On the byline gender gap

## By Steve Thorngate

March 4, 2011


Last month, VIDA published a tally of male and female bylines at a variety of thought-leader magazines in 2010. The results aren't pretty. At the Atlantic, men outnumbered women by a three-to-one ratio. The New Yorker was only slightly better, and Harper's and the New Republic were worse. Worst of all? The New York Review of Books, which favored men by a factor of six.

I counted up Century bylines for comparison. (I went with print magazine authors, both to maintain an apples-to-apples situation and to dodge the issue of contributing to the problem by putting my name on a blog post about it.) In 2010, there were about twice as many men as women in our pages. In other words, we're doing better at this than a lot of folks are, but the fact that we can say this with a two-to-one ratio speaks to the enormity of the broader problem.

This isn't a new debate, and if it were an easy thing to fix, the numbers would be better. But as Ann Friedman has argued for years, it's inadequate to write this off as
a supply-side problem--to maintain that the real problem is not that women have a harder time getting prominently published but that there just aren't as many of them writing. Recently Friedman created a new site to underscore this point: Lady Journos!, a Tumblr blog that, like other sites, curates long-form journalism published elsewhere--but focuses exclusively on female bylines.

I've added Lady Journos! to my feed reader. (Do you read the Century by RSS feed? If not, you should try it.) The site doesn't just make a rhetorical point; it also offers a practical tool for encountering more magazine writing by women.

