

MAVEN AND DISRUPTED'S COFFEE WITH STRANGERS SUMMARY



DisruptED19, hosted by ICTAM, engaged a diverse group of disruptive thinkers including movers, shakers and policy makers. Together, we explored the future of work.

This ground-breaking two-day conference sparked meaningful conversations about how to create a stronger, more successful future for youth and employees and employers. One that embraces technology as a tool for improvement.

Maven partnered with DisruptED's Coffee with Strangers roundtables to engage with over 70 conference participants on five topics.

The one-hour segment invited attendees to sit down for a facilitated discussion with their choice of 40 tech-related topics. After 30 minutes, participants shuffled to join a different discussion.

Below are key comments and takeaways from these conversations.

TOPIC 1: PARENTING IN A TECH DRIVEN WORLD

FACILITATOR: MARNIE GROENEVELD, MITT AND MAVEN COMMITTEE MEMBER

NOTE-TAKER: ALAN MACPHERSON, CAA

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 10 PEOPLE

AREAS REPRESENTED: PARENTS, IT INDUSTRY, DEVELOPER, AGRICULTURE, DIGITAL THREAT ASSESSMENT, NOT-FOR-PROFIT, EDUCATION

RELATIONSHIP WITH TECH

Varied among the groups. Only a few people identified they had a fairly good relationship. One person has a career in tech, another said they were an early adopter. While another participant thought they were comfortable but said **"I don't even know what I don't know sometimes."**

Addressed how many technology devices have addictive qualities and acknowledged their own personal habits with cell phones, tablets and social media. One person worried about how this reduces face-to-face time and the change in social interactions.

INTEGRATING TECH IN YOUR KIDS' LIVES

The first issue raised was how easily their kids navigated devices but there was a concern about their awareness of potential consequences from Internet posts. Some participants think their children's relationship with tech was **addictive**. They worried about their child's engagement, creativity, and ability to problem solve and wondered how we achieve disengagement. This is an interesting dichotomy, as others argued that tech promotes many of these traits.

Establishing **boundaries around tech usage** is important and varied between participants. Some try to stay off-line at home, others say no phones an hour before bed, or limit the amount of screen time. Many acknowledged the deep attachment that most kids have with their phones and tablets.

Kids YouTube was viewed as a weird rabbit-hole. Parents noticed high amounts of advertisements and were unhappy with age restrictions. Some said their kids have seen "crazy stuff" on the platform.

ACHIEVING GENDER PARITY IN STEM

It would be beneficial to have more of these conversations between parents and educators regarding children and their relationship with tech.

Most participants discussed the way their children use technology, but many did not see a direct link to careers in tech. One person said their daughter loves math and science, but they hope she becomes a doctor. They rank IT low on the list of job opportunities.

Robotics, LEGO, coding camps and educational apps were listed as positive pathways to connect their kids with tech.

TOPIC 2: NAVIGATING PARENTAL LEAVE AND CHILDCARE

FACILITATOR: ANNE DAENINCK, GREAT WEST LIFE AND MAVEN COMMITTEE MEMBER

NOTE-TAKER: SHIRLEY MAYADEWI, MANITOBA HYDRO

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 8

AREAS REPRESENTED: MOTHERS, LEADERSHIP ROLES, RETAIL, CONTRACTOR PEOPLE

PARENTAL LEAVE AND CAREERS

There's a general fear of the unknown and an air of uncertainty about returning to work after parental leave. One participant is concerned about her future temporary replacement and the decisions that will be made while away.

Another participant was considering being a stay-at-home mom but re-integrating the workforce after an extended period concerned her.

Another participant was in a contract position and when she was 7 months pregnant, her contract was not renewed. After giving birth, the participant was concerned about how her leave would affect her career. Fortunately, she found a job.

HELPFUL GOVERNMENT AND WORKPLACE POLICIES

Acknowledgments were made that parental leave is better than it was decades ago.

Workplace policies that support and respect family values and offer options like: flex-time, working from home and part-time employment were appealing to participants.

It was noted that it's difficult to find female employees and instructors in IT.

Child care availability and cost are a major concern for anyone who considers having children. A few participants were fortunate to have family members help with child-care and said it made a difference.

Drop off and pick up times were the biggest limitations especially if the workplace doesn't provide flexibility.

For example, one participant allowed her staff member to leave early to pick up her child to avoid being charged extra per minute and potentially losing the spot or having Child and Family Services involved.

Salary top up from companies during maternity would be very beneficial.

Participants appreciate the current government policy that requires companies to provide job security during parental leave. However, even though it's illegal, companies often still don't hire pregnant women. Participants commended a tech company in BC that hired a visibly pregnant woman and even provided a transitional plan for her leave.

PARITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE

There's a stigma for women taking time off after having a child. However, there appears to be worse stigma for men taking the time off to care or help care for the baby. More work needs to be done to eliminate this kind of stigma.

Everyone is trying to figure out ways to make career and parenting happen. However, women still bear the brunt of making those accommodations.

One participant said moms need to get over the idea that they must be there for everything and give 110% to both career and motherhood.

A participant's husband took a few weeks off to help care for the baby and ended up helping her deal with postpartum depression. She said men would have more empathy (for their partner, colleagues, employees) if they're given and actually take the opportunity to go on parental leave.



TOPIC 3: EDUCATORS AND THEIR ROLE IN TEACHING TECH

FACILITATOR: CRAIG GLENNIE, ST. JAMES- ASSINIBOIA SCHOOL DIVISION

NOTE-TAKER: LASHA GLENNIE, TECH WEST CANADA

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 35

AREAS REPRESENTED: RRC, MITACS, UCN, PEMBINA TRAILS, PTEC VP, SEINE RIVER, FARMER'S EDGE, TO MNP, PEMBINA TRAILS LIBRARY AND LITERACY, COMPUGEN, WISE KID-NETIC ENERGY, STUDENT, MANITOBA EDUCATION, HIGH SCHOOL AND POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS AND PRINCIPLE

HOW TECHNOLOGY HAS TRANSFORMED THE ROLE OF AN EDUCATOR

VR has made industrial arts classes safer, apps have helped enrich science classes and coding clubs are sharpening student's problem-solving skills.

Educators from northern communities that struggle with Wi-Fi connectivity said students notice what they're missing out-lack of cell service, dial up etc.

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY AND SUGGESTED CURRICULUM CHANGES

There is not enough consistency between educators. For example, there was a big push for SMART Boards a few years ago. Some educators have trained themselves and are excited about using them, others are not as comfortable and use it as a "glorified projector."

More research and training need to go into purchasing new technology. This will help prevent tech from being underutilized or not used at all.

Technology requires continuous learning. It was pointed out that there are lots of resources and supports but educators don't always have the time. Mentors, streamlined expectations and concrete examples of how to integrate tech would be helpful.

GENDER PARITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Emphasis on how tech is framed to students. Kids don't know what going into computer science entails and many girls tend to go into professions that 'help' others. There needs to be more awareness around the opportunities surrounding tech.

Some teachers found if they make girls team and co-ed teams, they have a lot more interest. They said it has to do with online culture and toxic male relationships. Having clubs that are girls/non-binary only is a good first step to help adjust the problem.

TOPIC 4: WOMEN IN TECH: BARRIERS, SUCCESSES AND THE FUTURE

FACILITATOR: HEATHER MILNE, ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET

NOTE-TAKER: LINDY SCHOLZ, GREAT WEST LIFE AND MAVEN COMMITTEE MEMBER

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 12

AREAS REPRESENTED: RETAIL, IT, DEVELOPER, TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANT, EDUCATOR

PATHWAYS INTO TECH

Career choice was influenced by culture. One participant who is Russian/English said she wanted to be a pilot but was told she couldn't. She took computer sciences but wasn't allowed to choose software development, so she went into IT marketing. In Canada, she took software development.

Participants daughter went to University of Victoria because it has the highest percentage of woman professors in the Computer Engineering program. Their daughter said that when she had **male teachers, they taught her to code "the boy's way."**

Someone else shared that they used to lead a tech education program. Ultimately, they left **the organization because they didn't agree with her philosophies.** She still works as an educator.

EXPERIENCES WORKING IN TECH AND BARRIERS

A few participants had male mentors and VP's encourage their career growth. They now give back by encouraging students as a sorority alumnus and supporting women in their workplace.

While working in a balanced workplace (50/50), participant noticed organizational decisions were better and more thought out. Another person works in a mainly male IT department and they have only seen one female IT person in 17 years. A third participant said they've done everything they can think of to get more women into the organization. They think **female role models from a young age is crucial.**

Not being able to work on parental leave, political correctness and cultural politeness and language on job postings were listed as barriers.



