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Add & Stir: Going Beyond Acknowledging the Diversity Problem in DH

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Add & Stir
Going Beyond Acknowledging the Diversity Problem in Digital Humanities

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Diversity

○ Definition: the quality or state of having many different forms, types, ideas, etc.

○ Coping mechanism of the binary

"They say we're not placing enough emphasis on diversity."
Why this panel matters

- First step: start having the conversation
James Baldwin

"Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced."
Why this panel matters

- First step: start having the conversation
- It’s an opportunity to listen
Why this panel matters

- First step: start having the conversation
- It's an opportunity to listen
- Our worlds are microcosms
Digital Humanities

- Global
- Collaborative
- Non-traditional
- Public
- Democratizing
- Capacity for Play and Failure

Martin Grandjean.
Diversity in DH

- Anecdotal
- Perceived lack of diversity
- Only recently collecting data
Alliance of Digital Humanities Orgs

- The Annual DH Conference
- Largest (other than perhaps the Digital Humanities Summer Institute)
- First "Eastern" conference 2015
- First multilingual conference 2017
PHYSICAL CENTRES IN DIGITAL HUMANITIES ACROSS THE GLOBE

114 Centers in 24 Countries

Melissa Terra, 2012
ADHO Participation by Gender Study

- Nickoal Eichmann - starting Jan 2017, Digital Scholarship Librarian at CU Boulder
- Scott Weinhart - DH Specialist at Carnegie Mellon University
- Report to publish 2017
- No other demographic data (i.e. race)
Sydney (2015) 46% female

Over 30% of authors and attendees arriving from outside Europe or North America
71% of women and 73% of men who submitted presentations passed the peer review process.

Women represent 36.1% of all authors (29%-38% fluctuation depending on the year).

Total Authors: 3,239.
ADHO DH Conference Findings

- Keywording on proposals align along gender
- Acceptance Rates:
  - Cultural Studies – 57%
  - Gender Studies – 60%
  - Text Analysis – 83%
  - Programming – 80%
Efforts to Correct Imbalance

- Diversity in DH 2011
- GO:DH 2012
- Twitter Discussions
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  - #myDHis
Efforts to Correct Imbalance

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DEB VERHOEVEN AT THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES 2015 CONFERENCE

How many of you have already seen a COCKATOO? How about a KOALA? A KANGAROO? Has anyone seen a funnel web SPIDER? Has anyone met an Australian who actually says G’DAY?

Now for that RAREST AND MOST ELUSIVE OF CREATURES....

Imagine for a moment what it’s like for the rest of us attending a DH conference. When was the last time the conference air conditioning didn’t feel right to you? When was the last time you had to queue to use the bathroom? When was the last time you thought twice about what to wear on stage so you could use a lapel mike? Why are they even called lapel mikes?

PARADE OF PATRIARCHS
SERIOUSLY WHAT IS GOING ON IN THIS FIELD... ??!!

I took the theme of this year’s conference Global DH to be a celebration of diversity not the universalization of one perspective.

SO BLOKES – I’M JUST GOING TO TALK TO YOU FOR A MOMENT...

When was the last time you saw seven consecutive women get up at a DH conference and speak about anything other than gender? You’ve made a world designed around ensuring your own personal comfort. But it’s not comfortable for so many, many others.

WHAT TO DO?
For a start can we turn the aircon down.... Systemically, seriously - I’M CALLING IT - it’s time for you guys to sweat.

I WANT 80% WOMEN, 20% BLOKES

for the next thirty years and only then can we say the scales have been righted. But in reality I’m not even agitated by my own definition of equity. The last thirty years have been pretty horrible for so many of us and I’m not an especially vindictive person. I wouldn’t impose the last thirty years on anyone else.

SO BLOKES, PLEASE, PLEASE JUST STOP IMPOSING IT ON US NOW.

PRACTICAL TIPS TO LEAVE DH IN A BETTER PLACE THAN YOU FOUND IT:
1. Get quantitative and number your days. Preferably publicly.
2. Find someone who doesn’t look and sound like you and mentor them, encourage them and invite them into your role.
3. Have a clear, purposeful succession plan and enact it.
4. And above all - BE MORE THAN BINARY - do this because you embrace diversity in all its complexity. Not because you have checklists or policies. But because you recognise that the real story of DH is more heterogenous and complex and vibrant than you have allowed it to be to date.

OK - WAS THAT CLEAR ENOUGH? 😊
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- GO:DH 2012
- Twitter Discussions
  - #myDHis
  - #whatifDH[year]
  - #transformDH
Efforts to Correct Imbalance

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  - #transformDH
  - #DHdiversity
Add & Stir

- Realize a group is too homogenous – or realize a need for diverse perspectives
- Build a program and hire one or two
- Mix them in when the macaroni
- Hope it gels
- Run with it
"As opposed to meeting people where they are, where people of color, women, people with disabilities are already engaged in digital projects, there’s a making of room at an already established table."
Add & Stir Limitations

- Does not engage people
- Does not provide equitable pathways for advancement and exposure
- Typically does not include mentoring programs
- No further cultivation of youth
Get Involved

- Get in touch with your prejudices.
- Allow space for others.
- Participate in movements
- Acknowledge limitations.
- Personalize approach.
- Understand the value.
- Continue to act.
YOU CAN DO IT
Questions?

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