
GNU findutils	Bernhard Voelker	m
Libgcrypt	Werner Koch	m
Emacs	Nicolas Petton	m
nano	Benno Schulenberg	m
FreeIPMI	Albert Chu	m
GNU Scientific Library	Patrick Alken	m
GCC	Jakub Jelinek	m
Unifont	Paul Hardy	m
Gnuastro	Mohammad Akhlaghi	m
GNU C Library	Carlos O'Donell	m
− July		
GNU Stow	Adam Spiers	m
Denemo	Richard Shann	m
GNU direvent	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
rush	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
GnuPG	Werner Koch	m
GNU Linux−libre	Alexandre Oliva	m
GNU gama	Ales Cepek	m
pies	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
rush	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
− June		
GNU Guile	Ludovic Courtes	m
GNU Stow	Adam Spiers	m
Nettle	Niels Moller	m
Nettle	Niels Moller	m

GNU APL	Dr. Jurgen Sauermann	m
mailutils	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
GNU Guile	Ludovic Courtes	m
Gawk	Arnold Robbins	m
nano	Benno Schulenberg	m
Dr. Geo	Hilaire Fernandes	m
GNU Artanis	Nala Ginrut [Lei Mu]	(?)
IceCat	Ruben Rodriguez	m
Unifont	Paul Hardy	m

− May

GnuPG	Werner Koch	m
GNU OrgaDoc	Adam Bilbrough	m
GNU libidn2	Tim Ruhsen	m
Bison	Akim Demaille	m
GNU Guix	Ludovic Courtes	m
Bison	Akim Demaille	m
GNU gettext	Bruno Haible	m
GNU Mcron	Adam Bilbrough	m
Unifont	Paul Hardy	m
GNU Shepherd	Ludovic Courtes	m
GDB	Joel Brobecker	m
GNU gettext	Bruno Haible	m
GNU CSSC	James Youngman	m
LibreJS	Ruben Rodriguez	m
GNU Linux−libre	Alexandre Oliva	m
GCC	Jakub Jelinek	m
GNU Guix	Ludovic Courtes	m
Emms	Yoni Rabkin	m

− April

dico	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
nano	Benno Schulenberg	m
rush	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
GNU Shepherd	Ludovic Courtes	m
Gnuastro	Mohammad Akhlaghi	m
nano	Benno Schulenberg	m
Emacs	Nicolas Petton	m
Gawk	Arnold Robbins	m
wget	Darshit Shah	m
wget	Darshit Shah	m

− March

GnuPG	Werner Koch	m
nano	Benno Schulenberg	m
GnuPG	Werner Koch	m
LibreJS	Ruben Rodriguez	m

coreutils	Padraig Brady	m
Unifont	Paul Hardy	m
GNU Linux−libre	Alexandre Oliva	m
GNU Octave	John W. Eaton	m

− February

GNU Dr. Geo	Hilaire Fernandes	m
GNU ddrescue	Antonio Diaz Diaz	m
dico	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
tar	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
mailutils	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
cflow	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
GCC	Jakub Jelinek	m
GNU MCSim	fredomatic [Frederic Bois?]	m
FreeDink	Sylvain Beucler	m
Texinfo	Gavin Smith	m
GnuPG	Werner Koch	m
GNU libidn2	Tim Ruhsen	m
GNU gama	Ales Cepek	m
GNU Binutils	Nick Clifton	m

− January

GNU MPFR	Vincent Lefevre	m
GNU C Library	Siddhesh Poyarekar	m
Bison	Akim Demaille	m
Bison	Akim Demaille	m
FreeIPMI	Albert Chu	m
FreeDink	beuc [Sylvain Beucler]	m
GNU Ocrad	Antonio Diaz Diaz	m
GNU MDK	Jose A. Ortega Ruiz	m
Readline	Chet Ramey	m
Bash	Chet Ramey	m
GNUstep	Ivan Vucica	m
GNUstep	Ivan Vucica	m
GNUstep	Ivan Vucica	m
autoconf	Peter Simons	m
GNU libidn2	Tim Ruhsen	m
GNU moe	Antonio Diaz Diaz	m
GNU ed	Antonio Diaz Diaz	m
recutils	Jose E. Marchesi	m
tar	Sergey Poznyakoff	m
diffutils	Jim Meyering	m

[Note : Lei is given to both men and women]

3 Statistics

Month (2019)	Male participants	Female participants
Sep.	100%	0%
Aug.	100%	0%
July	100%	0%
June	100%(?)	0%(?)
May	100%	0%
Apr.	100%	0%
Mar.	100%	0%
Feb.	100%	0%
Jan.	100%	0%

Table 1: Diversity in the GNU project and `gnu-info` mailing list participation.

Bibliography

`info-gnu`. https://lists.gnu.org/mailman/listinfo

Announcing future research

—. (upcoming). "*Yann Le Cun : portrait of a small-time engineer.*"
   Note : from the very bottom of French engineer schools crochetted his way to the top of international scientific society!

—. (upcoming). "*Danah Boyd never bothered anyone. Science in the interest of the rich and mighty.*"
   Note : celebrated by the EFF and employed by Microsoft, but "famous artists are quickly forgotten" according to Peter Doig.

—. (upcoming). "*Saint Sheryl.*"
   Note : on Sheryl Sandberg, and more on corporate diversity. Dumb like her barbies – said someone I know...