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“For every woman rising to prominence, there is another opting out of her career in IT. Encouraging women to embrace technology as a life-long career is fast becoming an imperative for establishing the kinds of adaptive, collaborative, and versatile enterprises that will thrive in a fast-paced global economy.”
—InfoWorld SPECIAL REPORT, June 27, 2007

Reconfiguring the Firewall

Recruiting Women to Information Technology across Cultures and Continents

Edited by Carol J. Burger, Elizabeth G. Creamer, and Peggy S. Meszaros



The recent research contained in this collection addresses the global challenge of recruiting girls and women into majors and careers in information technology. The studies are both illuminating and prescriptive for designing and implementing intervention programs, including:

- Top three reasons why women stay in IT, and why women leave IT
- What women and men state are the most important qualities of a career
- Five characteristics of women interested in a computer-related career
- How to change the high school culture to promote interest in IT Careers among high-achieving girls
- Which cultural and environmental conditions allow women to fit very well into IT

This volume is an essential tool for college faculty and advisors, programs designed to promote the success of women in science and engineering, those who fund academic researchers, K–12 educators, IT industry professionals, and industry leaders committed to a diverse workforce.

“Women represent 46.6% of the US workforce, only about 35% of the US IT workforce is female. More disturbingly, women hold only 10% of the top US IT positions, and fewer women are rising up the IT leadership ladder than in the past . . . To fill the gap in IT workers, women must consider IT as a viable career path. What is required to recruit women into IT careers in any significant numbers? Our purpose is to uncover the factors that influence females’ interest and choice of IT as a career field, and how this varies across race and culture.”

—from the Introduction, “Sizing up the Information Technology Firewall”

About the Editors

Carol J. Burger, Associate Professor, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Virginia Tech, USA. She is the coordinator for the Science and Gender Equity Program at Virginia Tech. She is the founder and editor of the *Journal of Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering*, now in its 10th year of publication. She served as Senior Program Director, Program for Women and Girls, National Science Foundation in 1996. She has published over 50 immunology and SET equity research papers, book chapters, and monographs, and she is the co-investigator on several NSF-funded projects.

Elizabeth G. Creamer, Professor, Educational Policy and Leadership, Virginia Tech, USA. Dr. Creamer has expertise in the areas of qualitative research methodology, most specifically case study, grounded in teaching graduate courses and employing qualitative research methodologies in various settings. She is co-PI on several NSF funding projects related to women’s interest and choice in careers in information technology. Creamer has an extensive publication record, including three authored and co-authored books and 45 refereed journal articles and book chapters.

Peggy S. Meszaros, William E. Lavery Professor of Human Development and Director, Center for Information Technology Impacts on Children, Youth and Families, Virginia Tech, USA. She has extensive teaching, research, and administrative experience including middle school and high school teaching of science and has been a faculty member and administrator for 28 years at private and public higher education research institutions. She has published over 80 scholarly articles and book chapters on topics such as academic benchmarking, mother and daughter communication, adolescent decision-making, and technology applications including e-health, cell phone use, and parent education.

Top researchers and IT professionals who contributed to this collection include:

William Aspray	M. Bernardine Dias	Soyoung Lee	Lesley H. Parker
Bettina Bair	Carol Frieze	Paula G. Leventman	Paula Rayman
Sarah Berenson	Orit Hazzan	Holly Lord	Mladen Vouk
Lenore Blum	Ann Howe	Miranda Marcus	Lesley Warner
Carol J. Burger	Jane Butler Kahle	Cecille Marsh	Laurie Williams
Elizabeth G. Creamer	Sarah Kuhn	Peggy S. Meszaros	Judith Wooller
J. McGrath Cohoon	Anne Laughlin	Joan Michael	

Praise for Reconfiguring the Firewall

“A must read for anyone interested in encouraging girls and women in the world of IT. Full of information and inspiration—this volume is a treasure.”

—**Londa Schiebinger, author of *Has Feminism Changed Science?*,
Director of the Clayman Institute for Gender Research, Stanford University**

“*Reconfiguring the Firewall* is a thoughtful and thorough contribution to the literature on the issues of women in IT in the developed world.”

—**Claudia Morrell, Executive Director, Center for Women and Information
Technology, University of Maryland Baltimore County**

“This book is jammed with information and insight. The editors and contributors have truly raised the level of discussion about how to address the under-representation of women and people of color in IT—and in science and engineering fields in general.”

—**Dr. Mary Wyer, Psychology and Women’s & Gender Studies,
Project Director, WGS WISE Curriculum Project, NC State University**

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