



2023 Women's Rights Caucus Virtual Teach-in on Digital technologies and digital rights for feminist futures

Led by the Our Voices Our Futures consortium (The Association for Progressive Communications, CREA, UHAI-EASHRI, WO=MEN)

Feminist demands on digital technologies and digital rights:

1. Access, accessibility, autonomy, and equity need to be central to every state agenda on digital technologies, as inequality increases across many domains, including the online. All women, girls and gender-diverse people's ability to access digital technologies in order to demand their rights and assert their voices, without fear of reprisal or exclusion, should be paramount to any state's agendas. Access to digital technologies cannot simply be thought of in a one-dimensional way, where states and corporations imagine that more internet access automatically guarantees greater positive outcomes for all. "Access" needs to be thought of in terms of "accessibility", which refers to structural changes which allow more diverse people to participate in a meaningful and impactful way. Certain groups of women and girls, such as women with disabilities, young women and girls, migrant women, lesbian and bisexual women, trans women and gender-diverse people, those who are marginalized due to their race, ethnicity or religion, racialized women, women who live in rural areas, or women who are criminalized - among others - will continue to be excluded, if there is not a comprehensive plan of action which takes an intersectional lens to women's rights. This must include an integral recognition of the diversity of experiences and needs of all women and girls.
2. Strengthen and expand the protection of WHRDs¹, in all their diversity, to include swift accountability for governments and non-state actors running targeted smear campaigns, harassment and surveillance of them and their communities online, meant to silence them and their activism;
3. Accountability for "big tech" corporations, for their consistent prioritization of profit over people, by infringing on the privacy of persons for commercial benefit without their knowledge and consent, and through knowingly driving polarization by design. Strategies for accountability must highlight design over content and acknowledge that digital technology design, the motivations which drive that design, and the actors behind the platforms, are accountable for the harm they cause, and not only individual pieces of content or individual users. Corporations must achieve safety and equity on their platforms without infringing on rights and freedoms;
4. Accountability for expanded surveillance systems, by state actors and their allies, and for the use of law and policy on "digital space / online space" which expands state surveillance and/or state and police powers to control the public;

¹ In this document, the term WHRDs refers to women's human rights defenders, which includes rights defenders of all ages, races, castes, classes, regions, abilities, sexual orientations and gender identities who engage in the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and all people who engage in the advancement of gender justice and equality, either individually or in association with others. This group includes women and other feminist, trans, intersex, and non-binary rights defenders.

5. Addressing online GBV in a holistic way, which creates safe and non-discriminatory pathways for redressal and access to justice for victims, and accountability for perpetrators, including the state, anti-gender and anti-democracy actors, and tech corporations;
6. Accountability of state actors and their allies with regard to engaging in shutting down, restricting or over-regulating public access to the internet and internet-based spaces and tools, and for using existing and new laws aimed at digital technologies, digital security etc., to regulate, curtail and control people's rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly online or on-ground. The issue of public access to information must be balanced with state priorities with regard to digital spaces, and maintaining digital spaces as equitable spaces must be achieved in a way which strengthens every individual's ability to exercise their right to autonomy, to privacy, to information, and to freedom of expression, and without curtailing rights and freedoms;
7. Accountability for technology corporations who are building and selling artificial intelligence and automotive technologies, for purposes of state and non-state deployment, to ensure the development and ethical deployment of trustworthy AI as a public good, not as a way to erode democracy, rights, and labour standards, and to further entrench discrimination. Accountability must be sought for the actors behind the development, sale, purchase and deployment of AI in anti-gender and anti-democracy campaigns. Big tech corporations and their allies seek to invisibilize the human actors behind AI, in order to escape accountability;
8. Accountability for disinformation, misinformation and computational propaganda for state and non-state actors, who are using and deploying digital technologies and AI to mislead the public, and influence major political events which affect all their lives, without their knowledge or consent;
9. Ending the criminalization of activists, journalists, WHRDs, and movement-actors through repealing unjust laws, policies and practices which relate to digital space and technologies; this must also include ending the criminalization of young people for their activities online, e.g. through "child protection online" laws and policies, especially ending the criminalization of young people's sexuality;
10. Inclusion of structurally silenced women and people in decision-making at all levels, as it relates to building digital technologies, and shaping the policies and laws which govern them and their use;
11. Ensuring new digital technologies, and the laws and policies which govern them, are built on sound principles, which are necessary and proportionate, through inclusive, participatory mechanisms and multilateral debate and discussion, that they are rights-affirming, gender-just and and have a positive impact on our planet, and that the internet is protected as a public good by states and other duty-bearers;
12. Ensuring that Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curricula are holistic and include perspectives from the social sciences and humanities, do not drive "innovation for innovation's sake", and that they prioritize rights-based, gender-affirmative, climate justice-centered approaches to new technologies. STEM must also be opened up to be more inclusive and accessible to diverse groups of women, girls and gender-diverse people who have, for decades, been excluded from this field

13. Deepening investment in feminist tech infrastructures and feminist internet governance modes and models, and community-led development of the development of technologies which advance women's are advancing human rights and climate justice, by investing in feminist movements, WHRDs, feminist technologists and feminist policy analysts who are driving transformative work in the areas of technology and gender, social, climate and economic justice.



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