

Nomination form

Minerva Informatics Equality Award



Applicants

Steering Committee of Alice & Eve: a celebration of women in computing

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¹ Sophie became involved in the Alice & Eve initiative when she was a PhD student at the University of Twente.

Summary

The goal of Alice & Eve is to celebrate the achievements of women in computing, from Ada Lovelace to upcoming stars, such as Feliene Hermans. Since 2020, multiple Alice & Eve events have been organised, consisting of a symposium, a poster competition, an exhibition portraying the achievements of very diverse women in computer science, and an accompanying exhibition booklet. The exhibition has been on display in Dutch computer science departments, and at the Dutch national ICT conference. A digital version of the exhibition exists at <https://www.aliceandeve.nl/>, and several movies portraying women in computer science were created for this digital exhibition.

Alice & Eve: a celebration of women in computing

Alice & Eve is the Dutch initiative that tackles the gender disparity problem in Computer Science in the Netherlands. The ambitious goal of Alice & Eve is to change this. Through various activities, Alice & Eve presents inspiring women in computing to the public, students, and professionals:

- through yearly physical Alice & Eve events,
- through the Alice & Eve exhibition, and
- through an Alice & Eve digital platform.

Next, we discuss these three parts of Alice & Eve in more detail:

Alice & Eve events: Alice & Eve events stand for a unique and festive event, which is women-focused, but not women-exclusive. Alice & Eve is explicitly not about gender issues within computer science. Rather, the team behind Alice & Eve has chosen to highlight that research done by women is simply awesome, excellent, and exciting.

An Alice & Eve event consists of:

- A symposium with mainly female speakers covering various topics, such as quantum computing, cybersecurity, and software engineering. The female speakers always give superb presentations, as such providing excellent role models for young scientists.
- A poster competition where BSc, MSc, PhD students and post-docs compete for company-sponsored prizes, all sponsored by the IT industry. The poster jury consists of promising young female researchers from various Dutch universities. We are happy to see that not only academics but also students at the Universities of Applied Sciences won such prizes. Moreover, a poster competition creates a lot of interaction, with lively discussions in front of the poster boards.

The first Alice & Eve event was held at the University of Twente in 2020. This was followed by events at the Radboud University in 2021, at Delft University of Technology in 2022, and at the Universiteit van Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Centrum Wiskunde & Informatica in 2023. Preparations for Alice & Eve 2024 in Leiden have started. Even though every organizer brings new elements to the program, the overall setup of the program always contains these main ingredients. Links to the Alice & Eve events can be found at <https://www.utwente.nl/en/eemcs/aliceandeve/>.



Alice & Eve exhibition: An exhibition portraying female computer scientists highlight the role and contributions of women from the Netherlands and abroad in computer science. Initially, 25 female computer scientists were portrayed, but in 2022 5 more portraits of female computer scientists working in the Netherlands were added. Much attention is paid to ensuring diversity in age, research area and ethnic background among the women portrayed. Thus, in addition to relatively well-known female computer scientists, such as Ada Lovelace and Grace Hopper, the exhibition also portrays, for example, Qiheng Hu, who brought the Internet to China, Sana Odeh, founder of Arab Women in Computing, and Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay, who made important contributions in bioinformatics, while leading a research institute in Calcutta. The exhibition also portrays several Dutch female computer scientists, such as the first Dutch female professors (Franciska de Jong and Frances Brazier) and the 2011, 2013 and 2021 and Dutch ICT award winners (Bettina Speckmann, Marieke Huisman, and Felienne Hermans). We believe that this diversity in the way women are portrayed is important to showcase that all women can be successful in computer science.

The exhibition is set up to be easily extendible, and we do encourage organizers of Alice & Eve events to add portrayals of additional female computer scientists.

The exhibition has travelled to numerous places in the Netherlands (ICT.OPEN, VU, CWI, UvA, RUG, UL, RU...) and will be traveling abroad (Aachen 2024). Moreover, it is always on display during ICT.Open, the Dutch national computer science conference.

Moreover, a booklet with more extensive portrayals of the 25 female computer scientists initially on display in the exhibition has been created. The booklet was initially developed to accompany the exhibition, but it also has proved its use on its own, for example by distributing it among first year computer science students, to participants in Hack4Her, the only female-focused student hackathon in the Netherlands, or to policy makers.



Alice & Eve digital platform: Also a digital version of the exhibition, has been developed, which can be found at <https://www.aliceandeve.nl/home>. It targets a wider audience, particularly high school students (and their parents and teachers). To make it appealing for this target group, special care has been given to collect photo and video material, as well as related games, in addition to the textual descriptions of the female computer scientists.

When we realized that there was not much video material about some of the portrayed female computer scientists (mainly those working in the Netherlands), we decided to create videos about their work. These videos can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/@aliceeve8791/videos>.



Impact of Alice & Eve

It is well-known that inspiring role models are a crucial influence on people's career and life choices. Alice & Eve provides those role models, both historical and women that are still active in computer science. Moreover, the role models that are still active in computer science can be met in real life during the events. The Alice & Eve events attract every year about 100 participants, of which approximately 70 – 80 % of women. Various young women indicated how encouraged they felt to see that - for once - they were not a minority. Changing the perception of women in computing cannot be achieved overnight. Rather, this is a long-term project, and establishing a yearly festive event on this topic is the right thing to work towards this change. The Alice & Eve initiative started as a plan to organize a one-day event in Twente, but it has taken a much larger scale than expected: the upcoming edition in Leiden will be the 5th edition.

Positive and Festive. Alice & Eve is an event with very positive vibes, celebrating women in computing and showing that it is normal for women to participate in the scientific top. The beautiful design of the exhibition and booklet, created by a talented BSc student, underlines the festive character.

Diversity in Diversity. Alice & Eve truly fosters diversity. It spans all areas of computer science and explicitly includes both research universities and universities of applied sciences. Further, the organizers of Alice & Eve have paid special attention to **diversity** when selecting the women to be portrayed. This is important: most accounts on women's work in computing, highlight mainly British and American contributions. Alice & Eve has chosen a broader perspective, including women from Europe, Asia, and the Arab world.

A lasting format. Alice & Eve is organized annually in the same format: symposium, poster competition, and booklet. The Steering Committee oversees the organization, and importantly, it ensures the required continuation to achieve Alice & Eve's ambitious goals to change the people's perception of women in computer science.

Broadly Scoped. The Alice & Eve exhibition has travelled to the various computer science departments in the Netherlands, as well as abroad. Moreover, every year, it is on display during the national ICT research event. This ensures that a large audience has been able to see the exhibition. The booklet accompanying the exhibition has been useful also for many other occasions, because it provides a very simple means to showcase the contributions of women in computing. The digital version of the exhibition has been developed, which has broadened the scope and impact of Alice & Eve, enabling it to reach not only students of (applied) universities but also high school pupils.

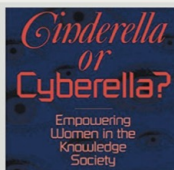
Nancy Hafkin

Was head of the UN Pan African Development Information System cooperative from 1987 to 1997, supporting the dissemination of ICT across the African continent



Became inducted into the Hall of Fame for operationalizing email networks in 24 African countries before the realization of full African internet

Nancy has maintained a focus on the importance of women in technology: "if a country does not invest in female resources, it loses half of the productivity it might have"

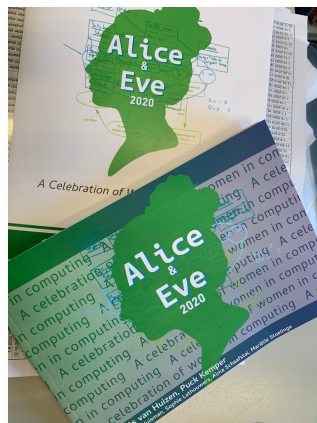


Contributed to the promotion of gender awareness in the field of ICT; writing - among others - a book on the usage of ICT for the empowerment of women

Got the 'Nancy Hafkin Prize for Innovation in Communications in Africa' named after her, recognizing outstanding initiatives using ICT for development



UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE



Estefanía Talavera @eTalaveraM · Jan 24, 2020

Congrats to the "Alice & Eve" organizers! It was a great event with inspiring speakers and posters. Looking forward to find out more works from women in computer science in the next edition 🧡 @univgroningen @BernoulliInsti2 #aliceandeve @UTwente



Informatics Institute University of Amsterdam @UvA_IvI · Nov 3, 2023 ...

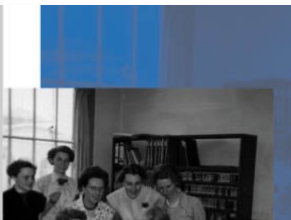
Last week @Lab42UvA hosted the Alice & Eve 2023 workshop celebrating women in computing! It was a highly successful event with posters, inspiring talks from female researchers, and an engaging panel! Read the more about it here: @UvA_Science 🔗



Computer Science, TU Darmstadt @CS_TUDarmstadt · Nov 12, 2021 ...

Professor Ahmad-Reza Sadeghi (@RealSystemSec) will chair a discussion panel this afternoon at Alice&Eve, a workshop celebrating women in Computing. We wish all participants in Nijmegen a fabulous event!

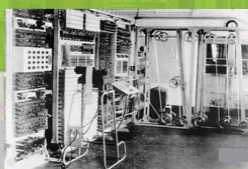
In 1954, for which Aad had made several educational trips to the United Kingdom and the United States, the first - successful - electromechanical computer was created in Dutch soil. This computer, the ARRA II (Automatische Rekenmachine Amsterdam), would take over the arduous calculatory tasks that had previously been done by the group of women. Nevertheless, its introduction did not make those women any less indispensable. Rather, it rendered them deft programmers: they would no longer do calculations by hand, but they



Ada's contribution to Computer Science is profound, both technically and philosophically. She did not only predict the rise of applications such as iTunes and Netflix 150 years before they were actually realized, she also brought together reason and imagination, that were, before her contributions, polar opposites of each other. Today, her legacy remains visible in every-day life, with the respectable programming language 'Ada' still being used around the globe in, e.g., the healthcare and aviation industries. Lastly, one must not forget that her contributions were done at a time and place where her gender was not necessarily contributory to her role as a computer scientist. Each year, therefore,



As it appears, Bletchley Park was not only the place whence the Germans were attacked most fatally - albeit with Mathematics rather than bayonets - it was equally the birthplace of the first fully-electronic and programmable special-purpose computer: the Colossus. Unfortunately, due to primarily male employees being associated with this computer, the entirety of Bletchley Park seems to be remembered as a male endeavour. In response to this imbalance, commemoration efforts have been made over the past years to bring these women together, giving them a voice. This task was complex, though: even 70 years after the war ended, the women of Bletchley Park still take serious their oath of secrecy. As a matter of fact, not rare is the occurrence that the friends and families of these women learn about their participation only by reading about it in a book or newspaper, rather than hearing it from them directly.



The Colossus

© Alan Turing

57



References

- Overview to all Alice & Eve events: <https://www.utwente.nl/en/eemcs/aliceandeve/>
- Digital exhibition: <https://www.aliceandeve.nl/>
- Alice & Eve exhibition booklet:
<https://fmt.ewi.utwente.nl/events/aliceandeve2020/booklet-13-01-2020.pdf>
- Alice & Eve videos: <https://www.youtube.com/@aliceeve8791/videos>

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