Briefing

European Parliament

Gender equality in the EU's digital and media sectors

As the 'digital revolution' expands into more areas of our lives, from the way we work, to how we consume, look after our health, learn and take part in politics, it is increasingly clear that this is not just a purely technical – or economic – process, but also a social one, and one which is not gender-neutral. Analysis of the risks and benefits finds that new information and communication technologies can be a gateway for women and girls to access new opportunities, means of expression and participation, and a powerful tool for advancing gender equality. In employment, for example, the digital sector offers highly skilled, better-paid jobs that could help to eliminate the gender pay gap. Likewise, the convergence between traditional and online media is blurring the boundaries between consumers and creators, and opening spaces for new voices, forms of awareness-raising and mobilisation – as the recent wave of 'hashtag activism' against sexual harassment has shown. On the other hand, if access is unequal, if algorithms or content available online are gender biased or do not reflect women's needs and realities, or if women themselves are not involved in shaping that content, digitalisation can reinforce existing gender inequalities. It can also create new risks and barriers, not least the colonisation of online spaces by misogyny and cyber-violence.
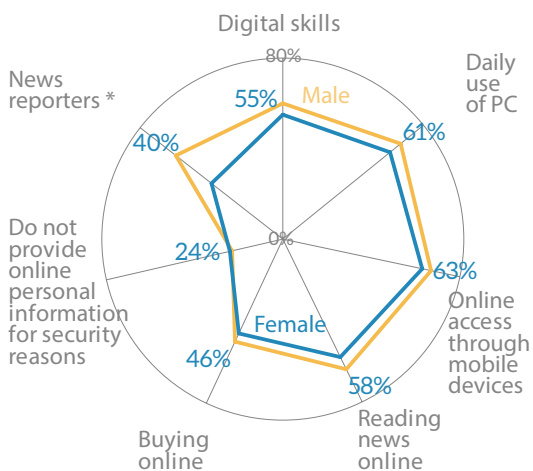
Employed ICT specialists
Percentage of population 15 years and over
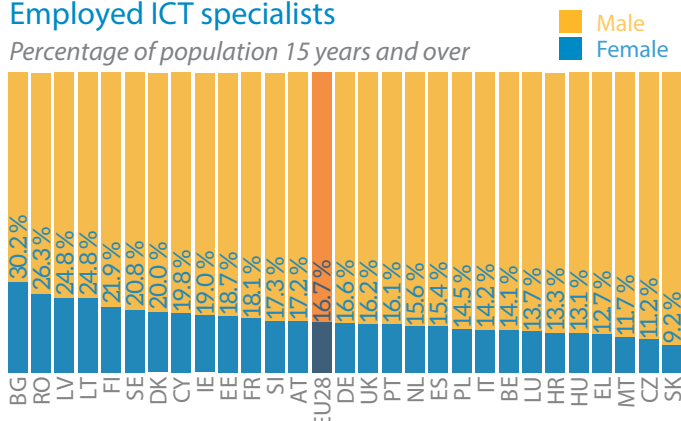
The need to ensure digital inclusion, and tackle gender stereotyping and other barriers to access, skills, representation and safety affecting women and girls has been recognised globally in the Sustainable Development Goals, and within the EU's Digital Single Market Strategy, together with the need for better data to inform action. The existing data point to a global digital gender divide. Within the EU, this is not so much a question of women and girls lacking basic internet access or skills – although there are gender differences, and the number of women who have never used the internet remains significant (14 % of women compared to 12 % of men). The gender gaps are much wider in advanced IT skills, tertiary education, employment and decision-making in the digital sector, with girls and women less likely to continue studying science and technology beyond the age of 15, enter or continue a career in ICT, reach specialist and managerial levels or start their own tech companies.

Research highlights that children's perceptions of their own abilities and career aspirations are shaped early, and strongly influenced by attitudes and expectations in families, peer groups, schools, and wider society – including limiting or positive images, messages 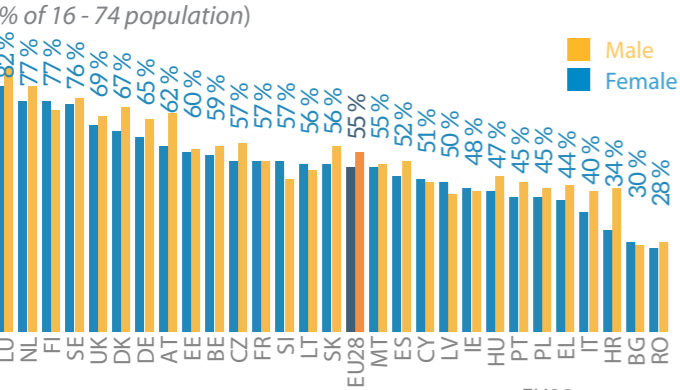and role models conveyed by traditional and new media. Media monitoring shows that there has been some progress, but women continue to be under-represented as reporters and decision-makers and misrepresented in coverage across the news media as well as in film and other sectors.

EU gender gap in digital and media sectors
% of 16 - 74 population (of all reporters)*

EU28 population	Female	Male	Total
0 - 15 years old	41.3	43.6	84.9
16 - 74 years old	190.9	187.6	378.5
More than 74 years old	28.6	18.2	46.8
Total population	261	249	510

Million persons

Digital skills (basic or above basic)
(% of 16 - 74 population)

Male (orange) · Female (blue)

82% 77% 77% 76% 69% 67% 65% 62% 60% 59% 57% 57% 57% 56% 56% 55% 55% 52% 51% 50% 48% 47% 45% 45% 44% 40% 34% 30% 28%

LU NL FI SE UK DK DE AT EE BE CZ FR SI LT SK EU28 MT ES CY LV IE HU PT PL EL IT HR BG RO

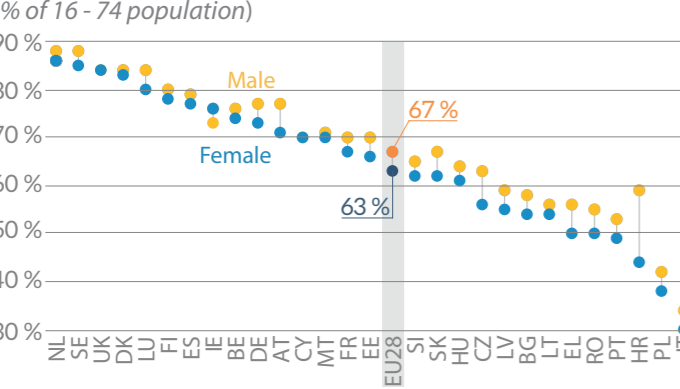Across Member States, the percentage of women with *above basic* skills varies between 9 % and 49 % (11 % - 61 % for men). The percentage for *basic* skills is between 18 % and 35 % for women (17 % - 36 % for men).

EU28

	Female	Male
Above basic	28 %	34 %
Basic	26 %	26 %

Daily computer usage
(% of 16 - 74 population)

90 % 80 % 70 % 60 % 50 % 40 %

Male · Female · 67 % · 61 %

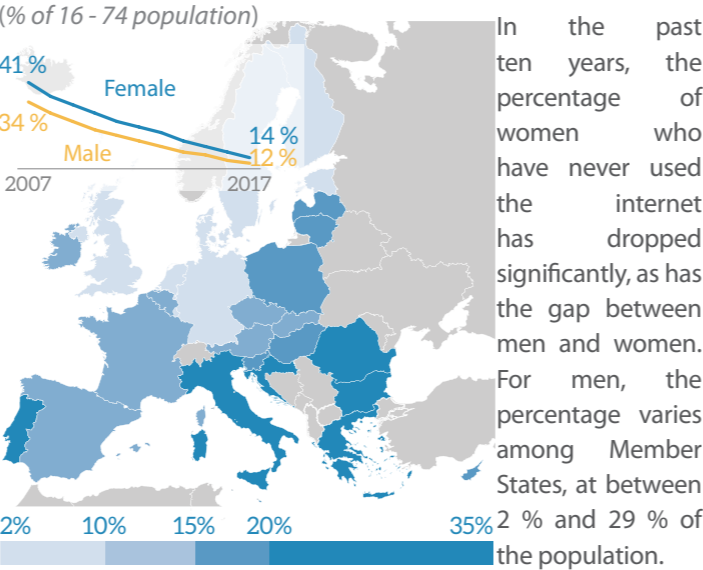DK SE LU FI NL UK EE BE DE LV MT SK HU CZ CY IE SI AT EU28 FR PL BG IT PT RO ES HR
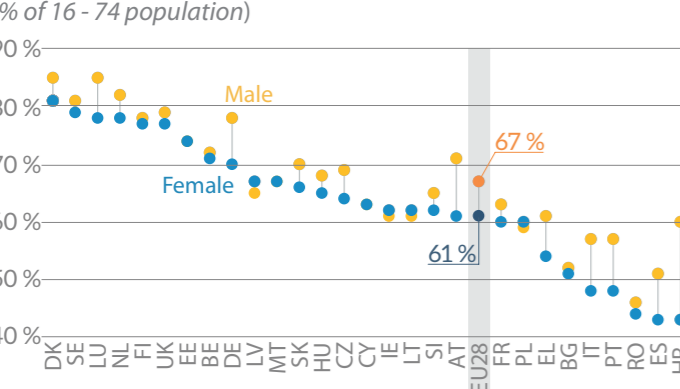
In only four EU Member States is the percentage of women who use a computer daily higher than that for men; the percentage is the same in three Member States.

Male 67 % · 50 % · Female · 42 % · 61 %
2007 — 2017

Use of mobile devices to access the internet
(% of 16 - 74 population)

90 % 80 % 70 % 60 % 50 % 40 % 30 %

Male · Female · 67 % · 63 %

NL SE UK LU DK FI ES IE BE AT CY MT FR EU28 SI SK HU CZ LV BG LT EL RO PT HR PL IT
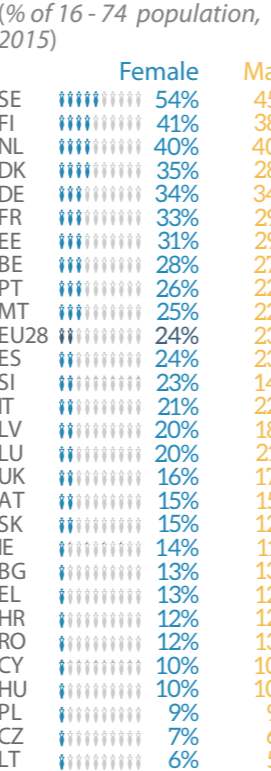
In the past five years, the gap between women and men has narrowed from 9 percentage points (p.p.) to 4 p.p.

Male 67 % · 40 % · Female · 31 % · 63 %
2012 — 2017

Women who have never used the internet
(% of 16 - 74 population)

41 % Female · 34 % Male · 14 % · 12 %
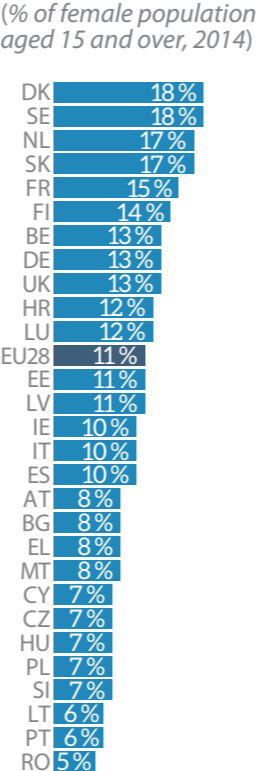2007 — 2017

2% 10% 15% 20% 35%

In the past ten years, the percentage of women who have never used the internet has dropped significantly, as has the gap between men and women. For men, the percentage varies among Member States, at between 2 % and 29 % of the population.

Security concerns
(% of 16 - 74 population, 2015)

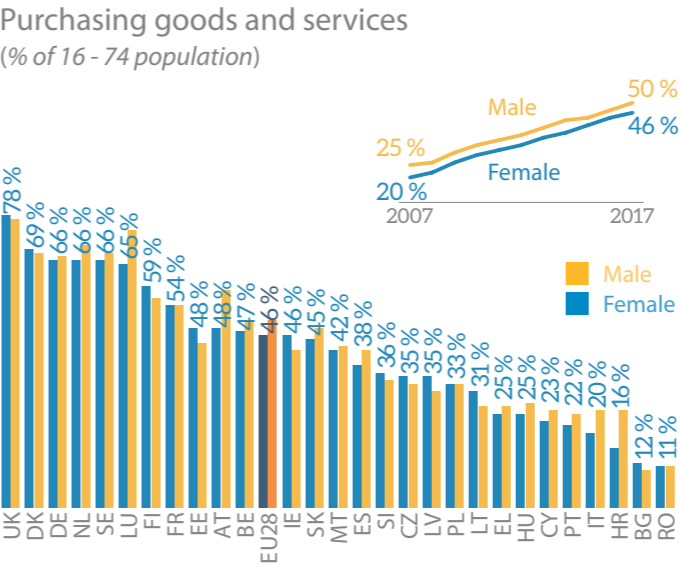|	Female	Male
SE	54%	45%
FI	41%	38%
NL	40%	40%
DK	35%	28%
DE	34%	34%
FR	33%	29%
EE	31%	29%
BE	28%	27%
PT	26%	22%
MT	25%	22%
EU28	24%	23%
ES	24%	23%
SI	23%	14%
IT	21%	22%
LV	20%	18%
LU	20%	21%
UK	16%	17%
AT	15%	15%
SK	15%	12%
IE	14%	11%
BG	13%	13%
EL	13%	12%
HR	12%	12%
RO	12%	13%
CY	10%	10%
HU	10%	10%
PL	9%	9%
CZ	7%	6%
LT	6%	5%

At EU level, security concerns, which prevent individuals from providing personal information to online communities for social and professional networking, are spread almost evenly between women (24 %) and men (23 %). In three Member States – Sweden, Slovenia and Denmark – the difference exceeds 7 p.p.

Cyber harassment
(% of female population aged 15 and over, 2014)

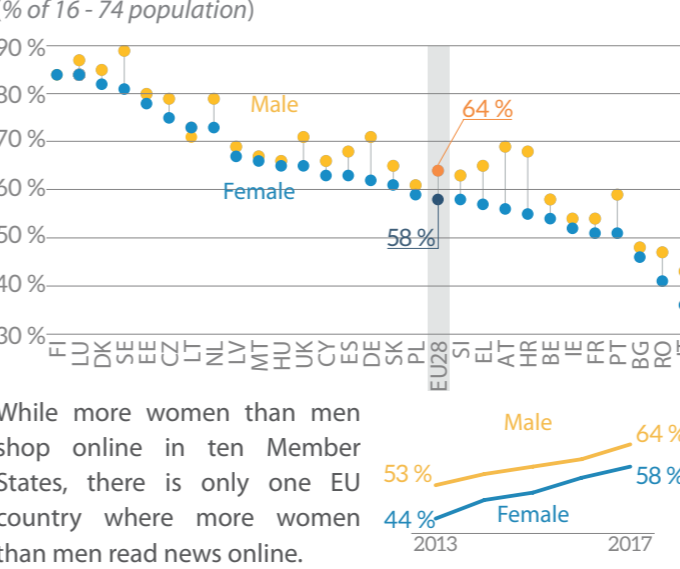|	
DK	18%
SE	18%
NL	17%
SK	17%
FR	15%
FI	14%
BE	13%
DE	13%
UK	13%
HR	12%
LU	12%
EU28	11%
EE	11%
LV	11%
IE	10%
IT	10%
ES	10%
AT	8%
BG	8%
EL	8%
MT	8%
CY	7%
CZ	7%
HU	7%
PL	7%
SI	7%
LT	6%
PT	6%
RO	5%

The two Member States where the most women reported experiencing cyber harassment – Denmark and Sweden – are also among the three where there is a significant gender gap for security concerns. The third of these, Slovenia, is however near the bottom for cyber harassment.
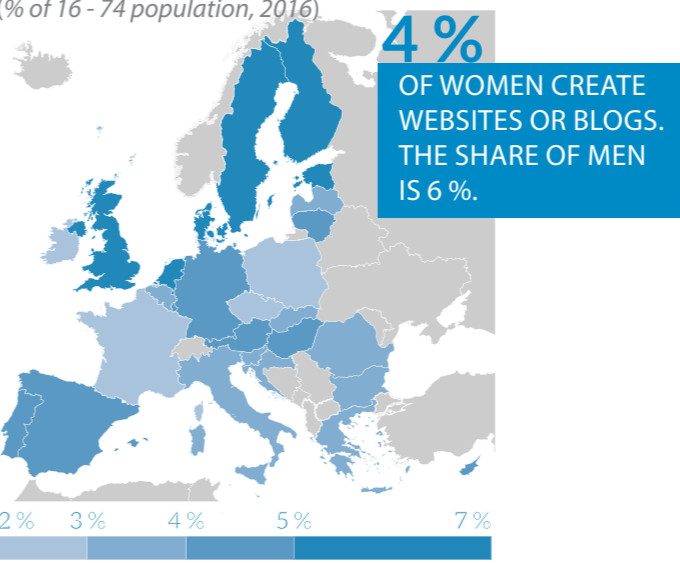
Actvities conducted on the internet
Purchasing goods and services
(% of 16 - 74 population)

Male · Female · 50 % · 46 % · 25 % · 20 %
2007 — 2017

78% 69% 66% 66% 65% 59% 54% 48% 48% 47% 46% 46% 45% 42% 38% 36% 35% 35% 33% 31% 25% 23% 22% 20% 16% 12% 11%

UK DK DE NL SE LU FI FR EE AT BE EU28 IE SK MT ES SI CZ LV PL EL HU CY PT IT BG RO

Reading online news, newspapers or magazines
(% of 16 - 74 population)

90 % 80 % 70 % 60 % 50 % 40 % 30 %

Male · Female · 64 % · 58 %

FI LU DK SE CZ LT NL LV MT HU UK CY ES DE SK PL EU28 SI EL AT HR BE IE FR PT BG RO IT
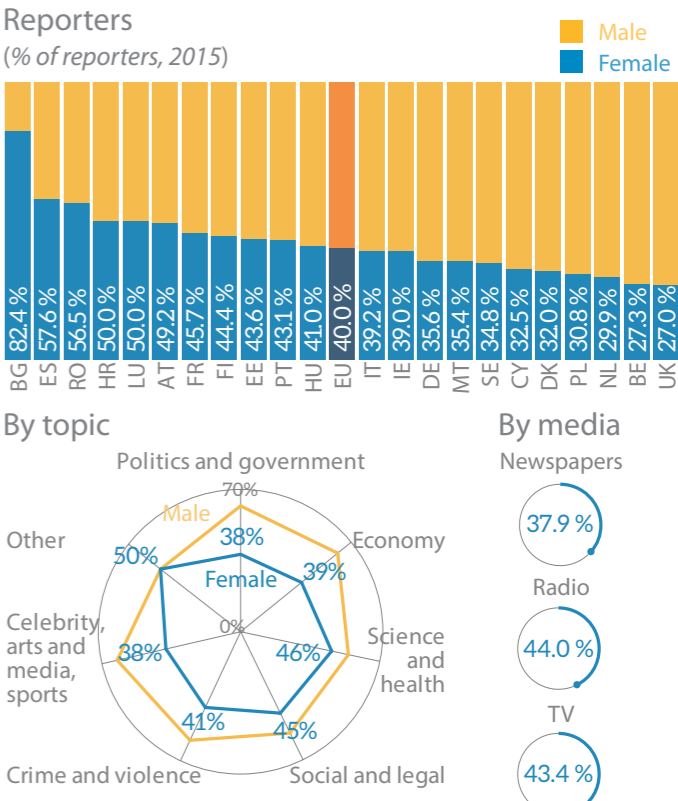
While more women than men shop online in ten Member States, there is only one EU country where more women than men read news online.

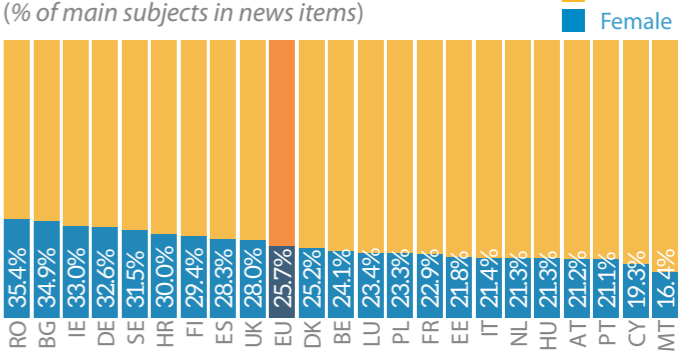Male 64 % · 53 % · Female · 44 % · 58 %
2013 — 2017

Creating websites or blogs
(% of 16 - 74 population, 2016)

4 % OF WOMEN CREATE WEBSITES OR BLOGS. THE SHARE OF MEN IS 6 %.

2 % 3 % 4 % 5 % 7 %

Women shaping the news and in the news
Reporters
(% of reporters, 2015)

Male (orange) · Female (blue)

BG 82.4 % · ES 57.6 % · RO 56.5 % · HR 50.0 % · SI 50.0 % · AT 49.2 % · FR 45.7 % · LV 44.4 % · EE 43.6 % · PT 43.1 % · HU 41.0 % · EU 40.0 % · IT 39.2 % · IE 39.0 % · DE 35.6 % · MT 35.4 % · SE 34.8 % · CY 32.5 % · DK 32.0 % · PL 30.8 % · NL 29.9 % · BE 27.3 % · UK 27.0 %

By topic

Male · Female

Politics and government 70% · 38% · 50% · Economy 39% · Science and health 46% · Social and legal 45% · Crime and violence 41% · Celebrity, arts and media, sports 38% · Other 50% · 0%

By media

Newspapers 37.9 %
Radio 44.0 %
TV 43.4 %

People in the news
(% of main subjects in news items)

Male · Female

RO 35.4% · BG 34.9% · IE 33.0% · DE 32.6% · SE 31.5% · HR 30.0% · FI 29.4% · ES 28.3% · EU 25.7% · DK 25.2% · BE 24.1% · LV 23.4% · PL 23.4% · FR 22.9% · EE 21.8% · IT 21.4% · NL 21.3% · HU 21.3% · AT 21.2% · CY 21.1% · PT 19.3% · MT 16.4%
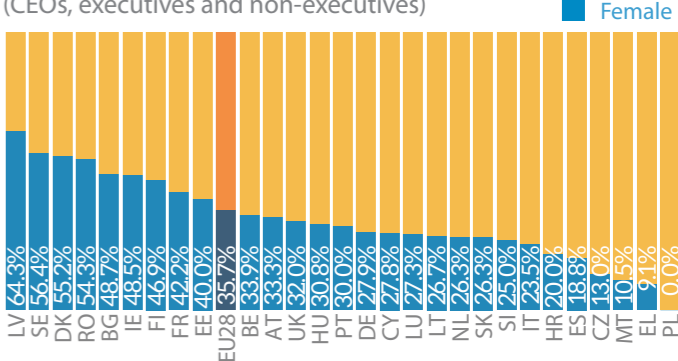
Women news reporters, in the 22 Member States surveyed, are on average a minority (40 %), and represent a majority in only three EU countries. Women are under-represented in the most prestigious categories of news reporting, such as economics (39 %) and politics (38 %). In news coverage, women appear as subjects in one in four news items (23.37%).

Public broadcasters
(CEOs, executives and non-executives)

Male · Female

LV 64.3% · SE 56.4% · RO 55.2% · BG 54.3% · FI 48.7% · FR 48.5% · IE 46.9% · FI 47.2% · EE 40.0% · EU28 35.7% · BE 33.9% · AT 33.3% · UK 32.0% · DK 30.8% · CY 30.0% · LT 27.8% · IT 27.7% · LU 26.3% · SK 26.3% · SI 25.0% · NL 23.5% · HR 21.2% · ES 18.8% · CZ 13.6% · MT 10.5% · EL 9.1% · PL 0.0%

Data in this paper refer to the year 2017, unless otherwise stated.

Women in movies

Characters
(% of characters)

Female (blue) / **Male** (yellow)

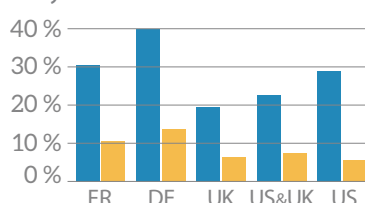|	
FR	29 %
DE	35 %
UK	38 %
US & UK	24 %
US	29 %
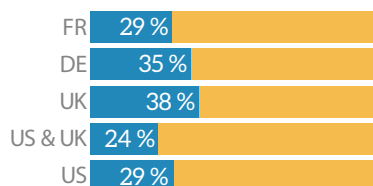
Women behind the camera
(% of total directors, writers and producers)

Directors / Writers / Producers
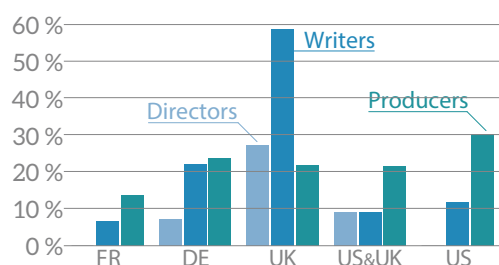
Sexualisation of characters
(% of characters)

Sexy attire

FR DE UK US&UK US

Some nudity

FR DE UK US&UK US
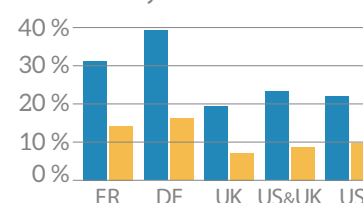
In all the markets surveyed, women are under-represented in front of and behind the camera. Only in the UK sample were there more female than male writers. Women are also far more sexualised than men.

Top critics on Rotten Tomatoes
(% of top critics, 2016)

27 %
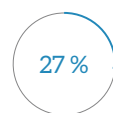
Rotten Tomatoes is a US film and TV review aggregation website. 'Top critics' on the website are those critics who are the most significant contributors to the field. Women comprise only 27 % of top critics, which is still an improvement from 22 % in 2013.

Definitions:

Employed ICT specialists: employed persons are persons aged 15 and over who performed work, even for just one hour per week, for pay, profit or family gain, or were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent.

Digital skills: Eurostat's digital skills indicator is a composite indicator measuring activities done by individuals aged 16-74 related to internet or software use. The activities are divided into four competence domains: *Information skills* (copying and saving files and folders, obtaining information from the internet); *Communication skills* (sending/receiving emails, participating in social networks, telephoning/video calls over the internet); *Problem-solving skills* (transferring files between computers, installing software, buying or selling online, internet banking); *Software skills* (using word-processing or spreadsheet software, editing photos or video, creating presentations, tables and charts, or writing code in programming languages). For each domain, an individual can have basic skills (being able to perform one activity) or above basic skills (being able to perform more than one activity). Individuals with 'above basic' skills in all 4 domains have 'above basic' digital skills overall, whilst those with 'at least basic' skills in all 4 domains have 'basic' digital skills overall.

Use of mobile devices to access the internet: the indicators refer to individuals using a portable computer or a handheld device to access the internet away from home or work.

Security concerns: security concerns means activities not done via internet for security reasons, which have prevented individuals from providing personal information to online communities for social or professional networking.

Cyber harassment: cyber harassment refers to women's experiences of online forms of sexual harassment, such as unwanted sexually explicit emails or text messages, or inappropriate advances on social media or in internet chat rooms. The data for this graph come from the 2014 EU-wide survey on violence against women published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). The chart shows the percentage of women who answered 'yes' when asked if they had experienced cyber harassment since the age of 15.

Purchasing goods and services: Purchase of goods and services refers to internet purchases by individuals in the last 3 months prior to the survey.

Women shaping the news and in the news: the data come from the most recent 'Global Media Monitoring Project Report (2015)'. The report presents gender data on traditional media (newspaper, radio, television) from 114 countries and data on online news media (internet and Twitter). It covers 22 EU Member States. The EU countries not included in the report are the Czech Republic, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Public broadcasters: the data come from the Gender Statistics database compiled by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), which contains national, EU-level and wider European statistics and aims to provide statistical evidence to support and complement the European Commission's Strategy on Gender Equality. CEOs refers to chief executive officer or equivalent position; executives to all executive members (if any) of the highest decision-making body and all members of the highest executive committee/board with responsibility for day-to-day management of the organisation; non-executives to non-executive directors in the highest decision-making body and in the highest executive committee/board (if any) in each organisation. Employee representatives participating in the highest decision-making body are included in the count of non-executive members.

Women in movies: the data on women in films come from a study that analysed gender roles in popular films in the 10 most profitable countries according to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). The infographic presents the data collected on the 10 films produced and most popular in the EU countries in the sample (Germany, France, UK), 10 most popular US/UK co-productions and 10 most popular US productions internationally. Films had to be released between 1 January 2010 and 1 May 2013 and appropriate for audiences 12-16 years of age or younger. 'Sexy attire' refers to sexually revealing clothing (i.e. tight, alluring, revealing apparel). 'Some nudity' means part or full exposure from mid-chest to high upper-thigh region.

Country codes: Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Croatia (HR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE), United Kingdom (UK).

Data sources: Population, Employed ICT specialists, Digital skills (basic or above basic), Daily computer usage, Use of mobile device to access the internet, Women that never used internet, Security concern, Purchasing goods and services, Reading online news, newspapers or magazines and Creating websites or blogs are from Eurostat. Cyber harassment from European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). Women in the news from Global Media Monitoring Project. Public broadcasters from European Institue for Gender Equality. Women in the movies comes from Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media. Top critics on Rotten Tomatoes comes from a 2016 report 'Thumbs Down 2016: Top Film Critics and Gender' by San Diego State University.