TV writers are sharing their salaries in a Google spreadsheet to combat pay disparity

TV writers, producers, executives, and assistants have been anonymously sharing their salaries in a widely circulated Google spreadsheet this week as part of an effort to help people working in the entertainment industry achieve pay parity, *The Hollywood Reporter* reports.

The spreadsheet is broken down by type of job (staff writer versus assistant versus executive), with columns for position or title, studio, network, amount of experience, and whether a person identifies as a man or a woman, or a person of color. No specific TV series are mentioned, though some entries note if a show is scripted or unscripted.

There is a huge range of salaries in the spreadsheet, which has more than 100 entries on the "staff writers" page alone, but there does seem to be at least some disparity in pay. For example, a woman of color who is a co-producer on a CBS show says she makes $10,000 per episode, while a white woman who is a co-producer on a CBS show says she makes $14,000 per episode, and a white male co-producer at CBS makes $16,000 per episode. Still, because there's no mention of which shows they work for, it's difficult to make exact comparisons.

The spreadsheet comes in response to a long-running discussion about the gender pay gap in Hollywood. When Gillian Anderson returned for new episodes of the *X-Files* in 2016, she reported that she had initially been offered only half the pay of her co-star, David Duchovny. Earlier this week, *THR* reported that Michelle Williams made $625,000 for Ridley Scott's *All the*

Money in the World while her costar Mark Wahlberg made $5 million. Last week, *Grey's Anatomy* star Ellen Pompeo, now the highest-earning TV actor, told *THR* that she struggled for years to make as much as her co-star Patrick Dempsey. "A guy wouldn't have any problem asking for $600,000 an episode," she said. "And as women, we're like, 'Oh, can I ask for that? Is that OK?'"

Back in September, a former employee at Google started a similar spreadsheet to help women and people of color learn what their co-workers were making. The document, shared by about 1,200 US Google employees, revealed that women on average were paid less than men, and that men's bonuses tended to be higher, according to an analysis by *The New York Times*.

The introductory comments on the TV spreadsheet call it a "good faith project," and note that "people in industry are fully aware that experience, leverage, etc etc factor into pay – this is still helpful to many of us to cross-check." Transparency about pay is often cited a positive thing for workers, especially for marginalized employees in industries that struggle hugely with diversity. Some employers even encourage employees not to share their salaries with co-workers, a tactic that primarily benefits the company's bottom line.

https://www.theverge.com/2018/1/24/16929592/tv-writers-spreadsheet-pay-gap-google-producers