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The Construction of Gender Binary: An Technological Analysis Queering the Male/Female Dichotomy

Feminist Technology Studies (FTS) have a history of exploring how technology discriminates against women. Arguing that due to their bodily differences the technology harms participation e.g. in cockpits (Weber, 1997), that certain actions for women are restraint e.g. repairing women's shavers (van Oost, 1999) and that in general, the norm of technology is one which is male and hence discriminates against women (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003). Although I admire the work done by these scholars, I will demonstrate it creates a false dichotomy between men and women as two separate entities. There are more genders, more sexes than male/female and man and woman (Fausto-Sterling, 1993). Exploratory research is therefore needed to understand if and how gender identity is mediated through different socio-technical systems and artefacts to understand how daily interactions alter our notions of gender identity. I will demonstrate that we surround ourselves daily with technologies that mediate our understanding of gender. If we use a public toilet we are often forced to make a binary division; entering the men's or women's toilet. This does not only impact non-binary individuals, but it also impacts the way society understands gender. Hence, it knows both an ontological as an epistemological impact. It is important to investigate the role of these technologies to understand gender identity, to know how it impacts gender dichotomy and how we can overcome this too narrow classification of gender/sex towards a post-gender technological world.