

WOMEN FIRST DIGITAL:

An eHealth platform providing reproductive health solutions

The global digital revolution is transforming how more than 5.3 billion people access sexual and reproductive healthcare (SRH). Technology's pervasive influence offers a distinct opportunity to connect with marginalized populations often excluded from conventional healthcare systems due to geographical constraints, prohibitive costs, and societal stigma.

In this 'digital first' age women and young people are increasingly turning to the internet as their primary source of information, including for guidance about reproductive health and abortion information.

[Women First Digital \(WFD\)](#) is an eHealth social enterprise that leverages the power of this digital revolution by reaching women directly on their handheld devices. WFD makes SRH self-care more universally and equitably accessible with easy-to-understand information and linkages to on-the-ground resources.

WFD's diverse range of digital products, including localized websites, on-demand abortion counseling, a referral database of global abortion providers, an eLearning center, multichannel chatbots, and a targeted on-the-ground presence in select countries. Collectively, these products work to minimize barriers, improve access, and strengthen women's decision-making power making SRH self-care universally accessible.

From 2015–2023, WFD received more than 31 million site sessions with users from over 242 countries; provided over 500,000 direct-to-user services for abortion care; facilitated over 75,000 referrals to abortion care providers; certified 15,424 medical abortion providers; and reached over 500 million users across social media channels WFD's marketing and communications work.



Digital products that inform and empower

HOWTOUSEABORTIONPILL.ORG



[HowToUse](#) offers stepwise, simple instructions for the safe management of an abortion with pills in 26 languages. Often the primary resource for women seeking accurate medical abortion information in their local language, HowToUse’s guidance for self-managed abortions is available for pregnancies up to 13 weeks and is delineated by each stage of the abortion process (before, how to, and after).

HowToUse also has 58 country profiles that specify the legal parameters for abortion access; types of abortion methods available; abortion pill brands, costs, and images of common in-country pills; and local resources such as hotlines and clinics.

To ensure local relevance and ease of access, HowToUse is also available through French and Spanish URLs, namely [comoabortarconpastillas.org](#) and [lapilule.org](#).

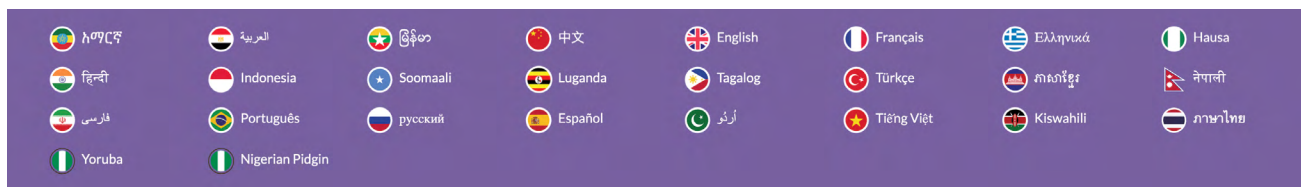
To address the importance of well-trained healthcare providers for safe abortion access, HowToUse partnered with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) to develop a free [pan-provider course](#) that

is offered through Moodle— an accredited eLearning centre and open-source platform. This course is offered in 13 languages: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese (Brazilian), Portuguese (European), Russian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Slovak, Hungarian, Romanian, Polish, and Ukrainian. Upon completion, providers can earn certification endorsed by the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO). This course has already certified 13,000 providers.

In partnership with Doctors Without Borders, HowToUse developed two online courses. One for [humanitarian aid workers](#) to provide safe medical abortions in restrictive and conflict-prone areas available in 5 languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Hindi), and another for end users to safely [self-manage an abortion at home](#) in 26 languages.

HowToUse also features “Ally,” the first-ever chatbot built for abortion care, which is available on its website, Facebook Messenger, [WhatsApp](#), and Instagram. Ally offers personalized information and automated prompts on medical abortion and has supported over 222,000 users.

Ally now also includes new features such as voice functionality and an in-built pregnancy calculator. Ally is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Hindi, and Kiswahili.



Abortion information is available in 26 languages.



SAFE2CHOOSE.ORG



[safe2choose](https://safe2choose.org) is available in 10 languages and provides information on self-managed and provider-assisted abortions, answers to frequently asked questions, and testimonials from women who have received support.

[safe2choose](https://safe2choose.org) is a leader in providing confidential and comprehensive support for abortion care. With its interactive counseling platform that is offered through live chat and email, the team of medically trained counselors provides compassionate and accurate guidance at each stage of the abortion process.

To improve efficiency and keep up with the volume of requests, safe2choose has automated its screening process and now provides round-the-clock responses to common questions and directs users to relevant resources.

To ensure a seamless journey from online counseling to on-the-ground support, safe2choose links users to verified local abortion providers and support organizations via its custom-built, encrypted database. Providers can [self-register](#) and undergo thorough vetting for quality, while the database's geolocation feature directs users to the nearest and safest point of care.

With over 1,000 points of care registered across 81 countries, safe2choose demonstrates its dedication to providing accessible and informed support to women globally. The safe2choose website is available in 10 languages and provides information on self-



WFD's websites inform users and providers about abortion with pills and self-care procedures.

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managed and provider-assisted abortions, answers to [frequently asked questions](#), and [testimonials](#) from women who have received support.

In 2023, safe2choose launched an [Online Counseling Certification](#) to build and strengthen the skills of those providing online abortion counseling. This toolkit comes as a 30-hour course that covers pertinent topics – abortion stigma, sexual and reproductive health knowledge, digital safety tools, and self-care tools for counselors – and is already available in English, French, and Spanish, with Portuguese coming soon.

FINDMYMETHOD.ORG

FIND MY METHOD.

[Find My Method](#) is a comprehensive and user-friendly resource that promotes sex and pleasure-positivity by providing reliable and easily understandable contraceptive information in 13 languages.

The website's non-judgmental and youth-friendly content addresses common questions and concerns that may hinder the uptake or continuation of contraceptives– such as concerns around side effects, cost, and access points. Through [a contraceptive quiz](#) and [comparison tools](#), users can make informed decisions about contraceptive methods based on their individual preferences and lifestyles.

A contraceptive bot – Myka has been launched on the [website](#), [Facebook](#), and [WhatsApp](#) to

make the information exchange seamless.

Find My Method provides comprehensive profiles for each contraceptive method that are tailored to the specific country in which they are available. These profiles offer critical information such as the general accessibility of the product, pricing, and images of locally available contraceptive brands.

Recognizing that many women face barriers in accessing accurate information and trusted providers, Find My Method is scaling its [contraceptive directory](#). This centralized hub will provide geo-located provider information and allow users to share reviews on their access experience. The directory was piloted in Mexico and is now being expanded globally.



Find My Method uses a sex-positive approach to discuss contraception, sex and pleasure.

FEATURES OF WFD'S TECHNOLOGY

WFD prioritizes global scalability and localization in its digital products through language, bandwidth, local preferences, and data security adaptations. WFD's websites are built with GatsbyJS as the front-end and WordPress as the back-end, creating fast-loading and dynamic websites that are less prone to hacking and have faster crash recovery.

The safe2choose counseling platform is hosted on FreshWorks, offering a secure and user-friendly backend, quick responses, and multilingual automation. The FreshWorks API (application programming interface) allows for external integration, enabling safe2choose to extend its counseling services to other partner websites and digital resources.

The Ally chatbot is also designed to be interoperable with partner websites, facilitating a seamless online user journey.

The safe2choose provider database was custom-built on Laravel, with restricted access limited to the counseling team. Multiple layers of encryption protect provider contact information, ensuring the confidentiality and security of sensitive information.

Data security is a high priority at WFD, and all of our websites and digital products are fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and international IT policies. User data is identified and securely housed, with periodic deletions to maintain the security of all stored information.

We're keeping an eye on the future of digital

self-care and keen to understand how new and relevant technologies can be integrated. We've already started this journey with AI, but keen to expand as AI gets more sophisticated.

STRENGTHENING GLOBAL RELATIONSHIPS AND PRESENCE

Advancing toward fostering global communities and establishing trust on a global scale, WFD actively participates in conversations and collaborations to advance shared goals through participation in significant events. Some notable events include RightsCon, Netroots Nation, Women Deliver, Inroads, Foro Idea, and the FIGO World Congress. We collaborated with a diverse range of partners who are aligned with our mission of increasing access to reproductive health care.

In the initial months of 2023, Women First Digital (WFD) faced considerable challenges, including disruptions caused by various Google algorithm updates, account suspensions, and website freezes.

To combat content moderation bias and account suspensions tied to content on abortion care content, WFD actively collaborated with stakeholders to advocate for policy changes, improved moderation transparency, a reliable verification process for digital reproductive resources, and the fostering of inclusive, responsible digital spaces.

Leveraging its expertise in the field, WFD published an [official public comment](#) and an [article](#) examining big tech's control and the suppression of crucial reproductive health information.

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WFD also published a [paper](#) in the Palgrave Encyclopedia of Social Marketing sharing lessons for digital abortion care from the perspective of an eHealth Social Enterprise.

DIGITAL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

WFD places great importance on ensuring that its informational products are easily accessible to those who need them. To optimize its reach and visibility, WFD employs a multi-faceted digital media strategy.

Search engines play a vital role in helping users find the information they need. WFD's SEO strategies optimize its content with relevant keywords, backlinks, meta descriptions, and tags, making it easier for users to find its resources and keeping it up-to-date with Big Tech algorithm changes. Additionally, WFD invests in paid ads to enhance its Search Engine Page Rankings (SERPs).

Social media has become an indispensable tool for WFD to engage with its audience and disseminate information. By providing its content in multiple languages and across various platforms, WFD's social media pages have garnered a following of 573,474 and a far-reaching audience of 80 million in 2023. The growing popularity and reach of these pages are a testament to WFD's innovative, creative, and sometimes provocative content, which seeks to inform and spark discussions on sensitive topics, and ultimately shape attitudes towards abortion, bodily autonomy, and sex-positivity.

WFD also understands the value of collaborating with local content creators to drive traffic to its three websites.



This collaborative effort involves influencers, activists, bloggers, and media publications beyond the sexual and reproductive health space.

By partnering with these content creators, who have built a loyal following and established trust with their audiences, WFD can make its information relatable and accessible to a wider community. This approach has led to partnerships with over 100+ content creators across 37 countries, reaching an estimated 17 million users.

WFD recognizes the importance of keeping pace with evolving digital preferences and habits among its users, as well as reaching users who may not typically access its resources.

To achieve this, WFD experiments with small-scale pilots and explores emerging digital channels to engage with users in the spaces they frequent. This allows WFD to remain agile and adapt to changes in digital use while ensuring that its resources and information remain relevant and accessible.

LINKING THE VIRTUAL AND THE REAL

WFD recognizes that not everyone has access to the internet, especially vulnerable women and youth. As internet penetration rates continue to rise globally, those without access to the web mustn't be left behind. To bridge this information gap and reduce unmet needs, WFD invests in offline marketing and outreach by strengthening partnerships with on-the-ground organizations, provider networks, women and youth action groups, and university associations. This enables WFD to disseminate simplified and localized educational and informational materials, such as posters, pamphlets, and pregnancy wheels, to people who may not have access to the internet.

In addition to these materials, WFD conducts briefing events to introduce attendees to each platform and take them through the medical abortion protocols. These events ensure that people are informed about the available resources and understand how to access them.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to Google Analytics data, users from over 242 countries and territories have visited WFD websites. Over 90% of WFD's digital products are accessed through mobile devices, underlining the importance of mobile compatibility and accessibility. The majority of users for HowToUse and safe2choose are women, but both sites also draw significant numbers of male users.

Find My Method, on the other hand, receives slightly more male visitors than female visitors.

WFD's digital products are most popular among visitors aged 18–24, followed by the 25–34 age group. While Google Analytics does not report data for minors, anecdotal evidence suggests that visitors under 18 also frequently access WFD's websites.

While our brands are global and accessed everywhere, our communications and outreach work is focused on a few regions – LATAM, FWACA, East Africa, South Asia, and the US. But we offer turnkey solutions that can be applied across different regions and even specific countries or cities.

We collect a wealth of data to understand how users prefer to navigate digital resources, and their journeys on our websites, and will continue to center our product features around user needs and preferences.



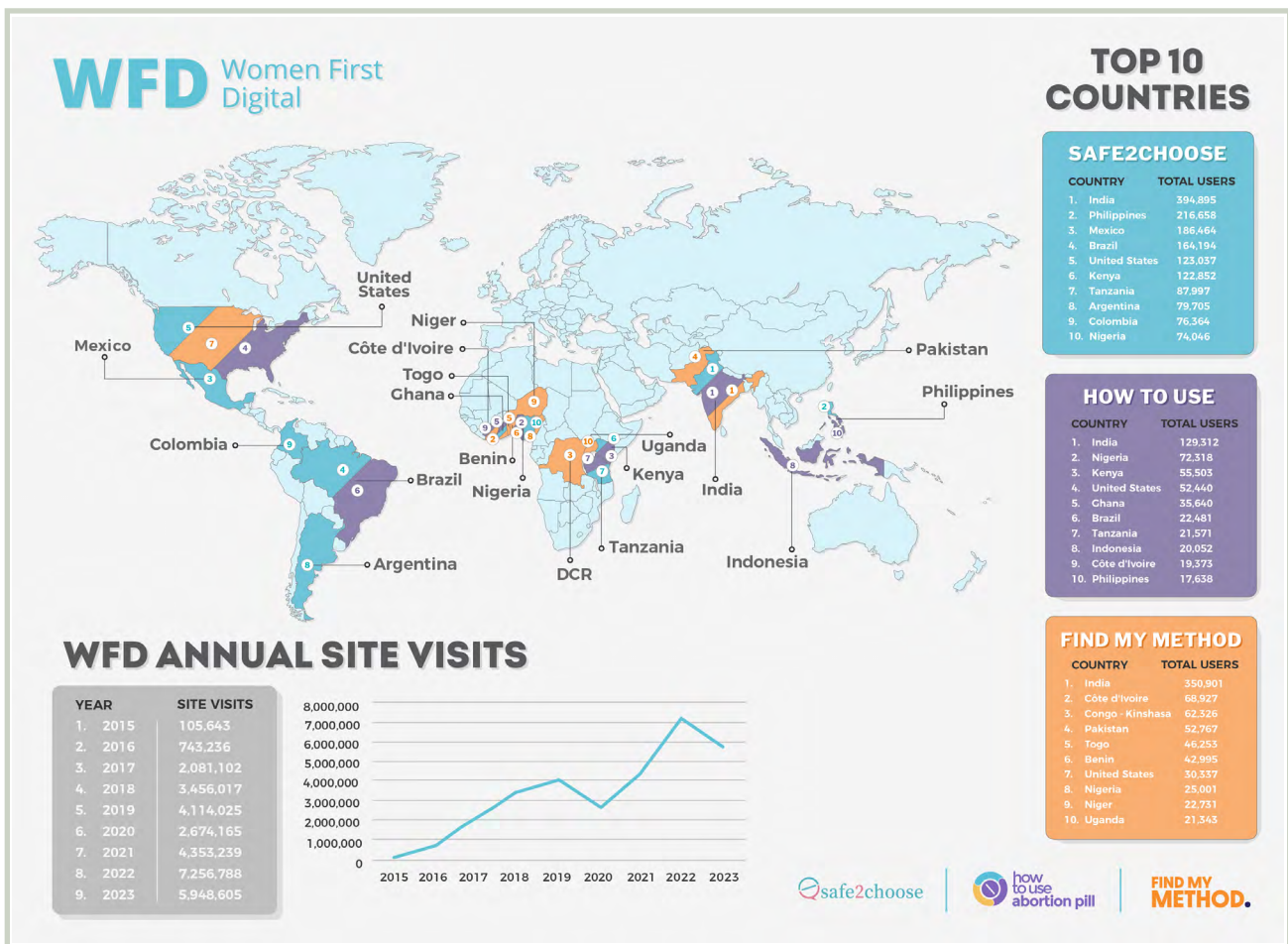
WFD conducts offline activities in universities and youth centers to increase awareness of abortion with pills.

Contact

If you interested in a collaboration or have any questions, please contact us at info@womenfirstdigital.org.

Learn more about Women First Digital, what we do, and where we work by visiting us online at www.womenfirstdigital.org. You can also get periodic updates by following us on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/women-first-digital).

The map below highlights the top 10 country visits for each website.



Women First Digital is transforming how sexual and reproductive healthcare is designed, delivered and accessed.

WFD is affiliated with a registered U.S.-based 501c(3) non-profit organization.

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