



The Internet Society to “Shine the Light” on Digital Trailblazers

Global campaign to highlight women who are using the Internet to make a difference

[Washington, D.C. and Geneva, Switzerland– March 8, 2016] The Internet Society has launched a campaign aimed at recognizing the many contributions made by women today to the development and growth of the Internet. By encouraging others to “Shine the Light” on women who are using the Internet to innovate and make a difference in people’s lives, the organization hopes to celebrate the online achievements of women and draw attention to the issue of gender inequality when it comes to Internet access.

Worldwide, there are an estimated [200 million fewer women than men online](#). In developed countries women and men have access to the Internet at comparable levels. But recent research by the [Web Foundation](#) shows that women in several developing countries are 50 percent less likely to be connected to the Internet than men in the same age group, where technical literacy levels and high costs are the two main barriers keeping women offline.

Despite the fact that the number of women on the Internet lags behind that of men, once women do have access, they are most likely to use it in their daily lives. The same research highlights how many of these women are digital trailblazers, using the Internet to speak out on important issues and maximizing its potential to create opportunities in education, healthcare, government services and in organizing their families and communities for social, economic and political empowerment.

Kathy Brown, President and CEO of the Internet Society, said, “More than half the world’s population is still not using the Internet. The stark reality today is that the majority of this offline population is women. However, women are key to advancing the Internet’s development and in making sure that it is useful and relevant to other women. Smart, empowered women are already making enormous contributions to this effort and collectively, we must ensure that their voices are heard as an integral part of the dialogue to build a secure, resilient, globally connected ecosystem.”

From engineers to activists to bloggers, the Shine the Light campaign will celebrate the voice of women on the Internet and promote their achievements. The Internet Society has worked with its community and members from around the world to bring the portraits of women and girls who are empowering themselves on the Internet today.

Some of the women highlighted include Linda Liukas, a Programmer and programming instructor in Finland who raised \$380,000 on Kickstarter to fund a coding book for children, and Nighat Dad, a lawyer and Internet activist who founded [the Digital Rights Foundation](#) and was part of TIME magazine's list of next generation leaders for helping Pakistani women fight online harassment.

“Women bring distinct perspectives and skills to the Internet,” continued Brown. “They are uniquely positioned to champion breakthroughs using the Internet for equality, poverty alleviation, better security and many other challenges. The quality, relevance, and impact of the Internet will only be improved if the people who are building it are demographically representative of the people who are using it, so we must recognize the contribution that women are making today and the significant role they can play in the future evolution of the Internet.”

Shine the Light encourages everyone to use the hashtag **#shinethelight** to nominate a woman who they think is creating opportunities for themselves and others through the Internet.

For more information, please visit: www.internetsociety.org/shinethelight.

About the Internet Society

The Internet Society, www.internetsociety.org is the trusted independent source for Internet information and thought leadership from around the world. It is also the organizational home for the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). With its principled vision and substantial technological foundation, the Internet Society promotes open dialogue on Internet policy, technology, and future development among users, companies, governments, and other organizations. Working with its members and Chapters around the world, the Internet Society enables the continued evolution and growth of the Internet for everyone.

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