ReFiguring Innovation in Games:

The Creative Collaboratory Method

Report and Toolkit

Professor Helen Kennedy
Professor Sarah Atkinson
Dr Natalie Wreyford

Introductory statement

The purpose of this publication is two-fold:

1. To provide a report which consolidates the findings and outcomes from research undertaken in conjunction with the ReFiguring Innovation in Games project over the past five years – specifically the development and evolution of the Creative Collaboratory Method.

2. To present a practical toolkit for other researchers engaged in partnership collaboration with which they can implement, develop and build on the Creative Collaboratory Method.

This method and the insights generated were developed through a series of predominantly game and immersive focussed projects but the resultant toolkit and the set of resources described here are widely applicable across subject domains and disciplines, particularly where there are external stakeholders and partners.

University of Brighton

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

KING'S College LONDON

LIMINA IMMERSIVE

University of Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

Contents

Introduction

Context

This report outlines a series of transformative and interventionist research practices that took place during the five-year ReFiguring Innovation in Games (ReFiG) project. These happened through ever-closer collaboration with key stakeholders and creatives who inhabit precarious but nonetheless productive spaces at the edges – or entirely outside of – mainstream games production in the UK. Rather than just decrying the absence of women in the triple AAA studio sector or focusing on the lamentable and toxic regimes that are sustained therein, the project sought out alternative spaces of innovation in immersive and interactive media that could offer the potential to support a more diverse workforce.

By looking at where the women are, rather than just where they are not, we sought to develop and promote methods and processes through which to nurture and sustain a more inclusive set of working practices for the games industry and the immersive sector more broadly.

The ReFiguring Innovation in Games project (ReFiG) ran from 2014-2019, a five-year multi-partnered network project funded by the Social Science & Humanities Research Council in Canada (SSHRC). It was set up to address an urgent need for equity, diversity and innovation in videogames industries and their associated culture that is notoriously exclusionary and openly intolerant, particularly of women. This extensive research-driven partnership was designed to enable and support a timely rethinking and 're-configuring' of an industry and culture impeded by persistent inequality by gender, race, socioeconomic background, disability and sexuality. The project worked across four sectors:

1. The games industry
2. Games cultures
3. Informal learning environments
4. Formal education

The project identified priority issues in each of the sectors, initiated research projects that directly addressed discriminatory politics and practices in these spaces and cultures, and supported techno-cultural innovation. Over the five years the aim was to intervene in industry and maker practices and promote diversity in game development while also improving conditions for all workers. With a lack of equity and diversity in the workforce, linked to working conditions in game development and long-term economic sustainability, the ReFiG project asked how might feminist research methods engage, study and intervene in the status quo?

Developing the methodology

In the first section of this report we outline a series of research interventions through which we engaged in a process of methodological innovation, including running all-women game jams, and working with a community of women in the UK virtual reality (VR) sector to develop a vision statement. In particular, we detail the development of a particular methodological approach, which evolved significantly throughout the *ReFiG* project, and which we have named The Creative Collaboratory Method – as a tool through which to rapidly develop new practices, experiences and processes.

The Creative Collaboratory Method (CCM)

The Creative Collaboratory Method is a framework comprised of a formal set of principles and practices through which to facilitate meaningful and action-oriented multi-stakeholder collaborations. We have evolved this framework with a range of partners and collaborators, and it has proven to be a very effective means through which to rapidly develop and evolve new practices, experiences and processes that respond to identified challenges or opportunities.

Collaborative research

ReFiG was underpinned by feminist research principles and by a commitment to collaborative research 'with' our stakeholders. Early in the process of writing the grant application the team described a 'co-laboratory' ethos – a way of encapsulating the 'doing it together' model that was being built into the project – as essential to how the research process would unfold. This was the starting point from which the CCM evolved. The CCM draws on a wide array of approaches to collaboration including community practice, design, organizational management and stakeholder engagement. This report describes our process of development and the iterations and refinements that required us to engage with techniques and insights from different contexts which were outside of our own core disciplines.

The resultant CCM aligns very well with the way in which Anne Stephens has adapted Gerald Midgley's 'systemic intervention' methodology to evolve a feminist theory that supports action-oriented, participatory research, which address issues of power in research practice and avoids the unhelpful dichotomy of observation and intervention (2013). Stephen's framework was expressed as five simple principles and was designed to assist project managers in the planning, implementing and evaluation of projects in the field of community development.

Stephens's five principles are:

1. Adopt a gender sensitive approach;
2. Value voices from the margins;
3. Incorporate the environment within research/actions;
4. Select appropriate methodologies; and
5. Undertake research/action that promotes plural, desirable and sustainable social changes.

The *ReFiG* project sought not only to understand the challenges of improving workforce diversity in gaming, but to intervene in and address these challenges. In this way, meaningful insight is developed that can assist in the process of intervention. The development and refinement of the CCM evolved through this commitment to adopt these principles and to work collaboratively towards a shared vision with our partners.

Systemic Intervention, Midgley (2000)

A multi-methodology, or mixed method research tool that simultaneously produces purposeful actions to create change. It calls for three things:
1. That researchers reflect critically on boundaries to determine what is to be included in an intervention and what might be marginalized.
2. A commitment to methodological pluralism. Researchers select appropriate theories and methods, acknowledging methodology as dynamic and evolving.
3. People undertaking systemic intervention should include a commitment to action to make a sustainable improvement.

Research contexts

> **The global market for video games is estimated to reach $180.1 billion by 2021, according to the Association for UK Interactive Entertainment** (UKIE 2018a).

All sectors from console sales to smartphone games are growing steadily, with mobile gaming showing the steepest rise in consumer spending over the last decade. Approximately 2.2 billion people play games worldwide (Macdonald 2017).

The UK is the 6th largest video game market in terms of consumer revenues. Approximately 37.3m people in the UK play games (UKIE 2018b) and 41% of all game players are women.

49% of mobile players are women and 43% of women mobile players play games five times a week or more, compared to 38% of men according to Google's *Change the Game* report (Google Play 2017). However, this report from Google in association with Newzoo also highlighted that the majority of women think games are mostly made for men.

Is this perhaps because of the top 100 grossing games, 44% more of the app icons feature male characters than female characters? Or because one quarter of men who play mobile games say they would prefer to play with or against other men?

The games industry has the capacity to deliver rich, meaningful, creative and stimulating cultural experiences that can contribute new tools for education and avenues for economic prosperity. A diverse, inclusive and representative workforce will help offer opportunities for all.

There were 2,261 active games companies in the UK as of June 2018 (UKIE 2018b). Data from other creative industries has shown a clear connection between the diversity of the workforce and the diversity of the product (Gill

> The **UK is the 6th largest video game market** in terms of consumer revenues. Approximately 37.3m people in the UK play games (UKIE 2018b) and 41% of all game players are women.

2007, Wreyford 2018). So who is making games in the UK?

According to a recent census report by UKIE and the University of Sheffield, the UK games industry workforce is highly international – 19% of workers are from the EU/EEA and a further 9% are from the rest of the world (Taylor 2020). The AHRC-funded *UK Games Industry Census* found that the games sector is predictably a young industry, with two thirds of the workforce aged 35 or under. Whilst this might conjure up notions of vigour, fresh ideas and a growing industry, such a young demographic has been shown in more traditional industries such as film to suggest a work/life balance that makes staying in careers hard for parents, especially mothers (Raisingfilms.com 2016). Indeed, the percentage of women working in games drops noticeably after age 30 and doesn't start to regain ground until the 46-50 age group.

And here's the rub: 70% of those working in the games industry are men. 28% are women and 2% are non-binary individuals. A huge 85% of respondents work full time and only 2% work part time which might account for a loss of some of the female demographic. There

is considerable research on the motherhood penalty on women's working lives and women still bear the burden of expectation that they will be the ones to compromise their careers to attend to the needs of future generations (Connelly et al, 2016). But motherhood alone is not sufficient to account for the gender disparity in game work. All job roles have more men than women, and the core, prestige production roles of programming, art and design have amongst the highest percentages of men.

49% of mobile players are women and 43% of women mobile players play games five times a week or more, compared to 38% of men according to Google's Change the Game report (Google Play 2017).

UKIE's census found that 10% of those working in games are Black, Asian or from another racial background that is a minority group in the UK. This is higher than the national working population but needs to be set alongside the geographical location of where there is work to be found, since in cities, particularly London, the racial diversity is much higher. London was overrepresented as a place of work in the census compared to other professions whilst rural areas such as large parts of Scotland and Wales were underrepresented. So, whilst this percentage exceeds most other creative industries, it is lower than IT jobs more generally. In addition, people from racial groups that are a minority in the UK are less well represented in senior roles,

and although women from these communities find their representation proportionally higher, it is difficult to celebrate this without knowing which roles they hold, and of course the low numbers of women overall means that a few women can skew the statistical significance.

62% of the video games workforce come from households where the main earner worked in a managerial or professional role and 12% attended an independent or fee-paying school, nearly double the national average. This suggests that the games workforce has an overrepresentation of people from more privileged socioeconomic backgrounds. 21% identify as LGBTQ+ and 79% as heterosexual. This significantly high proportion of LGBTQ+ workers perhaps reflects a more tolerant attitude among gaming's younger community, although they are more likely to be found in the precarious 'indie' sector than in permanent roles at bigger companies. (Ruberg 2019).

In one of the first ever reports on the immersive sector in the UK, Nesta and Immerse UK estimate that there are 1000 immersive-specialist companies in the UK, employing around 4,500 people and generating £660 million in sales. (Immerse UK 2018). 38% of the companies are found in London, but they are also in Brighton, Bristol, Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester, Cambridge, Oxford and Edinburgh. Given the size and the speed of growth it is particularly troubling that so little is known about the characteristics of its workforce. Across the UK, women make up less than 20% of the tech workforce (Onanuga 2019). In 2019 only 14% of UK VR companies have any women directors (King's College London & University of Brighton, 2019).

Media industries are culturally significant because they not only reflect the world in which the product is created but they can reach beyond

The games industry has the capacity to deliver **rich, meaningful, creative** and **stimulating** cultural experiences that can contribute new tools for education and avenues for economic prosperity. A diverse, inclusive and representative workforce will help offer opportunities for all.

this to create new worlds as varied and fantastical as the human imagination. Media can be not only a mirror of society but a catalyst for social change; an embedder of norms, an amplifier of stereotypes but also a site for humanity's hopes, fears and dreams to be enacted. In this regard, games and creative immersive experiences are no different to the more traditional media such as publishing, television, film and theatre. They are just much newer.

Research on creative industries has clearly shown that working in these professions can feel fraught and precarious, that informal and networked recruitment processes uphold

inequalities of access, particularly to the most highly paid and high-status jobs. Newer, subtler forms of sexism and racism have been identified by researchers and activists (Conor et al. 2015). However, changing ingrained structural inequality and exclusionary working practices needs widespread commitment from every sector.

History has shown us that discriminatory cultures remain relatively entrenched without active interventions. Games and immersive media companies have an opportunity to learn from the other creative industries that come before them. The *ReFiG* project has been conceived to positively intervene before it is too late. We have an opportunity to insist that jobs are accessible and inclusive. We can choose to craft an industry where teams are representative of the population and where everyone is equally valued, regardless of their identity. We have the chance to ensure gaming and immersive environments are truly egalitarian and open to all.

There were **2,261 active games companies** in the UK as of June 2018 (UKIE 2018b). Data from other creative industries has shown a clear connection between the diversity of the workforce and the diversity of the product (Gill 2007, Wreyford 2018).

creativity

success

prosperity

equality

growth

innovation

collaboration

=

diversity
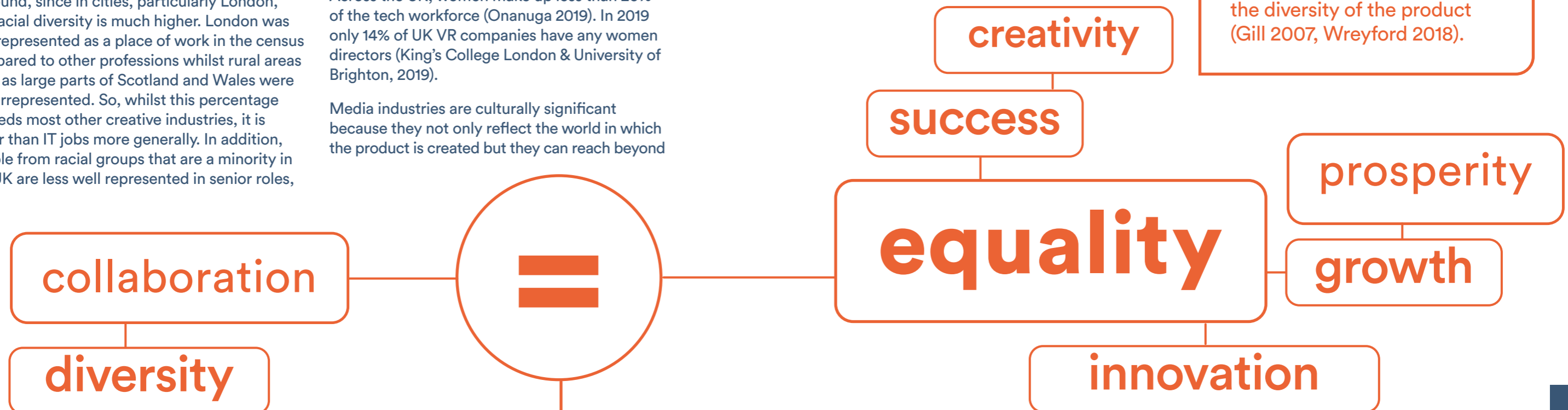
Developing

The Creative Collaboratory Method

1. Event activities shaping the method
2. All women game jams
3. Near-field work: immersive sector

Event activities shaping the method

Our Creative Collaboratory Method (CCM) evolved over a number of years between 2015 and 2019 and was shaped by our work on a series of events and research projects. Over the next few pages we briefly identify the origins of our methodology and its development in these early stages.

Root 1066 Hastings (2015)

Elements within the CCM process were first piloted in the Arts Council England (ACE) funded collaboration with Hastings Borough Council to evaluate their cultural events. ROOT 1066 was a landmark cultural programme inspired by the 950th Anniversary of the Battle of Hastings. It gave contemporary artists the opportunity to offer new perspectives on the history and legacy of 1066 and aimed for both deep and broad public engagement, addressing areas of poor access and low participation.

This was a complex project involving partners with very different economic, artistic and cultural objectives and interests – it provided a key opportunity to test out and evolve some principles of multi-stakeholder collaboration. The process of engagement and consultation with the partners refined a central key challenge that could be addressed through this project, and through which resources could be generated that would provide a valuable evidence base that could be used and adapted for all the key players. The intervention that emerged was an approach that centered around capturing and interpreting the individual audience experiences and evaluation of the festival events.

The resultant rich visual and textual resources gathered through this set of practices could be used by individual artists, cultural partners, commercial investors, promoters and by the local council to understand and evidence the economic, cultural and placemaking impacts of the festival. These outcomes could also be used by ACE funders to contribute to the national discourse around the value of cultural experiences. We developed a toolkit called the LIVE approach: Learning about Impact & Value through Experience. The sharable toolkit uses the example of ROOT 1066 to provide a step-by-step guide to the process, protocols and resources to enable event and festival organizers to develop their own audience evaluation and take their own LIVE measurements. Details are available at http://livetoolkit.uk/home.html.

TRI-PACT (2016)

Funded by the AHRC, Tracking IP Across the Creative Technologies (TRI-PACT) aimed to stimulate creative and strategic thinking around the management, protection, sharing, access, use and reuse of Intellectual Property (IP) within and across the technology-rich creative domains of Film, Broadcast and Games. A group of key stakeholders (practitioners, researchers, educationalists and industry partners) were brought together to rethink and re-imagine IP structures within Film, Broadcast and Games production.

The TRI-PACT project was a key stepping-stone in establishing the value and potential of the *Well-Sorted* toolkit in setting the agenda for interdisciplinary collaborative activity.

The toolkit is a free, simple and engaging way to create agendas, manage participants and review results online. This is a form-based interface that facilitates the input, collation and subsequent curation of responses from your stakeholders who are asked to respond to a specific question or issue. It then allows the responses to be sorted into thematised groups, establishing a shared agenda driven by the attendees.

Details are available at: www.well-sorted.org/index.php

The TRI-PACT project was also an opportunity to test and refine a series of different approaches to engaging multiple stakeholders and cross- sector participants in activities through which different perspectives could be valued whilst evolving a collective language around a shared challenge. Once established the shared challenge became the focus for collaborative actions, including building new networks, sharing resources and developing initiatives to stimulate change in policy and practice around creative use of IP.

The origins of our method
All-Women Game Jams

> "A game jam is an informal creative space, time-bound, resource-bound and task-driven event through which to create a game. They have been around for more than fifteen years and are used as a rapid prototyping strategy to deliver innovation and new ideas to the sector."
>
> Kennedy, H.W. (2018) 'Game Jam as Feminist Methodology: The Affective Labors of Intervention in the Ludic Economy'. *Games and Culture* 13(7) 708-727

2012 XX Game Jam

In 2012 an all-women game jam was held to improve women's participation in games work (critically this was before the explosion of gamergate. See VanDerWerff 2014). The event was scheduled to coincide with Ada Lovelace Day activities across the country – celebrating women's achievements and participation in science and technology. It also coincided with the London Games Festival. 24 women participated over 24 hours in the colourful Mind Candy offices in Shoreditch, London.

The game jam format emulates the project-driven, high pressure, precarious wider work structures of games industries - although they are usually dominated by men. Participation is unpaid, but the free labour (Terranova 2000) is given by those who take part in the hope (Kuehn & Corrigan 2013) that it will lead to future employment opportunities and a widening of their contacts network.

Participants work to a theme or challenge and are encouraged to form teams with those they have just met for the first time. A strict time limit and competitive framework is intended to foster innovative thinking, rapid problem solving and a strong team dynamic (Kennedy 2018).
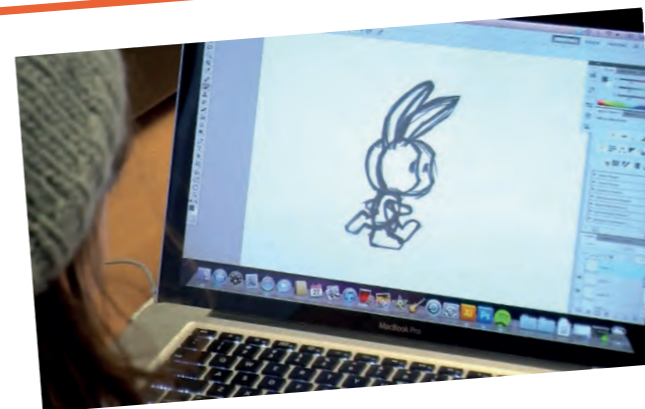
> **"** We want a diverse workforce, because when you have lots of people, with different stories to tell, with different experiences, and they bring them to a creative product, you get far more diversity of games made. Which in turn encourages more people to play games, because we're a diverse society"
>
> – Jo Twist, CEO UKIE
> XX Game Jam, October 26th 2012.

2016 XX+ Game Jams

Five more all-women game jams took place in 2016, revisiting the method from the first event and adding the '+' sign to explicitly signal their inclusion of transgender and non-binary identities. The re-naming came in response to concerns raised around 'XX' being exclusionary and biologically essentialist. Valuable lessons were learned in negotiating the complexities of bringing together multi-stakeholder partnerships which include both mainstream industry partners and marginalised communities. The reflection and resources section on pages 36 to 37 of this report is informed by some of this learning. The jams took place in locations across the UK: Leamington Spa, Brighton, Bristol, London's South Bank and King's College London. There were over 150 applicants and of those that participated only 5 had attended a game jam before.

In post event feedback, respondents commented on the inclusive, supportive and diverse nature of the events, fostering a collaborative and relaxed atmosphere. The participants shared their awareness of the challenges they would be likely to face if pursuing careers in gaming. For the intentional feminist impact of these events to be meaningful

NEWS
XX+ is the first ever pro-LGBT game jam, and it's just for the women, transgender, and non-binary folk

Pocketgamer.com Sep 29, 2016

the actions, agencies and affects evidenced during the high intensity but short lived "jam" need to be durable and impact beyond the scope of the event itself. (Kennedy 2018).

Many of the 2012 event participants have since established careers within games or games-related industries, many of them are working critically and innovatively and setting up initiatives to support other women in games work in the UK and throughout Europe.

These game jams provided a template for energetic, action-oriented engagement. Key elements of the game jam such as rapid team formation, collaborative skills sharing, iterative ideation and creative practice have all directly fed into the way in which our CCM labs are structured and facilitated.

> **"** It's inspirational to see how many women there are in dev roles in the industry. I met some very talented women – great for networking. It has given me the confidence in my skills to go to further game jams – and I will do this – I had an awesome day!"
>
> Participant, XX Game Jam,
> 26 October, 2012

Near-field work: immersive sector

Refining the Creative Collaboratory Method by working with women in the Virtual Reality sector.

ReFiG funded a stream of 'near-field' work led by Sarah Atkinson, Vicki Callahan and Helen Kennedy throughout 2016-2020. This work focused upon creative technology sectors operating outside of the AAA games industry. These sectors were identified as ones inhabited by women, who were made visible through industry events and social media.

Women in Transmedia

This work began with the *Women in Transmedia* project (Atkinson & Callahan, 2016). Over 100 women working in games, virtual reality (VR) and transmedia were interviewed. The results showed that women working in VR were very likely to end up working in games and other immersive tech industries, so VR quickly emerged as a near field or crossover field of creative practice. It was particularly interesting as it was still a relatively new media and therefore had the potential to be a key site for intervention to ensure its workforce was diverse and its working practices inclusive.

Women in VR

ReFiG then funded a second initiative in 2017 – Women in VR. It was at this point that a long-standing collaboration with VR producer Catherine Allen (CEO of Limina Immersive) was established; initially through the VR Diversity Initiative that Allen was leading in conjunction with VR Focus. *ReFiG* sponsored this event which was held at the Digital Catapult in London in July 2017 attended by 35 participants Atkinson was a key-note speaker, alongside her PhD student who provided hands-on Unity training as part of the day.

VRFocus @VRFocus
Some intense discussions taking place at #VRDiversity as attendees prepare to create their prototype.
13/07/2017, 16:11

Back home now after an amazing day in London, thanks to @_CatherineAllen @VRFocus and sponsors of the VR diversity initiative, been a blast!
14/07/2017, 16:50

VR: AID (September 2017)

Atkinson, Kennedy and Callahan went on to work with Allen on convening a two-day VR-AID (VR- Accessibility, Inclusion and Diversity) workshop which was scheduled at King's College London in September 2017.

This was the first full deployment of the now evolved Creative Collaboratory Method in the design and roll out of shared endeavor – 20 women from practice, advocacy and VR development worked together to develop a manifesto for the future of VR, a road map for a massive open online course (MOOC) to support VR education and a draft policy statement.

In just two days.

This process will be explored in more detail as the case study for our CCM Toolkit in Section 3.

> ❝
> My biggest take-away – even if you think you've made it as inclusive as possible, if people aren't turning up, it's not because they're not there and they don't want to come. It's because something about the way you're presenting your event is excluding them. There's no such thing as 'oh we tried and only men wanted to come' – it's something about the way that it's written means that other people did not feel like they could come or that it was for them."
>
> Participant VR Diversity

Thank you to everyone involved & especially **Sarah Atkinson helen kennedy** and **Catherine Allen** but also **Maria Ingold Ellie Robinson Tanya Laird** and **Jayisha Patel** in this pic!

Amandine Flachs
Emerging Tech | Co-founder at Unfold UK | Looking for…
25 d • Edited

This week I have been part of a fantastic workshop supported by **King's College London** and ReFig. For 2 days I worked with 10+ talented women in VR to create the roots of a manifesto, an educational program and a policy to build a more diverse VR & AR ecosystem.

I really hope this will impact all the tech communities and help build the foundations of a more diverse, fair and secure environment for everyone.

Happy to share more about this and discuss further what we came up with!

Toolkit

The Creative Collaboratory Method

1. Identifying the challenge
2. Lab participant selection and recruitment
3. Assembling resources
4. Agenda setting
5. The Lab
6. Post-Lab:
   User/audience testing and stakeholder consultation
   Dissemination and mobilization

Each of these initiatives have informed the development of the CCM framework and its six-tiered process. This process is now described in the next section. We will guide you through these stages using our case study of a Vision for Women in Virtual Reality (VWVR) as an example at each stage. It is hoped that this toolkit will enable other researchers to adopt the CCM when designing their own interventionist research.

1 Identifying the challenge

> This is the phase that is likely to be driven by the lead researchers but should always involve engagement with key stakeholders, participants and audiences or potential users.

The first step is to **identify** and **refine** a specific set of challenges or a challenge domain. This is most often the outcome of very intensive research and frequently draws on significant direct experience. In our case, the challenge domain had been identified through more than twenty years of feminist ethnographic and intervention-oriented engagement with the games, immersive and creative industries.

In design thinking approaches* this stage is often described as the 'empathize' stage and this is a helpful term to highlight the depth of understanding and insight required in order to grasp the full complexity of a challenge. Design thinking also emphasises the process of iteration, a continual process of refining and revising your understanding of the challenge but also a key factor in evolving any outcomes or actions that are proposed.

In the CCM approach, however close the researcher feels they are to understanding the issues that need to be addressed, i.e. 'the challenge', this understanding always has to be refined with representatives from the domain – stakeholders, beneficiaries, users or audiences – through the entire process.

Case study: Women in VR

To initiate the collaboration between academics and stakeholders in our project, we used *Well Sorted* (as outlined on page 12). We asked our participants to respond to the question –

"Can you specify an action or an intervention that you think is essential in order to ensure that the Virtual Reality sector sustains a diverse, inclusive and equitable working environment?"

After the responses were sorted, four key areas emerged, which we identified as:

Funding	Education
Training and development	Representation and diversity initiatives

Taking these key areas as a starting point – we scheduled a two day VR- Accessibility, Inclusion and Diversity (VR:AID) workshop to further interrogate the issues and challenges that had been identified; to share existing resources and proposed initiatives; and to begin to map out practical actions to bring about the required change.

*Some Illustrative Design Thinking Resources:

Bjögvinsson, Erling, Pelle Ehn, and Per-Anders Hillgren. "Design things and design thinking: Contemporary participatory design challenges." *Design Issues* 28, no. 3 (2012): 101-116.

Tham, Jason Chew Kit. "Feminist design thinking: a norm-creative approach to communication design." In *Proceedings of the 37th ACM International Conference on the Design of Communication,* pp. 1-3. 2019.

Søndergaard, Marie Louise Juul. "Intimate Design: Designing Intimacy As a Critical-Feminist Practice." In *Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems,* pp. 320-325. 2017.

2 Lab participant selection and recruitment

There are **five key areas** to highlight for this process of preparation for the Lab itself.

1. CURATING THE ROOM

Getting the mix of participants right is critical to ensuring that those with the most to gain from the intervention are in a position to contribute to and shape the conversation.

2. RESOURCING PARTICIPANTS

It is important to identify what barriers may exist to participation (e.g. caring responsibilities, transport and accommodation needs) and find resources and solutions to support this.

3. REACHING EXCLUDED GROUPS

Significant attention must be given to how you reach individuals and communities that are underrepresented or harder to access.

4. ACCESSIBILITY & RESOURCES

Is your setting accessible for all? Will it feel intimidating to some participants? Ask your participants about any access issues well in advance.

5. REFRESHMENTS

Make sure you have given thought to the timetable for the lab ensuring there are adequate breaks and nourishing and thoughtful refreshments provided (e.g. vegan alternatives, ask about allergies and any specific dietary requirements in advance).

Case study: Women in VR

We have identified a range of different exercises that have been used in public management research in relation to stakeholder engagement. One such matrix is shown on the next page: Eden and Ackermann's (1998) power versus interest grids. These grids array stakeholders on a 2-by-2 matrix where the dimension are the stakeholder's interest (in a political sense) in the issue or organization, and the stakeholder's power to affect the future.

Four categories result:

1. **Players** (have both an interest and significant power)
2. **Subjects** (have an interest but little power)
3. **Context setters** (have power but little direct interest)
4. **The Crowd** (stakeholders with little interest or power)

We took care to secure a participant group that was ethnically diverse, comprised of individuals with a range of different experiences and skills. We were able to work with an industry gatekeeper who helped us identify and access appropriate role holders.

It can seem like rather an unimportant or marginal aspect of a lab to worry about refreshments, but in our experience demonstrating care for the needs of your participants and providing pleasing snacks and refreshments contributes significantly to creating a supportive and positive space for the very hard work that is likely to take place.

3 Assembling resources

There is a further critical pre-lab stage that takes place once the researchers and key collaborators have been clearly identified and have engaged with the specifics of the challenge. This stage will take place in tandem with and inform Stage 4 of the process.

This is the point at which the project team must research comparable initiatives, products and projects that have been developed to address similar challenges – this is critical to avoid re-treading territory that has already been covered. It is also a valuable stage through which you can build on and evolve existing initiatives more thoroughly. Practically, this would include researching and collating materials from a broad range of resources (websites, project reports etc.). It is advisable to print these in an accessible format in readiness to share as workshop materials. However, you can also share some of these materials electronically in advance where appropriate.

Case study: Women in VR

For us, this stage involved looking at policy documents, and intervention methods in other sectors such as Film and Gaming.

We also gathered sample manifestos and unconscious bias training materials.

4 Agenda setting

In parallel with Stage 3, it is important to continue to engage your collaborators and your newly recruited lab participants from Stage 2 in helping to further shape and refine the agenda for the event itself. Here, you can re-run or adapt the same exercise described in Stage 1.

Stage 4 ensures that the event is collaboratively produced at every step. There are also a range of excellent resources that can be shared to support this process available at http:// diversily. thinkific.com.

Case study: Women in VR

Well Sorted's agenda setting process offers a range of ways to visualize the input provided by your stakeholders in the preparatory exercise described in Stage 1. We used a 'tree map' (pictured above) to show the clustering of priority themes to help us decide the focus and format of the lab.

Each of the clusters generates a table (pictured here) providing all of the raw data from the responses to the original question.

The Lab

SETTING THE TONE

It is really important to have an activity at the start that establishes the right 'tone'. This might be a guided meditation or visualization exercise but should be something that gets your participants in the right frame of mind for the collective activity ahead and set an agreed intention for the group. This can also include statements about 'safer space' intentions or principles for participation.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AWARENESS

This helps to create a space of self-awareness and raise the level of critical reflexivity in the room. If budget allows involve a trained facilitator for this. Even a quick 'circle of trust' style exercise can help raise your group's awareness (see next page).

WORKSHOPPING YOUR CHALLENGE

There are a wide range of workshop techniques that can be adopted during the lab. The key is to move swiftly through the cycle of problem identification to action and intervention ideation.

EVERYONE IS RESPONSIBLE

It is critical that the participants feel direct ownership of any agreed outcomes and actions. This is not about giving someone else work to do, it is agreeing what action can be taken and how lab participants can support those actions.

Case study: Women in VR

We set up four tables in a 'world café' style – to enable a broader discussion around problems and issues that our participants had encountered within their working lives within the VR sector: **People, Place, Process and Platform.**

During the first round, participants talked about the problems, and then in the second round, solutions were proposed (by appending orange-post-it-notes onto the problems – drawing from the suggestions from the Well Sorted exercise (see previous page).

As the two days progressed, and in the subsequent writing of the manifesto/vision – these four areas were distilled into four specific

areas of relevance and communicated into industry-relevant language: Representation of the industry; Roles and Teams; Products and Commissioning; and Industry Culture.

1. **People >** became Roles and Teams

2. **Place >** became Industry Culture

3. **Process >** also fed into the new Roles and Teams category

4. **Platform >** informed both Industry Culture and Products and Commissioning

5. **All four categories >** Representation of the industry

Circle of trust exercise

On a piece of paper create a 6 × 6 table.
Add a title row at the top to name the columns.

Stage 1.

In column 1 write a list of 6 key people (not family) who you really trust, whose advice you would seek and whose guidance you might follow when making important work or life decisions. You might think of these as your 'inner circle' of most trusted individuals.

Stage 2.

Now populate the other 6 column headings, 2: Gender, 3: Race, 4: Age, 5: Education Level, 6: Nationality. Column 6 could also be Sexual Orientation/Religious Views or even Political Affiliation depending on the group or the context of the exercise, or you could add all of these in additional columns.

Stage 3.

Now, for each of your key people, put a tick in all the columns that you share in common. So, if you are a man, you will tick gender for all the men in your list of trusted individuals and so on for race, age, educational attainment etc. Complete this process for all of your 'inner circle'.

Stage 4.

Now look at your table. What patterns do you notice start to emerge?

If you are a man, are most of your trusted 6 men too? If you are a woman, are the majority of your trusted 6 women? Do your trusted 6 look similar to you in age or race or education level? Are the majority from your nationality? Chances are YES. If you change the headings as suggested in Stage 2 the results generally come back the same. Your trusted 6 are very often people very similar to you!

Why is this? Well, homophily – the tendency to associate with people who share our own characteristics - is used by people to mitigate the risk of trusting others. Our closest advisors and those we rely on for insight are often an unconscious mirror of ourselves.

How is this problematic?

In the workplace, when leaders are given big projects or need to put together a certain team to respond to a new challenge or opportunity, they tend to draw automatically on those whom they trust the most within the organization or their wider network. Reliance on homophily increases when the risk increases, such as at the start of a new project or employing a new member of staff. Without necessarily intending to, leaders unconsciously draw on homophily and in doing so they can create a team that lacks real diversity and the potential for innovative thought and insight. This becomes even more problematic when we consider both the working patterns within the creative industries, and the overrepresentation of white, CIS-gendered, heterosexual, able-bodied men from socioeconomically and educationally privileged backgrounds in these leadership and decision-making roles.

6 Post-Lab

The proposed outcomes and actions should be tested in the field through engagement with a wider set of stakeholders and with the intended user group and audiences. This can take various forms spanning one-to-one individual consultations to in-depth focus group work with larger groups.

Case study: Women in VR

Diversily's *Change Canvas* was used in a later dissemination workshop on 11th June 2019 when the findings of the VR-AID workshop were mobilized. It captures the insights shared by the original VR-AID participants – 20 leading women in VR. Diversily define *The Change Canvas* as a visual framework to help make change happen, helping drive positive change in individuals and businesses.

The four areas that emerged from the workshop shaped the writing of A Vision for Women in Virtual Reality (VWVR). These were in turn supported and underpinned by our research, which included interviews with the participants and data drawn from our own commissioned research. The next few pages detail how the four key areas were evolved, developed and refined into the VWVR.

6.1 User/audience testing and Stakeholder consultation

The outcome of the two-day VR-AID workshop was a manifesto. During our post-lab phase this was further refined through consultation with a PR adviser, to eventually become the Vision for Women in VR. A graphic designer was commissioned, and copy was developed in collaboration with the original workshop participants.

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>
> *ReFiG* enabled a life changing collaboration for both me and my company Limina. The *Vision for Women and VR* (VWVR) project was a collaboration with Sarah Atkinson and Helen Kennedy. I learned a lot from working with them, and their thinking and support helped give me a sense of purpose within the VR sector. Thanks to VWVR, I could spot parallels with the early stages of other media & tech industries. That gave me a sense of foresight which I have carried with me, channelling it into industry activism; championing women audience members and VR industry workers to help shape a better future. The direction VWVR steered my work in has led to a TEDx talk, an award from Marie Claire magazine and an upcoming honorary doctorate from The University of Warwick."
>
> – Catherine Allen, CEO and co-founder of Limina Immersive.
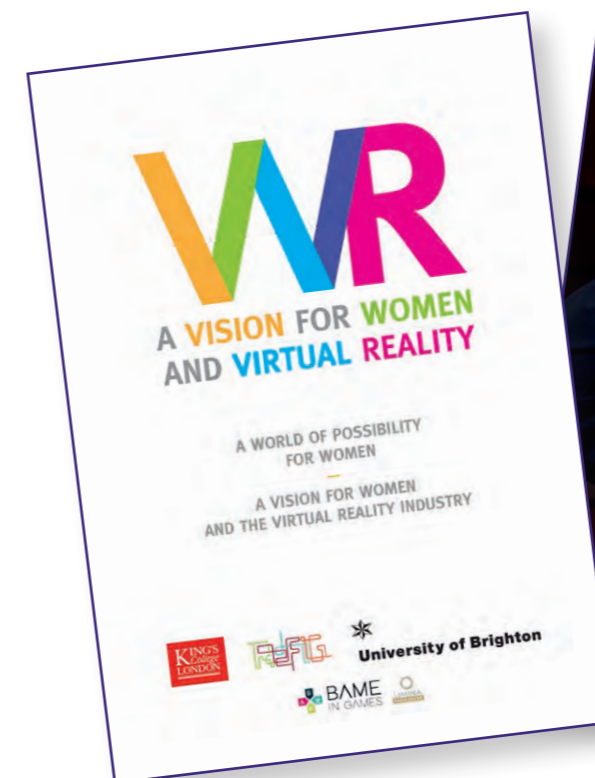
6.2 A Vision for Women in VR

Representation of the industry

The theme of representation was foregrounded in VWVR, as it emerged out of all four areas of discussion in the lab as an overriding factor of influence and one that feeds into and infuses *all* aspects of education, working life and culture. Rudimentary online image searches using the term 'virtual reality' revealed stereotypical representations of technology use and access.

This section of the vision also addresses the imbalance of women leading VR organizations, and the fact that more men-led projects (86%) are funded than women-led ones (14%) and calls for women to be not left out of written histories as they have been in other tech spaces of innovation (Hill 2016).

> The way the industry is presented to the rest of the world will have a huge influence over whether people feel like it's the kind of space they could envision dedicating their career to. This is the beginning of the career pipeline, where individuals form assumptions and associations that will guide their career decision-making in years to come"
>
> – A Vision for Women in VR

Roles and teams

As our research revealed a lack of women CEOs on VR company boards, participant testimonies also revealed how recruitment practices do not proactively reach out to underrepresented groups. An unconscious bias training session was delivered as part of the process to both advance and deepen our participants' awareness of unconscious bias, and how to develop personal and organizational strategies to counter this.

One of our participants identified the unconscious bias training as the most useful aspect of the workshops as a way to assess inclusivity, a tool to better understand how exclusions happen systematically.

In addition, our research data from Women in Transmedia (Atkinson & Callahan 2021) showed interesting distinctions between how females articulate their roles (Creative Producer, Producer) compared to how men articulate them (guru, world-builder, etc.), in instances where they are actually performing the same type of role. The vision explicitly responded to

this be stating that the stereotype of auteur, innovator and pioneer should not be associated with a gender.

> There is no 'normal' template for a VR landscape, organization or team yet."
>
> – A Vision for Women in VR

Products and commissioning

We know from the wider media and creative industries context that women's creative voices are marginalized (e.g. Cobb et al. 2016, Wreyford 2018). Also, we are aware from our own research that the VR sector is comprised of professionals coming from other 'older' industries, (i.e. film, broadcasting, gaming) where institutional bias already exists (in games see Consalvo 2008). The vision suggests checks for inclusivity – along the lines of the Bechdel test, and representative user testing throughout all stages of design, development and prototyping.
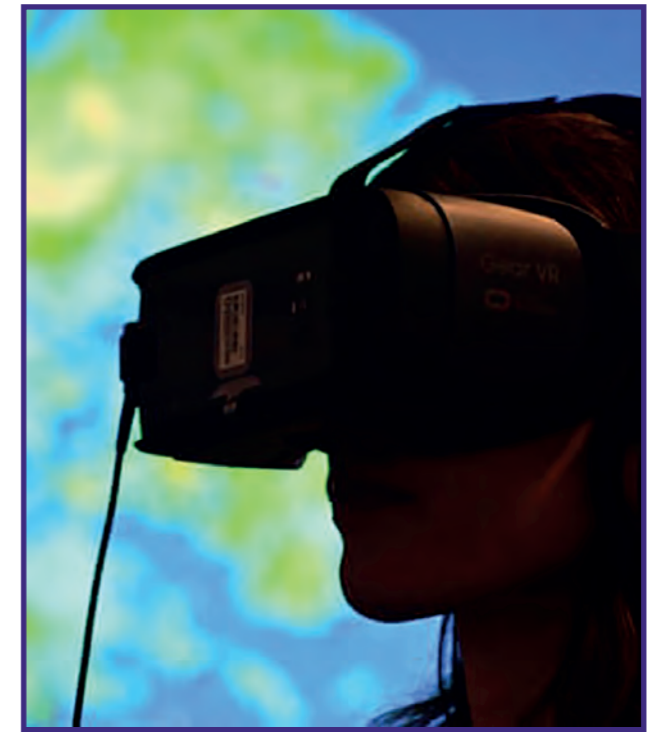
The Bechdel Test is a measure of the representation of women in fiction. It is named after the American cartoonist Alison Bechdel in whose 1985 comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For* the test first appeared. Bechdel credited the idea to her friend Liz Wallace and the writings of Virginia Woolf.

> When VR truly reaches the mainstream, the initial content selection available should feature a woman and gender-neutral point of view. A VR industry made primarily for men, by men is the worst-case scenario."
>
> – A Vision for Women in VR

Industry culture

Culture is critical: the attitudes and norms in a workplace influence the product and their audiences (Draper 2014). Culture has a significant impact on how comfortable and respected a person feels in an industry, and therefore on personnel retention. An industry culture that objectifies, bullies or diminishes women will not attract and retain them. We need to ensure our workplaces are fair, tolerant and respectful places for everyone.

Through our discussions, it emerged that industry culture manifests itself in a number of different 'locations' – both physical and online. These include places of networking; places of work and places of exhibition/experience. Our participants commented that networking spaces tend to be male-dominated, taking place during out-of-hours work times in pubs and bars, and at tech conferences.

Places of exhibition and experience were cited as highly problematic in their gender politics particularly within the larger tech

conferences and events. Our own observations at such events confirmed the saturation of male-dominated imagery used in marketing and advertising materials, and the use of 'booth babes' – scantily clad women hosting conference stands and reception events. The vision advocates adopting strategies for more inclusive and safer spaces of work.

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> **Culture is crucial: it transfers through to the product and its audience's understanding of themselves. An industry culture that objectifies, bullies or diminishes women will not retain them."**
>
> A Vision for Women in VR

In the current climate of #metoo #TimesUp its great to see women putting competition aside for the betterment of their industry. Vision for VR is a ray of hope. The VR industry has the potential to show us how it's done.. will it? @BWV2 Catherine is Bristol based...

VR Days Europe
@VRDays

#VRDays pledges support to A Vision For Women In Virtual Reality #VWVR to vocalize the need for greater transparency and gender balance in the immersive sector. Effective change needs many voices. @_CatherineAllen ...J Europ.. ..ay@ludologista @DrSarahAtkinson et al. vvvr.org ...dges supp..

Equal Realities

In June 2019, an event was held in Bristol with Catherine Allen of Limina and Sam Freeth of Fenturi: **Equal Realities: Addressing the Virtual Reality Gender Gap**. The event was based around the idea that Virtual Reality is a brave new world of possibility – but who are the people building these worlds? And how can we make sure what we build reflects the population as a whole rather than a narrow group?

Equal Realities took the format of an evening of lively panel discussion and talks exploring the roots of the gender bias seen in emerging technology industries, using the growth of virtual reality as a case study. From the marketing strategies of early console games to the leisure time gender gap, this event took a broad look at the social forces at play that have led to male bias's in home entertainment and emerging technology. https://arnolfini.org.uk/whatson/talk-equal-realities-addressing-the-virtual-reality-gender-gap/

Catherine Allen of Limina Immersive, who led the process of aligning the language of the vision to a sector-based audience, discovered problematic imagery relating to VR on Shutterstock. Images included a man wearing a VR headset whilst reaching out to grasp a woman's breasts. Allen raised this issue with Shutterstock via Twitter galvanizing much support from the industry and over 100 people joining the call for Shutterstock to remove the images. Shutterstock eventually did reply, but disappointingly they did not remove the images and said 'we confirm this content is within the guidelines of Shutterstock's policy'.

> **Only 14% of UK VR companies have any women directors on the board** (King's College London & University of Brighton, 2019). If you are a man in the UK or US, you are almost twice as likely to have spent time in virtual reality (Global WebIndex 2019). The situation roughly reflects tech's status quo, however it doesn't have to be this way. The comparative newness of virtual reality offers a golden opportunity to shape the medium to reflect society's best self, rather than its worst.

Catherine Allen
@_CatherineAllen

Hey, @Shutterstock. After finding this image in your library that objectifies women in VR, a few of us have written you an open letter. Many more examples of these images here instagram.com/shutterstocksv ...

VR COMMUNITY: if u agree then reply to this message with ur name, to co-sign 🙏

Dear Shutterstock Inc,

Please stop enabling the objectification of women in VR. The sector is at an early stage: it really is what we make it: please stop enabling the spread of harmful attitudes towards women to this new medium.

This may seem like a niche issue to you, but for us it is our lives. We have a hard enough time as it is as women in tech: facing multiple challenges on a daily basis, especially for women who are also from other under-represented groups.

Amplifying women's objectification does not help us, and will negatively affect the future of this emerging and fragile industry.

6.3 Dissemination and mobilisation

> Dissemination and mobilisation can take a number of forms depending on the context. Within an industry context, this can span dissemination through press releases to trade press, speaking at industry events and forums, through to mobilisation which involves further intervention with stakeholders.

i) Industry dissemination

In the case of VWVR, considerable press interest was achieved through working with a PR consultant, this included an article in *The Guardian*, interviews and a feature on the BBC. Industry events included a main-stage presentation at new.New in Stuttgart, in which the VWVR was previewed, followed by its subsequent launch as AWE. These were framed in this way (as 'preview' and 'launch') to ensure maximum press exposure.

XR for All

Hall 3

The panel will explore what is required for us, as a society, to not only build more inclusive and diverse virtual spaces, but also ensure that those building these new virtual worlds represent the diverse nature of the real world . The discussion will tie in with the release of a Vision For Women in VR Statement that outlines [...]

MAIN STAGE

AWE EU 2018
The World's #1 AR+VR Conference & Expo

TOM EMRICH   IOANA MATEI   CATHERINE ALLEN
HELEN KENNEDY   DR. MARÍA MURCIA-LÓPEZ

MOC Exhibition Center
Munich, Germany
18-19 October 2018

ii) Industry mobilisation

This can take three forms, further intervention in:

a. Knowledge, policy, advocacy

b. Creative products and services

c. Process

Outcomes in the **knowledge, policy or advocacy** area may be industry reports, guidelines, policy recommendations, public advocacy briefings as well as potentially more academic outcomes such as articles or chapters in relevant works.

The **creative products and practices** line of approach is focused on experimentation, particularly useful in stimulating innovation in the use of new technologies or new techniques.

Key participants are likely to be artists and technologists being supported by a facilitated CCM process. One recent successful project was the AHRC funded XR Circus scheme – described below - that brought circus artists into a series of intensive workshops and experimental laboratories to explore the very latest in immersive technology.

The **process** line of development is specifically tailored at identifying 'process' challenges. Here you identify a process that is seen to be exclusionary and seek out alternative methods or paths of intervention that might challenge or reverse this exclusion. The process could be as simple as marketing and recruiting new talent through to the complexities of designing technologies that are more inclusive of diverse body types. The specific process may change dramatically and the participants in the laboratory will be very different, but the method will follow the same stages.

a. Knowledge, policy, advocacy

ImmerseUK Roundtable.

ImmerseUK and Catherine Allen

In January 2019 an event was designed in collaboration with ImmerseUK and Catherine Allen to engage a new demographic of stakeholders in the VWVR. The event was attended by 30 individuals from funding organizations and digital businesses including Innovate UK, BBC, Microsoft, Screen Skills, The Foundry, Beyond Digital, the Welsh government, Business Sheffield and Invest Liverpool. Additional pledge cards were designed and produced for participants to 'sign-up' to actions. This is a key part of the CCM: participatory research and action-based methodologies (Anderson & McLachlan 2016). The participants were encouraged to fill in the cards and take them away as a reminder of how they intend to follow up with action to ensure the lessons learnt have actual consequences in the real world across the four areas of concern outlined in the VWVR statement.

I WOULD REALLY LOVE TO...

I WILL...

I CAN'T BECAUSE...

WE WILL...

b. Creative products and services

XR Circus was an AHRC-funded investigation into new generation immersive performance practice (led by Helen Kennedy, Donna Close and Sarah Atkinson). It was led by researchers but driven by performance practitioners who wanted to explore the potential of combining circus with new technologies. Over a period of six months, circus artists and theatre practitioners explored the possibilities of new technologies through a variety of hands on practical sessions. Through these sessions and a programme of further support the artists evolved unique new performances. By using the CCM, collaboration and experimentation was placed at the centre of the project from the very start.

On 21 May 2018 these five groups of artist-practitioners presented their ground breaking pilot performances in the Brighton Spiegeltent to a live audience. The showcase event was the culmination of intensive workshops, creative encounters, collaborations and development activities.

Performances included, Vicki Amedume from Upswing Arts who designed an aerialist performance which used a projection of water rippling as a backdrop. A watery audio soundscape provided a poetic and expressive aural illustration of a rope artist who appeared to swim through water. Carolyn Watt climbed silks in the live performance space with different perspectives of her body refracted across media: a camera mounted within her glittering feathered headdress replayed her perspective against the screen behind her, whilst her performance was live-streamed as 360-degree video on Facebook. Through the modern-day magic of augmented reality the hidden histories of circus were conjured before our very eyes in 'The Circus in a Bottle' AR installation by Trajectory Theatre, (trajectory theatre.com). Rowan Fae of Full Tilt Aerial Dance experimented with dynamic projection mapping in an augmented dance performance. Emma Cat presented her environmentally driven aerial performance against an immersive 360-degree video backdrop accompanied by a nature soundscape.

https://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/xrcircus/
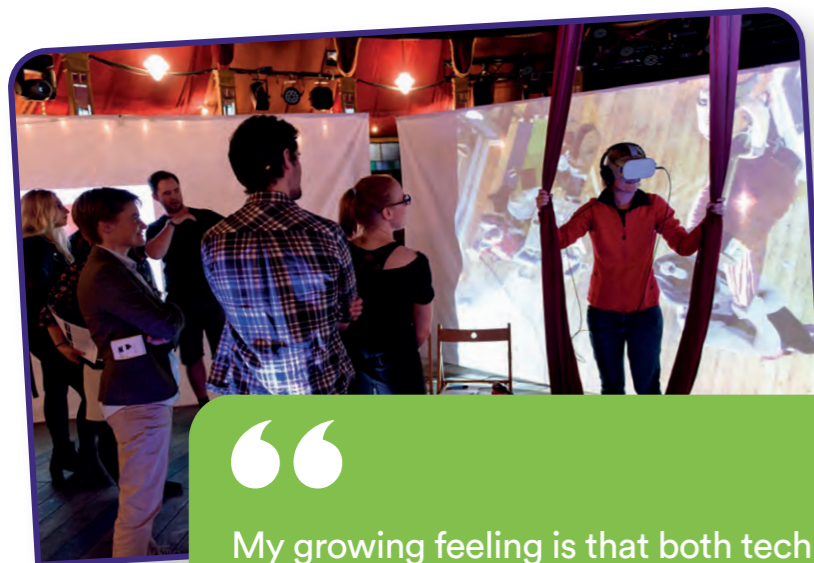
> 66
> My growing feeling is that both technology and arts need each other to move forwards. I sense that technology lacks the contextual and cultural meaning without creative input and that performing arts is in danger of just dying out without harnessing the power of new technologies."
>
> Rowan Fae: XR Circus participant

c. Process

An example of using the CCM to make interventions on working practices and processes is provided by Atkinson who was co-investigator on an InnovateUK-funded research project in collaboration with 'Charisma.AI' in 2018.

A one-day workshop involving a cross-sector group of creatives and academics was convened using the CCM framework to explore the impact of fictional character's memory on interactive story creation. The results were incorporated into a prototype project, produced using the https://charisma.ai/ platform. A set of guidelines for writers was established as well as a workflow for the authoring of fiction-based AI.

iii) Academic dissemination

Academic outputs can run alongside industry intervention and mobilisation testing, reflecting, reporting and theorizing the activities and outcomes.

Our academic outputs so far have included the following conference presentations:

"Women in Transmedia: Inhabiting, Shaping and Leading New Spaces of Creative and Technological Innovation" *ReFiG* annual conference, Montreal, Canada, October 2016.

"ReFiguring Innovation in Games: Dispatches from the Frontline" panel. Media Industries Conference, King's College London, April 2018.

"Beyond the frame: diversifying the potential of Virtual Reality" and "Refiguring conversational interactivity in games (ReCig!)". Develop: European Game Developer conference, Academic track, Brighton, July 2018.

"Transformative Practices, *ReFiG:* Industry Interventions UK", Digital Games Research Association (DIGRA) annual conference, Turin, Italy, July 2018.

"Refiguring Innovation in Games: Making Games Sustainable for Women" European Women in Games Conference, London September 2018.

"From Forthright Feminist Manifesto to Glossy Vision Statement: Negotiating the Professionals, Publics, PR & Press for Effective Knowledge Mobilization and Real Impact" and Diversity Toolkit Creative Co**ll**aboratory (workshop). *ReFiG* annual conference, Vancouver, Canada, October 2018.

The Creative Co**ll**aboratory Method was used to develop an evaluation and community exercise with *ReFiG*'s stakeholder/researcher community. *ReFiG* annual conference, Toronto, Canada, November 2019.

iv) Academic mobilisation

At the final *ReFiG* annual conference in 2019, and as the funding to support the research and community building activities came to an end, we deployed the Creative Co**ll**aboratory Method to develop a series of evaluation workshops and to explore sustainable community development activities with *ReFiG*'s stakeholders and researchers. This was a fitting culmination for the project, to deploy the CCM toolkit within the context of the community that was so instrumental to its development.

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>
> It just made me realise there's some really, really powerful women in the industry, really talented women in the industry. And I wasn't even aware of them until I met them at that event."
>
> – XR Producer, VWVR

Conclusion

For us, the ongoing success and evolution of the central example here – the Vision for Women in Virtual Reality - is an enduring legacy of both *ReFiG* and the CCM as an approach to collaboratively beginning to address the 'wicked' problem of toxicity in the creative technology sector. The outcomes, particularly the positivity of the vision statement, have created significant media interest and widespread awareness for the challenges facing the sector.

The values of empowerment, shared ownership, accountability and co-creation have provided the context within which key actors within the collaboration have been impassioned and inspired to move forward as advocates within the sector, becoming key agents of change and transformation within their own settings and organisations. In addition, their networks have been significantly strengthened and enhanced creating a cumulative effect through which they have become an influential group who can both support each other and leverage real change.

We hope that other academic researchers engaged in projects with external partnerships can implement this toolkit to build new, and to enrich existing collaborative projects across multiple disciplines and subject areas. Although this method has evolved within a creative arts context, the framework can be applied to problems in other areas where interdisciplinary stakeholder engagement is central to the research endeavour.

A critical finding of all the activities we have undertaken as part of this project is that if you want to enable genuine participation that leads to shared ownership of a programme of change you need to have a framework through which to initiate and sustain that engagement. It isn't enough to get the right people in the room, in order to have impact and create real change, you have to engage stakeholders in a series of meaningful and – crucially – inclusive undertakings that leads to a shared and enduring vision for transformation.

Establishing and sustaining inclusive creative collaborations

Some reflections and resources

We have learned a lot along the way, and continue to learn, particularly in relation to ensuring that the diversity and inclusion experienced by collaborators and partners fully matches our intentions and ambitions. One thing to bear strongly in mind when seeking to work with marginalised groups is that language and nomenclature can change frequently and is often reviewed. Terminologies that were acceptable twelve months ago may now have been challenged, updated and revised. It's always best to check with leading support organisations or advocacy groups, these will also be good routes to disseminate your invitation to participate or support your search for collaborators, particularly those within hard to reach or marginalised communities.

When promoting your event it is worth considering some very easy changes to your language in order to highlight your explicit commitment to be inclusive - for instance describing your event as for 'trans, non-binary individuals and women' changes the directness of an invitation in a way that could be significant when trying to reach these potential participants.

A key requirement is to communicate with all of your participants on an individual and confidential level well in advance of the event to ascertain access needs as these will be specific to the individual. Give them a chance to ask questions, and make sure you have an opportunity to ask them how they can be included, and then give time for arrangements to be put in place.

Make explicit statements of invitation to the groups you are trying to reach, include recognition of the challenges or barriers that may prevent their participation and offer direct support to overcome these - e.g. transport, subsistence, childcare, carer payments. If your participants are freelancers, ensure that your budget will cover a stipend to reimburse them for their time spent collaborating on the challenge.

We have assembled some useful links and resources for those seeking to foster inclusive partnerships and collaborations. This list is not exhaustive but is a good starting point.

For LGBT identities, there are valuable resources provided by Stonewall:
https://www.stonewall.org.uk/best-practice-toolkits-and-resources

For Race and ethnicity terminology, the equality challenge unit has produced this helpful guide:
https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/using-data-and-evidence/use-of-language-race-ethnicity

Neurodiversity inclusion: Making your event inclusive for neurodivergent participants also takes careful thought, Neurodiversity Hub suggests ensuring you have a neurodiverse event planning team as this will help you to consider their experience more directly as part of the process. They also offer a range of really helpful resources available here: https://www.neurodiversityhub.org/

See Change Happen (https://seechangehappen.co.uk) is a UK based professional organisation that provide training, workshops, mentoring and consultancy on inclusive practices. Their website also has a range of helpful resources including best practice in gender-inclusive language.

Your own institutions should have inclusive events guidance; refer to this wherever possible.

Further inclusive resources

Gendered Intelligence: Trans Inclusion Resource List for Professionals
http://cdn0.genderedintelligence.co.uk/2019/07/25/09-02-08-Trans%20Resource%20List%20Issue%2014.pdf

Stonewall Research: latest research into LGBT people's experiences of discrimination and public attitudes towards LGBT equality
https://www.stonewall.org.uk/get-involved/stonewall-research

Stonewall Glossary of Terms
https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/faqs-and-glossary/glossary-terms

LGBT Foundation: Including all Women
https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/lgbt-website-media/Files/a64eebb3-ccb5-46db-a212-69e448fbc490/Inclusion_Online.pdf

4 Intersex: Tips f#4intersex Allies
https://dhf.2b0.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/4intersex-Ally-Dos-and-Donts.pdf

10 ways to step up as an ally to non-binary people
https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/10-ways-step-ally-non-binary-people

Non-Binary Best Practices – Out and Equal
https://outandequal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/OE-Non-Binary-Best-Practices.pdf

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After that experience in Brighton [at the XX+ game jam] I started to make some events here, I started to organise things here in Italy and specifically in my region, which is in the South of Italy."

– Simona Maiorano, game designer.

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It was genuinely life changing. I think, us meeting and making this game has led to so many – I mean in itself it is a huge achievement, but then it's also opened lots of other doors and created lots of opportunities. So yeah, it's hard to put into words because it all just links back to us being there at that jam and meeting. So it is pretty incredible."

– Claire Morely, game designer and co-creator of 'Before I Forget'.

Report authors

Professor Helen Kennedy,
University of Nottingham

Professor Sarah Atkinson,
King's College London

Dr Natalie Wreyford,
University of Nottingham and
King's College London