We know from research into group management and dynamics that diverse organisations perform better. Therefore, the first step in addressing questions of diversity in the emerging interdisciplinary digital humanities space is to acknowledge that challenges of diversity indeed exist – in this respect this session is a welcome opportunity to discuss this matter.

Perhaps, the most common way of thinking about diversity is to refer to demographic diversity, e.g. diversity related to race, gender, class etc. For me, however, thinking about diversity in a meaningful way means that we pay attention to both cognitive diversity and demographic diversity in the digital research space, as well as their relationship. Cognitive and intellectual diversity means that we, as a community of practice, both acknowledge and value different ways of approaching digital research. This is not just about interdisciplinarity, but also about creating the space for different questions to be asked and different conceptualisations of the digital to be deployed.

Uzzi and Spiro in their article ‘Collaboration and Creativity: The Small World Problem’ (American Journal of Sociology 111(2): 447-504) which looked and how team dynamics affect the artistic and financial success of musicals in Broadway, hypothesized that the reason intellectual diversity was important in the production teams is because “small world networks that help to create success or failure in Broadway musicals... face liabilities in the realms of innovation and collaboration that impede their creating new, successful musical hits”; in other words, “too much small-worldliness can undermine the very benefits it creates at more moderate levels, due to a decrease in artists’ ability to innovate and break convention.” In this respect diversity in the emerging digital humanities and creativity research space is not just a noble aspiration but also a necessity if we want this space to be innovative.

When it comes to translating a vision about diversity in digital research in Newcastle University, I personally, see three areas that need our attention:

First of all, we need to create and invest on an inclusive and flexible digital skills training culture, which will allow individuals to join-in, experiment and develop their capabilities;

Secondly, we need to promote visible role models that can support self-confidence and a sense of belonging in the emerging community of practice;
And, thirdly, we need to develop a much clearer understanding of the diverse career aspirations of the people (students and staff) in this field and create enabling strategies for them to happen.

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1. **Respecting expertise and encouraging talent**

   This means creating actual material opportunities for under-represented and excluded groups (i.e. scholarships, fellowships, tenure-track positions), and unblocking the pipeline for progression and promotions given the problem in UK HEI with race diversity at faculty and senior management levels.

   In digital research, one issue is the formation of teams and selection of people for positions within collaborative work. Where digital/interdisciplinary research is so vogue and vague, it tends to attract many parties with peripheral interests in the digital, given perceptions around digital/interdisciplinary angles making funding bids look more attractive. This wide-ranging interest could in itself be fine, even perhaps arguably inclusive, but more likely, there is the risk of drowning out expertise that does not make itself known loudly.

   A possible tangible solution is a search platform or database/directory within the university’s IT infrastructure. There was a previous incarnation of this (ResViz). The university is supposed to be a repository of knowledge and expertise that should be easily accessible, rather than through word of mouth and networks as this means we risk overlooking the people who do not make themselves obviously known or who do not run in the same networks. This lack of open access to the expertise in the university is a serious issue for both diversity and for impact/engagement.

2. **Being aware of hegemonies, hierarchies and ‘cybertyping’**

   Digital spaces are neither black nor white, nor are they not either. This applies to gender as well. Digital research/ers therefore need to seriously consider i. the subjects/areas of research undertaken and ii. in terms of the methods and materials of digital research. An example: a DH project analysing texts to understand the changing meanings and contexts of particular political concepts - fantastic project but at the moment there is only capacity to analyse written texts in the English language. The hegemony of language is an issue across digital research, and in the case of this project, also has the effect of potentially further relegating non-western thought to "not philosophy". One tangible action here is the diversification of cultural and linguistic content, and analytical capacity, to include non-English, non-traditional texts. There are logistical limitations, but the really exciting challenge for DH then is to collaboratively come up with digital solutions that can truly capture the breadth of humanities.
3. **Listening**

Questions around what can be done for diversity have very likely already been answered and are already enacted by the excluded. What needs to be done is to listen, not simply to respond or with the intention of going ahead with our own big technological fix idea, but to actually hear and to be prepared to support/join existing efforts. Technological fix thinking has the tendency to stretch the definition of co-design, and we need to resist this by revisiting what it means to listen and hear.

Here too, if we listen, the preference from marginal groups is for intersectionality (which interrogates the entire system of imbalance) rather than diversity (which is about retrofitting quick fix, stop gap solutions to patch the obvious holes in the system).

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My top 3 messages (based on our own experiences and advice from those who’ve investigated diversity problems in computing) are as follows:

1. **“Go the extra mile” to attract and recruit people from underrepresented groups, e.g.**
   - We don’t take CV’s on face value: we take into account that some people may be well qualified for the programme, but may not sell themselves as confidently as others (Audrey’s "drowning out of expertise that doesn’t make itself known": see above);
   - Creating custom routes into our Collaborative Doctoral Training centre for those who don’t currently meet the entrance qualifications;
   - Being flexible, and tailoring the programme to the individual needs of those with caring responsibilities.

2. **Make sure that diversity is represented when anyone encounters the CDT, e.g.**
   - Our Web presence
   - The Interview panel
   - Our teaching staff

3. **Accept that the problem starts earlier than at PhD entry level and try to put effort into rectifying this, e.g.**
   - Encourage staff and local industry to contribute time to Code Clubs;
   - The School of Computing has been at the forefront of “Teaching the Teachers”;
   - Exciting children about computing: we are designing the new National Innovation Centre for Data building on Science Central as beacon building for school children.