



# What is an unconscious bias?

We can think of bias as a way for our brains to make shortcuts when making decisions. Since we live in a world where we are overloaded with information these shortcuts can be useful when dealing with limited information, focus, or time. However, bias' can sometimes lead us to make assumptions about people that may be inaccurate and have unintended consequences. As a result, we can unknowingly discriminate against people for factors such as their gender, disability, socioeconomic statuses, ethnicity, and religion.

As a Technovation judge, we want to provide appropriate and constructive feedback to all teams. With our global audience, you may be judging a team that comes from a place very different than you. That is why it is important to acknowledge and be cognizant of any biases we may have. Check out this video below.



So, how do we combat this? Research shows that [awareness of unconscious bias can lead to reversals in biased outcomes](#). Understanding that unconscious biases underlie beliefs may be necessary for changing attitudes. By becoming aware of our biases, we can make more thoughtful decisions about the people around us.

Research supports that you can help make the unconscious conscious if you pause before making any final decisions. This is important when giving Technovation teams feedback on their hard work. Try and give yourself a moment to slow down. This can help you recognize that your initial reaction might not paint a full picture of the team's efforts.

## Want to learn more about your unconscious biases?

Go [HERE](#) and take a few of these tests to learn more about your own biases. Harvard University conducted research and created self-assessment tests for us to become aware of our own biases. This research is called Project Implicit.

## A Few Additional Stories to explore

### A new study shows that the gender gap in math abilities starts early - and teacher bias makes it worse as time goes on

In 2008, research suggested there was no gender gap in math performance in the US. From second to 11th grades, girls did just as well as boys on state standardized math tests. A new, well-designed, and a large study suggests otherwise.

Jenny Anderson, Quartz, 2016

### Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students

Despite efforts to recruit and retain more women, a stark gender disparity persists within academic science. Abundant research has demonstrated gender bias in many demographic groups but has yet to experimentally investigate whether science faculty exhibits a bias against female students that could contribute to the gender disparity in academic science.

Corinne A. Moss-Racusin, John F. Dovidio, Victoria L. Brescoll, Mark J. Graham, and Jo Handelsman, PNAS, 2012

### Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal?

In this study two groups of resumes were sent out for the same entry level sales and marketing jobs - one had an African American sounding name and the other had a European American sounding name. It took 50% more resumes for the African American candidates to get a callback. 50% more. Imagine the impact this has over time on someone's career possibilities.

Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2003

### Orchestrating Impartiality: The impact of "blind" auditions on female musicians

A change in the audition procedures of symphony orchestras - adoption of "blind" auditions with a "screen" to conceal the candidate's identity from the jury - provides a test for sex-biased hiring.

Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse, JSTOR, 2006

### Aversive Racism and Selection Decisions: 1989 and 1999

The present study investigated differences over a 10-year period in whites' self-reported racial prejudice and their bias in selection decisions involving black and white candidates for employment.

John Dovidio and Samuel Gaertner, JSTOR, 2000

### A Failure to Communicate

Many Americans are wary of people who speak with foreign accents.

Pamela Paul, NY Times, 2010

**Sometimes our natural reactions are influenced by our bias, which makes detecting our own bias difficult. Being conscious of our biases is important when giving feedback teams.**