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OPINION

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Grrls Byte Back

With a variety of sites, women are making the World Wide Web their own

It's no hidden fact that computers and the Internet have traditionally been, and still are to an extent, dominated by men. The rise of the Web and Internet culture has made a way for women to speak out like never before.

There are several websites now devoted to women, but these are no sissy, feel-good sites. These are screaming sites that seamlessly blend feminism with humor, scathing wit and a little bit of patriarchy bashing. One of my favorites is the Heartless Bitches International website at <http://www.heartless-bitches.com>, Bitch being an acronym that stands for "Being In Total Control, Honey." It's a graphic-intensive site

complete with frames and tons of links to other pages and funny stuff.

Their icon is a red heart with an ax embedded in the center, and one of the icon "buttons" is animated with the ax cheerily hacking away. One of the linked pages is a list of things that annoy. One of my

favorites is: "Any writer who refers to an intelligent, well educated, powerful, take-charge female in a position deserving of respect as 'feisty,' 'perky,' 'zippy' or any other term best applied to a little yappy mutt with a bow in its hair."

Another site, less-subtly titled than the former, is the All Men Must Die website. This was done by a girl in England who just got dumped by her boyfriend and decided to blow off some steam at the other gender. It has received a lot of attention by Web pulse-takers and is replete with stinging diatribes and a form that invites men to "Beg Like a Dog" to be spared their lives. And there are a lot of guys begging out there.

What makes these sites cool is that they exist. Women are the constant brunt of sexist jokes, put-

downs, stereotypes and other cultural crap. Basically, what it boils down to is that women can finally speak out on the Web. The Internet is an actual place where you can say, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me."

In other places, women are making their mark. If you are at all familiar with the testosterone-plastered, blood and gore that are the first-person, fighting computer games "Doom," "Duke Nukem"

and "Quake," then you are probably familiar with their cult-like following and their cult-like, or should I say, clan-like players.

These online games can be played individually or as a group with people 1,000 miles away. "Quake" has a system of clans who play against each other. One of the newest is the PMS Clan, or Psycho Man Slayers. They say that initially they got a lot of obnoxious flack

from their male competitors, even having the guys they are playing against stop the game to ask, "What do you look like? Are you cute?"

The group of eight women let these things roll off their back as they crush the competition. You can see their website at <http://www.under-ramp.com/~pms> and be greeted with the welcoming quote, "Under every floral print dress lies a lady wearing black garters, carrying a big f-king gun!"

The surge of women on the Net parallels what computer companies and game designers are experiencing — more women. Due to the overwhelming success of Mattel's interactive CD-ROM Barbie Fashion Designer, as reported in *Wired* magazine, many developers are trying to tap in to the female market. Unfortunately, they can't get away from giving their programs overtly feminine names. While that works for some people, I think that they will have little success if they market them like tampons: "It's a breath of spring air on your girly computer."

The world of computers and the Internet is an area where I think we will see women succeeding. It is a truly unique area in that brains are worshiped over brawn. And, as technology becomes overwhelmingly a part of our daily lives, women will be able to assert a lot of power and be the unabashed movers and shakers of the very near future.

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OPINION



Amanda Erickson



Top 10

Top 10 signs it's time to get out of your cult

-10-

You notice the words "mass suicide" written in black marker on the events calendar.

-9-

Social highlight of the week is "Monday Night with the Moonies."

-8-

Your dress code includes black Nikes.

-7-

You get a 10 percent "suicidal cult discount" at participating stores.

-6-

Your leader preaches abstinence, but all the female members seem to sleep in his room.

-5-

Despite the fact that you are a "pacifist" group, you have an alarming amount of AK-47s in the basement.

-4-

When you mention your group in public, people say "That crazy cult?!" and run away.

-3-

You have to pack your suitcases every night before sleeping.

-2-

In every speech, your leader slips and declares, "We're all going to die!"

-1-

One word: castration

Women on the Web

FOXY MAGAZINE

<http://www.tumyeto.com/tydu/foxy>
Lots of tongue-in-cheek articles including a "mega-index of dumb chick stuff."

gURL

<http://www.itp.tsoa.nyu.edu/~gURL>:
A simple online magazine that has fun graphics (a la Maurice Sendak) and is great for the older high school or young college girl.

CyberGrrl

<http://www.cybergrrl.com>: Off-kilter and amusing; it's the "premier place for nice Jewish goils." It even has a matchmaking service called Cyber Yenta.

BRILLO

<http://www.virago-net.com/brillo>: Another online mag which features pop culture graphics and articles ranging from Ebonics to privacy to AIDS. A lot of useful information here.

CUPCAKE

<http://www.cupcake.com>: This is actually done by a guy but it's pretty funny and you can read about how he duped the media royally into thinking he was a girl. Obvious womb-envy here.

Here's pages of other chick-related links:
<http://www.dogpatch.org/women.html>,
<http://www.webgrrls.com/directory.html>,
<http://home.dmv.com/~olcs/www.html>

LETTERS

Racism not dead

I am writing in response to the letter submitted by Ed Madrid (*ODE*, March 17). I am both saddened and deeply frustrated by the tone Mr. Madrid chooses to adopt. Mostly, I am appalled by his assertions of the "utter irrelevancy" of "race issues" and by his portrayal of "those few outraged individuals" who have nothing better to do than "creatively invent instances of racism" either on this campus, in this state or in this nation.

I find myself actually agreeing with Mr. Madrid that instances of racial harmony do exist on this campus (as they do in the larger

society). I even agree with his concerns that focusing only on the negative is not only counterproductive but unfair to the hard work so many of us (of all colors) have put in to unlearn our "isms" (racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, etc.) and look past these smoke screens to acknowledge our common humanity.

But I must stress that it is even more dangerous to assert that race has reached a point of irrelevancy as well as callous to dismiss instances of racism either on this campus or in the larger society as "invented." I am reminded here of the young black couple who were gunned down by ex-paratrooper and

self-professed skinhead James Burmeister in North Carolina, the ridiculous uproar that developed after a black actor was cast in the role of Jesus in the annual Passion play in Union City, New Jersey, my own experiences recently while driving along the Beltline Highway and in IHOP and yes, the racial slurs targeting UCLA basketball players. In short, racism is not dead.

Speaking directly to Mr. Madrid, I ask what is so threatening to you to believe that other people on this campus experience pain based on their perceived racial differences? I invite you to take one of my classes (with an open mind to being exposed to

ideas/experiences that may not sit well with you since they clash with your belief that incidents of racism are "creatively invented").

You have truly lived a blessed life as a Filipino-American if you have not been subjected to racial taunting, hate stares or discrimination. I only wish the same could be said for all people of color. I challenge you to systematically study the significance of racial dynamics in this society, both past and present, before summarily dismissing the existence of racism.

Mia Tuan
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