Blog #6 Thinking Globally

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Up until now I have mainly been focused on the Female Gamer information community as a general group, and most of my sources have been based in the US. But it would by myopic to suppose that the issues faced by women who game exist outside of a larger context, which is why I am focusing on global issues relevant to my chosen information community.

The Female Gamer Information community is a global network that can be understood through a connected learning approach. Connected learning is a concept described in *Information Services Today* as learning that is "powered by an individual's interests and passions and supported by peers…. It exists in spaces where an individual feels valued and safe" (Hirsch, 2015). By making it easier for people to communicate and interact with others in an information environment libraries can help individuals with a variety of information needs. Libraries have a unique responsibility to facilitate a safe and supportive learning environment in order to service their communities.

Many of the issues that Female Gamers face can be understood as issues faced by women online in general. In a stocktaking paper entitled "Harnessing the Digital Revolution for the Achievement of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" the UN-Women organization seeks to correct the imbalance between technological advancement and gender equality. UN-Women recognizes the new opportunities presented by the digital revolution and the ways in which current technologies allow traditionally marginalized groups to have a voice. But unfortunately these opportunities are not without backlashes that reflect issues of social injustice. While digital technologies have made it possible for women around the world to empower themselves, "Women and girls are also particularly exposed to cyber-bullying and cybercrime, including cyber trafficking" (UN Women, 2017). Like Female Gamer community women globally face issues of harassment and sexism.

While the digital lives of women can be difficult to navigate, libraries can be a valuable resource for women and other marginalized groups by serving as a safe space within which disadvantaged populations can access ideas and information. "Libraries are a solution: they offer an 'integrated delivery' model that provides women with a safe space and access to essential information on health, livelihoods, rights, and more" (Sciabia, 2014). The Female Gamer information community shares with the global female population the need for a safe place to find and share information, with an emphasis on community.

Thinking globally is critical to those of us in the information sciences. In an increasingly connected world it is beneficial to examine the diversity of information needs across the planet and to find the overarching consistencies in library values. Considering these points helps us to decide how to best serve the public, and helps shape our futures by highlighting commonalities that unify what we think of as library work.

References

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