Chapter 7.3
Gender–Based Attitudes Toward Technology

Konrad Morgan
University of Bergen, Norway
Madeleine Morgan
University of Bergen, Norway

INTRODUCTION

During the past 30 years of investigation into the ratios of males and females using technology (Harrison, Rainer, & Hochwarter, 1997), there have been consistent reports of males being more positive toward technology and being more likely to adopt the use of new technology on a voluntary basis (Volman, & Van-Eck, 2001). This trend has been reported from early school through adult life, and from diverse geographical sources (Broos, 2005; Heemskerk, Brink, Volman, & Ten-Dam, 2005). Although some scientists have argued that this pattern is changing (Colley & Comber, 2003; Durndell & Thomson, 1997), surveys continue to show an imbalance between the sexes favoring males over females (Colley & Comber; Heemskerk et al., 2005).

The authors consider the consequences of this gender bias to be significant not only in terms of maximizing the whole potential workforce, but also because there is some evidence that males design information- and knowledge-based systems in ways that are different from females, and often these differences favor male users in communication and searching methods. The gender imbalance may become of increasing importance as high-technology industries, such as knowledge engineering and Web commerce, become the normal methods of conducting business throughout the global economy.

BACKGROUND

A scarcity of females in computing can be detected from the earliest levels in many educational systems (Durndell & Haag, 2002). It pervades through all levels of education and into industry (Jackson, Ervin, Gardner, & Schmitt, 2001). This trend could not only pose a threat to the economic growth and stability of the global economy, but it...
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