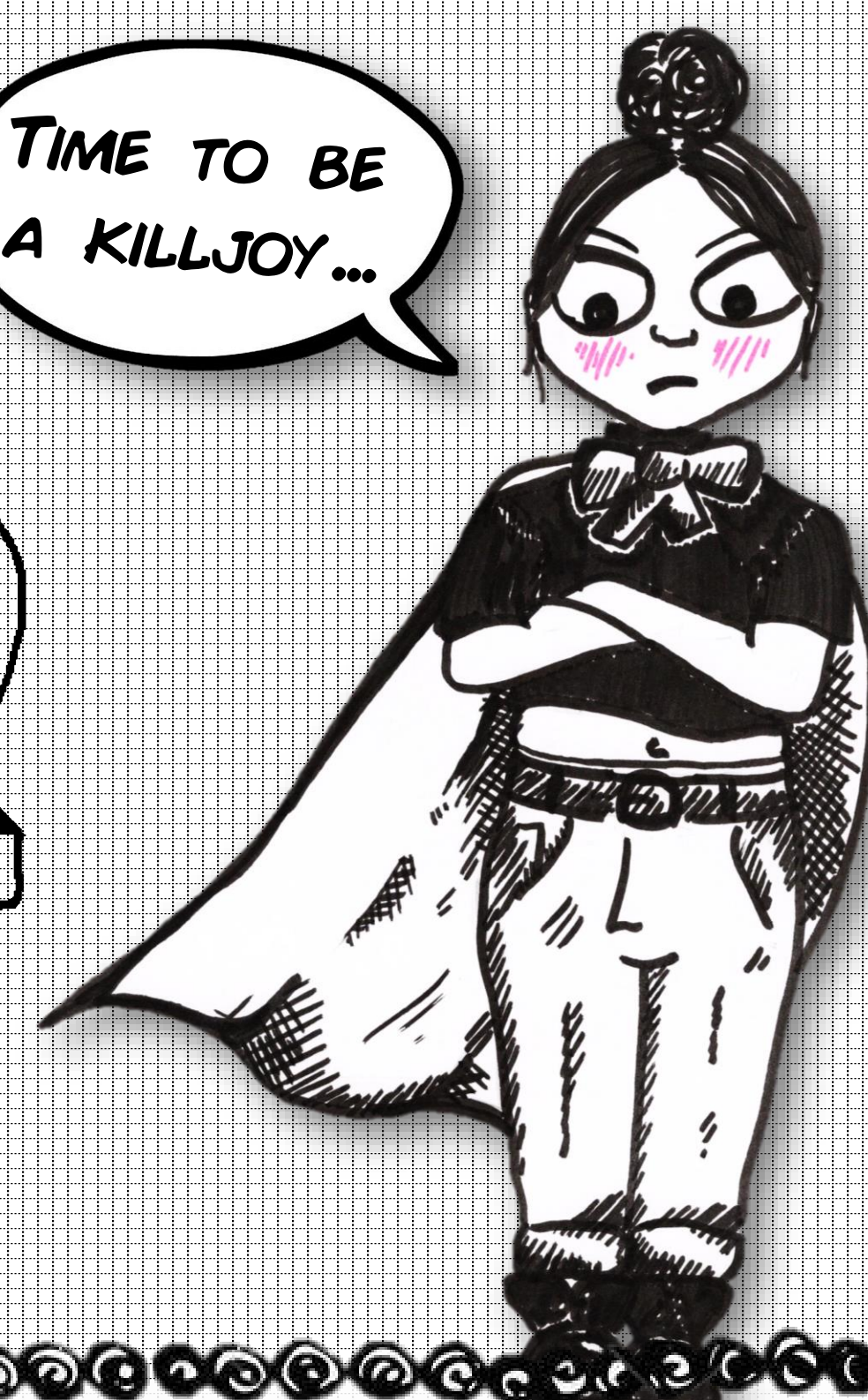


TIME TO BE A KILLJOY...



THE DISAPPOINTING ADVENTURES OF... HACKERGIRL_1852

BY SIÂN JM BROOKE

THE IMPORTANCE OF TELLING STORIES



Cyberpunk fiction and comics have become a key element of how hackers and creative programmers perceive themselves since the 1980's. The genre often romanticises historical Victorian figures, giving new life to "forgotten" women of hacking.

Sydney Padua (2015) wrote the steampunk comic based on the life of Ada Lovelace, the inventor of the first computer programme. This poster is (loosely) based on this style to reflect the remembering of women's history in technology and in spaces of hacking.



BROGRAMMERS NOUN / US / INFORMAL:

Overt sexism and hyper-masculinity has emerged in hackathons in recent years, in the form of the **BROGRAMMER**. The term is often used pejoratively but some male programmers use it positively to reflect how social and outgoing they are.

It gained popularity following a Mother Jones article entitled "Gangbang Interviews and Bikini Shots" which saw the recasting geek identity with a frat house swagger as a dangerous game.



A hiring advert at Stanford University asked prospective employees if they wanted to "Bro down and crush some code".

At the Disrupt 2013 hackathon the fictional mobile app **TitStare** was pitched.

Such discourses are typical of the programming subculture and the evolution of the uncool GEEK.

LITERALLY THE IT DEPARTMENT

EXCUSE ME GIRLS, DO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND SOMEONE QUALIFIED TO FIX MY COMPUTER?



THE OBLIVIOUS HACKER

Much scholarship points to the dearth of women in creative coding but provides little explanation for this absence. Tanczer (2015) shows that women do participate in the social spaces of hacking, but online they are masked by the obliviousness of male discourse.

SOCIAL JUSTICE WARRIORS (SJWs)

ESR (2015) dismisses those who critique the male dominance of hacking as SJWs and the enemy of the hackers "cult of meritocracy". A SJW is seen to be motivated by personal validation rather than political conviction. Those who speak out are **FEMINIST KILLJOYS** (Ahmed, 2010) disrupting a collective delusion of happiness and equality.

HACKER'S WIVES

Levy's (2010) work *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution* begins with a "Who's Who of Hacker Culture" with 52 men, 10 computers, and three women.

LOOKS LIKE I CAN ONLY BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY ANONYMOUSLY ONLINE!

M'LADY, LET ME HELP YOU WITH YOUR CODE



BREAKING GENDER CODE

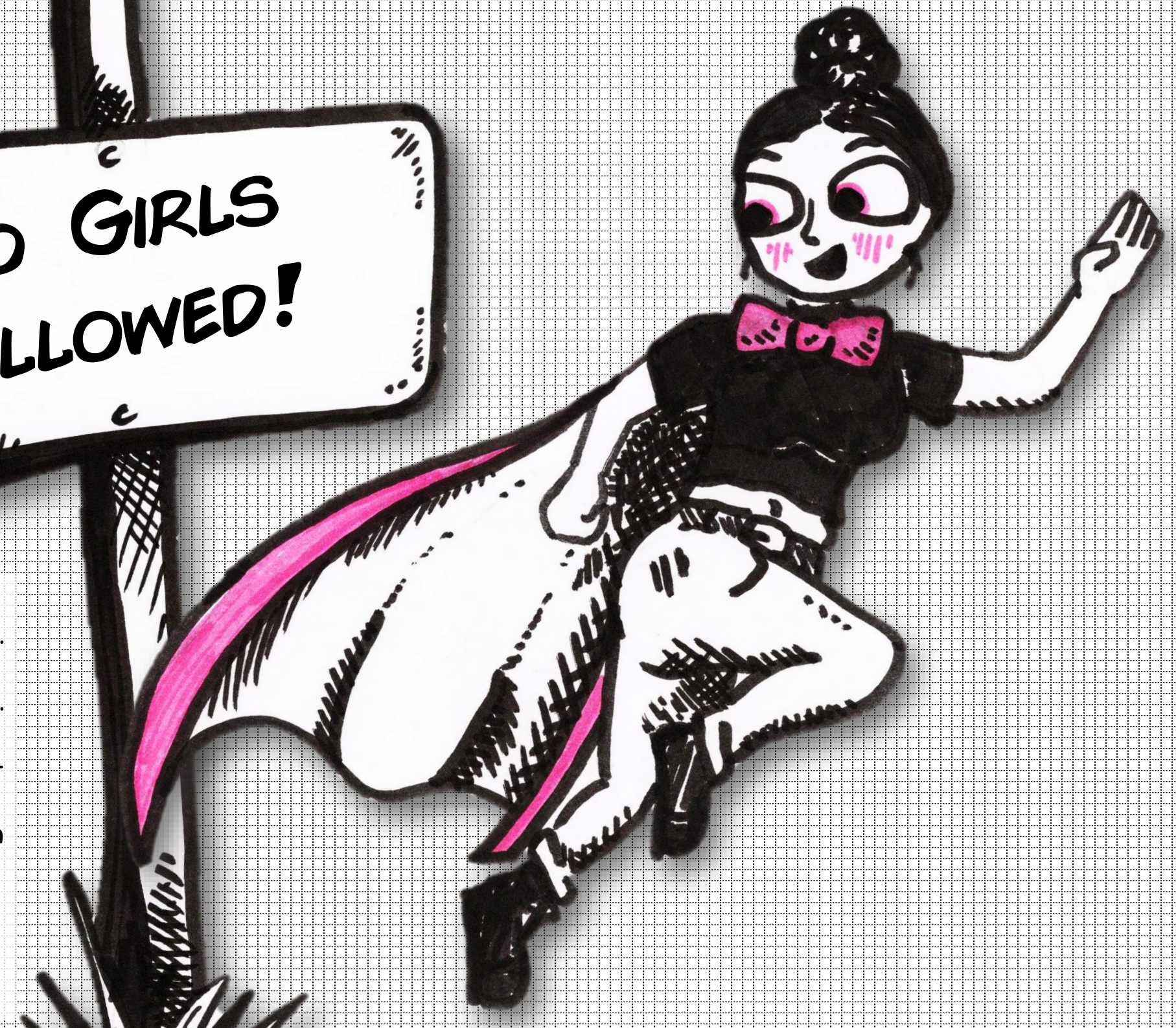
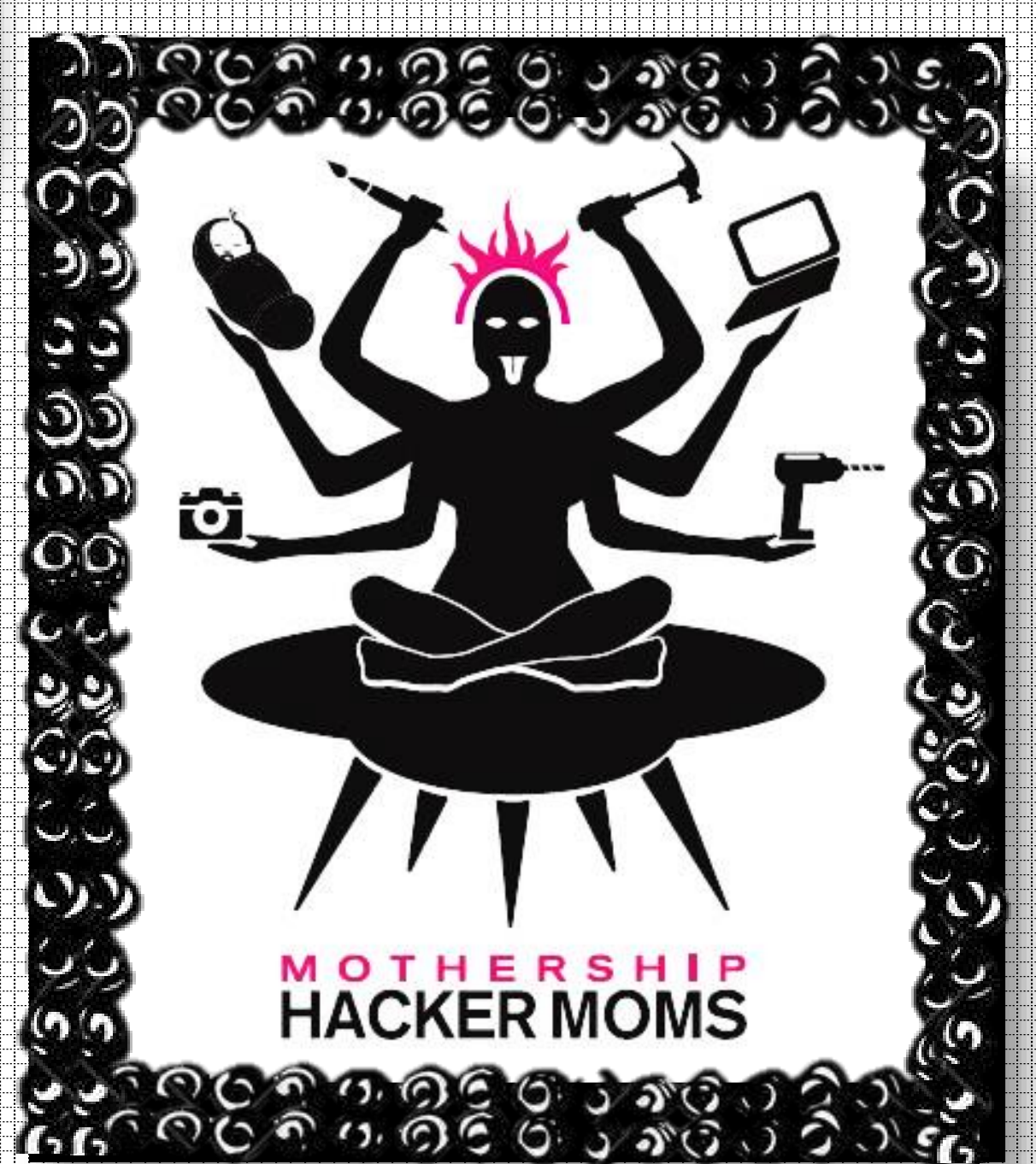
Women have developed hackerspaces and places in which femininity in hacking is normative and necessary. The physical spaces are formed on the basis of interest and openness, rather than the pre-proven ability of the Hacker Ethics.

Hackathons are fundamental to inclusivity in hacking, in which the physical and digital spaces of hacking "powerfully reinforce each other" (Coleman, 2010, p.49). Organised spaces include **HACKERMOMS**, a women's only space with a DIY ethic and onsite childcare bringing domesticity into hacking.

DECONSTRUCTING RESISTANCE

The feminine physical spaces of women in hacking continue to define femininity corporeally; you may only be a woman hacker by presenting a female identifying body. Women-only spaces are still defined by the absence of masculinity.

The cultural privilege and normativity of masculinity in relation to the feminine other is reinforced and the social hierarchy of hacking as a masculine space is re created.



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