

November 25, 2018

Dear friends and colleagues,

The #MeToo movement is bringing ever-increasing awareness of the challenges facing women in STEM.

My rather unique life-experiences have provided me with novel perspectives on this issue. I've described some resulting insights in an invited-essay in a Special Issue of *IEEE Computer Magazine* on "[Winning and Losing in IT](https://www.computer.org/csdl/mags/co/2018/10/mco2018100066.pdf)":

Lynn Conway, "The Disappeared: Beyond Winning and Losing", *Computer*, Vol: 51, Issue: 10, Oct. 2018, pp. 66-73.*
<https://www.computer.org/csdl/mags/co/2018/10/mco2018100066.pdf>

Abstract: When "others" such as women and people of color make innovative contributions in STEM, they often "disappear" from later history and their contributions ascribed to people who are remembered. Sometimes the contributions are lost altogether, or never come to fruition due to discouragement. This is seldom deliberately caused; it is the accumulation of advantage by those expected to innovate. "Others" are not expected to innovate and lose advantage, reinforcing expectations. In this paper we chronicle an example disappearance and introduce the "Conway Effect," an extension of sociologist Robert Merton's Matthew Effect and historian Margaret Rossiter's Matilda Effect, to elucidate the disappearance process.

I'm hoping my essay, along with others in the [Special Issue](#) of *Computer*, widens the scope of the dialogue on this vital topic and encourages others to step forward and contribute their own unique perspectives.

Your reactions and comments would be greatly appreciated.

With best wishes,

Lynn

Lynn Conway
Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Emerita
2717 Beyster Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2121
conway@umich.edu
<http://www.lynnconway.com>
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/lynnconway>
<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/BioSketch2018.pdf>

Related Presentation:

L. Conway, "An Invisible Woman: The Inside Story Behind the Micro-electronic Computing Revolution in Silicon Valley," Keynote Address, #UNIT 2017: *The Global LGBTI Tech & Science Conference*, Berlin, Germany, May 6, 2017.
http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/Memoirs/Talks/UNIT_2017/Inside_Story_Talk.pptx
http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/Memoirs/Talks/UNIT_2017/Inside_Story_Talk.pdf

***Note re Links:** Unfortunately, the essay's embedded links didn't pass-through production and into the published article. Therefore, you'll have to cut/paste URLs into your browser in order to access key references. For your convenience, I've attached a PDF of the Reference Section that contains active hyperlinks.