

Issue 005

WHEN SPARKS SPEAK

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—• ELSA TANNOUS •—

ELSA TANNOUS
Founder of DigiWomen



When it comes to making Tech a more diverse environment, two questions arise immediately. Firstly, how? Then, where do we start?

With this article, Elsa Tannous hints at both answers. It is truly never too early to start showing each little girl that science awaits them. The sparks bloom not only in college, but way before that, in high school, and middle school all the way to primary school. Digiwomen reminds us that children are inherently curious and ready to learn.

Furthermore, as a mom, Elsa underlines the role of parenting in making the scientific space inclusive. To all the parents, grandparents, siblings, this is your reminder that you can act on building a space more welcoming for women right from your home.

Education doesn't start in the classroom because biases arise as soon as kids step in the outside world and follow us throughout our lives all the way up to the professional sphere. Through her HR expertise, Elsa shares how to overcome hindrances that women may face entering STEM. Both from the recruiter's and employee's point of view.

I would recommend to all readers to take a look at Digiwomen's action because there must be a project that speaks to you. Nice read!

Each issue of When Sparks Speak is an invitation to look at technology through a human lens. In this January edition, that lens widens – beyond companies and careers – to families, communities, and the next generation.

Elsa Tannous reminds us that inclusion in tech does not start at hiring. It starts much earlier: in classrooms, in living rooms, and in the stories young people are exposed to long before they ever write a line of code. Through her work with DigiWomen, Elsa is not just advocating for women in technology – she is actively building the conditions that allow girls, parents, and communities to imagine themselves inside the digital future.

What stood out to me most in this conversation is Elsa's insistence on accessibility. Tech is not reserved for an elite few. It is something we can all engage with, shape, and use as a tool for empowerment. Whether she is speaking about inclusive recruitment, intergenerational learning, or supporting mothers navigating career transitions, her work challenges the idea that technology must be intimidating or exclusionary.

This issue is a reminder that progress in tech is not only about innovation – it is about intention. About who we invite in, who we support along the way, and who we make space for to lead.

As always, thank you for reading and for being part of this growing conversation. We are proud to share Elsa's story with you and to continue amplifying voices that are shaping a more inclusive future for technology.



Elise



Michael



MEET ELSA:

My name is Elsa Tannous, Mom, entrepreneur, human resources and technology expert with more than ten years of experience in France and Quebec. I am the founder and president of DigiWomen, an organization that works to make Tech more inclusive for young girls, women and their families. I am also a radio columnist and involved with several organizations that support innovation, equity and talent development.

TECH TALENT

What is the role of HR in Tech?

HR in Tech is about attracting, developing and retaining talent in a sector that is changing extremely quickly. This requires a acute understanding of technical professions, but also an ability to support teams in innovation, digital transformation, agility and diversity. It's a job where human skills count as much as technological skills.



Why did you choose this sector?

Because Tech is transforming absolutely everything: our companies, our jobs, our lives. I wanted to work in a field of the future, where the impact is real and where we can help create more inclusive environments. And honestly, Tech chose me as much as I chose it: I followed extraordinary talents, innovative companies... And I never left this universe.

Are there fewer female candidates than male candidates in tech roles?

Yes, definitely. Women are still underrepresented, especially in technical positions. And this reality starts very early: from primary school, many girls don't see themselves in Tech because they don't see role models, or because society still conveys the idea that "technology is for the boys". It is this perception that I thrive to change.



“I wanted to work in a field of the future, where the impact is real and where we can help create more inclusive environments.”

What strategies do you put in place to promote diversity within your teams?

Firstly, I work on inclusive recruitment: gender-neutral job descriptions, objective criteria, openness to atypical career paths. Then, I focus on

training, mentoring, upskilling and creating psychologically safe environments. You can't attract diversity if you're not able to retain it and make it grow.



You have worked in France and Canada. It is often said that Canada is more advanced in terms of equity. In your experience, is that the truth?

Canada is indeed ahead of the curve in some areas, including inclusion, accommodation and social issues awareness. But it's not perfect: women in Tech are still in the minority, and there are still significant gaps. Both contexts have their strengths, but also their challenges.

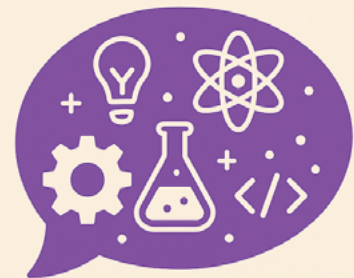
“I host the program Tech & Transmissions, a series of intergenerational interviews that highlight the journeys of women in Tech”





What does your work as a columnist consist of? Is it also linked to Tech?

Yes, absolutely. On the radio, I host the program Tech & Transmissions, a series of intergenerational interviews that highlight the journeys of women in Tech, their challenges, their resilience and the impact they create. It is a space for education, awareness and inspiration — for parents and young girls alike.



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DIGIWOMEN

Could you tell us what DigiWomen is and where the idea came from?

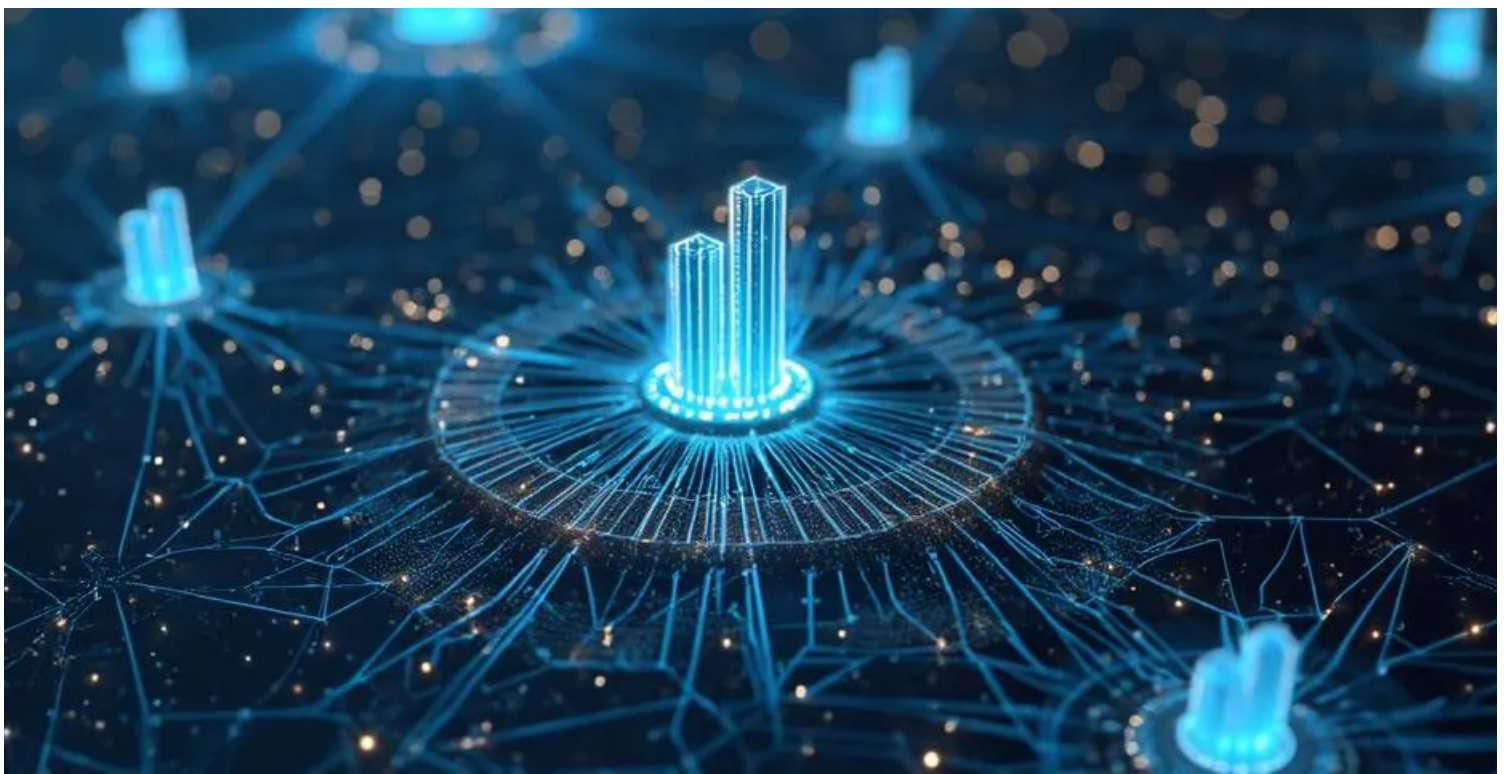
DigiWomen is a non-profit organization based in Laval, Quebec, that supports young girls, women and their families in the discovery of technologies. We offer immersion workshops, events, learning paths and even a documentary. The idea came to me by noticing two things:

- the lack of women in tech professions,
- the lack of information and role models for young girls — but also for their parents. I wanted to create a bridge between the three: school, families and industry.

How can I join DigiWomen?

It's very simple: through our workshops, our events, our memberships, our newsletter or by becoming a volunteer or partner. Our goal is to create an accessible, welcoming, and intergenerational community.

“Our goal is to create an accessible, welcoming, and intergenerational community”

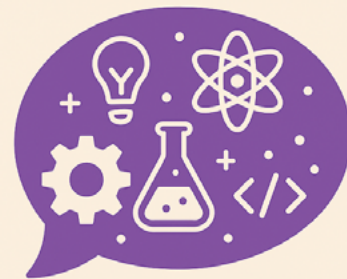


I heard about the “J’ose La Tech” project, could you explain its principle? Do you really manage to teach primary school students technically complex projects?

“J’ose La Tech” (“I dare Tech”) introduces girls aged 8 to 18 to technologies through concrete and fun workshops: robotics, programming, AI, design, cybersecurity... And yes, children learn very quickly! When you introduce them to technology in a simple, concrete and fun way, they develop incredible fluency. Our goal is not to turn them into engineers in an hour, but to plant a seed and show them what they are capable of.

Could you share another striking project?

Our documentary Femmes en Tech, et alors ?” (“Women in Tech, so what?”) is one of our strongest projects. It presents nine women with inspiring backgrounds, through their experience, succession, diversity and ambition. This documentary raises awareness and vocations with each broadcast. It has become a major educational tool for DigiWomen.



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What are the next events planned?

We have just held the first edition of Digital Women's Day, a highlight of 2025 that brought together companies, professionals and students around Tech and employability.

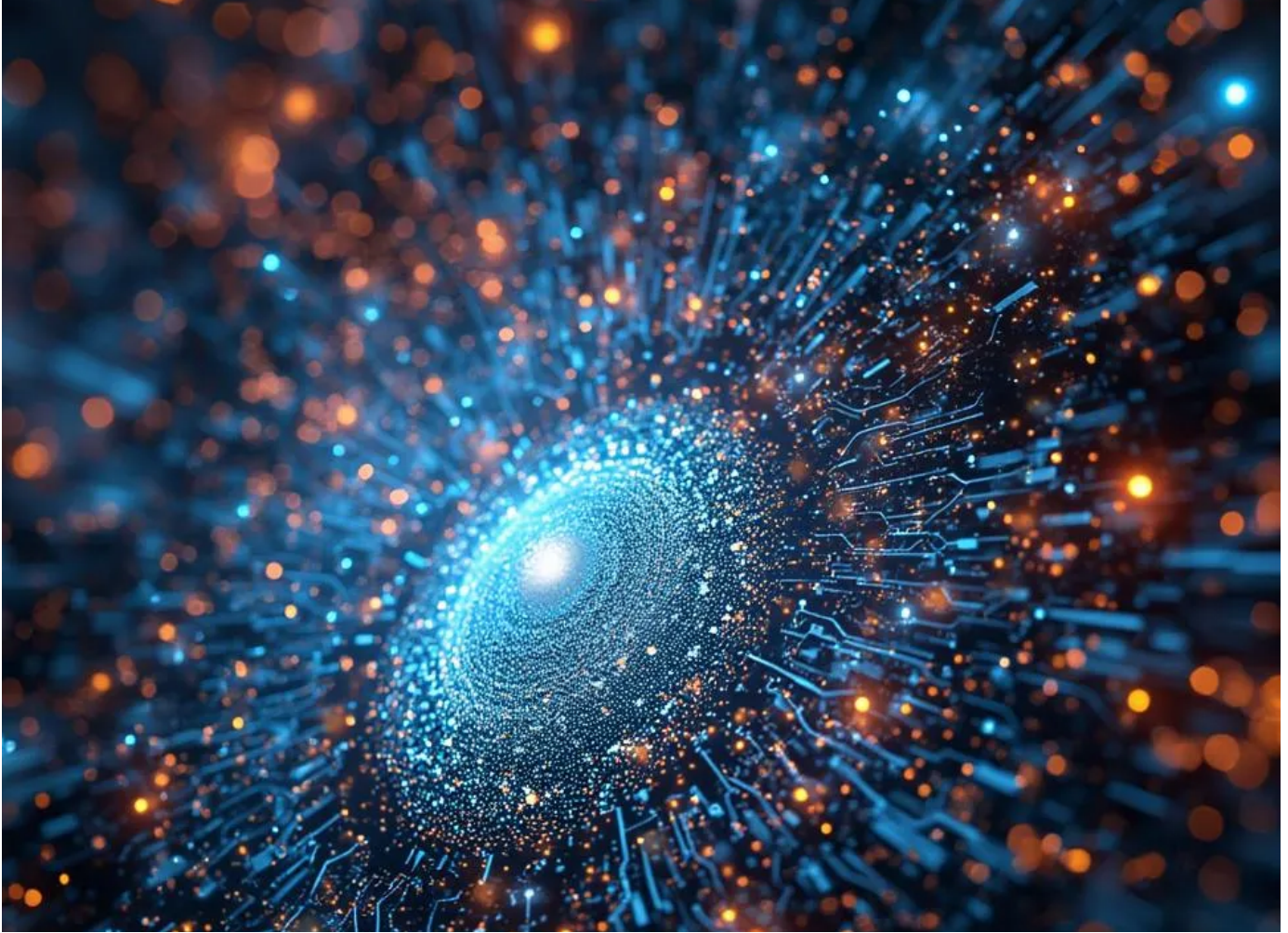
For the coming year, several major projects have already been confirmed:

The new season of Women Tech Talk, with immersive workshops in various emblematic digital locations. We will address themes such as interactive, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and the inspiring journeys of women from diverse backgrounds.

The deployment of "Jose la Tech" in three schools, to introduce even more young girls (and allied boys!) to technologies and broaden their vision of the jobs of the future.

The filming of the second documentary Women Tech Talk, which will highlight new female voices in technology, always with an intergenerational approach.

The preparation of the second edition of Digital Women's Day (JFN 2), which will take on an even larger scale and will include an expanded job fair, panels, workshops and an open stage for emerging talents.



The creation of educational pods for parents, young people and schools to better understand Tech professions, AI, cybersecurity, and support equal opportunities as early as possible.

The launch of the TechMoms Academy, a program specifically designed to support moms in developing their digital skills, professional confidence, and transition into tech jobs.

The continuation of the Tech & Transmissions radio show, which will continue to highlight women from all walks of life and explore major technological issues with a human and intergenerational perspective.

2026 will be a year of expansion and impact, with a clear goal: to equip, inspire and connect even more women, young people and families to the world of Tech.



THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE DIVERSIFICATION OF TECH

How do you involve parents in the projects that DigiWomen carries out with the youngest such as J'ose La Tech?

We systematically integrate parents: educational explanations, intergenerational discussions, participation in certain workshops and support in understanding the jobs of the future. Parents are key players in academic and professional guidance, so they need to be equipped and reassured.

And in the other projects, are parents involved?

Yes. In our events, our radio show, our digital content... They are often present, curious, committed. We are breaking the idea that Tech is reserved for an elite: it is for everyone, and families have an essential role in this digital culture.

What are the main difficulties and barriers that mothers, especially single mothers, may encounter in the tech job market?

The availability, the mental load, the lack of role models, the fear of not being “technical enough”, and sometimes a professional environment that does not adapt to the reality of family life. These are real barriers, and that’s why DigiWomen puts forward resources, mentors, and dedicated programs like TechMoms Academy.

And you, what practices do you put in place to give your daughter the choice and opportunity of Tech?

I show her female role models, expose her to different technologies without pressure, value her curiosity and explain to her that Tech is not a man’s world — it’s an open world. I want her to know that she has every right to, that she is capable, and that she can choose freely.

If you had to recommend a book, movie, podcast, what would they be?

Book: Invisible Women by Caroline Criado Perez — a must-read on bias in our societies.

Film / Documentary: Hidden Figures, which shows how women have built Tech even before they were recognized.

Podcast / Show: Tech & Transmissions — because it gives a voice to women of all ages who are shaping the digital world.

What advice would you give to young women reading this article?

Don’t be afraid to try. DARE. Tech is not a separate world: it’s a space you can occupy, transform, and reinvent. You belong, and you have the right to go as far as your ambitions take you.

“You belong, and you have the right to go as far as your ambitions take you”

A Note to Our Readers

Thank you for opening this January 2026 issue of When Sparks Speak.

In Issue 005, we explore technology through the lens of inclusion, education, and intergenerational impact. Elsa Tannous's journey highlights a truth we return to often: meaningful change in tech happens when people feel welcomed, supported, and empowered to participate – no matter their age, background, or starting point.

From young girls discovering robotics for the first time, to parents learning alongside their children, to women reclaiming space in a rapidly evolving industry, this issue celebrates the idea that tech belongs to everyone. It is not a closed world – it is an open one.

We hope this edition encourages you to ask new questions, challenge old assumptions, and imagine what technology can look like when it is built with care, equity, and community at its core.

Thank you for being part of When Sparks Speak.

– The When Sparks Speak Team



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