

Inclusions and exclusions in the digital world: meanings, challenges, opportunities

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New means of information sharing and communication presented a promise and an opportunity; a new frontier open to more democratic and accessible practices (Papacharissi 2002). Affordances of the digital represented a chance for people from marginalised social groups not only to be ‘included’ in existing organising structures, often pervaded by historically-rooted forms of privilege (Adamson et al. 2016, Ahmed 2012), but to transform them. However, recent research has shown that the inequalities of the ‘analogue’ world have been reproduced or exacerbated online: relations of rentiership - where ownership and control of assets enables individuals to capture and appropriate value (Birch 2017); unequal resource access (Martinez Dy et al 2017); and neoliberal capitalism (Brewis and Mitchell 2017).

The very design of contemporary digital technologies reflects and reproduces the worldviews of those who create them (Lanier, 2011), thus (re)producing kyriarchy - an interlocking set of persistent social hierarchies, such as those of race, gender, and social class. For example, research shows how high tech founders tend to come from the top of the employment strata (Braguinsky et al. 2012); that digital media platforms are not culture, race or gender neutral (Noble, 2018); and how resource needs of the global tech industry have negative impacts on the living and working conditions of marginalised communities across the world (Bleischwitz et al., 2012).

Neoliberalism uses the digital to tighten its grip on individuals through surveillance and self-tracking (Moore 2017), consumption and desire (Belk 2015, Denegri-Knott and Molesworth 2013). An accelerating precarity and pace of work (Wajcman 2015) has, in part, been facilitated by the digital and legitimated under the discourses of ‘flexibility’ (Nyong’o 2013). Precarity disproportionately affects members of marginalised groups (Duffy and Pruchniewska, 2017), furthermore, online abuse and discriminatory harassment of people from marginalised groups, women in particular, is well documented (Jane, 2014), as is the use of digital spaces by the State to target activists and potential change makers (Michaelsen, 2018).

Yet, we have also seen powerfully transformative and world-shaping uses of digital spaces for both online and offline organising (Smith-Prei and Stehle, 2016), for example, in the Arab Spring, Occupy, Black Lives Matter, and Me Too movements, as well as the development of cryptocurrencies. Thus, it is timely to critically examine the concept of digital inclusion, and analyse the extent to which its *promise still holds*. With this call, we invite submissions that engage critically with the notion of inclusion within the digital space. We encourage analyses that look not only at how digital technologies and spaces can help organisations to include marginalised peoples, but also how the digital can help to challenge and change the dominant discourses and practices of organising to produce new meanings of inclusion.

It is important that we develop knowledge of how and why marginalisation and privilege are (re)produced via the use and design of digital technologies, but we also invite engagement with efforts to disrupt these patterns, subvert mainstream organisation, and promote alternative forms of politics, for example through collaboration, amplification of marginalised voices, collective action, and non-capitalist economies. Furthermore, we invite submissions to reimagine the meaning of inclusion itself, as a concept that finds itself embedded with normativity. We therefore ask:

* What does it mean for digital technologies to be genuinely inclusive, or of service to, people of different genders, ethnicities, global locations, abilities, classes, ages, and sexual identities?
* How can an ‘open’ digital space contribute to reimagined or alternative meanings of ‘inclusion’?
* How can digital technologies promote openness and resist attempts to colonise the new frontiers of the digital space through political, cultural and financial means?
* How can digital technologies be used to advocate for or foment greater inclusivity in ‘analogue’ workplaces and entrepreneurial activity?

Submissions may engage with the questions outlined above in relation, but not limited, to:

* Digital exclusions and marginalisation
* Digital networks, communities, solidarities and collaborations
* New meanings of (digital) inclusion and inclusive organising
* The blockchain, accountability and transparency
* Artificial Intelligence, labour organisation and regulation, universal basic income
* Open source, crowdsourcing and crowdfunding
* The interface of the digital and the analogue
* Materiality and digital dirty work
* Affect, embodiment, transformed subjectivities and experiences of digital labour
* Neoliberalism, (neo)colonialism, rentiership and alienation
* History/Herstory of the digital
* Digital technologies, surveillance and the State
* Cryptocurrency, FinTech, and the banking sector
* Digital entrepreneurship and inclusion

This stream encourages a variety of submissions, such as traditional research papers, digital demonstrations and interactive analysis, artistic engagements, and other alternative modes of presentations and discussion.

Please submit an abstract or proposal of no more than 700 words (excluding references) together with your contact information to Deborah Brewis D.Brewis@bath.ac.uk Please send this as one page, Word document (not PDF), single spaced, without headers, footers or track changes.

**The deadline for submission of abstracts is January 31st 2019, and we will notify you of our decision by the end of February**

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