The ‘First Lady’ of computing

Over 100 years before the first computer was built, Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace, wrote the first algorithm intended to be processed by a machine. As such, she is often considered the world’s first computer programmer.

While her peers focused on the possibility of analytical engines to simply ‘number-crunh’ she predicted as early as 1842 that such machines might be used to compose complex music, produce graphics, and serve both practical and scientific uses. A woman truly ahead of her time!

Unfortunately, her ground-breaking contribution to the field of ICT, is not reflected by the level of participation of contemporary women in ICT.

Current participation of women

Despite the rapid growth in ICT jobs in recent years, the percentage of women employed in these roles has remained very low. This trend is currently reflected across ITS, as only 20% of our workforce is female. Although this percentage is in line with other Australian organisations of similar size, I am keen to facilitate the entry, retention and progression for women working in ICT.

New network for RMIT female staff

In order to support women in the ICT workforce, ITS has becoming a corporate member of the Victorian ICT for Women Network. This industry-driven body represents government, corporations and vendors to ‘invest in action’ and encourages women to pursue ICT careers.

The Network is also a critical link between government, business, the education sector as well as other industry associations to collaborate on, and influence, the direction of ICT in Victoria.

It is strategically important that we reinforce our status as an Employer of Choice for Women (as determined by EOWA – Equal Opportunity for Women in the workplace Agency). This prestigious citation publicly acknowledges RMIT’s efforts in the area of equal opportunity for women, and contributes to our overall position in a competitive marketplace.

Network membership benefits

As a corporate member of the Victorian ICT for Women Network, all continuing, fixed term or casual female staff working in ICT related roles are automatically eligible to:

- attend personal and professional networking events
- participate in various workshops and seminars at member prices
- access mentoring programs
- access a range of resources to improve career opportunities and knowledge base.

The future

Although we have a long way to go, I look forward to working with the Network to raise the profile of women in ICT across RMIT.

I also encourage all eligible staff to visit the Network’s website at: www.vicictforwomen.com.au and learn more about the benefits and opportunities offered by our membership.

Queries?

If you have any queries about the network or suggestions for improving the role women play in ICT, please contact Mandy Jones, Personal Assistant to the Executive Director (mandy.jones@rmit.edu.au).