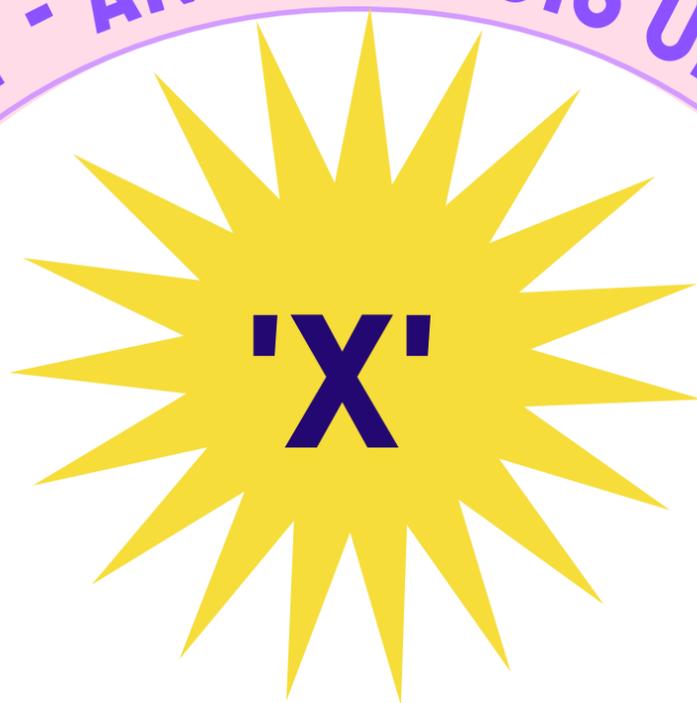


WHAT ABOUT WOMXN? - AN ANALYSIS OF SPELLING WITH ANY X



This infographic aims to dive deeper into the use of the term womxn when spelled with an 'x'. It was created by the UCI Womxn's Center for Success with a critical lens and specifically with the UC Irvine community in mind.

WHAT WOMXN MEANS TO THE WOMXN'S CENTER FOR SUCCESS:

"Womxn" is one of a few lexical and social phenomena, including the adoption of 'x' in naming gender non-conforming individuals, genderqueer folxs, two spirit people, femmes, transgender folxs, and non-binary people.

Womxn acknowledges that gender identity exists in a sphere and one word has room for multiple gender expressions without weighing one more important than another.

In addition, it highlights that more than one gender expression can be impacted by patriarchy, misogyny, and sexism. This term recognizes that in the past, the history of feminism has included racism, transphobia and harmful gender binary views.

DICTIONARY.COM DEFINITION:

a woman (used, especially in intersectional feminism, as an alternative spelling to avoid the suggestion of sexism perceived in the sequences m-a-n and m-e-n, and to be inclusive of trans and nonbinary women)



ACADEMIA DEFINITION:

"Womxn" is an intersectional concept that seeks to include transgender womxn, womxn of color, womxn of Third World countries, and every personal identity of womxn. It is an antithesis to the daily micro-aggressions that subtly, but systematically work to undermine the value of womxn and enforce their secondary social status.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The Womxn's Center for Success advances gender equity by raising consciousness on social justice concepts, fostering personal growth, building community connections, encouraging identity development and increasing access to resources that support holistic wellness. For questions or dialogue, please contact us through our website at www.womxnscenter.uci.edu



TIMELINE OF THE WORD WOMXN



1976 + VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS & PUBLICATIONS START TO USE 'WOMYN' SPELLING



2016 WOMXN'S MARCH SEATTLE USES 'X'

In late 2016, Womxn's March Seattle took its name using the x, becoming a beacon for inclusivity. Around the same time, award-winning poet, Koleka Putuma, published with the first poem titled, "Growing Up Black and a Womxn."

[HTTPS://MEDIUM.COM/@MAKEMUSE/INTERSECTIONAL-FEMINIST-VOCAB-USING-THE-TERM-WOMXN-B0076AA99794](https://medium.com/@makemuse/intersectional-feminist-vocab-using-the-term-womxn-b0076aa99794)



1975 WOMYN APPEARED

Womyn appeared in the issue of Lesbian Connection Magazine announcing the Wolf Creek Womyn's Festival ('75 - '15')

*Festival organizers indicated that attendants must be "womyn-born-womyn" the word 'womyn' came about to be seen as a clean white, liberal-feminist transphobic concept.

[HTTPS://WWW.SHETHEPEOPLE.TV/HOME-TOP-VIDEO/DIFFERENCE-WOMXN-WOMYN-DIVERSITY/](https://www.shethepeople.tv/home-top-video/difference-womxn-womyn-diversity/)

2010 WOMXN SHOWS UP IN INTERSECTIONAL SPACES

Start to see womxn brought up in intersectional feminist spaces.

2016 WOMXN'S HUB WAS CREATED

Founded through the collaboration of staff in the Cross Cultural Center. Need was assessed and a name was picked to reflect the community and its values.

2019 WOMXN ADOPTED INTO DICTIONARY.COM

The definition reads: noun, plural **wom·xn** [wim-in]. a woman (used, especially in intersectional feminism, as an alternative spelling to avoid the suggestion of sexism perceived in the sequences m-a-n and m-e-n, and to be inclusive of trans and nonbinary women):

WHO HAS BEEN USING WOMXN?

Originally modern intersectional feminist spaces. More recently, larger platforms have adopted the word with some backlash.

CRITIQUES & COUNTER DIALOGUE

Identity is a topic that is personal and individual. Narratives around identity span a variety of community members. Dialogue around the impact of language and words are important and we recognize the importance of holding space for multiple viewpoints.

CRITIQUES OF THE WOMXN SPELLING



"Using 'womxn' to refer to trans women implies they aren't actually women. Reducing them to an 'other' to be tolerated isn't actually more inclusive. "

"Using 'womxn' as a catch-all term to include non-binary people erases the fact that many non-binary people aren't impacted by women's issues. Some do not want to be included in the term 'women' or 'womxn' at all."

<https://www.insider.com/using-the-phrase-womxn-doesnt-mean-youre-trans-inclusive-2021-3>



INCLUSION BEYOND LANGUAGE



Inclusion is more than just a word. Adopting a letter will not automatically make sustainable equitable change. If there is no action behind a word, then it becomes surface level action.

If institutions and organizations don't actively take time to consider, include, and celebrate the narratives of the identities represented with an 'x', then using the word becomes a meaningless gesture.



A NOTE ON PREFERENCE



It is important to note that, not every single person prefers to use the 'x'. Identity is personal and is influenced by lived experiences. What matters most is that we take into consideration each person's own preferences and respect the ways in which they choose to identify. They could be using the spelling with the 'x' or not and both preferences are valid.

<https://www.shethepeople.tv/home-top-video/difference-womxn-womyn-diversity/>

HOW WOULD I EVEN PRONOUNCE WOMXN?

By being still new to the mainstream, there is not one particular pronunciation of this word.



IS IT AUDIBLE TO EVERYONE?



Most pronounce it like they are saying woman or women, but spell the singular and plural with the 'x'. However, this raises the question if that actually is truly inclusive; members of the blind community may be left out if there is no audible way for them to hear this distinction.



DIALOGUE ABOUT LINGUISTICS



Others prefer to say it as wom-inx or woma/en-x, or wom-ux. These ways can bring attention to womxn when talking verbally to someone about and opens up more dialogue about linguistics.

<https://medium.com/@makemuse/intersectional-feminist-vocab-using-the-term-womxn-b0076aa99794>

SHOULD YOU USE WOMXN?



DEPENDS ON THE PERSON



At the end of the day, it depends on what people want to use and identify themselves as. On our behalf, we should be willing to take that extra step to respect other people and their choices, value different experiences, and understand the power of language and spelling.

Read more at: <https://www.shethepeople.tv/home-top-video/difference-womxn-womyn-diversity/>



END GOAL IS INCLUSIVITY



The 'x' creates a space for women and femme folks that aren't cis women, meaning it tells people that ALL women-identifying people are being included and addressed. This is a helpful distinction especially when certain spaces align with white feminists and/or trans exclusionary radical feminist (TERF) ideology. However, there are folks that don't like it, and that's okay too. The end goal is to get society into a place where inclusivity is the norm and exclusivity is the problem.

<https://medium.com/@makemuse/intersectional-feminist-vocab-using-the-term-womxn-b0076aa99794>