Diversity in Open Technology Design and Creative Industries

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Diversity & Innovation

- Everyone from Forbes to the European Union thinks that diverse teams produce better solutions
- 'Differently wired brains' debate never resolved - but a very simple truth is emerging:
  * Tech projects which actively encourage diversity become diverse
  * Tech projects which actively discourage diversity become monocultural
- So embrace change - just say 'yes'!
Digital Arts Performance Workshop - Flossie 2012
Low-key/High impact

• 'Innovator' is not synonymous with 'heroic billionaire'
• Local innovations simply utilising established technologies can have amazing global impacts (eg mobile payments in Africa)
• New twists on 'think global, act local' - the world is changing, don't get stuck in a 'silicon valley' rut
• Local sensitivity and diverse involvement are becoming the key to going global
Flossie & Fossbox

- Flossie annual conference - independent collective working to diversify open source
- Fossbox - women-led social innovation SE, co-design and development working with tech industries, social innovators, universities, museums and non-profits
Flossie 2012 - student volunteers
Flossie - diversifying open development and culture

- Women are 3% of FLOSS coders globally
- How can such an open contribution framework become so unequal?
- Many theories!
- Never mind, just change it . . .
Flossie Skills Sharing Workshops

- Support and advocacy not enough - practical interventions needed
- Women aren't 'soft' - we represent the whole spectrum from 'soft' people skills to hardcore coding
- Having a baby is not the same as a lobotomy!!!
- Skills gap/lag - women returners can be reskilled quickly
- Contributing to open source is a great way back in
- There are more women in proprietary than OS sectors - chance for OS to attract 'quick start' new coders
- Open source benefits from increased contributions
Geek Chic? Erm . . .

Eclectic Tech Carnival, Linz
Fossbox - Community Co-design

Common problems with partial solutions

+ Diversity

* Coders, innovators, artists, local communities, entrepreneurs, researchers, data-wranglers

* Diverse communities - gender, age, background and orientation

Let's believe that we can change the world together!

= Innovation!
'Future Cities' research network

- Cross-disciplinary approaches emerging from AHRC funded KT projects:
  * Design by research bringing together and transforming praxis: coding, data, HCI, information systems, systems engineering, built environment, urban infrastructure, cultural criticism
  * Women crossing disciplines to innovate in design through collaborative practice
  * Fostering connections and exploring process
Coders, artists and social innovators coming together - Flossie 2012
Open your mind as well as your code?

Reducing barriers to participation:

- Network, collaborate - expand your comfort zone
- Innovation is disruptive - don't be afraid of change
- Excitement is much more fun than anxiety
- Engage with wider communities
- Specialness is not scarce - you're unique already so chill!
- Difference is not a deficit
- Diversity is the solution, not the problem!
Get in touch!

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