

## Are IT women discriminated against?

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**Most female IT pros feel they've been hit by sexism, but many of their male counterparts disagree.**



Ninety per cent of surveyed female IT professionals think the industry is biased against them, according to a recent poll by **InterQuest**, an IT recruitment company.

The study, which surveyed IT professionals of both sexes, found that one-third of the women experienced sexism at work, but 70 per cent of the men didn't think discrimination was an issue.

These results were very shocking to Emma Gray, director at InterQuest. She said she wasn't so much surprised by the amount of men who didn't think discrimination was a problem, but she was "really surprised by the results, particularly the number of women who felt there had been some sort of bias against them."

This challenge for women in the IT industry is not a new issue. In a survey conducted last year by Intellect, **women in technology didn't feel they were being paid fairly or equally to their male counterparts**. Female IT professionals have also found it **difficult to advance in their careers**.

Gray said she attributes the issues to fewer women entering the industry.

"Women find themselves working with men on projects and at work, and that dynamic of men and constantly being around men can create a feeling of isolation," she said. Because there are fewer women in the industry, fewer women consider entering it, and the cycle continues.

She said another concern for women considering IT is the time. "IT has a reputation of having strict deadlines, hard work, and long hours," Gray said. "And a lot of women find it harder for them to be constantly committed to their jobs when they have children and a family."

Gray also said a lot of women just don't know what the IT industry can offer them.

"It's just not on a lot of women's radar. But once they've been in the workplace for a while and realize what the IT department is all about, they start to see what it can offer them," she said.

Despite these issues for women in IT, 75 per cent of female IT professionals said they chose a career in technology because they feel their strengths and skills are well suited to the industry.

"Women are, by nature, great multi-taskers," Gray said. "They also have a great need to get the project done on time and done correctly, and are very attuned to the needs of the company and listen well to what the business actually wants and needs."

Gray said women do especially well in positions such as **project management**, business analysis, and testing.

In order to inspire more women to enter the IT industry, Gray said, the women who are successful need to be more public.