

APA Annotated Bibliography (Haddad)

Gender and Online Communication 1

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Patterns of Gender-Related Differences in
Online Communication: An Annotated Bibliography
Bruckman, A. S. (1993). Gender swapping on the Internet.
Proceedings of INET '93. Retrieved from <http://www.cc.gatech.edu/elc/papers/bruckman/gender-swapping-bruckman.pdf>

In this brief analysis, Bruckman investigates the perceptions of males and females in electronic environments. She argues that females (or those posing as females) receive an inordinate amount of unwanted sexual attention and offers of assistance from males. She also suggests that females (and sexually unthreatening males) are welcomed more willingly than dominant males into virtual communities. She concludes that behavior in electronic forums is an exaggerated reflection of gender stereotypes in real-life communication. The article is interesting and accessible, but it is quite old, and it relies almost entirely on quotations from four anonymous forum participants.

Crowston, C., & Kammerer, E. (1998). Communicative style and gender differences in computer-mediated communications. In B. Ebo (Ed.), *Cyberghetto or cybertopia? Race, class, and gender on the Internet* (pp. 185-203). Westport, CT: Praeger.

This brief study examines how the dominant

In APA style, each entry begins at the left margin; subsequent lines indent 1/2".

The annotation begins on a new line and is indented 1/2".

Summary is followed by a short evaluation of the source that notes its age and questionable research technique.

Marginal annotations indicate **APA-style formatting** and **effective writing**.

Source: Diana Hacker (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008).

This paper follows the style guidelines in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed. (2010).

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communication style (masculine versus feminine) of an online discussion group affects men's and women's desire to participate. The findings, while limited, provide evidence that in fact *both* women and men were less interested in joining forums that were dominated by masculine-style language. These findings seem to contradict the pronounced gender inequality found in the other sources in this bibliography.

Haddad interprets the authors' findings in relation to other sources in the bibliography.

Herring, S. C. (2003). Gender and power in on-line communication. In J. Holmes & M. Meyerhoff (Eds.), *The handbook of language and gender* (pp. 202-228). Oxford, England: Blackwell.

Annotations are roughly three to seven sentences long.

Herring investigates empowerment opportunities for women online. She points out that, although more than half of Web users in the United States are women, men continue to dominate technical roles such as network administrators, programmers, and Web masters. Even in anonymous online settings, males tend to dominate discussions. And online "anonymity," argues Herring, may not really be possible: Writing style and content give off cues about gender.

A quotation from the author of the source captures the essay's main point.

Herring concludes that "the Internet provides opportunities for both male and female users, but does not appear to alter societal gender stereotypes, nor has it (yet) redistributed power at a fundamental level" (p. 219). The essay is well written and well researched, and it includes a long list of useful references.

Herring, S. C. (1994, June 27). *Gender differences in computer-mediated communication: Bringing familiar baggage to the*

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new frontier. Address at the annual convention of the American Library Association, Miami, FL. Retrieved from <http://www.cpsr.org/cpsr/gender/herring.txt>

Herring asserts that men and women have different Internet posting styles and that the difference typically results in online environments that are inhospitable toward women. Herring uses mainly personal experience and her own survey as evidence for her theories. This source is somewhat narrowly focused on the issues of Netiquette and flaming, but the topic is deeply analyzed, and the author is careful to back up her claims with supporting evidence.

Haddad includes both positive and negative comments about the source.

Jaffe, J. M., Lee, Y., Huang, L., & Oshagan, H. (1999). Gender identification, interdependence, and pseudonyms in CMC: Language patterns in an electronic conference. *The Information Society*, 15. Retrieved from <http://www.indiana.edu/~tisj/>

This study examines the male and female communication patterns in two CMC (computer-mediated communication) environments: one that used real names and one that used pseudonyms. The authors found that women are more likely than men to disguise their gender when given the opportunity and to display patterns of “social interdependence” (such as self-references and references to previous posts) in their language (p. 221). In addition, when using pseudonyms, men are more likely to show social interdependence than they are in real-name groups. This excellent source is fairly recent, documents a scientific study, and includes many references.

Double-spacing is used throughout, with no extra space between entries and no extra space between entries and their annotations.

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The writer found additional information about the source (the genders of the authors) by conducting an online search.

The composition of the team of authors—two males and two females—suggests they were seeking gender balance among themselves to avoid bias.

Savicki, V., & Kelley, M. (2000). Computer mediated communication: Gender and group composition. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 3, 817-826.

The goal of this study was to examine rigorously the question of whether men and women communicate differently online. The authors found context variables such as gender composition, task type, and expectations of group etiquette to be major factors in shaping online communication styles. The communication patterns that arise in female-only discussion groups, for example, are quite different from those in male-only groups. And differences between both female and male communication styles are far less pronounced in mixed-gender groups. The authors are clear and thorough in documenting their carefully planned and executed experiments.

Savicki, V., Lingenfelter, D., & Kelley, M. (1996). Gender language style and group composition in Internet discussion groups. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 2(3). Retrieved from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/>

URL for the journal's home page is provided for an online source.

The authors examined the effects of gender composition on group communications online. After defining “masculine” and “feminine” communication styles, the authors find evidence—with some cautions—for their theories that (1) the higher the proportion of males in the group, the more

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masculine the communication style, and (2) the higher the proportion of females in the group, the more feminine the communication style. However, the authors did not study any groups that had a majority of women, and in some cases groups had a higher number of unknown gender participants than of women. The underrepresentation of women, along with the study's age, diminishes this source's credibility.

Soukup, C. (1999). The gendered interactional patterns of computer-mediated chatrooms: A critical ethnographic study. *The Information Society*, 15, 169-176. doi:10.1080/019722499128475

The author participated in two chatrooms (a sports forum and a "female-based" forum) for eight months and observed discourse styles. He focused not on the "physiological sex" of participants but on their "gendered discourse"—the feminine versus masculine quality of their language and interactions. From his observations and examples of online chatting, the author found "stereotypical and traditional" patterns: In both forums, masculine styles of discourse ("aggressive, argumentative, and power oriented") dominated the feminine discourse (based on "cooperation, emotionality, and relationship building"). In particular, the female forum was dominated by masculine discourse when participants with male screen names or personas entered the space. Although intriguing, the findings of this small-scale, uncontrolled study are not definitive.

If an online source has a DOI (digital object identifier), no URL is given.

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Thomson, R., & Murachver, T. (2001). Predicting gender from electronic discourse. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 40*, 193-208. Retrieved from <http://www.bpsjournals.co.uk/journals/bjosp/>

In three experiments, the authors tested their assumptions about male and female communication in online settings. They found that, as with face-to-face communication, men and women have identifiable differences in their online language style. They note that the individual differences are small but that, when they are taken as a whole, clear male/female patterns emerge. They also note that humans are very sensitive to minor variables in language style and can make accurate predictions as to whether an anonymous communication was written by a male or a female. This report uses dense, scientific language, but it provides strong evidence to support the theory that there is a real, identifiable gender difference in online communication.

Witmer, D. F., & Katzman, S. L. (1997). On-line smiles: Does gender make a difference in the use of graphic accents? *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 2*(4). Retrieved from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/>

The authors began with three hypotheses about online communication: that women use more emoticons than men, that men use more challenging language than women, and that men flame more often than women do. Only the first was supported by evidence from more than 2,500 e-mail messages. As for why their other hypotheses were not supported, the

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authors speculate that women may be more likely to use male communication styles online than in person and that the women in this study, being mostly in technology and academia, are not representative of all women. This article does not elaborate on the methodology or results of the experiment, so the findings seem less credible than those of other studies.