

# FEMINIST FREQUENCY ANNUAL REPORT

2014

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# WHO WE ARE

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## Feminist Frequency: fostering critical engagement with media



Feminist Frequency is a not-for-profit, educational organization that believes media has the power to change the world. We provide comprehensive analyses of modern media from an unapologetically critical perspective on societal issues such as race, gender, and sexuality. We educate the public through freely available online videos and through workshops, lectures and public speaking engagements, teaching others how to critically engage with the media they consume. We also provide resources for media makers to improve their works of fiction. Feminist Frequency strongly advocates for the just treatment of all people online and believes that media is an essential tool for eradicating injustice. Through consciousness-raising around issues like online harassment, we hope to cultivate new media literacies that will make us all more responsible media users in a just and more equitable virtual world.

# LETTER FROM ANITA

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**F**ive years ago, Feminist Frequency was founded on the belief that media has the power to change the world. It all started with short, simple videos made with a borrowed camera and lighting equipment; my “studio” was a makeshift space in my living room with a piece of fabric tacked up on a wall. My vision for Feminist Frequency was to bring discussions of feminist theory to a wider audience by way of popular culture. I would never have guessed back in 2009 that Feminist Frequency would officially become a nonprofit organization and play a significant public role in shaping conversations about media engagement and online abuse.

In 2014, our Youtube channel was viewed over 5.7 million times as we continued producing our popular *Tropes vs Women in Video Games* series. Our videos focused on the exploitation and violence against women that permeates many of the gaming industry’s most popular and profitable titles. Feminist Frequency’s producer Jonathan McIntosh wrote and directed “Playing with Privilege,” a web video that explored the specific unearned advantages men have in gaming spaces with the help of 25 male gamers including veteran games journalist Adam Sessler and beloved game developer Tim Schafer. In March, I was the recipient of the Game Developer’s Choice Ambassador Award which honors an individual who has helped the game industry advance to a better place. In a more personal direction, I wrote an op-ed

**“Feminist Frequency  
was founded on the  
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change the world.”**

about my history playing games and the current state of gaming for the New York Times Opinion section. And to close 2014, I collaborated with FemFreq consultant Carolyn Petit to share our five favorite feminist moments in the history of video games for Matter’s *The New York Review of Video Games*.

Our work at Feminist Frequency has not always been met with support (which might be the understatement of the year). Back in 2012, when I announced the *Tropes vs Women in Video Games* project, I received an enormous amount of abusive harassment. Unfortunately, this vitriol is still a daily occurrence, making it impossible to separate our media criticism work from the reception of that work. As a result, we have expanded Feminist Frequency’s mission to include advocacy around ending online hate and abuse, analyzing and advancing awareness of how gendered harassment operates online. At the XOXO arts and tech conference, I presented an expanded analysis of some insidious ways that gendered online harassment operates.

Feminist Frequency’s efforts have made headlines across the globe and were featured in countless media stories, including an article on the front page of the New York Times, a cover story in Bloomberg’s *Businessweek* magazine, and even a guest appearance on Comedy Central’s *The Colbert Report*. Privately, I am working with online feminists to strategize long-term solutions to deal with the epidemic of online abuse and create mechanisms for support. I am also consulting with tech and gaming companies on how to address issues of online harassment in their own communities.

Throughout all of the turbulent ups and downs of 2014 we held onto the warmth and support from our viewers and fans. The overwhelming number of supportive messages, emails and tweets reminds us of how important this work is and how much of an impact we are making. From the parents who use our videos to teach their children media literacy tools, to the game developers who accepted our criticism and promised to improve in the future, to the little boy who came up to me at XOXO and said, “Hi, I’m a feminist gamer,” you are the reason we continue in the face of such opposition. I cannot express enough how much hope you give me. My whole team is committed to this work and we are not going anywhere.

Sincerely and with gratitude,



Anita Sarkeesian  
Director

**Feminist Frequency's Tropes vs. Women in Video Games series has become essential viewing for developers. The videos have been instrumental in affecting an industry-wide discussion about the representation of women in games. The series was influential in putting me on a path to create and write stronger, more complex female characters.**

**– Neil Druckmann, Writer, Creative Director  
(The Last of Us, Uncharted 4) – Naughty Dog**

# WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

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2014 was marked by a string of encouraging successes and difficult challenges. Our media criticism videos, the core of Feminist Frequency's work, gained a new level of positive attention and celebration, but the torrent of sustained harassment that our work has consistently faced over the last few years has continued. In fact, this year saw a significant escalation of this hate campaign, much of it associated with "GamerGate." Dealing with this backlash was a challenge, but it has also strengthened our resolve to continue doing advocacy work to raise awareness and develop solutions around the epidemic of online harassment.

- Released two episodes in our ongoing *Tropes vs Women in Video Games* series addressing the topic of Women as Background Decoration
- Released the video "Playing with Privilege: 25 Invisible Benefits of Gaming While Male"
- Received Game Developer's Choice Ambassador Award - March 19, 2014
- Nominated for Microsoft's 2014 Women in Games Ambassador Award - March 20, 2014
- Wrote "Anita Sarkeesian on Video Games' Great Future" - New York Times Op-Ed - Oct 28, 2014
- Wrote "Five Feminist Moments in the History of Video Games" - Matter, The New York Review of Video Games - Dec 17, 2014
- Focused on advocacy efforts regarding online harassment including consulting with tech and social media companies to improve their platforms and participating in a task force working on short- and long-term strategies to end digital abuse
- Mentored a Women in Tech public speaking workshop
- Presented and lectured on topics of online harassment and women's representations in games at five universities and three conferences
- Twenty media appearances and interviews



# IN THE NEWS



**NEW YORK TIMES** – [“Feminist Critics of Video Games Facing Threats in ‘GamerGate’ Campaign”](#) New York Times (Front Page) – Oct 15, 2014



**BUSINESSWEEK** – [“What Do Video Games Have Against Women? How One Critic is Trying to Change a \\$25 Billion Dollar Industry”](#) Bloomberg Businessweek (Cover Story) – Nov 26, 2014



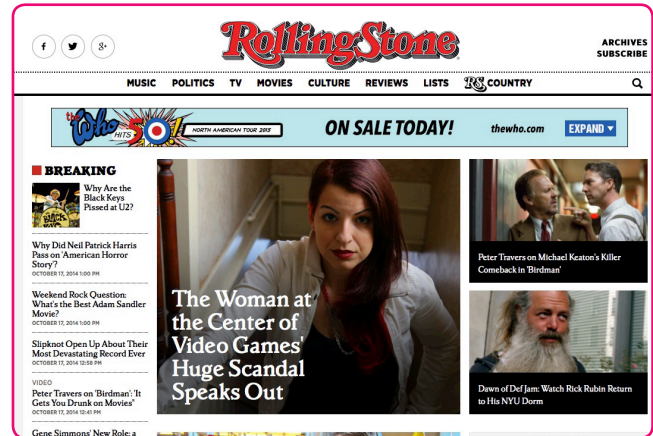
**THE COLBERT REPORT** – [“GamerGate”](#) Comedy Central - Oct 30th, 2014



**“[Tropes vs. Women in Video Games is] essential viewing for anyone interested in video games.”**  
**– The New York Times**



**GAME INFORMER** – “Critique and Controversy” – Oct 2014



**ROLLING STONE** – “Anita Sarkeesian on GamerGate: ‘We Have a Problem and We’re Going to Fix This’ - How a video game fan weathered a misogynist backlash to become pop culture’s most valuable critic” – Oct 17, 2014

**CBS THIS MORNING** – “GamerGate,” guns and threats against women collide in Utah (Oct 16, 2014)

**MOTHER JONES** – [This Women Was Threatened With Rape After Calling Out Sexist Video Games](#) (May 30, 2014)

**WIRED** – [Curbing Online Abuse Isn’t Impossible. Here’s Where We Start](#) (May 15, 2014)

**NPR’s All Things Considered** – [One Feminist Critic’s Battle With Gaming’s Darker Side](#) (Oct 18, 2014)

**BBC** – [Blurred Lines: The New Battle of the Sexes](#) – BBC2 Documentary (May 8, 2014)

**THE SET UP** – [The Setup Interview: Anita Sarkeesian](#) – Usesthis.com (March 4, 2014)

**THE GUARDIAN** – [GamerGate is loud, dangerous and a last grasp at cultural dominance by angry white men](#) (Oct 21, 2014)

**BBC** – [GamerGate is “a sexist temper tantrum”](#) - World Service Radio (Oct 16, 2014)

**ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY** – [“Cyber Bullies Reach a New Low”](#) (September 5, 2014)

**ASSOCIATED PRESS** – [Feminist speaker questions Utah’s campus gun laws](#) (Oct 15, 2014)

**MSNBC’s Melissa Harris-Perry Show** – [Can gaming industry culture be changed?](#) (Oct 19, 2014)

**DEMOCRACY NOW** – [“Women Are Being Driven Offline”: Feminist Anita Sarkeesian Terrorized for Critique of Video Games](#) (Oct 20, 2014)

**SALT LAKE CITY TRIBUNE** – [Utah lawmaker: State colleges can’t limit guns](#) (Oct 15, 2014)

**SALT LAKE CITY TRIBUNE** – [Anita Sarkeesian explains why she canceled USU lecture](#) (Oct 16, 2014)

**FOX 13 Salt Lake City** – [Feminist gamer won’t speak at Utah schools until guns prohibited](#) (Oct 16, 2014)

# PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

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**“It may be a long time before sexism is effectively erased from the media landscape, but, among so many others fighting the good fight, it’s good to know Anita isn’t going anywhere.”**  
– The Verge



Feminist Frequency is a very young nonprofit, only gaining 501(c)3 status in May 2014. As we look toward 2015, we’re excited about our plans to continue growing our nascent organization. In this first full year, we hope to establish a solid foundation so that we can continue and expand our award-winning video work. Here are some goals for the coming year:

- Begin a new video series examining the representations of men and masculinity in video games
- Begin a miniseries presenting examples of positive female characters in video games
- Continue producing *Tropes vs Women in Video Games* beginning with “Women as Reward”
- Continue and expand efforts to advocate for equitable online spaces by educating and consulting on issues of gendered online harassment
- Expand the organization by hiring new staff members
- Complete a rebranding of Feminist Frequency including a new logo design and website
- Create Feminist Frequency merchandise

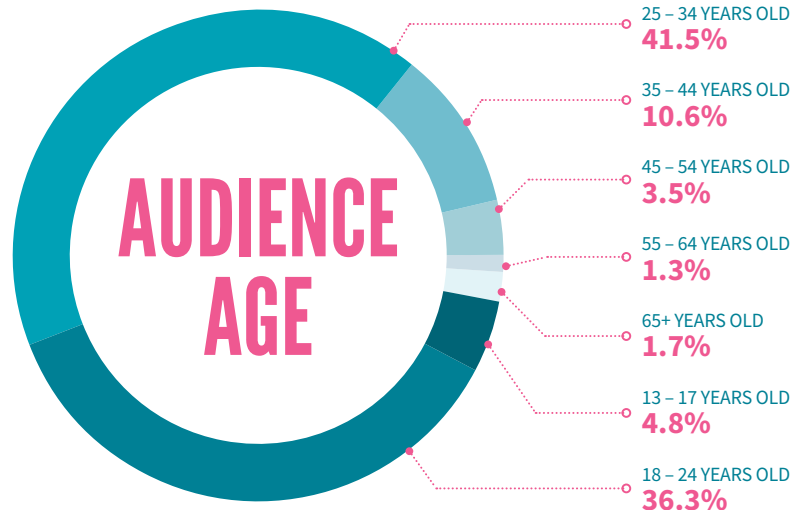
**Feminist Frequency is an organization that offers a valuable and unique perspective on the world of gaming. The fact that there is so much controversy around the mere discussion of women's roles in video games indicates the need for voices in this area. For years, Feminist Frequency has been a thought leader in analyzing gaming in a unique way. Here's to many more!**

**– Felicia Day, Writer, Actor, Producer**

# OUR YEAR IN DATA

 **YouTube Views**  
**5,790,302**

Minutes Spent Watching Videos  
**36,809,072**  
**70 YEARS 11 DAYS**  
**20 HOURS 32 MINS**



## INTERNATIONAL REACH

113 Translation Volunteers  
43 Videos Subtitled  
17 Languages Available  
231 Countries/Territories Viewing Videos

## TOP 5 MOST WATCHED VIDEOS OF 2014

- 1 Women as Background Decoration: Part 2 - 943,284 VIEWS**
- 2 25 Invisible Benefits of Gaming While Male - 853,034 VIEWS**
- 3 Women as Background Decoration: Part 1 - 665,850 VIEWS**
- 4 Damsel in Distress: Part 1 - 519,904 VIEWS (ALL-TIME VIEWS: 2,296,783)**
- 5 Ms. Male Character - 344,842 VIEWS (ALL-TIME VIEWS: 1,115,968)**

 **COMPUTER**  
**66.2%**

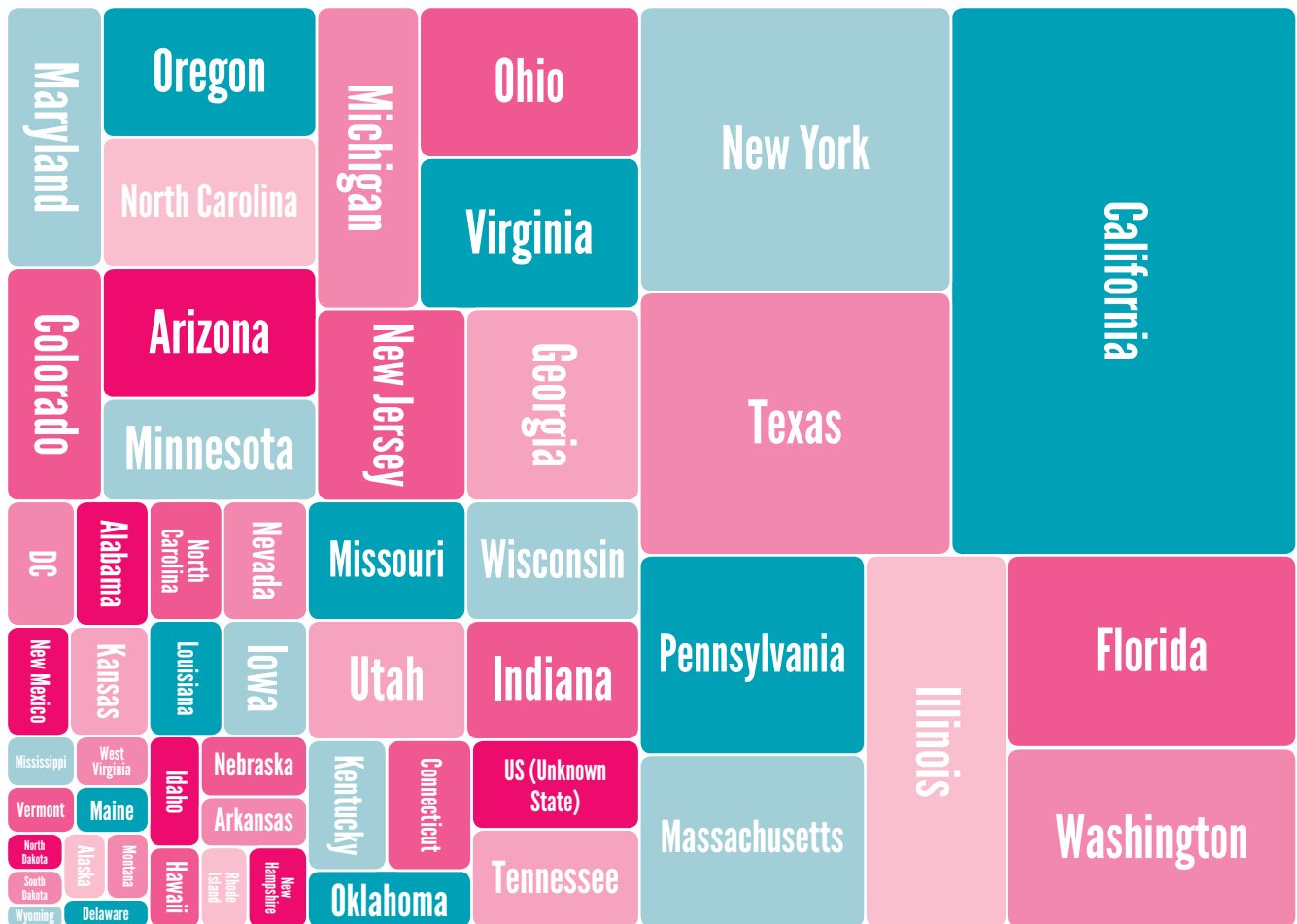
 **MOBILE**  
**19.8%**

 **TABLET**  
**7.6%**

 **GAME CONSOLE**  
**4.1%**

 **TELEVISION**  
**1.5%**

 **OTHER**  
**0.8%**



## 2014 VIEWS BY US STATE

California	419,096
New York	198,024
Texas	177,966
Florida	121,445
Washington	115,334
Illinois	113,173
Pennsylvania	96,502
Massachusetts	85,408
Ohio	76,247
Virginia	70,925
Michigan	68,376
Georgia	66,876
New Jersey	66,093

Oregon	62,714
North Carolina	60,082
Maryland	54,933
Arizona	53,345
Minnesota	53,027
Colorado	50,588
Wisconsin	43,610
Indiana	41,104
Missouri	39,615
Utah	36,938
US (Unknown State)	36,262
Tennessee	35,735
Connecticut	26,942

Kentucky	23,542
Oklahoma	21,368
Nevada	21,315
South Carolina	19,933
Iowa	19,868
Louisiana	19,506
Alabama	19,337
District of Columbia	18,855
Kansas	18,800
New Mexico	14,068
Nebraska	13,795
Arkansas	11,670
Idaho	11,426

New Hampshire	10,253
Rhode Island	9,005
Hawaii	8,541
West Virginia	8,506
Maine	8,035
Mississippi	7,958
Vermont	6,476
Montana	6,381
Alaska	6,296
Delaware	5,368
North Dakota	4,515
South Dakota	4,336
Wyoming	2,961
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,592,474</b>

# TOP 5 MOST FAVORITED TWEETS OF 2014

**1**

**Feminist Frequency**  
@femfreq



RETWEETS **3,729** FAVORITES **8,066**

4:21 PM - 29 Oct 2014

**2**

**Feminist Frequency**  
@femfreq

I'm safe. I will continue my work. I will continue speaking out. The whole game industry must stand up against the harassment of women.

RETWEETS **3,464** FAVORITES **5,692**

7:54 PM - 14 Oct 2014

**3**

**Feminist Frequency**  
@femfreq

Transgender women are women. End of discussion.


RETWEETS **3,551** FAVORITES **5,294**

2:16 PM - 17 Oct 2014

**4**

**Feminist Frequency**  
@femfreq

Had a great time on the Colbert Report tonight. Thanks @StephenAtHome for having me on the show!



RETWEETS **1,358** FAVORITES **4,532**

9:56 PM - 29 Oct 2014

**5**

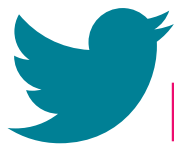
**Feminist Frequency**  
@femfreq

We didn't wanna do this but the Feminist Gaming Illuminati had a meeting & we're taking your games away until you can be decent human beings

RETWEETS **2,848** FAVORITES **3,993**

3:01 PM - 19 Aug 2014

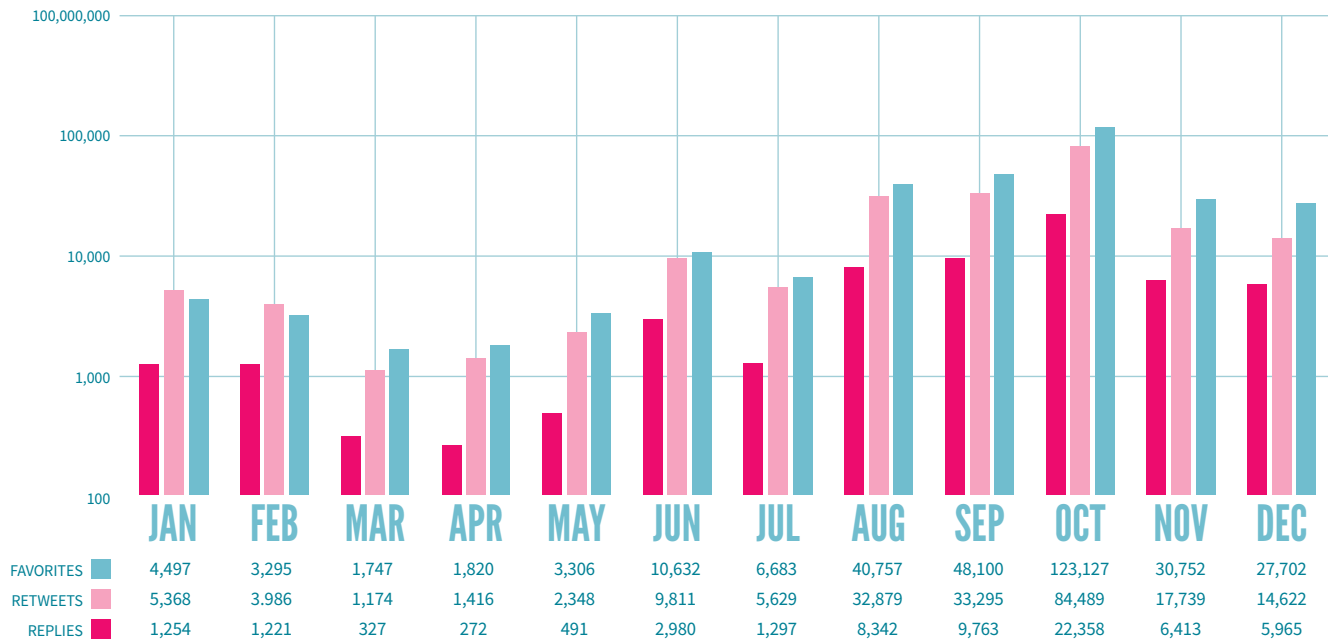




**JAN 6: 65,578 Followers**  
**DEC 29: 223,013 Followers**

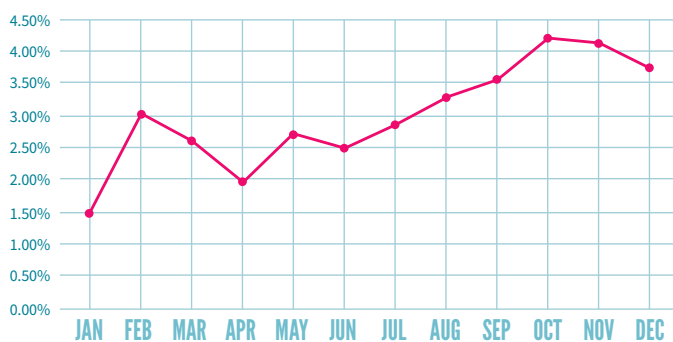
**GAIN: 157,435**

## FAVORITES, RETWEETS & REPLIES: January 2014 to December 2014

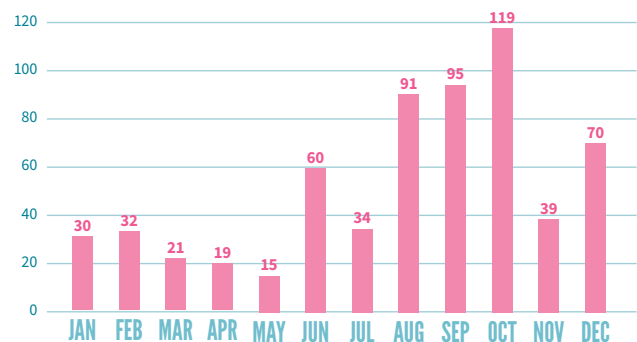


*Note: Data is presented on a logarithmic scale to preserve detail.*

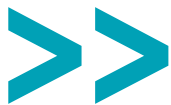
## ENGAGEMENT RATE



## TWEETS



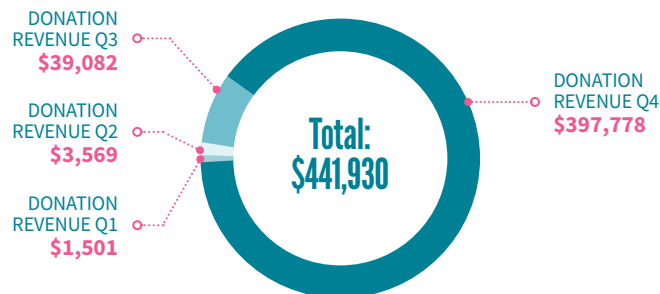
# 2014 FINANCIAL INFORMATION



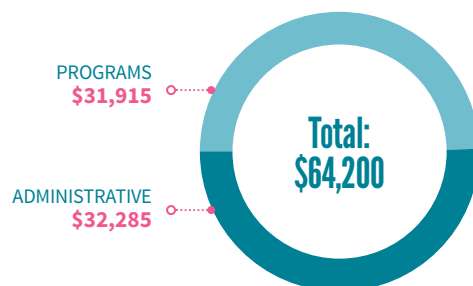
Feminist Frequency's primary source of revenue has always been through crowd-funded donations. During most of 2014 we operated on a shoestring budget. We only made necessary purchases for production/research needs and we were paid bare minimum salaries, volunteering much of our time to the organization.

Thanks to generous contributors, we received a substantial increase in donations at the end of the year, raising just over \$230,000 in December alone. This unexpected increase in revenue will allow us to dedicate these new resources in 2015 to expanding Feminist Frequency's writing and support staff as well as our programming.

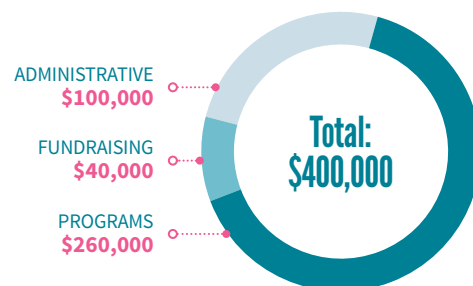
## 2014 REVENUE



## 2014 EXPENDITURES



## PROPOSED 2015 BUDGET



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This was a tumultuous year for the games industry and a challenging year for all of us at Feminist Frequency. To say that we appreciate your support would be an enormous understatement. We were overwhelmed by your heartfelt words of encouragement, and your unwavering faith in our mission inspires us everyday to keep doing this vital work.

As we remain committed to producing free educational videos without any pesky advertisements, we continue to rely on you, our viewers, for financial support. So it's no exaggeration to say that your generosity makes our work possible; our donors, backers, monthly sustainers, volunteers, and supporters are what keep us going. Whatever success we may have had this year, we owe to you, and we couldn't even begin to think about expanding the scope of our work in 2015 if it weren't for your support.

As we begin this next year, we couldn't be more excited to have you with us.

Thank you from the entire Feminist Frequency Team.

