Gender, feminism, and blogging in Egypt

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The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

GENDER, FEMINISM, AND BLOGGING IN EGYPT

Thesis Submitted to
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (JRMC)
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts
by Irene M. Meshreky
BA, AUC, June 2002

(Under the supervision of Dr. Rasha A. Abdulla)

December/2009
GENDER, FEMINISM, AND BLOGGING IN EGYPT

A Thesis Submitted by

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to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (JRMC)

December 2009

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication

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ABSTRACT

Gender, Feminism, and Blogging in Egypt

Irene M. Meshreky

Supervised by Dr. Rasha A. Abdulla

This research is focusing on blogs in Egypt. It aims at finding out how effective blogging is in promoting equality and freedom of expression between men and women. It is trying to provide an overview of whether blogs aim to challenge the prevailing gender assumption of the society trying to achieve more liberating ways for women to exist in the world or not.

The blogging trend is still on the rise, and several researches are assuring that the number of blogs and bloggers will continue to increase. Results found support for these forecasts and showed that women are actively involved in blogging. In addition, previous results in addition to this research’s findings prove that blogs are considered to be a way for bloggers to express themselves, especially for women.
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Chapter One
INTRODUCTION

‘We are creating a world where anyone anywhere may express his or her beliefs, no matter how singular, without fear of being coerced into silence or conformity’

(Barlow 1996 - Founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation)

No one can deny that information and communications technology (ICT) is changing the world around us. In the past few decades, several new media were invented and lots of discussions were revolving around their democratic capabilities. This began with the invention of the radio and many decades later, the emergence of the Internet which drew a lot of attention as one of the most influential inventions of the digital age.

Right now, there is no doubt that the world has entered a new age of information access and news dissemination made available by the Internet. After all, the Internet is an open medium that allows the free flow of information and ideas across the globe, thus empowering freedom of expression and exchanging of information.

Research on blogs in the Arab world is scarce as blogging is considered a relatively new phenomenon to the Arab public. Examining the existing literature on the Internet in general and blogging in specific, one notices that it has been written from a Western point of view by Western analysts and researches where blogging has a different purpose since the right to freedom of expression for everyone is granted and enjoyed by citizens, unlike the situation in the Arab world. Blogging has become a fundamental
communication strategy for many aggravated Arabs as it became a challenging tool for Arab leaders.

Blogs allowed bloggers to discuss several key issues related to democracy since bloggers have the chance to evaluate and criticize state information. This is why in general most blogs in the Middle East – that are considered intellectually sheltered countries- are devoted to politics. Blogs in the Middle East are almost the sole “public forum” where people can express their viewpoints and experience their freedom of expression to an extent in an attempt to endorse and encourage democratization. This research is trying to examine the role of blogs in relation to gender inequality in the Arab society focusing on Egypt.

Many people have their own definition of feminism; Nathalie Jolly argues that students constantly portray blogs as new platforms where feminist voices can increase knowledge and understanding. Blogs can also speak in opposition to the missing representations of women in other media. Jolly stated that blogging for women allow new instructive and educational ways of learning about feminism. The author adds that blogs help in the discussion of information in addition to the fact that it is accessible to most of the people. Jolly has noticed that since blogs started to appear, a large number of women have started to be involved in feminism. Blogs allow silent women who fear in person participation to contribute to the society through blogging with more comfort (Jolly, 2006).
Jolly also believes that “feminism (as a movement, a theory, and a practice) is thriving in the digital age” (Jolly, 2006). Expanding our acquaintance with new technology is crucial; our association with feminism will depend on our aptitude to be part of the new technologies, especially blogs.

This research is focusing on blogs in Egypt. It aims at finding out how effective blogging is in promoting equality and freedom expression between men and women. It is trying to provide an overview on whether blogs aim to challenge the prevailing gender assumption of the society trying to achieve more liberating ways for women to exist in the world or not.

History and Development of blogs

Although blogging may be a fairly recent trend, the concept it is based on is not a new one. Electronic communities existed well in advance of internetworking. The AP wire was similar to a sizable chat room in which “wire fights” and electronic conversations took place. What’s more, Ham radio also had logs called “glogs”, which were personal diaries put together using wearable computers in the early 1980s (Stone, 2002). Surprisingly, “glogs” which are a form of personal diary existed through Ham radios which allowed users who have their own broadcast tool to be able to be connected directly to each other. Glogs are considered to be logs in ham radio allowing individuals to document their journals using portable computers during the early 80s (Stone 2002). Prior to the creation of the World Wide Web, digital communities have several forms of
communications such Usenet (combination between “user” and “network” and it is a form of Internet discussion system), listserv (first electronic mailing list software application), email lists, and message boards (online discussion sites). Blogging, one of the most appealing forms of cyber communities, was the result of an evolution in such forms. Whereas weblogging is a modern concept, most of the jargon related to it has actually originated from these early forms (Kim, 2005).

Usenet, listserv, and message boards have paved the way for the emergence of the appealing form of digital communities: blogging. The 1990s witnessed communication tools such as WebX that enabled its users of following up on certain topics or issues through thread messaging. Diarists who used Internet journals call themselves “escribitionists” and they displayed their diaries on the Internet for everyone to read.

Another popular form of communication was the “finger protocol” which is a protocol for the exchange of user information. It was created to help users get information about a certain person or topic on a specific network.

"Troll" is one example of technical jargon that appeared with Usenet as an early form of digital communities. Herring (2002) defines troll as “a game about identity deception, albeit one that is played without the consent of most of the players. The troll attempts to pass as a legitimate participant, sharing the group’s common interests and concerns; the newsgroup members… attempt to both distinguish real from trolling postings, and… make the offending poster leave the group”. Thus trolls allow users to
post messages during a discussion to provoke other users and to send hostile messages (Zeller, 2005). Bloggers are trying to prevent abusive trolls to minimize harassment over blogs. When discussing the same topic, a “thread” was utilized to refer to messages commenting or responding to the same question or topic. This can also be referred back as “Usenet” and “listserv”.

Xanga, Pitas, Blogger, GreatestJournal, and LiveJournal were among the first tools for hosting weblogs that appeared in the market. Then followed more advanced tools such as bBlog which is a Web publishing and content management system, Nuceleus CMS, a form of blog management software package, and b2evolution which is multi-lingual, multi-user, multi-blog publishing system. All these tools started to gain more popularity as they allowed for hosting group blogs rather than individual ones, and therefore, making it possible for users to remotely edit and create text as they access their weblogs from around the globe.

Also, tools like Common Gateway Interface (CGI) which is a set of protocols by which servers interconnect with external programs and PHP which is an advanced scripting language for website designs, facilitated for some users to build and design their own blogs (Kim, 2005).

In 1997, Jorn Barger introduced the term “weblog” and then Peter Merholz shortened it to “blog” in 1999 when he divided the word into “we blog” on his weblog (Faas, 2005). The verb ‘blog’ was developed to mean editing or posting to weblogs (The
University of British Columbia). Evan Williams and Meg Hourihan popularized the usage of the term when they initiated the first weblog tool which was later acquired by Google in 2004 (Faas, 2005). The terms weblog and its derivates: weblogging and weblogger were added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2003 (The University of British Columbia). In 2004, Merriam-Webster’s American Dictionary announced the word ‘blog’ as the word of the year 2004.

Definition of blogs

Blog is the abbreviation for weblog which is considered one form of “electronic communities” in which blogosphere is referred to as “the totality of weblogs or blog-related websites” (Faas, 2005). It is posting information on a website for millions of people to view.

It is a kind of online journal or newsletter that is updated often and usually it is intended for the general public. The act of updating a blog is called “blogging” and anybody who uses or owns a blog is a “blogger.” When there are a lot of discussions about a specific subject in the blogosphere, it is called “blog swarm or blogstorm.”

Blogs do not require a specific technical background in order to use it; users can automatically post information in an easy manner. In some blogs the user can simply type text in the interface created by the web hosts in order to publish his/her blog. Consequently, blogs found their way among many people with different ages,
backgrounds and education. Blogs are mostly used to post thoughts, comments, and opinions about social, political or any kind of issues depending on the nature of the blog. It can also be a mixture of many types and some people say that “there are as many types of blogs as there are people” (Haq, 2005).

The real beginning however of blogging owes much to Dave Winer, who created servers that enabled users to ping in order to know whether a blog was updated or not. Blogrolling became a widely used blog reading utility that alerts users when new posts have been made to their favorite blogs (Lefever, 2004). Blogs help users to find what they search for in an easy way as the Internet is overwhelmed with sources and sometimes users get lost when trying to find information about specific topics. Blogs were invented to make this process easy, in other words blogs can help users find information about any topic by filtering and providing links with illustrative text to advice the reader what link to click. That is why the whole idea behind blogs is based on sharing content with other participants. Blogging is a method by which the blogger puts information on a website he or she would like to share with the rest of the world. Its far-reaching abilities allow the blog to be accessible from anywhere and at any time.

Therefore, the basic concept of the blog far outdates the term: since the format of the Internet became more user-friendly in the early to mid-nineties, there has been email, chat rooms and most relevantly, interest-oriented message boards. So what, then, makes the blog so much more appealing and perhaps even revolutionary?
Why blogs are different?

Characteristics of blogs

Technically the way a blog works is by sending the information first to a blogging server, then the information is automatically placed into a template customized for the user’s Web site (Miles, 2005). One advantage of a blog is that it is a successful way for small groups to communicate and to keep in touch with each other. It has a special structure where the latest information is posted first. A blog usually reflects the views of its author; it can be written by a group of people or by one person.

“Feedback” or “commenting” and “blogrolls” are the two most common features in blogging. Blogrolls allow users to move from the weblog they are viewing to other links outside the weblog that are relevant to the topics tackled on it (Gardner, 2006). This tool has given rise to “reciprocal linking,” an implicit agreement between bloggers to link to each other to increase access to their weblogs. This feature makes it possible for users to discuss a certain topic of interest through “threads” or “comments”, which eventually help in the formation of blog communities. Moreover, because the structure of blogs is easy and user friendly, they can all be connected and bound together which explains why blogs are becoming very popular and their numbers are increasing as well as their usage.

Blogs have individual benefits such as self awareness, improvement of writing style, and building critical thinking skills. Blood (2002) believes that blogs have spread
because they give the users the opportunity of self publishing as well as contributing
directly to the blog.

Blogs are useful and have many valuable features. They offer information about
specific topics, sometimes reviewing the subject in great detail, also, through their
filtering features, they allow users to find the information they need faster. Blogs also
offer a variety of different view points, which supports and encourages media literacy,
promoting commentary and interpretation of messages, easy access, lack of censorship or
gate keepers and finally they serve as a tool to disseminate any kind of information
(*Association for Progressive Communications, 2009*).

**Blogs vs. Web Pages**

A blog is much simpler than webpages. Blogs are usually a single page. Of course
in each blog there are archives of older comments, but most bloggers are interested in the
main page (*Pichai, 2008*). Blogs are also organized in a sequential order where the most
recent entries are on top and the least recent comments are at the bottom. In addition,
most blogs can be seen by anyone so they are public. Each blog is usually written by a
single author, which makes the writing style consistent.

One difference between blogs and web pages is that blogs are easier in the way
they are developed and maintained. Websites require specific software to be written, links
to be managed, and specific design for each user throughout all pages. In addition
personal homepages or websites are time consuming and require a very high technical background (Miles, 2005). On the other hand blogs use “Content Management System” (CMS) in order to be built, therefore blogs gather and accumulate data within a database that already exists unconnectedly from the webpage and it reissues the whole site into fresh web pages every time a change is made, which makes it easy because everything in a blog is becoming a template that users can change or even redesign (Miles, 2005).

A unique function that has been supported by blogs is the "tracback" which basically means that if someone anywhere wrote something that refers specifically to your blog, then your blog will recognize it and therefore will "know about it" (Long, 2006). Tracback happens invisibly and it is one of the key aspects that made blogs unique as it helps in binding all blogs together.

**Blogs vs. Diaries**

Blogs are different from diaries because diaries are about an individual thought not to be shared with others but the idea behind blogs is that it requires participation of other people through commenting. "It is a writing that binds parts into wholes, as blogs are not only a collection of fragments within one site but also participate in network ecologies" (Miles, 2005). Miles argues that blogs are “networked writing and reading practice” and that the main attribute of a blog is the way it personifies the author.
Blogs vs. Message Boards

For some, blogs and message boards are similar as in both, owners enjoy the opportunity to edit and post messages for other individuals to view. However, the essential difference between blogs and message or bulletin boards is that blogs are exclusively controlled by their owners (LeFever, 2004). A blogger has the autonomous power to post messages that can be viewed by other users who can read them and then decide if they want to comment. On deciding whether to construct a message board or a blog, users often consider the number and kind of users who will be posting messages. Figure 1 illustrates the main differences between blogs and message boards (Social Design for the Web, 2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locus of Control</th>
<th>Weblogs</th>
<th>Message Boards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centralized and personal</td>
<td>Decentralized and group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authoring of New Topics</th>
<th>Centralized; individual or small group drives all new topics</th>
<th>Decentralized; group shares equal responsibility to post new topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intent</th>
<th>Personal accounts, news, reflection</th>
<th>Group input, decision making, collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Comments are extraneous, not required</th>
<th>Replies are required for a discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>RSS, Aggregation, Trackback, Permalinking, Crosslinking, etc are currently in the weblog domain</th>
<th>Message board may integrate new tools, but must have not. This is quickly changing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chronology</th>
<th>Reverse chronological order of topics on front page</th>
<th>Wide variety of topics or discussion organization and presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Connections</th>
<th>Deeper look into one person or small group's thinking</th>
<th>A broader look at a large group's thoughts in group context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pollution control</th>
<th>Can be unparrable or unflame-able by others without loss of primary value</th>
<th>Must be managed closely to deal with spam or flames</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Content Buckets | Weblog topics are all presented on the weblog front page and then archived into categories. | Message board discussions are often presented in multiple places across the online community and archived independently. |

Copyright 2004 Common Craft, LLC
Hewitt was concerned in her book about trust where she is asserting that old types of media have lost credibility of the audiences and that new media like blogs are starting to gain this credibility. Hewitt argues that trust is one of the most important characteristics of blogs and therefore this trust “contributes not only to politics, but also to various kinds of businesses, in terms of management or marketing strategies” (Hewitt, 2005).

**Types and uses of blogs and their impact**

According to Faas, blogs can range from personal diaries to political campaigns. Several types include business, topical, health, research, and educational blogs. In addition, blogs are known to be used in journalism this is why many newspapers design their own blogs so that they have a continuing online conversation with their readers (Yahr, 2008). Usages of blogs are numerous, they can be used in knowledge management and sharing, interactive journalism, communication, self expression, marketing, social development and reform through campaigning, and story telling.

As per Yahr 2008 “top editors are increasingly reaching out to readers via blogs.” Blood argues that blogs are a perfect medium where news can be analyzed and evaluated; this is because blogs allow readers to post comments freely. Berger said that blogs are a new type of journalism that helps journalists to express their opinion freely. This is
because in a blog there are no publishers or editors that can influence the journalist’s opinion.

Therefore, one should not only consider blogging as a new way of communication, but also as a means that goes beyond communication and entertainment trying to help and develop social as well as political areas.

Blood (2002) categorizes weblogs into three main categories: filters, blogs and notebooks. Filters are when the author of a specific blog offers a permanent source of information including up to date news about a specific topic to the reader. Blogs include short entries, more than one per day, and usually bloggers struggle for communication rather than information. Notebook is when people use their blog to post ideas rather than personal events. People who use notebooks usually search for individual stories rather than posting messages day by day.

However some people do post personal events but not in order like blogs. Nowadays, weblogs with its three main categories are substituted with the word “blog” to cover those three categories in one term which also includes all the above mentioned characteristics; the usage of a blog is determined by the user who can use it as notebook, filter or blog.
The Widespread Emergence of Blogs

Blogger estimates around the world are always on the rise. According research done in 2004 by a blog search firm, Technorati.com, the number of blogs around the world is almost 10 million. Forbes estimated the number of blogs in 2005 to be 22 million *(Forbes Magazine)*. Technorati showed that the number of blogs in 2006 increased to 60 million; in 2007 the number rose to over 70 million, in 2008 Technorati tracked more than 133 million blogs. Forbes estimates that the number of blogs by the end of 2009 will approach 1 billion.
“All studies agree, however, that blogs are a global phenomenon that has hit the mainstream” (Technorati.com, 2009). According to a recent research, there is a 58% increase in the number of people who actually read blogs while there is a significant decrease in the circulation of newspapers and viewership of television (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2008). Figure 4 illustrates the top 20 countries that use Internet in Africa. As shown in the figure, Egypt is on the first rank.

![World Internet Users by World Regions](image-url)

Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm
1,733,893,741 Internet users for September 30, 2009
Copyright © 2009, Mimi Watts Marketing Group
Internet Usage and Population Growth

Egypt and the Middle East

Table 1 shows the Internet usage and population growth in Egypt from year 2000 till 2009. As one can see, the percentage of penetration of Internet users is almost 16%. The percentage more than doubled from 2006 to 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Internet Users</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>% Pen.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>66,303,000</td>
<td>0.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5,100,000</td>
<td>71,236,631</td>
<td>7.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>10,532,400</td>
<td>81,713,517</td>
<td>12.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>12,568,900</td>
<td>78,866,635</td>
<td>15.9 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Source: ITU, cited in Internet World Stats 2009. Statistics were updated as of September 30, 2009.
Iran is on the top of the Middle Eastern countries in terms of Internet usage, Saudi Arabia comes in the second rank. Israel is ranked as number one in terms of Internet penetration in the population while UAE comes in the second rank. Iran is also ranked as number one in terms of the user growth from year 2000 till 2009 and Syria follow it.
Bloggers’ Rights

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is one of the main foundations that support freedom of speech as it encourages bloggers to blog without restraints bearing in mind that their legitimate speech is well defended and protected.

In 2005, EFF started a campaign to support bloggers’ rights from being censored and they prepared a legal guide for bloggers to ensure freedom of speech in blogs. In 2009, EFF revised and expanded the bloggers’ legal guide and it is still in the process of battling to gain more rights for bloggers. Several issues related to bloggers are being discussed such as: free speech, right for political speech, and the right to stay anonymous. Kurt Opsahl, senior staff attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation wrote: “freedom of speech is the foundation of a functioning democracy, and Internet bullies shouldn't use the law to stifle legitimate free expression.

In July 2009, Peter Eckersley, Staff Technologist at EFF, developed a practical guide “Surveillance Self-Defense International” (SSDI) that helps activists, especially bloggers under oppressive regimes, around the world to be able to express their opinions freely and safely through the Internet. The guide discusses several ways to help preventing surveillance such as understanding risk measurement, being cautious of malware – computer viruses that spy on users’ computers, choosing the least-risky
communications channels, and using encryptions to help avoiding surveillance and restrictions of web usage.

This guide also encourages users outside the suppressive regime to help repressed people express themselves, avoiding governmental censorship. This can happen remotely via setting up proxies for example to help the oppressed access the web in countries that ban some websites especially the political ones.

"SSDI isn't just about what to do when facing down surveillance and censorship in your own country, it's about what ordinary Net users can do to help protect others. Whoever you are, and wherever you are, you can help keep the Net safe for free speech." said Danny O'Brien, International Outreach Coordinator at EFF.

**Blogs and Politics**

Bloggers are becoming a threat in the world especially in oppressed countries in the Middle East for example. Many countries like Bahrain, Syria, and Iran, Egypt – although are the top countries in terms of Internet usage- have already arrested bloggers and online journalists while other countries are closely censoring and even prohibiting access to blog's content. Experts believe that one of the major factors in the growing number of blogs is the oppressing governmental regime in suppressed countries.
Blogs are seen to have a great influence on politics especially on the West. This is because they have the ability to shift the attention of media to specific topics and therefore they eventually gain the power of influencing the leaders’ strategies and policy decisions (Sroka, 2007). Neil argues that because blogs have a very high readership, they act as the “watchdog” of the prevailing and mainstream media. “The blogosphere has a much stronger voice being heard by legislators than previously considered” (Sroka, 2007).

Levinson argues that the relation between rebellion and online communication is not new. In southern Mexico, rebels of Zapatista have gained attention because of a Net campaign in the 1990s. In 1999 anti-globalization dissents have been quite noticed in Seattle because they were highly organized online. "Today, blogs, or Web journals, have taken up the charge" (Levinson, 2005). Following the 2004 Madrid terrorist attacks, people were allowed to make immediate comments on televised events through live blogs.

In addition Gaafar (2004) illustrated in her article that blogs are means for uncensored information which people can access easily. She made it clear in the article that during the times of war, people used blogs to spread information without facing the barrier of censorship.

Blogs signifies the wide range of topics that could be covered and the space allowed for different political views to be unrestrictedly displayed in public. For
instance, following the 9/11 attacks, more and more users were widely logging on blogs that endorsed the US “War on Terrorism,” expressing political views on the government policy.

Bahrain is being very strict about blogging. Early 2005, "Bahraini authorities arrested a blogger and two website technicians from the Internet forum Bahrain Online, which had posted a United Nations report critical of the government's discrimination against the Shiite majority" (Lynch, 2007). The largest opposition movement in Bahrain has used a blog to organize some protests and most of them have been arrested.

Later the Bahraini Ministry of Information has drafted a law forcing all bloggers to register their blogs with the government. Bloggers refused to record their blogs and they organized a demonstration calling for more freedom. This campaign proved to be effective as the prisoners were released. Haitham Sabbah, a prolific blogger since 2003 stated "Without the bloggers of Bahrain escalating this, and trying to pressure the government, I don't think anyone would have ever cared or heard about these guys" (Sabbah, 2005).

Faiza Ambah (2008), Washington Post Foreign Service wrote in her article “Dissident Saudi Blogger Is Arrested” that Saudi Arabia’s most well known and popular
blogger Mr. Farhan has been arrested as a result of his online critics. Farhan uses his blog as a medium to call for social and political change.

Although the media in Saudi Arabia did not report the arrest, the blogosphere was overwhelmed with bloggers from Egypt, Bahrain, Tunisia and Morocco that condemned and criticized his detention. Ahmed Al Omran, Saudi blogger, stated: “I think some people will be afraid now, especially those who use their real names -- they will be more careful. A lot of bloggers will be intimidated. But it could also cause a backlash in the blogosphere, and spur bloggers to write even harsher criticisms.” (Ambah, 2008)

While in most countries, people are encouraged to use blogs as a way of communication that enjoys freedom, a young Egyptian blog author got arrested in October 2005 for posting messages that oppose the current Egyptian regime. Kareem Soliman Amer who maintains a hobby of blogging criticized the "sectarian" clashes in Alexandria and he is known to be an “Islamophobe.” After he was arrested his hardcopy blog entries were confiscated. Soliman said that he was not being ill treated, but became imprisoned "with political detainees" in the Tora jail; back in Alexandria his release was accompanied with a 'never-be-seen-here-again' salute from the indicter. Although not supportive of his views, most people disagreed with his capture. (Free Kareem Blog.org)

On November 2006, Kareem was detained again in Borg Al Arab prison near Alexandria and since then he was never out of prison. In February of 2007, Kareem was sentenced to four years (Ziada, 2007). In 2006 the Free Kareem Coalition campaign
started by a group of young and active bloggers along with college students who believe very much in the right of freedom of expression as well as freedom of thoughts. This campaign represents the bloggers’ way in fighting against censorship as they want to practice their right in expressing themselves freely.

On October 2009, the Arab Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) sent a petition to President Mubarak asking him to release Soliman as he completed ¾ of his sentence. The ANHRI received more than 600 petitions from Egyptian and International citizens supporting Kareem’s case. The more petitions are presented the more the state security apparatus in Egypt persists on harassing Kareem by depriving him from any visits (Free Kareem Blog.org).

Kareem was supposed to have an appeal in September of 2009, and the decision should be announced in October. As it was mentioned in his blog campaign, the court decided to postpone his appeal till December of 2009. “his trials are consistently delayed, causing him to remain in prison for much more than he should be, even though he already completed 3/4th of his sentence” (supporters of Kareem’s case, free Kareem Blog.org). Due to the strict censorship over the regular forms of media, Arabs started using blogs to tackle sensitive issues that are rarely discussed by the media. Blogs have proved that they are capable of reaching large numbers and they are considered to be an influential source of information. Chase & Hamzawy (2006) claim that not only activists rely very much on blogs to know about who has been under arrest, in which prison they are, but also to get a chance to freely debate the efficiency of opposition policies and strategies.

Chase & Hamzawy (2006)
Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Blogs, then, can become an effective way to contextualize the struggles of women writers, prompting an examination of how personal writing has been consistently devalued and exposing the challenge that many women writers face in having their voices heard. (Smith, 2009)

The authors of “Psychological and Social Influences on Blog Writing” are trying to find out why bloggers continue to write and to use their blogs. The study confirms that if the owner of a blog is satisfied with the relationships with others, as well as the benefits of the blog to him/her self, it is more likely that this person will continue to use the blog. In addition, the authors confirm that if a person gets a positive feedback, support, and understanding, on his blog, he/she is more encouraged to continue writing.

“Satisfaction from being accepted by others had the strongest effect on the intention to continue blog writing” (Miura and Yamashita 2007).
On the other hand, this study suggests that negative feedback has no effect on the blogger’s satisfaction. This study has found that the reason why people do use blogs and not personal diaries is that those people are aiming for a larger group of audience globally which is provided by blogs (Miura and Yamashita 2007).

In July 2005, a research was conducted in Egypt by Milad Yacoub - sociology PhD holder- in Paris about urban sociology. The research was done about Egyptian bloggers and it was conducted though a questionnaire which was targeting 253 bloggers out of 327. 36% of the target group filled out the questionnaire. The research conducted showed that more than two-thirds of the bloggers who filled out the questionnaire were males. The average age of bloggers ranged between 17 and 56 years but the majority of bloggers were in their 20's and this age distribution was very similar to the global trend. The research showed the educational background of respondents; two thirds of the respondents were university graduates, a quarter obtained a post graduate degree, and one fifth were still university undergraduates which means that bloggers in Egypt have "higher than average education." About the marital status, 84% were single and 13% were married.

One issue related to blogs is how far bloggers can disclose their identity and gender. In the article “Gender, Identity, and Language Use in Teenage Blogs” the authors discuss topics related to language and online identity usage among teenagers who maintained journals and blogs. They examined closely how far males and females can disclose personal information. The results show that males as well as females disclose
similar information in their blogs. This includes age, real names, as well as their real locations. However, males used emoticons more than females. In addition, results suggest that teenagers represent their real identity and that they stay very close to reality through their expressions online (Huffaker & Calvert, 2006).

Wheeler argues in her article that most of the positive effects of the information revolution have bypassed women in the Middle East while their Internet use in Europe and North America has increased dramatically. As a result, women of the Middle East have missed an opportunity in so many aspects such as economic, knowledge, access to data, and investment. “Women in the Arab World are in the deepest recesses of digital divide” (Wheeler, 2004).

According to Christina Vogt and Peiying Chen (2001) computer based communication has an important effect on feminist social activism. “The Internet creates a potentially powerful women’s space for networking that feminist activists can use to shape their identities and actions” (Vogt and Chen, 2001). In cyberspace women can communicate their knowledge and experiences and consequently, this will strengthen their common beliefs which will eventually help them in implementing their actions.

In this study Vogt and Chen surveyed 50 women’s organizations that are web-based in Canada and the US; those 50 women were using the Internet as their primary medium for communication. Most of the respondents strongly agreed that the Internet has helped in promoting the idea of social change and as a result, women’s movement can
also be positively affected. This is because the Internet helps in the quick spreading of
information as it is considerable less expensive compared to other media, and finally the
Internet is relatively easy to use. Therefore, the Internet helps in increasing the
collaboration and communication between feminist groups. “The frequency of news and
dialogue allows larger audiences to be quickly informed and mobilized about various
situations; this happens at a speed never before imagined” (Vogt and Chen, 2001).

Although the Internet has not formed considerable new partnerships, it has
involved new members into fundamental groups and it has multiplied “cross-coalition
alliances.” The movement’s cellular construction appears to be enhanced by the Internet
usage, “with its own non-hierarchical and decentralized structure.” This construction will
help in maintaining the feminist movement active if it has even been exposed to threats
by global or local forces because it does not have a specific point of attack. “Because the
Internet structure defies hierarchical order and has no center—it relies upon lateral
communications—in cyberspace we may have interactions that are not bound by status,
location or time. The domain of the public/private may be fused and women can be
mobilized in their homes and their workplaces at any time. The Internet will likely be
used in the future to give more of the world’s women a voice” (Vogt and Chen, 2001).

According to the BBC, 30% Internet users in Egypt are female; however, this
percentage consists only of middle and upper social classes. They are using the Internet
mainly to exchange information and to discuss topics that can not be discussed in other
medium. Because the Internet provides anonymity, Egyptian females take advantage of
this feature and they share cultural as well as political views in addition to discuss their personal and every day frustrations (BBC Arabic Service, 2009).

In the article “Egypt women blog for their rights,” bloggers agreed that blogs are considered to be one of the few spaces in Egypt in which men and women are represented equally as blogs create a partnership between men and women regarding social issues. In addition, female bloggers can discuss issues that are considered taboo by the society. “They discuss issues such as sexual harassment, which is often pigeon-holed in Egypt as a ‘woman's problem’” (BBC Arabic Service, 2009).

A new trend is being undertaken by frustrated females in Egypt. Amani Tunis, 25 years old, started the first online Arabic Radio station “Banat Wa Bas” and it means “girls only.” The station is completely run by women and it only addresses their issues and frustrations. Amani (2009) said: “We are almost not living. If you are always at risk of being sexually harassed everywhere, what kind of life is this?” Banat Wa Bas is encouraging all the station’s contributors to express their view freely because they are running this radio station through the Internet which means that they can get away from governmental censorship.

The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University has conducted a study in an attempt to map the Arabic language blogosphere. “The goal for the study
was to produce a baseline assessment of the networked public sphere in the Arab Middle East, and its relationship to a range of emergent issues, including politics, media, religion, culture, and international affairs” (Etling, Kelly, Faris, & Palfrey, 2009).

Results of this study indicated that most Arab bloggers are males and they are young in age; however, the great percentage of female bloggers was found in the Egyptian youth sub-cluster. Almost half of the Egyptian bloggers specifically are women in the age range of 18-24. However, when talking about the Arab blogosphere in general, the study found that 60% of bloggers are males while female bloggers constitute only 34%, which indicates a significant gender divide.

Analyzing the issues discussed on blogs, the study showed that personal and local issues are the two most important topics discussed. In other words, when bloggers write about politics, their focal point is their country. There is an outstanding focus on Egyptian activists, Muslim brotherhood, and feminism which emphasis the women’s rights issue. The study claims that most Muslim brotherhood bloggers are women who not only support their religious commitment and dedication but also defend their right to chase men rather than wait submissively for men to choose them. Other topics discussed on blogs that are worth mentioning are religion and human rights.

Moreover, the study found that most Arab bloggers, except Syrians, Moroccans, and Kuwaitis, do not use their real name while blogging. “Generally, women are more likely to blog anonymously than men” (Etling, Kelly, Faris, & Palfrey, 2009). Within the
Arab blogosphere, the most attractive blogs are within Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait respectively since they have the largest clusters of bloggers compared to other Arab countries.

Jenn Watt in her article “Blogging busts out for women” states that although technology and computers are often perceived as kingdoms for men, blogs are changing this perception as they are becoming an influential tool for women. Watt mentioned that 55% of bloggers are females. In addition, the author declares that women tend to start more blogs than men and they are more likely to keep their blog active for longer periods of time (Watt, 2006).

Natalie Bennett, the editor of the Guardian Weekly, an English blogger and the creator of “Carnival of Feminists”. The carnival is hosted twice a month and usually hosted by a different blogger each time. The idea behind the carnival is to invite blogger to contribute articles on general as well as current events. Bennett mentioned that she thought about creating this carnival when the number of female bloggers started to dramatically increase. The carnival intends to highlight the best feminist posts from around the blogosphere

Bennett mentioned that “The Carnival hopes to build the profile of feminist blogging, to direct extra traffic to all participating bloggers, but particularly new bloggers, and to build networks among feminist bloggers” (Bennett, 2007)
Kennedy (Ph.D. candidate at the University of Toronto 2006) argues that blogs can help women post their beliefs, thoughts and experiences and to be able to share them with other people. Bennett agrees with Kennedy and adds that blogs are democratic by nature due to the fact of anonymity that gives women more power to share their own viewpoints and thoughts and make them known to the public (Kennedy, 2006).

However, the success rate of women blogging is not yet recognized only two out of the ten most visited blogs are owned by women (Watt, 2006). Bennett believes that if women keep blogging the number will definitely increase; she added that “The network element of blogging is valuable in empowering and encouraging more women to put their voice forward. Increasingly, blogs are a source for the mainstream media, so the message or idea can then be carried further.” (Bennett, 2007)

The increase in number of female who are using blogs is significant. According to the 2007 Nielsen Net Ratings “women make up slightly more than half of the active Internet universe and we can expect them to play an increasingly significant role in blog consumption.” According to a research conducted in 2008 on female Internet users in the US, more than 55% of female users either write or read blogs. "Social media continues to be a growing phenomenon, and bloggers, in particular, represent a highly engaged and influential segment of social media users” (Wright, 2008).

In “New Hope or Old Power: Democracy, Pornography and the Internet” article, Heider and Dustin stated that some scholars think that new technologies and specifically
the Internet are leading the world to a new age of democracy. This article takes an analytical look at this hopeful and positive view. The authors “use a textual analysis and a feminist theoretical framework” (Heider & Dustin, 2002). They analyze pornography websites to demonstrate how the Internet is emphasizing the already existing power constructions, such as male domination and the abuse and manipulation of women. The authors affirmed that these websites highlight and emphasize the long-established structures of men’s power over women.

The Pew Internet & American Life Project, in 2005, reported that in the years between 2000 and 2005, the proportion of Internet chat and discussion group users dropped from 28 percent to 17 percent. This trend was directly linked to women, as the majority of these users were females concerned about exposing themselves to disturbing and threatening advances. In 2006, the University of Maryland released a study which indicated that female bloggers receive 25 times the number of harassing messages than males (Nakashima, 2007). On the contrary, in 2008 the Pew Internet & American Life Project conducted another study and showed that the number of women online has almost quadrupled, which explains that women are no longer worried about threatens or harassment. Instead of stepping back and leave blogging, females decided to continue blogging and try to decrease harassment through many ways such as filtering.

According to Joan Walsh, editor in chief of the online magazine Salon, the magazine receives more online criticism and much harsher condemnation of the female writers than the male writers. Huffington Post founder, Arianna Huffington, employs a
“zero-tolerance” policy toward abusive and foul language on her site. She acknowledges that the anonymity provided by the Internet allows people the opportunity to exhibit improper behavior and prejudiced opinion towards women, and ensures that her site is monitored around the clock to filter users from any offense (Nakashima 2007).

Nakashima also mentioned in her article “Sexual Threats Stifle Some Female Bloggers” that a female blogger has been threatened with rape because she was writing about the pornography industry.

Experts indicate that frequent exposure to disturbing language and threats has made women reluctant to participate online, which undermines the purpose of the Internet as a free and open forum. Robert Scoble, a technology blogger, adds that women’s lack of participation online reduces their prospects in the technology industry, a male-dominated arena (Stone 2007).

When Kathy Sierra, founder of the web site Creating Passionate Users, became the victim of sexual harassment and death threats, she ceased blogging. Her ordeal sparked international outrage over the misuse of the Internet. Sierra, in response to graphic images she received of herself with a noose around her neck and a muzzle over her face, became housebound, and refused to appear at upcoming speaking engagements. She wrote on her website “I will never feel the same. I will never be the same” (Sierra 2007).
Professor of information science at Indiana University, Susan Herring, expressed that initially new online forums tended to be greeted with enthusiasm by educated individuals eager to express their opinions. Nowadays, however, it is more common to find negativity in blogs. This is because of the high number of trolls available on online communities that threaten and harass bloggers. In fact, some of these trolls have succeeded in interrupting bloggers for a period of time. Herring (2002) adds “blogs risk becoming "nastified," at least in the comment zones.”

According to Kathleen Cooper, a single mother, was first attacked online five years ago. Since then, she has been the recipient of numerous threats from the same Internet user. She contacted his Web server to shut him down, but to no avail as he revives his site from various servers. She also took the threats to the law enforcement authorities who turned her away, considering that she is under no real danger (Nakashima, 2007).

Some female bloggers advise their counterparts to look past the insults and threats and to continue participating online. However, these bloggers are rare. Most women succumb to the intimidation and fear. And while some bloggers have requested an online code of conduct, limiting anonymous comments, other feel this flies in the face of free speech (Herring 2002).

The solution proposed by BlogHer, an online community of over 10,000 women, involves creating rules for every site, rules outlawing abusive comments for example, and
enforcing them fairly (Bennett 2007). According to Bennett and Stone 2007, BlogHer has developed a community guideline to help preventing sexual harassment over their blog as they welcome and adopt the spirit of civilized disagreement and refuse to publish any improper or offensive content.

According to Jill (2007), a lot of women stopped blogging because of the threats and harassment comments they receive. In Jill’s opinion, harassment especially the sexual one, is a clear message that women have fewer rights than men. She also believes that there is no way to totally prevent such harassment but there are ways to control it. She suggests that bloggers especially females can restrain comments by using moderation tools; she added that female bloggers should also watch out for each other. “We should be at the forefront of taking a collective stand against harassment and in support of the public woman” (Jill, 2007).

Pedersen and Macafee conducted a study to see if gender affects blogging behavior or not. The study shows that for both men as well as women, blogging is a leisure interest. Women use blogs as means for their creative work, more personal content, while men use them as a source of information. The research suggests that companies and businesses are using blogs as they prefer them more than “static” websites, because blogs are more interactive which results in increasing customer satisfaction (Pedersen & Macafee 2007).
The results suggest that the motive behind women using blogs is the fact that they are perceived and presented as minority with lower profiles in the blogosphere. This is why there is a successful attempt from women to increase their blog usage and it is proven by the high quality of subjects they cover in their blogs as well as the significant improvement in their technical abilities and competence (Pedersen & Macafee 2007).

According to Nakashima, women represent approximately half of the online community and, according to recent information, are at more risk of being harassed online than their male counterparts. Female bloggers are at particular risk, reporting threats that include stalking, rape and death. While experts and bloggers have identified that a lack of civility is ever-present in online forums, as evidenced in the early chat rooms of the 1990’s, the public visibility of female bloggers makes them accessible targets (Nakashima, 2007).

Yasmin Rifaat in her article “Blogging the Body: The Case of Egypt” suggests that there is a clear distinction in the way females and males are engaged in blogging. She adds that blogs are the only public realm where Egyptian women can communicate their ideas and opinions in a relatively equal way to men. Women can discuss several issues related to them such as homosexuality, arranged marriages, veiling, and sexual frustrations. Women bloggers are more concerned about the holistic view of social as well as political issues. Therefore they focus their comments on such issues that they believe are important in improving the society. In addition, Rifaat believes that women
choose to use blogs as a domain where they can tackle and deal with their conflicts as females. For women, blogs serve as a refuge from the society around them (Rifaat 2008).

The Supreme Council of Information and Communication Technology held “Mudawanat: All About Blogging” conference in Doha, Qatar in December 2009 (ICTQatar). The ICTQatar conference focuses on why blogs are an incredibly effective way to communicate. Ahmed Hamzawi, Head of Engineering, Google Incorporation, Middle East/North Africa, panelist and a presenter at the ICTQatar conference, declares that according to research conducted by Google, in the year 2009 there are more blogs and more readers than ever.

There are 417 million words per day, 300 million visitors per month, 290,000 words per minute, and 10 million content creators per month. At the end of 2003 (when Google acquired Blogger), Blogger had just over 250,000 - 30 day active users. Today Google reports that it has over 300 million. Hamzawi adds that there are over 120,000 new blogs a day with 2 million posts per day (Hamzawi 2009). In addition, 63% of Blogger traffic comes from outside the United States.

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2 30 day active user is defined as users who log in Blogger at least once per month.
Google Insights for Search has developed the chart below to show the rise of blogs and the interest over time in addition Google adds the forecast of blogs usage (Google Insights for Search 2009).

Figure 6

Chapter Three

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Feminism Theory History:

It is relatively hard to define feminism; however, the term includes all actions of men and women, writings and speeches that are related to women’s issues as well as their rights. Feminist theory intend to examine and understand the kind of inequity between genders as it focuses on sexuality, gender politics, and power relations; it also promotes women’s issues, interests and rights (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000).

Feminism in general is a collection of many theories, most of which are social. It also involves “political movements, and moral philosophies, largely motivated by or concerning the experiences of women, especially in terms of their social, political, and economical inequalities” (Rosser, 2005).

The expression feminism first appeared in France during the 1880s. It appeared in Great Britain in the 1890s and finally in 1910 it appeared in the United States. Before starting to use the word feminism, people used the term “women’s rights” to refer to women issues and movements (Citron, 2004).

Due to the diverse definition of this theory, there is no sole universal form of feminism; however, the most recognized types of feminism are: social, liberal, radical and post-modern feminism (Haslanger & Tuana, 2003).
Maggie Humm and Rebecca Walker elaborate that in order to discuss the history of feminism; one can divide it into three main phases or waves. The first phase was in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and early 20\textsuperscript{th}. The 1960’s witnessed the second wave and the third wave was during the 1990’s until present. Each wave was characterized by specific issues. The first was discussing the suffrage of women and it was promoting the idea of voting for women. The second was mainly concerned with the social and legal equality of women. The third wave was a continuation of the second phase (Humm, 1997).

Women’s suffrage was one of the most essential focuses of feminism. This is because women’s suffrage clearly states that women are second class citizens. Suffrage of women included fair pay compared to men, more access to education, right to begin divorce procedures, and the right for women to make decisions as regards to pregnancy (including the right to use contraceptives and abortion). Civil rights were another focal point; civil rights included equal rights in law, planning their own families, fair wages, owning property and serving in military (DuBois, 1998).

\textbf{First Wave Feminism}

The first wave feminism is mainly characterized by getting the right for women to vote. This right was guaranteed to some women during the 1918 and to all of them 10
years later. This first happened in Britain and was mainly because of the major role
women played in the First World War. The situation was different in the United States;
leaders of the first wave feminism were more concerned about the elimination of slavery
before getting the right to vote for women (Beasley, 1999). However, getting the right to
vote for women was a main focus and by passing the law that granted women the right to
vote in 1919, the first wave feminism was considered to have ended.

**Second Wave Feminism**

“Women’s liberation” was the main theme of the second wave. In 1963 Betty
Friedan’s wrote “The Feminine Mystique” in which she affirmed that the reason behind
the suffering of women is the existence of a “false belief” which states that a woman can
only find herself and her identity through her husband, children and family (Bordo,
1999).

Second wave feminism stressed on political and cultural discrimination. It
couraged women to better understand features of their personal lives. Although the
second wave feminism refers to a phase when activities of feminists began during early
1960s till late 1980s; this wave has lived constantly since that time and it coexisted with
the third wave feminism (Bordo, 1999).

**Third Wave Feminism**
The third wave feminism was mainly concerned with the failures of the second wave feminism. It began in the early 1990s and it was a response to the criticism against the movements and initiatives that started in the second wave. The third wave feminism tried to avoid the definition of feminism that was created earlier. This is because the definition used was emphasizing the experiences of white upper middle class women only. Third wave feminism focused on the interpretation of sexuality and gender as well as “micropolitics” (Beasley, 1999).

Third wave contained internal important debates. One group believed that there are differences between the sexes and consequently between women and men, on the other hand, the other group believed that there are no such differences and that the gender roles are the effect of social settings that are imposed by the society.

A very famous incident happened in 1991 where Anita Hill charged Clarence Thomas (African- American man chosen to the Supreme Court) by sexual harassment that happened when Hill used to work as his secretary a decade earlier. Thomas declined all accusations, the Senate voted 52-48 in favor of Thomas after a huge debate. In 1992 and in response to this court case Rebecca Walker issued an article titled “Becoming the Third Wave” where she stated "I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the third wave." Walker argues that this case had made it clear that sexual harassment is still present which brought awareness to many people who thought that sexual harassment and other issues related to the second wave had been solved.
Some of the leaders of the third wave feminism already existed in the second wave; they all requested a new subjectivity in the voice of feminist. They wanted to discuss important issues in feminist notion such as race related matters.

**Feminism sub movements**

There are several sub movements related to feminism theory such as: socialist and Marxists feminism, radical feminism, liberal feminism, black feminism, post colonial feminism, third world feminism, multiracial feminism, and libertarian feminism.

Socialist feminism linked the women oppression to Marxist concepts which focuses on the utilization and exploitation of women and labor. Social feminism discards individuality, it believes that new technology and its social shaping are being conceptualized in terms of men, and it excludes women. “Socialist feminist reform suggests that the allocation of resources for technology development should be determined by greatest benefit for the common good” *(Rooser, 2005).*

Radical feminism believed that the only way women can liberate themselves is to refuse the inherited patriarchal system. “Radical feminist feel that there are male-based authority and power structure and that it is responsible for oppression and inequality, and that as long as the system and its values are in place, society will not be reformed in any significant way” *(Haslanger & Tuana, 2003).* It states that the most widespread and common oppression is women’s repression. It discards most theories because they
exclude women and they are not women focused. It also suggests that patriarchy and masculinity have become tangled with the society and technology that is why “no truly feminist alternative to technology exists”.

Liberal feminism confirms that political and legal reforms are the only ways to achieve liberation. This form of feminism is an individualistic one that focuses on the abilities of women to maintain and show their equality via their own choices and actions. Libertarian feminism is concerned about “self ownership”. It states that women as well as men have the right for freedom because they are both “self owners” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Liberal feminism requires that men as well as women obtain equal privileges without any discrimination that is based on gender. It also seeks equal access for women to jobs that require information technology; in addition to providing economic equality which is based on providing high paying jobs for women.

Postcolonial feminism states that colonization is the main reason that impacted cultures to oppress women. In contrast to liberal feminism, postmodern feminism implies that there is no universal agenda or a common application of technologies that will be right and correct; various women will have diverse reaction to new technologies. These reactions will depend on many factors such as race, social class, and country. Wajcman stated that nothing can be generalized and that women can not be addressed universally. She elaborates by arguing that there is no meaning or behavior which is related only to either men or women. “What is considered masculine in some societies is considered feminine or gender-neutral in others” (Wajcman, 1991). She adds that this does not mean
that gender discrimination is not there, but it rather revealed in different ways in different societies.

Black feminism argues that race discrimination is one of the main reasons behind women’s oppression. It also stated that any form of feminism that is mainly focuses on class oppression and sexism but ignore race discrimination is a myth because by ignoring race, it is already discriminating against “many people including women through racial bias” (Hooks, 1992).

**Feminism in the 15th and 16th Century**

During the European Renaissance, humanists of this era argue that at least upper-class women require education. Unfortunately, women who excel are often called witches or manly. A great example is Queen Elizabeth I “The only way she could be seen as a good ruler was for her to be described with manly qualities. Being a powerful and successful woman during the Renaissance, like Queen Elizabeth I meant in some ways being male, a perception that unfortunately gravely limited women’s potential as women” (Morgan, 2006). The only role women were given is reproduction which defined a woman’s purpose in life. Even philosophers of the Renaissance had the same concept about women. Education was not promoted during renaissance; men were encouraged to be educated while women were not. Women were either owned by their husbands and if they are not married, they become their father’s possessions.
Feminism in the 17th Century

The 17th century witnessed a better situation for women. This era saw many forms of rebellions which permitted more actions to women. Of course women’s participation in society was resisted and challenged; however, gender equality and political participation started to be discussed. Although, women’s publications were not published till the 20th century, women writers began to appear which change the false perception of women’s reproduction role. By the end of the 17th century, more women’s voices were heard but women were still subject to inequality by not being provided with work opportunities.

Feminism in the 18th Century

The 18th century was the age of enlightenment where intellectual debates and philosophical literature were available. The most significant feminist writer was Mary Wollstonecraft argues that the rearing and education of women are the factors that shaped the negative perception of women as well as the restricted expectations from them which are all based on an image that was created by males. She believes that women as well as men contributed to the general idea if inequality and that both sexes need to be educated to guarantee the essential changes in social perception.

Feminism in the 19th Century
At the beginning of the 19th century there was more space for women to speak out; however their influence was limited only to create awareness as there was no sign of change in the society regarding the perception of women. Towards the end of the century, there was something more tangible than awareness. In 1843 Reid wrote her book “A plea for women” in which she set the agenda for women’s rights. Advocates of feminism movement argue that women have all the potential that men have but women were never given the opportunity to excel or to prove what they can do.

In the 1850s Barbara Leigh Smith and a group of her friends initiated regular meetings to discuss women needs. They were called “Langham Place ladies” because they used to meet in Langham Place in London. One of the purposes of these meetings was to try to present a unified and cohesive voice of women in order to achieve the change in perception in the society. Their main focus was employment opportunities, the right for education and finally marital law. Later the committee was renamed to the London Society for Women's Suffrage. This committee was the base for all publications related to women’s suffrage such as Women's Suffrage Journal and Englishwoman's Review.

Smith had so many influential writings and she had greatly contributed to the “English Women's Journal.” She was able to create a strong base of women audiences which later helped in the formation of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (SPEW) (John, 1996). During this period education was not a right as much as a privilege; however, because this small group of ladies was lucky enough to be educated, they were able to struggle on behalf of women in general. They stated that “realizing it
was not just a portal to employment and financial self sufficiency but that the denial of education was tied to women’s expectations and their self image of their potential and worth” (Freedman, 2007).

As an outcome of the collective efforts towards addressing the issue of women’s suffrage, women were given the right to vote for the first time in 1881 in the United States. While in Britain, the year 1918 witnessed the first law advocating the woman’s right to vote. “Representation of the People Act” was passed; giving women over thirty years old, who owned houses the right to vote and in 1928 this law was extended to all women over twenty one years old.

One can say that women education reform started to be an action rather than collective efforts during the 19th century. In 1848, Queen’s college began to offer education to females and 14 years later, a committee was established to convince some universities to let women take “Local Examinations”; the committee did not fully succeed. In 1866, the first higher education institution for women was established, starting with 5 female students. Despite this progress, few women could join this institution. University of Calcutta was the first university to allow women graduates to its academic programs.

Feminism in the 20th Century
The 20th century is considered to be a landmark in women’s history. During the early 20th century, women were actively involved in the society by offering them more employment opportunities. In addition, for the first time a woman political association was formed in 1903 named Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), followed by Women's Freedom League and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). Regarding the right for voting, Pankhurst stated that “votes for women were seen then as no longer ‘a right, but as a desperate necessity.”

Early in the 20th century, feminist science fiction appeared with the goal of discussing the role of women in the society. Feminist science fiction presented issues such as how the society perceive gender roles, reproduction and how it plays a role in classifying gender and finally, the inequality between men and women with regards to personal and political power. Themes such as utopia and dystopia were more illustrated to define a society with no gender difference; arguing that feminist movements should continue to work. Utopian writings started to increase addressing sexism and they were all written from women’s perspective dealing with gender inequality as well as sexuality.

During the First World War, mid 20th century, women started to work in the market with an extraordinary numbers that never happened before in history. Due to the war, a vast number of men were killed which led to a main alteration in demographic structure. Women continue to struggle for their rights and the term feminism was used
The right to vote had major influence on the feminist movements. It allowed women to participate in the parliament and in 1919 and 1920, two women succeeded in gaining seats for the liberal and conservative sects. Despite of the movement’s political success, women discovered that this political shift did not have the desirable effect of changing the society’s perception about women and their circumstances. This is due to the fact that women who were working during World War I were forced to give the jobs back to men when they returned from the war. New organizations were established to ensure the equality between men and women in so many aspects such as socially, economically, politically, occupationally, morally and legal equality.

Reproductive rights were another main issue in feminism that women fought for. During the 19th century women who were trying to promote family planning were condemned. However, during the 20th century the punishment for abortion has diminished to life imprisonment instead of execution. Contraception and birth control were restricted until the 1960’s while feminist believed that birth control will set women free from the burden of being mothers to children they did not want. For them, controlling reproduction was a key element in their movement success as it allows women to be economically independent. Therefore, when the first birth control pill
appeared, feminists wanted to make it accessible and obtainable to every woman as soon as possible.

Many of women’s issue were postponed when the Second World War started. Like the First World War, World War II was an excellent opportunity for women liberation and empowerment since they replaced most men’s jobs since they were away for the war. However, the situation was not exactly the same because women were more educated and hence not only they replaced men’s jobs, but also they were able to contribute professionally with their high skills expertise they acquired through education. Then again, after the end of the war, women found themselves giving back the jobs to men when they are back from the war. Although women were able to prove that they are as effective as men when it comes to work, the main issues of discrimination, and restricted work opportunities appeared again with the end of the war.

Therefore, after the Second World War, feminism started to take a different approach and it was referred to this phase as second-wave feminism. The term “Women’s Liberation” is considered to be relatively recent although its meaning was used throughout the feminism history. The expression was used for the first time in print in 1966 to refer to the women’s movement as a whole.

The 1960’s is considered another landmark in the history of feminism. During this period, the number of women with higher education was increasing in addition to the establishment of new academic courses and departments specializing in women’s studies.
During the 1970’s a lot of feminist writers started to appear addressing more political and sexual concerns, especially male sexual violence, rape, and sexual harassments. Feminism was seen as an international phenomenon, but each culture takes different approaches and manifestations based on each society. In the 1980’s, raping and sexual harassments were transformed from a personal experience to a social dilemma that truly communicated the pain of living in an unfair and unequal society. In addition, the second wave feminism dealt with the issue of homosexuality which was considered to be an important treat to male dominance.

Feminism in the Middle East

In the Middle East, specifically during the middle ages, there have been so many efforts exerted to develop the women’s status. This was illustrated when women were given more rights in inheritance, divorce and marriage. Women were not granted such rights in other cultures like the West until centuries afterward. Under Islam many perceptions have changed with regard to women.

Before Islam, dowry was seen as a price for the bride paid to her father; it became a wedding gift that is kept by the bride as part of her own property. In addition, marriage is seen as a contract rather than a status. Prior to Islam, inheritance was limited to males; women now are given the right to inherit. Annemarie Schimmel states that "compared to the pre-Islamic position of women, Islamic legislation meant an enormous progress; the woman has the right, at least according to the letter of the law, to administer the wealth
she has brought into the family or has earned by her own work" (Schimmel, 1998).

Women were also pushed for education as the founders of educational institutions at that time were women.

**Feminism and Human Rights, Global Feminism**

**National Organization for Women (NOW)**

National Organization for women (NOW) was initiated in the US during 1966 and its purpose was to bring equality between women and men. The United Nations Human Development Report states that on average women work more than men when paid employment and unpaid household tasks are accounted for. “In rural areas of selected developing countries women performed an average of 20% more work than men, or an additional 102 minutes per day. In OEDC countries surveyed, on average women performed 5% more work than men, or 20 minutes per day.” It was stated at the UN’s Pan Pacific Southeast Asia Women’s Association 21st International Conference that “in the world as a whole, women comprise 51% of the population, do 66% of the work, receive 10% of the income and own less than 1% of the property”

**Feminism in the United Nations (UN)**

Feminism has become an international topic with the establishment of the United Nations. This is because the UN created several divisions and departments that protect
women’s rights and address women’s equity and equality in society. In addition, several conferences were held by the UN to discuss women’s issues as they gathered women from around the world to provide more opportunities to advance women’s status universally. However, it was very hard to apply what the UN was aiming for globally, because several factors prevented women to achieve their rights. Diversity in class, race, nationality, ethnic backgrounds and third world versus first world was one of the main obstacles to attain equality between men and women around the world. However, it was agreed that in general, women should attain their full human rights, and have the full chance to develop, improve and benefit from the society.

One of the theories used in this research study is Feminism theory (Cyberfeminism). The main factors of this theory are women’s rights, welfare and interests. It also discusses gender inequality, discrimination, stereotyping, oppression and patriarchy.

Cyberfeminism started in early 90s it supports and encourages the female’s use of IT as this will eventually lead to end the superiority of males. Cyberfeminism advocates that there is a great aptitude for job openings and opportunities for women in the field of computer science and Internet. This is because racism, gender bias and other forms of oppression might be absent in virtual world so this will give women more opportunity to prove themselves more than the real world which is full of oppression forms to women.
According to Wilding, the theory focuses on the fact that new technologies in general and new media in specific give women the chance to begin and create new platforms that meet their needs and thus help them in changing the status and perception of women. “This variety of net utopianism declares that the choice is yours in cyberspace--you can be anything you want to be--and refuses to be pinned down to definitions which might imply a fixed set of beliefs, practices, or responsibilities or a fixed subject position” (Wilding, 2001).

Criticism of the Feminism Theory

Proponents to feminism argue that this movement is a harmful force that damages the core belief behind the family concept. Gottfried argues that as a result of feminism movement, women have shifted their roles from being mothers to be more self-centered trying to achieve success in career and this is a disaster that negatively affects the family (Gottfried 1993).

Feminism theory originated from the West which is one of its critics. This is because it focuses on women of the West ignoring women from the third world as they experience a unique form of oppression.

Another criticism, especially for the second wave feminism, was the lack of attention to the diversity amongst women. In other words second wave feminism ignored
differences such as class, nationality, religion, race and social background and focused mainly on “identity” as the central point in gender struggle (Breines 2002).

Feminists among themselves disagree about some definitions or concepts due to the subjectivity of such definitions. For example, feminists may disagree about what would be considered as fair or unfair for women; same applies for definitions of terms such as oppression and equality. It is not easy to agree on answers to questions such as what rights should all women get? What are the forms of injustice that women face? What would be considered as complete or full justice for women? This is considered another critique of feminism because it claims that feminism is based on concepts that are very relative when it comes to define them as there are many ways and meanings to classify and describe those concepts (Friedan 1963).

Chapter Four
METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE
Three hundred and twenty questionnaires were filled out by bloggers mainly in Egypt. A pilot study was conducted through 20 bloggers and as a result the questionnaire was readjusted twice to include all comments received.

The sample consisted of 320 bloggers from Egypt and the Middle East. There was a filter question in the questionnaire where respondents have to identify whether they own a blog or not. If their answer was no, then they were excluded from the sample.

Many approaches were used to try to find bloggers who are willing to respond to the questionnaire, a combination of snowball and purposive sampling. First, bloggers whom the researcher knows personally were targeted and they referred the researcher to other bloggers that they know. Second, the researcher joined Bloggers in Egypt group on Facebook where the questionnaire was posted and the responses were collected. Finally, the researcher created a blog on blogspot where a link to the questionnaire was posted and the researcher invited other bloggers through messages on the blog to participate in the study.

The questionnaire was designed to assess if there is a relation between gender and blog usage. In addition the questionnaire was trying to test the relation between gender and several dependant variables such as how often bloggers check blogs, what do bloggers blog about, bloggers target audiences, commenting in terms of receiving, responding or writing, how did bloggers know about blogs and what do they blog about,
for how long they have been using blogs, and finally several statements were included in a Likert scale to reveal whether blogs are a means for self expression, especially for women in Egypt, or not.

The questionnaire consisted of 26 questions where the first 3 questions were about age, gender and education and those were the independent variables. In this research the focus is on the gender variable, trying to find if there is a relation between gender and using blogs. The questions are trying to examine the following research questions:

**RQ1:** What do bloggers blog about?

**RQ2:** Who are the bloggers’ target audience?

**RQ3:** Is bloggers’ target audience gender oriented?

**RQ4:** Are female bloggers being attacked or threatened more than men?

**RQ5:** Do bloggers comment and respond to comments on their blogs?

**RQ6:** Does gender affect bloggers’ decision in responding to comments?

**RQ7:** Do blogs allow equal participation of women and men in discussions?

**RQ8:** How did bloggers know about blogs?

**RQ9:** Are blogs a means for self expression to bloggers?

**RQ10:** Are blogs a means for self expression among women bloggers in Egypt?

**RQ11:** Does writing in blogs help in self satisfaction?

**RQ12:** Do bloggers feel more self confident when they blog?

**RQ13:** Are blogs gendered?

**RQ14:** Does gender have an effect on why bloggers use blogs?
Some of the statistical techniques used were descriptive to show frequencies, means and standard deviations. Furthermore, inferential statistics were used to test for significance among the variables in the research questions.
Chapter Five
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

AGE: Respondents were divided to five age groups. 3% are from 16-20 years old, 24% are between 21-25 years old, 26-30 years old represented 45%, and for the low age groups of 31-35 and above 36 years old represented 14% each.

GENDER: 187 of the 320 were males and they represented 58% of the sample while 133 were females and they represented 42%.
**EDUCATION:** the majority of the sample was university graduate\(^3\) and they represented 122 out of the 320 (38%), holding a master’s degree was in the second category (24%), undergraduate students represented 21%, 14% were graduate students\(^4\), and 3% hold a doctorate degree.

![Education Pie Chart]

**COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE:** 287 of the sample were bloggers who live in Egypt representing 90% of the whole sample, while 33 lives in United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Saudi Arabia representing 10% of the sample.

![Country of Residence Pie Chart]

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\(^3\) University graduates are defined as respondents who hold a university degree. In other words, they have completed a university undergraduate degree.

\(^4\) Graduate students are defined as respondents who are currently registered or enrolled in a master’s degree program.
General Overview:

Education and age group variables:

Following are the most significant results involving the education and age group variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>University Graduates</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
<th>Master’s Degree Holder</th>
<th>PhD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific topics of interest</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics that are not discussed on any other medium</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social issues</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political issues</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Issues</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment issues</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural issues</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Group 1 16-25</th>
<th>Group 2 26-35</th>
<th>Group 3 36-above 40</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific topics of interest</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
<td>70.70%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics that are not discussed on any other medium</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>35.10%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social issues</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
<td>41.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political issues</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
<td>46.80%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Issues</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>41.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment issues</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>23.90%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural issues</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>41.50%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the PhD holders in the sample visit blogs more than once per day while graduate students come in the second rank where they scored 75%, followed by university graduates, undergraduate students and masters degree holder that represented 54%, 50% and 43% respectively.
The age variable was grouped into three categories where category one is from 16 years old to 25, category two from 26 to 35 and finally category three from 36 to above 40 years old. The results showed that category three, which is between 36 and above 40 years old, scored the highest in regards of visiting blogs more than once per day as they scored 75%. This was followed by category two (26 to 35 years old), and category three (16-25) which scored 52.7% and 50% respectively.

All PhD holders in the sample blog about their specific topics of interest, 73% of the university graduate students were in the second rank followed by undergraduates who scored 66.7%. Moreover, 70% percent of respondents whose age was between 26 years old and 35 blogged about their specific topics of interest followed by the first age group (16-25) which scored 62.5% and finally, 50% of the age group between 36 and above 40 years old blogged about their specific topics of interest.

All PhD holders in the sample blog about topics that are not discussed in any other medium while graduate students and undergraduates scored 50% and 33% respectively. Also 35% of the sample whose age is between 26 and 35 years old blogged about topics that are not discussed in any other medium.

A total of 75% of the graduate students, 66.7% of the undergraduates, 45% of the university graduates, 62.5% of the respondents between the age of 16-25 and 50% of the age group between 26-35 years old blog about social issues. A total of 75% of graduate students, and 66.7% of the undergraduates 62% of the first age group blog about political
issues. A total of 75% of the graduate students and 41% of the age group between 26 and 35 blog about current issues followed by the first age group representing 37.5%.

Moreover, 33% of undergraduates, 30% of graduates, 25% and 24% of the second and the first age group respectively blog about entertainment issues. 66.7%, 50% and 46% of undergraduates, graduate students and university graduates respectively blog about cultural issues; while 50% of the respondents whose age is between 16-25 blog about cultural issues as well.

A total of 66.7% of undergraduates and 75% of the 16-25 age group blog to themselves. Half (50%) of graduate students, 37.5% and 35% of the 16-25 and 26-35 age group respectively blog to their families as their target audience. All PhD holders in the sample, 75% and 71.5% of graduate and undergraduate students blog to their friends. 100% of graduates, undergraduates and masters degree holders and 91% of university graduate blog to people they don’t know. All members of the age group between 26-35 years old blog to people that they do not know.

Moreover, 75% of graduate students and 35% of age group 26-35 receive threats over their blogs. One third (33.3%) of undergraduates rarely receive comments\(^5\) on their blogs, 100% of PhD holders sometimes receive comments on their blogs, 43% of master’s degree holders students often receive comments on their blogs, and 54% of university graduates always receive comments on their blogs.

\(^5\) Receiving comments is defined as any comments made by readers on a blog
A quarter (25%) of the first age group rarely receive comments on their blogs, 50% of age group 3 sometimes receive comments on their blogs, 23.5% of age group 2 often receive comments on their blogs, and 50% of age group 3 always receive comments on their blogs.

All PhD holders in the sample, 91% of university graduates, 83% of undergraduates, and 75% of graduate students get comments from both males as well as females. A total of 87.5% of age group 1, 76.6% and 75% of age group 2 and 3 respectively get comments from both males as well as females.

A total of 57% of master’s degree holders rarely write comments on other blogs, 100% of PhD holders sometimes write comments on other blogs, and 25% of graduate students often write comments on other blogs.

A total of 35% of age group 2 rarely write comments on other blogs, 75% of age group 1 sometimes write comments on other blogs, and 25% of age group 3 always write comments on other blogs.

All PhD holders in the sample always respond to comments, 50% of undergraduates sometimes respond to comments and 50% of graduate students often respond to comments. As for age, 75% of age group 3 always respond to comments.

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6 Writing comments is when a reader reads a blog and he/she write a general comments on that story
7 Responding to comments is when a blogger find a written comment on his/her blog and respond to it. It has to be a response to something already written.
Gender Variable

Since this research focuses mainly on gender and whether it affects the blog usage, in the section below there is a detailed analysis of the gender variable as the independent variable in relation to all dependant variables in this study.

Frequency and Cross Tabulation of Using Blogs: 55% of the respondents visited blogs more than once per day - 53% males, 58% females. 14.1% of the whole sample visited blogs once a day - 12% males and 17% females, 17.2% visited blogs once every two to three days - 17% males and 17% females. 6.9% of respondents visited blogs every 2 weeks - 12% of males. 6.9% visited blogs less often than once per month - 6% of males and 8% of females.
Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>18.383</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>26.337</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>2.212</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*chi square test was calculated at a 0.05 significance level. There is a significant difference between males and females in terms of how often they use blogs.

Because of the significance found in the Chi Square test, it shows that gender, which is the variable in question, does affect the frequency of how often bloggers visit blogs.
FREQUENCY AND CROSS TABULATION OF WHAT BLOGGERS BLOG ABOUT:

A total of 65.6% of the respondents blog about their specific topic of interest, 27.5% blogged about topics that are not discussed in any other medium, 48.1% blogged about social and political issues, 37.8% blogged about current issues, 21% blogged about entertainment issues, and 41.6% blogged about cultural issues.

Chi-Square Tests

### Specific topics of Interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>18.284</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>22.202</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Assoc.</td>
<td>5.999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.57.

### Topics that are not discussed in any other medium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>42.210</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>40.576</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>47.147</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Assoc.</td>
<td>42.078</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 36.58.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Social issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>4.180</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.041*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>3.729</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>4.195</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Assoc.</td>
<td>4.167</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 64.01.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Political issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>20.628</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>19.61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>20.934</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Assoc.</td>
<td>20.564</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 64.01.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Current issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>16.358</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>15.426</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>16.79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 64.01.
Chi square tests were conducted to test if there is significant difference between males and females in relation to what bloggers blog about. On one hand, results showed that there is a significant difference between males and females in relation to: specific topics of interest, topics that are not discussed in any other medium, social, political, current and cultural issues. On the other hand, no significance was found in regards to blogging about entertainment issues.

**FREQUENCY AND CROSS TABULATION OF BLOGGERS’ TARGET AUDIENCE:**

The results showed that 48% of the sample blog only for themselves as the target audience, while 34.4% blog to their family, 55.6% blog to their friends, and 93% blog to people they don’t know. In terms of gender, 35.3% of males and 66.2% of females blog to themselves, 30% of males and 41% of females blog to their family, 59% of males and 50% of females blog to their friends, 94% of males and 92% of females blog to people.
they do not know. Interestingly, 100% of males and 100% of females are targeting both males and females as their target audience, which means that gender has no effect in deciding about bloggers’ target audience.

Chi-Square Tests – Target audience is myself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>29.670</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>28.447</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>30.123</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>29.578</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N of Valid Cases | 320

a. 0 cells (0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 64.01.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Chi-Square Tests – Target audience is family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>4.913</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>4.398</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>4.887</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>4.898</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N of Valid Cases | 320

a. 0 cells (0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 45.72.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table
In asking male and female bloggers about their target audience, a chi square test was conducted and proved significant between gender and target audience as themselves or as family. However, there was no significant difference for friends and people the bloggers do not know as target audiences.

**BLOGGERS BEING THREATENED:** The results showed that 24% of the respondents have been threatened through their blogs. The gender breakdown is 23.5% of males and 25% of females. Bloggers who were threatened over their blogs explain that they would be in danger mainly if they talk about religion, or about social and political issues. Some of them might be actually imprisoned if they write about religion such as was the case with Kareem Amer. In addition, bloggers who talk about social issues like female sexual
abuse do receive threats over their blogs. As the chi-square shows, there was no significant difference in terms of receiving threats between male and female bloggers.

**Chi-Square Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 32.00.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**COMMENTING:**

**Receiving more comments from a particular gender:** The results showed that 17.5% of males and 8.5% of females get comments from mostly females, 6% of males and 8.5% of females get comments from mostly males, and finally 76.5% of males and 83% of females get comments from both males and females.

**Chi-Square Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>6.092</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.048*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>6.397</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>4.145</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.14.

*chi square test was significant at a 0.05 significance level.

The chi square test shows that there is significant difference between gender and receiving comments on blogs.
Writing comments on blogs that belong to a particular gender – All males in the sample and 92% of females write comments on blogs that are owned by both males and females. 8% of females write comments on blogs that are owned by females only.

SOURCE OF KNOWING ABOUT BLOGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Male percentage</th>
<th>Female percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>less than 0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>less than 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-Square Tests – know about blogs through friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>13.503*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>12.657</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>13.471</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>13.461</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 50.29.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Chi-Square Tests – know about blogs through magazines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>17.530*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>15.119</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>21.732</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>17.475</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.99.

Chi-Square Tests – know about blogs through newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>16.802*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>15.015</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>24.785</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>16.750</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.14.
### Chi-Square Tests – know about blogs through Internet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>27.350</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correctionb</td>
<td>26.159</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>27.510</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>27.264</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 55.28.*

*chi square tests were significant at a 0.05 significance level.

The chi square test results indicate that gender is a significant element in terms of how bloggers know about blogs. Females are significantly more likely to know about blogs from friends, while males are significantly more likely to know about blogs from the Internet.

For how long have bloggers been using blogs: 12% of males have been using blogs for less than a year, 6% of males and 50% of females are using blogs for one to two years, 33% of males and 17.5% of females are using blogs for three years, 33% of males and 16% of females have been using them for four years and finally, 26% of males and 16.5% of females have been using blogs for five years.
### Why bloggers use blogs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Male percentage</th>
<th>Female percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spend free time</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express myself</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>92%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs offer different viewpoints</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>75%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable source of news</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs are easy to use</td>
<td>35%*</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs are easy to maintain</td>
<td>53%*</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs are huge archives</td>
<td>41%*</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs are user friendly search engine</td>
<td>23.5%*</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs are a credible source of news</td>
<td>29.5%*</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs offer in depth analysis</td>
<td>47%*</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For entertainment</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*chi square tests were significant at a 0.05 significance level.
### Chi-Square Tests - Express myself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>31.062</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>29.601</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>34.435</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>30.965</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 32.00.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Chi-Square Tests – Offer different viewpoints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>3.997</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.046*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>3.521</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>4.056</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>3.984</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 41.15.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Chi-Square Tests – Easy to use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>3.997</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.046*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>3.521</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>4.056</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>3.984</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 41.15.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Chi-Square Tests – Easy to maintain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>12.400</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>11.610</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>12.558</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>12.361</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 59.43.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Chi-Square Tests – Huge archive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>9.226</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>8.515</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>9.422</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>9.198</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the chi-square test indicate that there is a significance between gender and certain reasons for blogging. Females were significantly more likely to blog as a means of self expression, or because blogs offer different viewpoints. Males were significantly more likely to blog because blogs are easy to use, easy to maintain, have a huge archive, have a user friendly search engine, are credible source of news, and offer in-depth analysis.
RECEIVING COMMENTS- The results showed that 12% of males rarely receive comments, 35% of males and 50.5% of females sometimes receive comments, 17.5% of males and 16.5% of females often receive comments, and finally 35.5% of males and 33% of females always receive comments.

WRITING COMMENTS – As for writing comments, 29.5% of males and 25% of females rarely do that, 70.5% of males and 42% of females sometimes write comments, 25% of females often write comments, and finally 8% of females always write comments. The results of the chi square test indicate that there is a high significance between gender and writing comments.

RESPONDING TO COMMENTS – The results showed that 8.5% of females never respond to comments, 17.5% of males and 8.5% of females rarely respond to comments, 23% of males and 25% of females sometimes respond to comments, 29.5% of males and 25% of females often respond to comments and finally 29.5% of males and 33% of females always respond to comments. It is worth mentioning that in the “responding to comments made by” question, 100% of males as well as females responded to comments that are made by both males and females, thus gender did not affect the bloggers’ decision in responding to comments.

EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF MEN AND WOMEN THROUGH BLOGS: 17.5% of males and 25% of females strongly disagree about this statement, 29.5% of males and 9% of females are
neutral, 24% of males and 25% of females agree, and finally 29% of males and 41% of females strongly agree.

**BLOGS REPRESENT A MEANS FOR SELF EXPRESSION:** 17% of males and 25% of females strongly disagree about this statement, 59% of males and 33% of females agree, and finally 24% of males and 42% of females strongly agree.

**WOMEN CAN EXPRESS THEMSELVES FREELY THROUGH BLOGS:** 17.5% of males and 16.5% of females strongly disagree on this statement, 29.5% of males and 17% of females are neutral, 17.5% of males and 41.5% of females agree, and finally 35.5% of males and 25% of females strongly agree.

**BLOGS SATISFY MY NEED FOR EXPRESSION:** 12% of males and 16.5 of females strongly disagree about this statement, 6% of males disagree, 12% of males and 16.5% of females are neutral, 47% of males and 59% of females agree, and finally, 23% of males and 8% of females strongly agree.

**BLOGGERS FEEL MORE SELF CONFIDENT WHEN THEY BLOG:** 12% of males and 8% of females strongly disagree about this statement, 6% of males disagree, 41% of males and 17% of females are neutral, 35% of males and 58% of females agree, and finally 6% of males and 16.5% of females strongly agree.
**Most Bloggers are Men:** 12% of males and 25% of females strongly disagree that most bloggers are men, 23.5% of males and 42% of females disagree, 29.5% of males and 34% of females are neutral, and finally 35% of males agree.

**T-tests, Means and Standard Deviations**

Means and standard deviations were calculated for all scale questions. The findings were based on a 5 point scale where 1 means “never”, 2 means “rarely”, 3 means “sometimes”, 4 means “often” and 5 means “always”. Significance level was calculated at 0.05. Results were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you receive comments on your blog?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you write comments on other blogs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>3.17*</td>
<td>.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you respond to comments?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs allow equal participation of men and women.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs are means for self expression.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women can express themselves freely.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs satisfy my need for expression.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more self confident when I blog.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>3.74*</td>
<td>1.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most bloggers are men.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>2.88*</td>
<td>1.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.763</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*t-tests were significant at a 0.05 significance level.

From the results of calculating the mean it can be seen that most of the answers were between “sometimes” and “often”. The only statement that averaged “rarely” was answered by females and is “most bloggers are men”.

Meshreky, 2009
The t-test results indicate that there is a significance between gender and the statements: do you write comments on other blogs, I feel more self confident when I blog, and most bloggers are men. Females are significantly more likely to write comments on other’s blogs, and to feel more self-confident when they blog. Interestingly, males are significantly more likely to believe that most bloggers are men.

There was no significance between gender and the statements: do you receive comments on your blog, do you respond to comments, blogs allow equal participation of men and women, blogs are means for self expression, women can express themselves freely, and blogs satisfy my need for expression.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: What do bloggers blog about?

Results show that bloggers blog more about their specific topics of interest in addition to social and cultural issues. Males are more interested in discussing politics while females are more interested in blogging about social issues. This supports the findings of “Mapping the Arabic Blogoshpere” research conducted by Harvard University where it states that males tend to be more critical of politics than females.

RQ2: Who are the bloggers’ target audience?

The majority of the sample in general and females in specific blog to people they do not know, they write for the sake of blogging itself. However, it was found that males blog more for their friends. In addition, females are more likely to blog to themselves than males.

RQ3: Is bloggers’ target audience gender oriented?

It is worth mentioning that males as well as females target all readers regardless of the gender.

RQ4: Are female bloggers being attacked or threatened more than men?

One quarter of the sample experience threats over their blogs in addition, males and females get threatened through their blogs in equal percentages. Moreover, bloggers tend to ignore such threats and continue writing as they enjoy the freedom of expression more than their fear of getting threatened.
**RQ5:** Do bloggers comment and respond to comments on their blogs?

One third of the sample receives comments on their blogs. However, females do receive more comments than males. The majority of bloggers receive comments from both females and males; nevertheless males receive more comments from mostly females and vice versa.

**RQ6:** Does gender affect bloggers’ decision in responding to comments?

More than half of the sample sometimes writes comments; however males are more active in terms of writing comments on blogs in addition, both males and females write comments on any blogs regardless of the gender of the blog’s owner.

One third of the sample responds to comments written on their blogs, however, females are more involved in this regard. All the sample responds to comments made by males as well as females which indicates that gender did not affect whether to respond or not to comments.

**RQ7:** Do blogs allow equal participation of women and men in discussions?

More than one third of the sample strongly agrees that blogs allow equal participation of men and women but more females than males strongly supports this statement. This clarifies that women find blogs as a means to express their thoughts and opinions.
RQ8: How did bloggers know about blogs?

The majority of males knew about blogs through the Internet while the majority of females knew about them through the friends. Most of the respondents have been using blogs for at least more than one year; half of the females have been using blogs for more than two years and the bulk of males are using blogs from three and four years.

RQ9: Are blogs a means for self expression to bloggers?

All participants in the sample agree about this statement. It is worth noting that no one in the sample disagrees with this statement.

RQ10: Are blogs a means for self expression among women bloggers in Egypt?

Almost half of the bloggers agree that blogs are a means for self expression; the majority of females strongly agree about this statement while the majority of males agree. Most of sample agrees that women can express themselves freely through blogs; the majority of males strongly agree about this statement while the majority of females agree.

RQ11: Does writing blogs help in self satisfaction?

More than half of the sample agrees that blogs satisfy the need for self expression; and the majority of males and females agree on this statement as well. These results explain the dramatic increase in blog usage.
RQ12: Do bloggers feel more self confident when they blog?

The greater part of the sample agree that bloggers feel more self confident when they blog; the majority of females agrees about this statement while the majority of males were neutral. In addition, one of the most significant findings of this study is that females are more likely to feel self confident when they blog than males.

R13: Are blogs gendered?

Most of the females disagree about the statement of “most bloggers are men” while more males agree. From previous research conducted it is true that most blogs are men however recent studies are assuring that the number of female bloggers is in significant increase.

RQ14: Does gender have an effect on why bloggers use blogs?

For both males and females, the two main reasons for using blogs were to express themselves freely in addition to the fact that blogs offer different view points. It was noted from the results that females are more likely than males to use blogs in expressing themselves and offering different points of view.
Chapter Six

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of the findings

The majority of the blogosphere is between the age group of 26-30 years old. The sample was divided into females and males in almost equal percentages which gave credibility and reliability to the results. More than half of the sample checks and visits blogs more than once per day, which indicates their high level of activity when it comes to blogging.

The highest group who visited blogs several time during the day were the PhD holders in addition to the age group 36 to above 40 years old.

All PhD holders in the sample in addition to the majority of the age group 26-35 blogged about their topics of interest. Moreover, the second age group in addition to PhD holders blog about topics that are not discussed in any other medium.

Social issues were a main concern in blogging where the majority who were disusing such topic were graduates and in the age group between 16-25. Interestingly, political issues were more discussed by bloggers whose age is between 16-25 years old. Most of the undergraduates and those whose age is between 16-25 are interested in blogging about cultural issues.
Most of the PhD holders, graduates, undergraduates, and master degree holders blog to people they don’t know. The highest two groups that receive threats over their blogs are the graduates and people whose age is between 26-35 years old.

From the literature review, it was found that the issue of threats over blogging is quite important to the extent that some bloggers actually left blogging to avoid such threats. However, the new trend is that all bloggers as well as blog owners are trying to develop new strategies by which they can avoid or at least minimize the amount of unacceptable comments over blogs.

As shown in the data analysis section, bloggers do receive threats over their blogs and these results are consistent with findings of previous research where it was stated that women tend to get more comments, mostly negative, on their blogs. Ghada Abdel Al, the creator of “wanna-b-a-bride” blog and one of the most well know feminism bloggers mentions that “Criticism comes mostly from men; they feel they have to attack me simply because I use the expression ‘wanna be a bride’ and criticize men” (Abdel Al, 2009).

The results assure that blogs are a means for self expression. Abdel Al stated that the reason she is using blogs is to challenge the patriarchal beliefs and norms of the Egyptian society. Abdel Al adds: “men who read my blog pose the question how I dare reject men who are elevated to canonical ranks; if you expose men’s flaws, you are perceived as a criminal” (Abdel Al, 2009).
The results support the assumption that gender does affect blogs’ usage. Blogs are of course a very unique medium to females especially in Egypt being under an authoritarian regime where they can express themselves. Not only do they talk about political or religious issues but more importantly about social issues that affect their lives. Social issues discussed, such as premarital sex, circumcision, marriage, social experiences and opinions. Females have finally found a ground where they can speak and be heard. It was shown in recent research that females have started to raise awareness about the importance of addressing any issues that are related to the female status.

It is worth mentioning that men think that bloggers are gendered and that most bloggers are men, whereas females did not agree with this line of thinking.

Although by the year 2009, blogging is not considered as a new medium, however, most of the research assures that it is still growing and still gaining more audience more than ever. It was demonstrated that blogging can serve minorities who can not speak or talk about what they actually think. Blogging give them the chance – even if it is not full especially in Egypt- to express what they really think and propose alternative solutions by which they can help raise awareness as well as fight for their rights.
CONCLUSIONS

Blogging is not just a phenomenon that encourages the discussion of personal and public concerns, but has become a means for developing an awareness of current social, political and religious issues. As blogs increase and strengthen digital communities they, in turn, help provide ground on which people can discuss any topic that they believe is relevant, useful and timely. The blog is also a platform for individuals everywhere to discover their voice, to present their thoughts. It greatly assists personal growth and development, making the individual a more active and knowledgeable member of his or her community.

Research indicates that the blogging trend is on the rise worldwide. What’s more, recent statistics predict that the number of blogs and bloggers will continue to increase over time, and point out that women are active users of blogs and do, themselves, initiate their own blogs and contribute to others on a wide scale.

Blogs allow women an open forum through which to directly express their views and opinions on any topic - even delicate or controversial ones that may be difficult for them to discuss openly in closed societies. Blogs allow women a means by which to express themselves, to learn from others, and to consider other viewpoints. Female bloggers create for themselves a community within their communities in which they can more safely take a proactive role, lead discussion, and grow in personal and professional ways.
Although the number of bloggers online today is greater than ever, most of the users surveyed in Egypt were reluctant to fill out this study’s questionnaire, which relied on results from both genders to create an accurate representation of current blogger trends in Egypt. Additionally, academic research of online trends in Egypt is quite minimal; despite there being numerous articles on this subject. While the topic is still a relatively new one in Egypt and lacks substantial current documentation, the conclusive findings of this thesis indicate that the blogosphere within Egypt ranges in age from 26 to 30, with over half the sample taken during the course of the preparation of this thesis visiting blogs several times a day.

The findings indicate also that both males and females blog because it provides them freedom of expression and also the opportunity to be exposed to other opinions. Women who participated in the survey agreed more strongly than their male counterparts that blogs allow women in Egypt a means of self-expression. Over one third also concurred that blogs allow the equal participation of men and women.

An overall look at female bloggers in Egypt finds them pleased with this relatively new means of self expression, and most have indicated that blogging boosts their self confidence. Women expressed that they usually blog to people they don’t know, they blog primarily to express themselves. Reviewing the most popular topics addressed by bloggers in Egypt, men prefer to use their blogs to discuss politics, while women are more keen to blog about social and cultural events and issues.
The findings of this thesis, while pointing to the fact that blogs have become a vital means by which women can exercise their rights more freely where previously they may have been denied freedom of expression or access to other people and their viewpoints, the study does indicate that there is still a great need in Egypt for greater impartiality online. To this day, blogs are still under the watch of the Egyptian authorities, who censor and penalize participants should their discussions lead to heated debate involving religious, anti-governmental or political attitudes contradicting those held up by the government.

Female bloggers in Egypt today still feel stifled by the censorship extended to blogs and by their exposure, through blogging, to online harassment. Freedom of expression is not yet truly championed through blogging in Egypt and, often, exposes female bloggers to attitudes they may find offensive, and to users who intrude and offend. Women, while they have achieved great levels of advancement through blogging, are not yet entirely fulfilled or able to take full advantage of their online presence. Blogging, like all public arenas, has great benefits and great risk.

**STUDY LIMITATIONS**

Although the number of bloggers is increasing more than ever, it was quite difficult to find bloggers who are willing to fill out the questionnaire. Furthermore, because this study is gender focused, it was important to have a balance between the number of males versus females in the sample in order to have meaningful and
representative results. In addition, academic research on blogs in Egypt is very limited although there is a significant research body on blogs worldwide.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Further research is needed to test if blogs aim to challenge the predominant gender assumption of the society trying to achieve more liberating ways for women to exist in the world. More research is needed to help in obtaining a better understanding of gender issues in relation to blogging activities.

The effect of blogging needs to be tested in the authoritarian parts of the world where people are not allowed to express themselves through any form of media like newspaper or television. The role of blogs in such parts will be interesting to observe bearing in mind that oppressive regimes might tend to fully censor blog content if they threaten the government’s policies.
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APPENDICES

**Questionnaire**

Dear respondent:

My name is Irene Meshreky and I am doing my Masters degree at The American University in Cairo. I am very interested about the phenomenon of blogging and therefore I am conducting a research about bloggers in Egypt and the Middle East to represent my thesis. I would appreciate if you can respond to the questions below. Your responses are very important to my research.

Thanks in advance for your time and cooperation.

Please Mark a (√) next to the right answer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1. Age</th>
<th>☐ 16 -20 years 1</th>
<th>☐ 21 -25 years 2</th>
<th>☐ 26 -30 years 3</th>
<th>☐ 31 -35 years 4</th>
<th>☐ 36 -40 years 5</th>
<th>☐ Above 40 years 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q2. Gender</td>
<td>☐ Male 1</td>
<td>☐ Female 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q3. Education</td>
<td>☐ High school diploma (thanaweya amma or equivalent) 1</td>
<td>☐ Undergraduate Student 2</td>
<td>☐ University graduate 3</td>
<td>☐ Graduate Student 4</td>
<td>☐ Master’s degree 5</td>
<td>☐ PhD degree 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4. Country of residence</td>
<td>☐ Egypt 1</td>
<td>☐ Out of Egypt 2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Q5. Do you have a blog</td>
<td>☐ Yes 1</td>
<td>☐ No 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>If your answer is no, please stop here</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>Q6. How often do you visit blogs?</td>
<td>☐ More than once a day 1</td>
<td>☐ Once a day 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q7. What do you blog about</td>
<td>☐ my specific topics of interest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>☐ topics that are not discussed in any other medium</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>☐ social issues</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>☐ political issues</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>☐ current issues</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>☐ entertainment issues</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>☐ cultural issues</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Others (please specify)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8. Please describe your target audience.</td>
<td>☐ myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(you can choose more than one answer)</td>
<td>☐ Family</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Friends</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ People I don’t know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Others (please specify)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9. My target audience is</td>
<td>☐ females only</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ males only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ both</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q10 Have you ever been threatened because of a blog or comment?</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>If no please go to Q12</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11 If you answered yes to Q10, please explain</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Q12 | Do you receive comments on your blog?  
If your answer is never, go to Q 14 | □ Never | 1 |
|     |                                       | □ Rarely | 2 |
|     |                                       | □ Sometimes | 3 |
|     |                                       | □ Often | 4 |
|     |                                       | □ Always | 5 |
| Q13 | Who do you get more comments from on your blog? | □ Mostly females | 1 |
|     |                                               | □ Mostly Males | 2 |
|     |                                               | □ Both | 3 |
| Q14 | Do you write comments on other blogs?  
If your answer is never, go to Q16 | □ Never | 1 |
|     |                                            | □ Rarely | 2 |
|     |                                            | □ Sometimes | 3 |
|     |                                            | □ Often | 4 |
|     |                                            | □ Always | 5 |
| Q15 | Do you write more comments on blogs that are owned by | □ Mostly females | 1 |
|     |                                               | □ Mostly males | 2 |
|     |                                               | □ both | 3 |
| Q16 | Do you respond to comments  
If your answer is never, go to Q 18? | □ Never | 1 |
<p>|     |                                            | □ Rarely | 2 |
|     |                                            | □ Sometimes | 3 |
|     |                                            | □ Often | 4 |
|     |                                            | □ Always | 5 |
| Q17 | Do you respond to comments made by | □ Mostly females | 1 |
|     |                                              | □ Mostly males | 2 |
|     |                                              | □ Both | 3 |
| Q18 | Blogs allow equal participation of women and men in discussions | □ strongly disagree | 1 |
|     |                                               | □ disagree | 2 |
|     |                                               | □ neutral | 3 |
|     |                                               | □ agree | 4 |
| Q19 | How did you know about blogs? | □ strongly agree | 5 |
|     |                               | □ Friends       | 1 |
|     |                               | □ Magazines     | 2 |
|     |                               | □ Newspapers    | 3 |
|     |                               | □ Internet      | 4 |
|     |                               | □ Others (please specify) | 5 |
| Q20 | How long have you been writing a blog? | □ less than a year | 1 |
|     |                               | □ [specify number of years] | 2 |
| Q21 | Blogs are a means for self expression | □ strongly disagree | 1 |
|     |                               | □ disagree      | 2 |
|     |                               | □ neutral       | 3 |
|     |                               | □ agree         | 4 |
|     |                               | □ strongly agree | 5 |
| Q22 | Women's opinions are more freely expressed in blogs than in any other medium | □ strongly disagree | 1 |
|     |                               | □ disagree      | 2 |
|     |                               | □ neutral       | 3 |
|     |                               | □ agree         | 4 |
|     |                               | □ strongly agree | 5 |
| Q23 | Blogs satisfy my need of expressing myself | □ strongly disagree | 1 |
|     |                               | □ disagree      | 2 |
|     |                               | □ neutral       | 3 |
|     |                               | □ agree         | 4 |
|     |                               | □ strongly agree | 5 |
| Q24 | I feel more self confident when I blog | □ strongly disagree | 1 |
|     |                               | □ disagree      | 2 |
|     |                               | □ neutral       | 3 |
|     |                               | □ agree         | 4 |
|     |                               | □ strongly agree | 5 |
| Q25 | I think most bloggers are men | □ strongly disagree | 1 |
|     |                               | □ disagree      | 2 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q26</th>
<th>Do you blog because: (you can choose more than one)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ you want to spend free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ you want to express yourself freely</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ it offers different viewpoints</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ it is a reliable source of news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ it is easy to use</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ it provides wealth of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ it is easy to maintain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ it has a huge archive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ it has a user friendly search engine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ it is a credible source of news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ it offers in depth analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ you want to entertain yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C

End of Questionnaire
Thank You