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Hosting biz-queenpin parachutes Everest Memset MD strives for gender-balanced IT sector

By [Lewis Page](#)

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One of the UK's most prominent female IT executives has joined the first group of skydivers to freefall over Mount Everest.

Kate Craig-Wood is MD of Memset Ltd, "the UK's first carbon-neutral hosting company". She will be making the Everest jump in order to raise money for Computer Clubs for Girls (CC4G), a third-sector outfit which aims to encourage more females to enter the IT sector.

The first trio of skydivers made their jump successfully [yesterday](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7649011.stm) (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7649011.stm>), jumping from more than 29,000 feet and free falling for a full minute before coming in to land on the world's highest drop zone. A further 29 parachutists, including Ms Craig-Wood, will make the same jump in coming days.



Craig-Wood preparing to take the plunge.

"It is tragic there are not very many women in the industry, because women are very good at IT," Craig-Wood told *CIO Magazine* earlier this year. On her [website](http://kate.craig-wood.com/index.php) (<http://kate.craig-wood.com/index.php>), she points out that there are now fewer female IT workers than there were five years ago, and that the IT sector's gender pay gap is worse than the national average.

Craig-Wood has personally improved these statistics even more than one might expect. In addition to adding a well-paid woman to the IT workforce, she also simultaneously removed one man when she underwent transgender surgery to become female two years ago.

Born Robert, the young Craig-Wood was privately educated and did a degree in Biomedical Science at Southampton before becoming a management consultant and then moving into hosting as an Easyspace exec. In 2002, he co-founded Memset, and the new company did sufficiently well that the expensive transgender procedures necessary to become Kate could easily be paid for from his/her own pocket.

"I went to the best surgeons on the planet and the bill, including facial surgery and a boob job, was around £50,000. I had my genital surgery in Thailand ... everything works ... There is something deeply affirming and fulfilling about sex as a woman, and it's very, very powerful. Having been on both sides, I now know that women have the better deal," Craig-Wood [told](http://women.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/women/the_way_we_live/article3620849.ece) (http://women.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/women/the_way_we_live/article3620849.ece) the *Sunday Times* earlier this year.

"I hope to act as a role-model to other would-be female IT entrepreneurs," she adds on her own site. ®

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