3.

Homo Includens

Surveying DiGRA's Diversity

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ABSTRACT

This article examines which bodies have access to participate in Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA) events, and to DiGRA as an organization. It is based on a survey (N=174), among subscribers to the DiGRA "Gamesnetwork" mailing list. The survey included questions on age, gender, location and career level to gain insight into who is included in the DiGRA community, with further questions on problems and challenges faced by those who have had trouble accessing DiGRA. This paper does not proceed solely by statistical methodology, but draws on feminist theories of embodiment and qualitative methods. Through this diverse methodological approach, the paper analyzes which bodies have difficulties accessing DiGRA's academic communities and conferences, which practices cause these difficulties, and which policies might be introduced to address these. The survey indicates that young, early-career and women's bodies are in particularly precarious positions. This situation is perpetuated through various practices of economic and social inaccessibility. Upon reflection, the paper proposes a set of policies to address these practices. We conclude that this survey and its analysis are only a first step to making DiGRA a more diversely inclusive organization.

Keywords

DiGRA, survey, diversity, bodies, embodiment, conference, policy, precarity, access

INTRODUCTION

> "As researchers we all have embodied, cultural and social lives and feelings that we don't leave at the door when we do our research." (Humphreys 2017, 15).

> "When you look like what they expect a professor to be, you are treated like a professor […] the body that allow[s] them to pass seamlessly into the category. […] At one moment I express my fatigue at the repetition of these gatherings, where the all is hidden by the assumed generality of a particular ('open to all' often translating into all male, all white, or all but one). I express a sense of what is lost when academic gatherings are restricted to certain kinds of bodies." (Ahmed 2012, 176-179).

> "If we consider why freedom of assembly is separate from freedom of expression, it is precisely because the power that people have to gather together is itself an important political prerogative, quite

> distinct from the right to say what they have to say once people have gathered. The gathering signifies in excess of what is said, and that mode of signification is a concerted bodily enactment, a plural form of performativity." (Butler 2015, 8).

It is easy to underestimate the importance of bodies in academia. Instead, academic conferences such as the Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA)[1] are often seen, first and foremost, as a meeting of minds, rather than bodies. Even there, bodies assert themselves, especially in the experiences of those who are often excluded for being seen as having 'non-neutral bodies.' That is, bodies that may be differently coloured or bodies that may be differently abled. Bodies that are gendered, bodies which may be attracted to other bodies – or not at all. All these bodies, some more than others, may be stopped by border control. Some bodies may need a visa, some bodies are un(der)funded, some bodies are jetlagged. At conferences, bodies go out to smoke and bodies go for drinks. Bodies need food and different diets. Bodies lactate. Bodies menstruate. Bodies go to bathrooms.

All bodies are intersectional – even bodies which may be read as 'neutral' are inscribed with certain affordances. It may no longer come as a surprise, furthermore, that bodies may be threatened and harassed. These possibilities are easily ignored or forgotten when we take the luxury of only thinking of ourselves and our colleagues as minds and, arguably, if we uphold the distinction between those minds and their bodies in the first place.

Below we explore the results of a preliminary and inaugural survey conducted in late 2016 by the DiGRA Diversity Working Group (a committee of volunteers formed with the intention to improve diversity and accessibility for DiGRA members and game studies academics). Within the interdisciplinarity of game studies and DiGRA as an organisation, as well as through the variety of

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1. "Founded in 2003, DiGRA is the premiere international association for academics and professionals who research digital games and associated phenomena" ("Welcome to DiGRA," 2012).

scholars in the Diversity Working Group, this paper has likewise used a mix of methods. The interdisciplinarity, group effort, and bottom-up approaches which this paper has adhered to, are thus a consequence of a collective and interdisciplinary effort of research by game studies researchers (of various bodies and intersectional identities), who have collaborated “partial knowledges built through self-reflexive processes.” (Humphreys 2017, 2)The following people in particular have participated in the process of producing this paper. The survey was conceived by Alyea Sandovar, workshopped with the DiGRA Diversity Working Group, and put together by Rachel Kowert. Circulated through the DiGRA mailing list “Gamesnetwork”, the survey was produced to assess people’s experiences, and how and why DiGRA conference-going bodies can or cannot attend DiGRA. The aim of the introductory DiGRA diversity survey was to initiate outreach to DiGRA’s attendees for general feedback, with intentions to improve the survey and circulate updated versions annually by the DiGRA Diversity Working Group. The paper’s framing, analysis and discussion by Mahli-Ann Butt and Lars de Wildt, have resulted in these initial findings, for DiGRA to collectively reflect upon as a case study in conference accessibility.*Who finds access to DiGRA, who has trouble doing so, and how can we improve their access? How do we improve DiGRA’s diversity?*The discussion works toward a more inclusive and diverse DiGRA through unpacking the data and analysis with a feminist analysis, paying “attention to formations of power, social context, and historical contingency,” (Humphreys 2017, 2) and a theoretical framework of embodiment (cf. Ahmed 2012; Butler 2015; Hannabach & Shaw 2017; Humphreys 2017) with three cumulative steps:

1. ‘Precarity’ (i.e. which bodies are vulnerable to inaccessibility);
2. ‘Practice’ (i.e. which concrete, material practices restrict such bodies);
3. ‘Policy’ (i.e. which policies can organizations such as

DiGRA employ to improve such practices).

Taking a bottom-up approach in collaboration with the attendees of the DiGRA 2017 Diversity Workshop “Gaming the System” and the efforts of the DiGRA Diversity Working Group, we have collated a skeleton of suggested policies to be introduced to DiGRA. For these policies and diversity initiatives to be integrated successfully requires that they be considered as processes: we expect that the DiGRA community, the DiGRA board and the DiGRA Diversity Working Group will continue to take up these proposed initiatory policies and make them more rigorous by developing them into concrete practices of inclusion. In terms of discipline specificity, in light of gamergate, the initial analysis has focused on the pressing issue of harassment of women in games studies (Chess & Shaw 2015; 2016; Humphreys 2017). We conclude that future versions of the survey can be improved by circulating it beyond DiGRA’s Gamesnetwork, by greater effort to reach out to more marginalised voices outside of DiGRA’s current anglocentric sphere.

Asserting Bodies

What do we mean by diversity? Why be diverse? These two questions need to first be addressed to contextualize the survey, its outcome, and our consequent theorizations.

First, what do we mean by diversity? We will delineate our working concept of diversity as one that deals with a bodily diversity of physical, material bodies, not a disciplinary diversity of departmental bodies; nor a representational diversity of virtual bodies.

Second, we must ask: why be diverse? Why have diversity? In addressing this question, we argue for why we should care about the affordances of bodies.

What is diversity?

To be stopped, searched, interrupted, prevented from entering or traveling to places, is to realize the limitations of one's body. Sara Ahmed argues that "there is an implicit relation between categories, such as 'woman,' 'non-white' and other 'marked' categories of bodies, "and mobility," a relation she attempts to make more explicit (2012, 176).

> "When [such] a category allows us to pass into the world, we might not notice that we inhabit that category. When we are stopped or held up by how we inhabit what we inhabit [i.e. our bodies], then the terms of habitation are revealed to us." (ibid.)

This concept of exclusion, with inclusion as its inverse, is known to many through direct experience. Diversity here will be discussed as the inverse of exclusion: holistic inclusivity works to reshape spaces to improve the affordances of less privileged bodies. Our working definition of diversity is a commitment to an active and deliberate process of rectifying historical and cultural discrimination. This distinction also acknowledges that diversity does not grant inclusion of voices which promote exclusionary practices.

Even when voices are present, their presence does not guarantee that they are being heard (Lillis, 1997). In addition, the perspective neglects that, at any given moment, a body may have different voices that require expression – parent, teacher, designer, researcher – and what voice a body may wish to express at any given moment. Nor does this perspective consider the language a voice may express itself best in. In this brief empirical report we will not attempt to produce an exhaustive definition. Instead, we choose to delineate our concept of diversity in order to contextualize the research below. Thus, our working concept of diversity refers to a diversity of physical, material bodies – including bodies that are interrupted, harassed or unable to attend.

By focusing on embodied intersectional diversity (of ethnic, gendered, religious and other identities), we explicitly do not discuss two other topics of diversity:

> First, that of *disciplinary diversity*: humanities scholars, social scientists, game designers, and others. Interdisciplinary diversity is beneficial for all manner of bodies (including the most privileged academics of wealthy white cishet male bodies). For work on disciplinary diversity, see Quandt, et al., 2015; Williams, 2005. Academic work requires critical examination of new views and understandings, and disciplinary diversity supports the construction of such new understandings. Although, when interdisciplinarity is framed as a diversity matter in itself, this diverts efforts and attention away from addressing the historical exclusion of those with diverse bodies in academia. While we explicitly support interdisciplinarity and stand against discipline policing, we believe that it would be counterproductive for this paper to center on interdisciplinarity. This paper prioritises supporting those who are marginalised and threatened because of their embodied existence, before addressing the concerns of interdisciplinarity for the most privileged bodies. This centering of embodiment in our consideration of interdisciplinarity insures that diversity questions may continue to prioritise 'rectifying historical and cultural discrimination' such as addressing the gender divide of disciplines.
>
> Second, that of the *diversity of non-human bodies*: virtual bodies, animals, fictional representation, characters and avatars in media and games. We greatly admire the work of our colleagues researching diversity of virtual and fictional representation in media and games. This iteration of the DiGRA diversity survey only addresses questions of the affordances of human bodies researching games, and how we might continue to respond and make DiGRA more accessible and safer for a greater array of these bodies. Space could be made for future iterations of this survey to also address animal bodies, such as accessibility for seeing eye and therapy animals, as well as the consideration of reducing animal harm, environmental impact, and exploitative labour, for conference catering choices.Thus, diversity in this paper addresses the various states of embodiment for human researchers of games, with the intention to rectify historical and cultural discrimination.

Why be diverse?

The Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA) and the DiGRA Diversity Working Group believe that it is beneficial for everyone to consider the diverse bodies we may include. Inclusivity and diversity being regarded as beneficial is supported by literature from management, pedagogic and other utilitarian perspectives. For example, the positive benefits of diversity to learning were demonstrated for students sharing diverse classrooms, when compared to a control group of segregated classes (Gurin, et al., 2004), whilst perceived discrimination has been shown to be detrimental to workplaces, more so than other stressors (Sanchez & Brock, 1996). The inclusion of diverse perspectives has been argued to be a vital tool for critical knowledge production in scientific communities (cf. Fehr, 2011; Hurtado, et al., 1998; Milem, 1997, 1999), including increased understanding, competence and productivity in academic milieus such as campuses, conferences and formal institutions (cf. Villalpondo, 1994; Tanaka, 1996; Gilliard, 1996; qtd. in Milem, 2003).

Utilitarian approaches, however, exist paradoxically when diversity is positioned as a quantifiable, managerial, bureaucratic discourse. Stamping the label of ‘diversity’ as a commercially valuable “holy mantra” (cf. Ahmed 2012, 51; Puwar 2004, I) becomes a strategy for institutions and academic conferences to brand themselves as inclusive through token efforts of checklists and promises of goodwill. The pervasive repetition of ‘diversity’ as an institutional mantra, cleaves diversity from its related concepts, such as inequality, racism and whiteness (Ahmed 2012, 81). For scholars of diversity (cf. Ibid., 52-3; Deem & Ozga 1997, 33), the term may suggest differences of bodies, but does not necessarily reference an active commitment to an ethical paradigm, instead granting institutions masks for their existing structural inequality (Ahmed 2012, 53).

Diversity works against its own goals when it is offered as a solution. For example, having one person of colour on a panel does not amend a white majority, nor does one women's panel amongst a sea of men, nor does the siphoning of feminist and queer studies into a designated gender track. Offering diversity as a solution burdens delegates from marginalised groups with fixing the 'lack of diversity' with their participation. Inviting and welcoming diverse bodies still calls on a position of an authorial relationship between 'hosts' and 'outsiders'. However, diversity remains valuable when offered as a question (Ahmed 2012, 17). When posed as a question, diversity makes the walls established by academic institutions visible. Following the sensibilities of Ahmed (2012), academia's walls become palpable when diverse bodies come up against them and are pushed away.Feeling resistance brings into focus the existence of institutionalised barriers.

Amongst the utility and benefits of diversity in academia, the studies mentioned above may lend themselves as 'solutions', but are also interpretable as 'questions' pointing towards two coexisting concerns: *homogenous knowledge production*(knowledge concerns) and *inequality* (justice concerns). Both concerns intertwine into reproducing each other. The underrepresentation of women and African-Americans in fields where an assumed inherent "talent", "brilliance" and "genius" (terms that are less likely to describe women and people of colour) recirculate a masculine and Eurocentric coding of knowledge creation (Storage et al., 2016). As academics, we may uncritically reproduce inequality through our everyday research practices. To draw on the work of Wendy Brown (2010, 8), categorisation, taxonomy, demarcation and creating boundaries are academic forms of legitimisation, but at the same time these practices continue to structure hierarchies, value authorial figureheads, and encourage processes of 'othering'. "Psychically, socially, and politically," Brown notes, "walls inevitably convert a protected way of life into hunkering and huddling." (Ibid., 42) Indeed, our political climate is increasingly one consumed by building walls.

To contextualise the need for diversity specifically in academia, the promises of success through aggressive individualism have helped push the academic profession into an era barren of job security and tenure track positions (Berlant, 2011). With the precarity of academic careers and the restrain of researchers under neoliberalism, Kevin Birmingham recently argued, exceptional research by asking exceptional questions is being jammed (2017). Academics are compressed into small boxes as human resources who must play the game of academia in order to survive. Without diversifiers (i.e. diversity workers), everyday academic practices may continue unintentionally fortifying the walls of its ivory Euro-phallocentric tower, and as a consequence will continue constricting knowledge and the livelihood of academics.

Sal Humphreys argues with Adrienne Shaw that this on-going constriction of knowledge is key to both understanding the academic field of game studies, as much as the medium it studies. Shaw states that “feminist theory asks us to imagine how else these [academic] spaces might manifest.” (2014, 76) Humphreys comments on Shaw, arguing:

> I think this is a key question for games studies, and a key reason for being attentive to the voices that bring different understandings from the margins. Games can inherently offer us a place to imagine different worlds—spaces that play by different rules—that’s what games are. To limit ourselves to a narrow field of imagined difference is to miss the opportunities that games actually hold. The benefits of diversity for games studies are clear. We gain a more robust discipline. (Humphreys 2017, 15)

Hence, the question of diversity benefits as much from an understanding of video games as from an understanding of the academic communities studying them.

This question of diversity, more generally, sets forth the tearing down of walls, beyond offering allocated spaces and access through gateways, advocating for more malleable and permeable margins (Ahmed 2012, 173-187). Diversity work offers questions without necessarily provoking solutions, but ones which must nevertheless keep being asked. Instead of having one person of colour on a panel, one women's panel at a male-dominated conference, or isolating feminist and queer studies research into gender tracks, we might be able to unravel and address these problems by asking: *Why is the panel mostly white? Why is the conference mostly attended by men? Should topics of diversity be placed into designated tracks at all?*

Ultimately, how diversity should best be done is often debated and we acknowledge that there are multiple ways and approaches to do diversity work. As such, this paper does not simply rely on the survey data, but advances to propose measures supported by reasonable intuition and feminist praxis such as that advocated by Ahmed. There are all manners of diversity work which intends to support minority and marginalised bodies and their voices. We recognise that what has been delineated here is not all encompassing of the mass of diversity work being done across and beyond academia. For future iterations of the DiGRA diversity survey, how diversity is defined and the contextual considerations of the urgency of diversity – among other unspoken aspects of diversity this paper has missed – should evolve alongside the continued conversations on diversity work.

How diverse is DiGRA?

To this end, the survey was designed to indicate any problems that game scholars in different career phases and from different backgrounds are facing. We did so specifically to answer the questions:

1. Who finds access to the DiGRA conference and its wider community?
2. How do different bodies experience problems with such access?
3. Which bodies can we identify as having problems of

> inaccessibility, which practices uphold this inaccessibility, and how can we improve on or negate those practices?

In other words, the current survey started as a way of identifying which bodies most urgently need resources to improve the diversity of DiGRA.

Below, we briefly specify the method and the resulting dataset, which we discuss in light of the questions asked above. In all, the overarching goal is to present the diversity of DiGRA as an organization, the diversity of DiGRA event attendance, and the difficulties that may arise in prohibiting some bodies from doing so.

Method

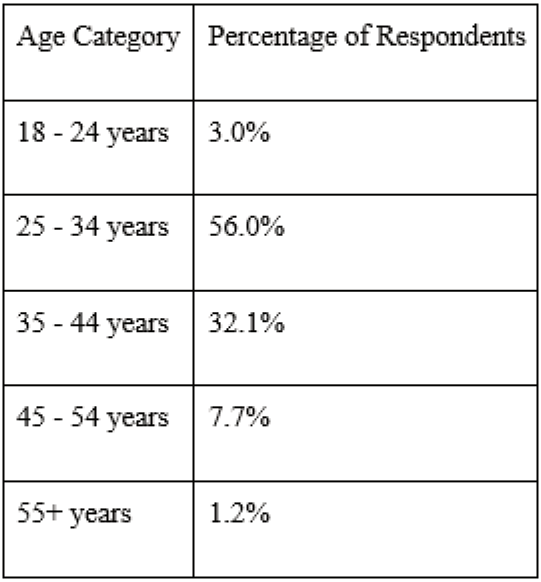
The DiGRA Diversity Working Group constructed an online survey through Google Forms that was disseminated through the DiGRA "Gamesnetwork" mailing list in October 2016. The survey included demographic questions (age, gender, location) relating to participation in DiGRA and alternative organizations (including conferences), and several open questions to allow for inductive data collection. The questions included in the survey followed three themes: reasons for attending DiGRA events, reasons for not attending DiGRA events, and problems experienced accessing, feeling (un)welcomed, and (un)included in DiGRA.

Data

Demographics

In total, 174 DiGRA members completed the online survey, representing an 8.5% participation rate of the mailing lists' 1965 subscribers (although it must be noted that a large part of the list's population is likely inactive or consisting of double accounts, such as multiple institutions' email addresses for the same person).

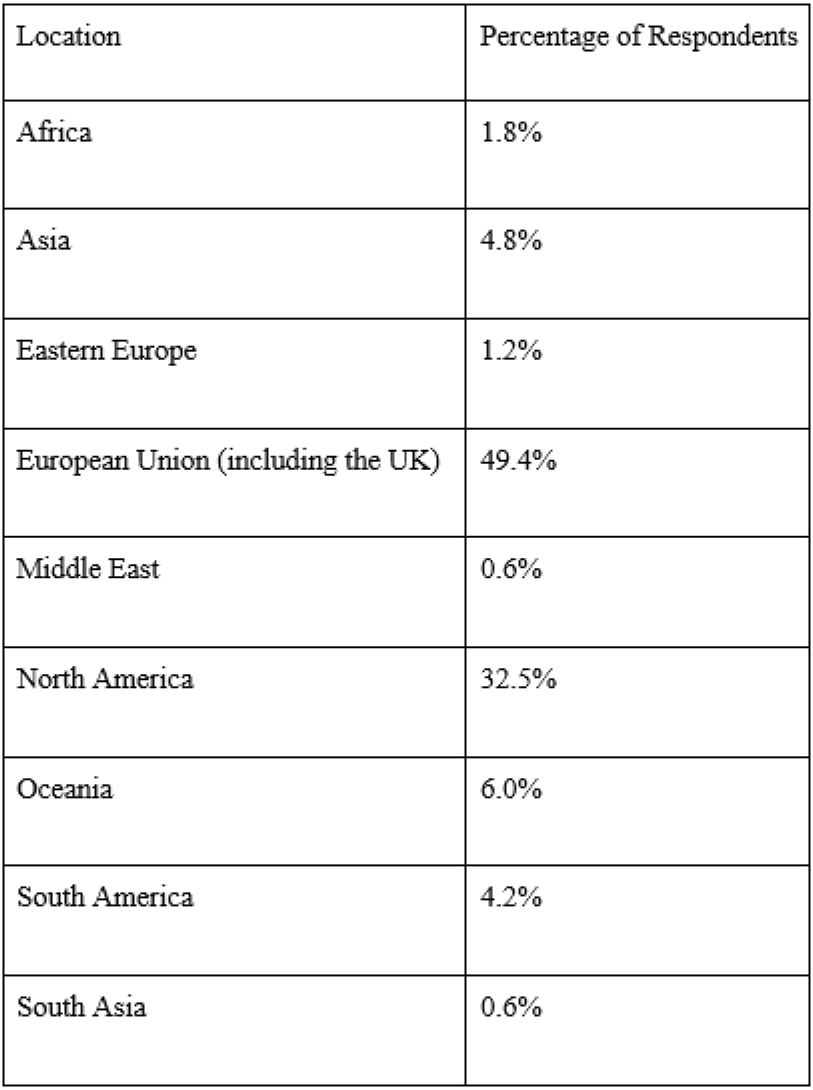
One hundred and three participants (60.9%) identified as male, 66 (36.1%) identified as female, and 5 (3%) identified as agender, genderqueer or non-binary. As seen in Table 1, more than half of all participants were aged 25 – 34 (56%).



Age Category	Percentage of Respondents
18 - 24 years	3.0%
25 - 34 years	56.0%
35 - 44 years	32.1%
45 - 54 years	7.7%
55+ years	1.2%

Table 1.Respondents' age:

In terms of location, 83 participants (49.4%) reported residency within the European Union (including England), whilst 31.5% (53 participants) reside in North America. Less than a fifth of respondents were located in other regions. A more detailed breakdown of location information of the participants can be seen in Table 2 and Figure 1.



Location	Percentage of Respondents
Africa	1.8%
Asia	4.8%
Eastern Europe	1.2%
European Union (including the UK)	49.4%
Middle East	0.6%
North America	32.5%
Oceania	6.0%
South America	4.2%
South Asia	0.6%

Table 2.Participants' locations:

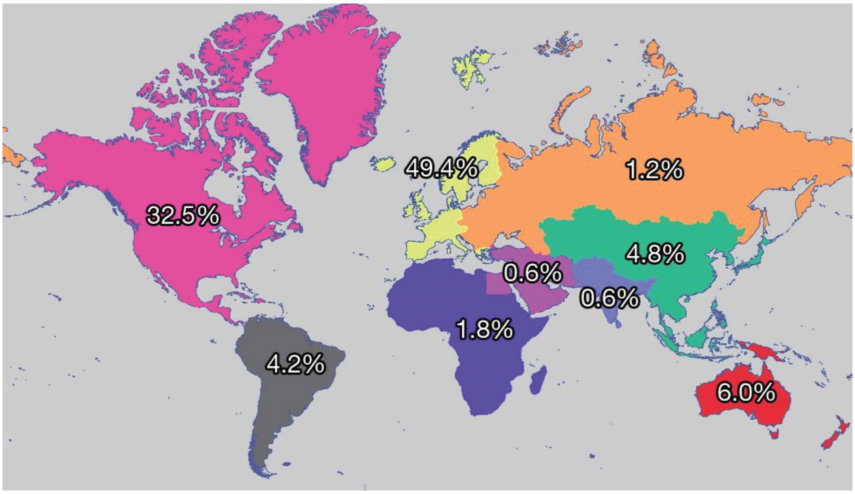


Figure 1.Geographical distribution of survey participants.

Scholars from several different levels of academia were represented within the survey. PhD students constituted the largest percentage of participants (40.6%), followed by associate and assistant professors (27.6%), early career researchers (post-doc, 10.6%), and master's students (6.5%; see Figure 2). In total, students (at all levels) comprised 51.5% of the sample, with the rest being researchers and educators at various levels. A larger number of participants were male-identifying. Within each stage of academic careers, distributions of gender show an overall increase of men further up the university hierarchy. For instance, 38% of students identified themselves as female, 59% as male, and 3% identified as non-binary (i.e., agender, genderqueer, predominantly male). Of the postdoctoral researchers and beyond, 34% identified as female, 63% as male, and 3% identified as non-binary.

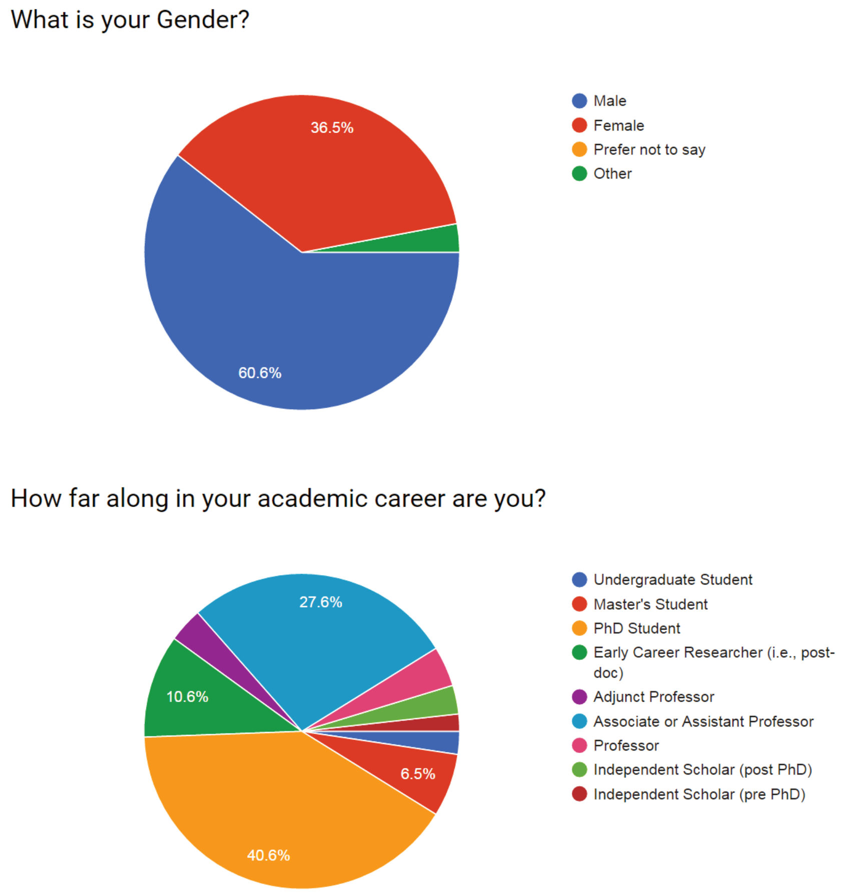


Figure 2.Gender and career stage among participants.

Participation in DiGRA

DiGRA is organized both on an international level in the shape of its journal *ToDIGRA*, mailing list Gamesnetwork, annual conference DiGRA, as well as on a local level (current local DiGRA chapters are: Australia; Chinese-speaking; Dutch; Finnish; Flemish; German-speaking; Israeli; Italian; Japanese; Turkish; British). At the same time, academic bodies make personal and strategic choices regarding which conferences to attend within constraints of available time and budgets. For this reason, the data gathered reflects attendance of the global DiGRA conference, local chapter events, as well as the various regional and global alternatives to the DiGRA conference.

Annual Conference Attendance

When asked about participation in the annual DiGRA conference, only 5.7% reported that they have attended all of DiGRA's past ten conferences, while 17.2% reported that they sometimes attend the annual conference. Just over a third of DiGRA-goers (35.7%) only attend the annual conference when they have a paper accepted. Another third of respondents (34%) stated that they have not attended a DiGRA conference, but would consider it in the future. Of those who have submitted, 5.7% have not attended. Just one respondent (0.6%) decided not to attend, and two (1.1%) have not considered attending.

Local attendance

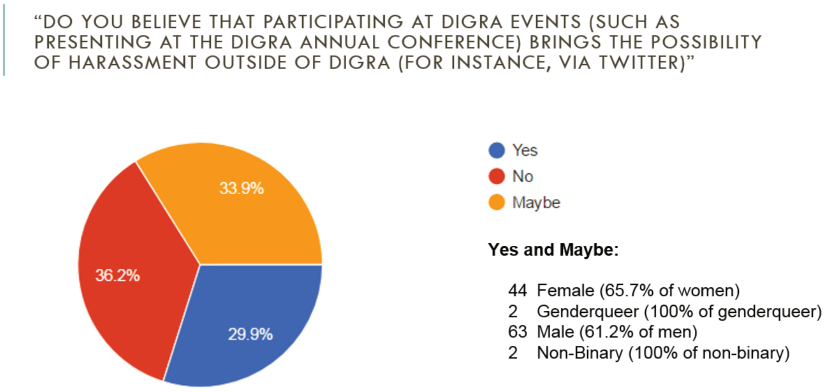
When asked about their local participation in DiGRA events, the majority of respondents (73.9%) had not previously attended a national or regional DiGRA event. Of the respondents, 67.7% had no access to local DiGRA chapters or were unsure.

In terms of access, 49% of respondents were "interested in becoming more active in your local DiGRA chapter." Some reasons were indicated: 41.5% do not know who to contact to participate in local chapters. Additionally, 40% do not know any other local DiGRA members, 30.8% do not have the time, and 6.2% of respondents were uninterested. Only 9.2% of respondents were active in their local DiGRA chapter.

In order to compare available alternatives to DiGRA, participants were asked which conferences they attended (or considered attending) annually. The Foundations of Digital Games conference [FDG] is the conference most likely attended (42%), followed by the International Communication Association conference [ICA]

(19.5%), and thirdly CHI Play (19%), the Player-Computer Interaction-focused conference by the Association for Computing Machinery. More locally oriented conferences are also strong contenders when taken as a category: 18.4% attended conferences such as CEEGS (Central-/Eastern Europe), CGSA (Canada), DiGRAA (Australia), F.R.O.G. Vienna (Austria), GRA (Poland), and similar conferences as viable (local) alternatives to the global DiGRA conference. Indeed, for various reasons, which we shall explore in the analysis, one of the impressions that forms from the data is the problem of funding and travel: 72.2% of survey respondents requested a conference location closer to home as a way to encourage participation.

Harassment


"DO YOU BELIEVE THAT PARTICIPATING AT DIGRA EVENTS (SUCH AS PRESENTING AT THE DIGRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE) BRINGS THE POSSIBILITY OF HARASSMENT OUTSIDE OF DIGRA (FOR INSTANCE, VIA TWITTER)"

Yes and Maybe:

44 Female (65.7% of women)
2 Genderqueer (100% of genderqueer)
63 Male (61.2% of men)
2 Non-Binary (100% of non-binary)

Figure 3.The possibility of harassment as a consequence of participation, broken down by gender identification.

Almost two thirds of participants (63.8%) reported that they believed participating in DiGRA could bring the possibility of harassment. Furthermore, 58.8% would not know who to speak to if they were harassed. Approximately half of all participants (47.4%) reported that they would like a more formal channel for recourse to deal with harassment and inappropriate behaviour.

The threat of harassment as a consequence for participation was deemed a concern across genders (Figure 3). Women only slightly more affirmatively answered yes (31.3%) or maybe (34.3%) to the question of whether they believe “participating at DiGRA events (such as presenting at the DiGRA annual conference) brings the possibility of harassment outside of DiGRA (for instance, via Twitter).” For men, these percentages were similar (28.2% Yes, 33% Maybe).

The current version of the survey appeared not specific enough to many participants regarding whether this threat of harassment is perceived to be toward themselves or towards fellow DiGRA participants. In light of this feedback, it became impossible to conclude how many participants had actually and personally experienced harassment, and this is something that could be addressed in future surveys. In any case, the results show a definitive confirmation that harassment is a pressing concern as a whole, although future iterations of the survey should be more rigorous in regards to questions about the threat of harassment.

Notably, 100% of non-binary and genderqueer participants answered “Yes” to this question. While a group of four participants is insufficient to draw further conclusions, it is clear that, to at least four bodies, the harassment question was unambiguous. In line with this, six participants indicated that they “do not feel welcome at DiGRA for personal reasons [or] because of who I am.”

Non-attendance

Overall, participants reported being unable to attend local and international DiGRA conferences due to various reasons. A lack of funds was the most common barrier: institutional funding was a problem for 50%, and 28.2% found DiGRA entirely “too expensive to attend.” Indeed, 77.8% of respondents indicated that funding and scholarships would significantly help attendance. Other reasons included feeling unwelcome (19.5%), religious commitment (13.8%), disability (13.8%), family responsibilities (10.3%), language inaccessibility (3%) and harassment.

When asked what would enable them to attend, respondents indicated the need for a clear support system (25%); ‘abuse, harassment and discrimination prevention and support’ (13.9%); a ‘safe space policy’ (9.7%); a clear ‘statement of accessibility’ (13.9%); and the availability of ‘childcare’ (12.5%). Many of these are policies and organisational structures that would incur very little economic cost, but could be significant developments for the community.

Discussion

How does theoretically framing the survey around theories of embodiment and diversity help make sense of these data? By focusing on the bodies that want to attend DiGRA, we asked how various bodies experience access to DiGRA. We discuss these data through the concepts of precarity, practice and policy; as three concentric categories that arose from the problems indicated by participants, to be presented below. The theme of bodies also helps to push the discussion beyond statistical inference, to make reflexive political proposals for action that critique the concept of diversity itself.

Precarity, practice and policy

Notably, a number of bodies in the data above indicated they were in difficult positions to participate in DiGRA conferences and events. Beyond rights to association and rights of expression, assemblies such as these are distinctly an embodied act (cf. Butler 2015). Consequently, conferences are a ‘convening’ presupposed by mobility. The particular bodies congregated at a site in turn reflect the infrastructures of the particular space supporting the presence of certain types of bodies. Those who are absent may recede further into the background overshadowed by the attending bodies. Inhabiting a particular sphere, such as whiteness, conditions the anticipation of encountering whiteness as if it were an expected 'demographic' of Eurocentric conferences. 'Body counting' (i.e. checking 'ethnicity boxes') problematically regards diversity in terms of quantifiable numbers, but it should also be recognised that these numbers can be affective for those who are counted. "It can be surprising and energizing not to feel so singular," prompts Sara Ahmed,

> "If we get used to inhabiting whiteness […] it does not mean whiteness does not still affect us. […] When you inhabit a sea of browness as a person of color, you might realize the effort of your previous inhabitance, the effort of not noticing what is around you. It is like how you can feel the 'weight' of tiredness most acutely as the tiredness leaves you." (2012, 35-36)

Through the embodiment of assemblies, the collective body of delegates represent the capacities and accommodations endowed by the conference infrastructures and policies, but furthermore, they also indicate how delegates from minority groups make further accommodations for inhabiting spaces of the accommodated majority.

Without a commitment to reshape DiGRA to be more inclusive, we risk continuing the present situation of erasing, ignoring and being ignorant of the needs of those who are absent, as well as those who come to DiGRA but will experience trouble during their attendance. The proceeding discussion moves from locating *precarity*(which bodies are vulnerable to inaccessibility),identifying *practices*of inaccessibility (which concrete, material practices restrict such bodies), to suggested *policy* (policies that organizations such as DiGRA can employ to improve such practices).

First, to locate where the data show *precarity* among participants, i.e. who most urgently needs our attention: here, the data points to students, women and genderqueer folk. Second, the data show two categorical *practices* of inaccessibility: economic and social.

Third, reflecting on the data and feedback from the DiGRA Diversity Working Group and the inaugural Diversity Workshop held at DiGRA 2017, we will suggest a list of *policies* which are categorised under six subheadings: organizational, financial, technological, local, global and symbolic.

Precarity: Students, Women and Genderqueer folk

To start locating the bodies that need our most urgent attention, the results of the survey points to two principally precarious groups which require the community's care: early career researchers (particularly students); women and non-binary identifying folk.

More than half of DiGRA attendees are students and early career researchers (62.1%) who are between the ages of 25 and 34 (56%), with many having insufficient travel funding (36.2%). A lack of funding is further felt by bodies that are in lower income brackets and from lower income economic regions, in comparison to the conference host countries. These include participants with children, those earning (below) minimum wage, and those that suffer from wage gaps, such as women and people of colour – indeed, many institutions still pay these bodies less than their male and white academic colleagues (Barbezat & Hughes, 2005; Renzulli, et al., 2006; Freund, et al., 2016).

As a consequence, below we suggest that the position of a funding officer be created to raise funds to support students, early career researchers, and other precarious and underrepresented groups.

The question of supporting young and financially precarious scholars is one which is tied in with gender representation. The greater number of male-identifying academics in higher positions in our data could either mean that a younger generation of game scholars is more gender-diverse – more women and genderqueer folk are entering the field – or it could also be indicative that, at the top levels, academic positions and funding opportunities are less accessible to non-male bodies.

Two main concerns of accessibility for these bodies emerged from our data: economic inaccessibility and social inaccessibility. When these two kinds of access fail, research from excluded bodies cannot appear at DiGRA. *Which practices perpetuate these inaccessibilities for the bodies affected?*

Practices: Economic and Social Inaccessibility

Economic inaccessibility includes the inability to pay conference fees, to travel, to afford a hotel, or to eat abroad. Economic inaccessibility includes geographic inaccessibility: expensive flights, exchange rates and visa costs. Practices perpetuating economic inaccessibility go beyond simply the ‘lack of funding’ that our participants decry. They include, we want to specify, the practice of making more (travel) funding available to tenured professors than to the doctoral students who need to disseminate their research to gain traction in a tight job market. They include moving toward an academic system of sessional labour and teaching-heavy appointments rather than including research and travel funds. They include paying academics unequally for reasons of gender. They include charging academics and conference-goers equally for participation regardless of how much they earn or possess. They include costs of childcare. They include involuntary exclusion from conference events such as special dinners, drinks and parties.

Economic inaccessibility overlaps with social inaccessibility; staying near the conference venue costs more than staying at a hostel half an hour outside of the city. In this way, economic capital functions to exclude people from what Bourdieu called social and cultural capital (1984). That is, economic inaccessibility prevents poorer academics from fostering the right relations and behaviours with the aim of succeeding within a social, in this case academic, in-group.

Social inaccessibility, more broadly, is the lack of access some bodies experience when excluded from hegemonic, often white, male, cisgender, able-bodied, middle-class, anglophone academia. They include all of our participants who felt unwelcome "because of who they are," who felt uncomfortable speaking English, and all of the bodies who feared that participation would invite harassment. Particularly vulnerable bodies are all those who are deemed non-hegemonic. Those that are threatened, those that are traumatized, ridiculed and harassed. Those that need unisex toilets, those that are excluded, those that are unwelcome. In short, all those who suffer material consequences for the bodies they are born with, and symbolic violence for who they are and choose to be.

To be sure: mapping practices of economic and social inaccessibility includes registering a mountain of practices that lead to bodies being excluded. That does not mean that all such practices are fixable, or that all such fixes are feasible. Some inaccessibility happens at the organizational level, including fees. Some occur at the institutional level, such as wage gaps. Some occur at the national and international level, such as the costs of having a child, having a disability, or living within an unequal social system or economy. Nonetheless, all these inaccessibilities exist at the bodily level.

DiGRA is no stranger to harassment, with the organisation and its members being a recurring target by an 'antifeminism in games' harassment group (see: Chess & Shaw 2015; Chess & Shaw 2016), yet there is still much more work to be done in thinking through continuous ways for prevention and support, both within and outside of DiGRA. We are troubled by how many (58.8%) reported not knowing who to contact if they had a problem with a fellow attendee or organizer, with many voicing that they would like a formal channel for recourse.

Policy: Organizational, financial, technological, local, global, and symbolic

We aim to indicate specific policies that address the practices above, with the specific goal of including a diversity of bodies that experience inaccessibility to DiGRA as a result of their precarity. The list below is by no means exhaustive. Nonetheless, the following section serves as a political turn from the analysis of data, to a call for action by which we explicitly press both DiGRA's board and its conference organizers to push for implementation of the policies. Policy recommendations are categorized by organizational, financial, technological, international, local and symbolic policies.

Organizational

The authors recommend that a number of changes should be considered at the organizational level of DiGRA itself, and its conferences. Those include a revision of the code of conduct to allow for the exclusion of harassers, the consideration of an ombudsperson, a welfare officer or diversity chair, and the consideration of a funding chair.

To address the problem of harassment, first and foremost, DiGRA must address the lack of agency that its current code of conduct lends to conference organizers when confronted with known harassers. While DiGRA can remove attendees from the conference who violate the code of conduct, there are currently no formal articulations within that code to prevent the attendance of those known to be a threatening presence, unless they act inappropriately during an event itself. This can be a difficult problem to navigate, as some bodies are more at risk of being excluded; thereby exposing these bodies to further ostracism. However, when faced with this dilemma we argue that we should draw a line against the inclusion of those who act to exclude others. There is a clear distinction between an attendee being disagreeable, and acts which violate the code of conduct. The code of conduct should include a way of addressing histories of harassment outside of the duration of single events, and attendees should have a formal way to request the assurance of their safety, and to be able to request the exclusion of persistently threatening persons. This becomes especially pertinent when, considering that attendance itself can be used as a form of continued or systematic intimidation (see, for instance, the experience by, and account of, Sarkeesian [2017]).

Secondly and thirdly, we suggest the inclusion of at least one specific function within the DiGRA board (a welfare or diversity officer), as well as another position outside of it: that of the ombudsperson. A welfare officer would be able to address concerns of inclusion and diversity through several means – which we suggest include a regular iteration of the survey, as well as regular convening with the existing diversity committee at DiGRA, through online communication and its annual meeting. The welfare officer would ideally be part of the board, in order to represent the concerns raised by both the diversity committee and the survey; as well as serving to convene with conference organizations to accommodate disabled, excluded and other precarious bodies, and consequently to advise on policies to mitigate such precarity.

An ombudsperson, by contrast, necessarily serves outside of the appointed board. An ombudsperson hears and investigates complaints by individuals against, and principally outside of, the official organization of DiGRA and its conference. It serves in two ways: the ombudsperson has an anonymizing function, by protecting the complainant from harm; and the ombudsperson should attempt to alleviate the ‘admin trap’ for the victim by taking over much of the work of reporting and proof. In other words, instating an ombudsperson takes away the personal repercussions and much of the extra work that would otherwise discourage individuals from addressing practices of inaccessibility, such as issues of harassment, exclusion and other forms of discrimination. Instating an ombudsperson, furthermore, instates as a clear practice of inclusion, by providing a protocol for treating the problems experienced by bodies who otherwise do not have time, power and means available to make their issues known; for the benefit of all that follow them.

More broadly, we recommend that DiGRA be considerate of the vulnerable – and specifically gendered – nature of bearing the burden of proof, particularly for cases of sexual harassment. We can readily assume the position that students, women and non-binary bodies are more at risk of sexual harassment at DiGRA. With the release of a recent report in Australia, it appears that 51% of all university students were sexually harassed in 2016, 21% of which were sexually harassed in a university setting during 2015-2016. Women were three times more likely to be sexually harassed, and almost twice as likely to be sexually assaulted. 94% of those who were sexually harassed and 87% who were sexually assaulted did not make a formal complaint to their universities (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017). For those in the DiGRA community who do not know who to contact for grievances, or do not have a clear sense of how the organisation will proceed if they make a report, the lack of a clearly defined channel of communication discourages those who are seeking help. It is important to acknowledge that the nature of emotional and psychological abuse does not produce the same forms of 'evidence' as physical abuse. Women are not only more likely to be sexually harassed and assaulted, women are also less likely to be heard or have their pain taken seriously (Hoffman & Tarzian, 2001). Those who are statistically more vulnerable often have more difficulty in convincing others of their own vulnerability, as Ahmed argues:

> "[T]he evidence we have of racism and sexism is deemed insufficient because of racism and sexism. Indeed racism and sexism work by disregarding evidence or by rendering evidence unreliable or suspicious. […] This disregarding – which is at once a form of regarding – has a central role in maintaining an order of things. Simply put: that evidence of something is deemed insufficient is a mechanism for reproducing something." (Ahmed, 2016)

The difficulty of reporting harassment and the burden of proof are a problem in and of themselves, and one that is all too easily ignored by those who do not experience it.

Fourth, a fundraising officer should be considered to sit on the board – specifically for the fundraising of travel funds for students, and other academics in vulnerable groups, such as people of colour, the Global South, and other disadvantaged bodies. A fundraising officer focuses on running funding campaigns with academic institutions and progressive tech companies. Such an officer, finally, would oversee many of the policies recommended in the following section.

Financial

In order to address wider problems of funding, beside the work of a funding officer, several policies are possible. Fees for DiGRA conferences have traditionally comprised of full fees and student fees. However, based on our data we argue that a differently defined policy would be more appropriate for pricing concessions.

Firstly, in the wake of DiGRA 2017's policy in Melbourne, we recommend that the concession rate be explicitly made available to those lacking funding and in positions between employment – such as, commonly, recent post-doctoral academics without funding. In addition, the recent policies on concession rates have not been sufficiently explicit or inviting: several participants in the survey and of the diversity workshop reported not knowing that they were entitled to concession rates because of their positions in industry or unemployment. Ambiguity in these cases serves nobody.

Secondly, other conferences have had success with fees based on a sliding scale: that is, a scale based either on a self-reported income bracket; or a more sophisticated set of options based on different levels of income – we suggest considering levels based on career status and country of origin. Importantly, not all students from all countries are relatively underfunded, and not all professors from all countries are relatively well-funded. By comparison, organizations such as the ICA, ASA, SCMS, CSA, IAMCR and ECREA all currently employ several membership tiers based variously on country, income and/or employment status, as well as different levels of conference fees – some of which accommodate guests, spouses and childcare.

Technological

Less financially demanding but nonetheless effective is the use of technology to make conferences more accessible.

Firstly, we recommend that DiGRA support streaming as a valid and explicitly supported way of including those bodies that are not able to make it to the conference venue. By including streaming as a viable and acceptable option to participate in panels or present papers, the conference can include home-bound bodies, those who are unable to obtain a visa, and bodies who, for any reason, are not able to present their work. Beside issues of bandwidth; conference venues, volunteers and session chairs would do well to accommodate streaming as a way to include distant bodies.

Secondly, the use of social media and anonymized online forms could go a long way toward making it easier for DiGRA members to show concerns and provide feedback. One way of making any such system more accessible prior to, during and after conferences is to allow people a quick and non-threatening way of reporting their concerns. This suggestion should be considered in combination with, or even as an alternative to, an ombudsperson. Such a formalized channel for participants to raise concerns will be relatively cost-efficient and should be quickly implemented.

Thirdly, we recommend a continuation and expansion of the DiGRA homestay and couchsurfing community. This was an online, *Facebook*-organized initiative for conference-goers, mostly students, to find cheap accommodation alternatives abroad. It would be beneficial, particularly for young and disadvantaged researchers, to find affordable ways of staying while constructing networks of solidarity among early career researchers. The homestay community encompasses shared hostel and hotel seeking, and other accommodation services such as *Airbnb*.

International

Discussion of the homestay and couchsurfing community raises the question of international conference location. Where should the conference be held to optimize accessibility, and how can considerations of global situatedness help disadvantaged bodies?

Firstly, and this is a practice shared by many other organizations across disciplines, DiGRA must try to make sure that the location of its conferences varies, so that it is accessible to all participants. Past DiGRA conferences, with the exclusion of Tokyo in 2007 and Melbourne in 2017, have all been held in Northwestern Europe or North America: twice in the Netherlands, twice in the U.S., twice in the U.K., once in Canada and once in Germany. This trend of Eurocentric organization perpetuates both social inaccessibility (by hosting in countries that are predominantly white, anglophone and culturally homogenous) and economic inaccessibility (by demanding travel and expenditure to locations and economies that are difficult to access from outside of these areas), thereby being particularly exclusive of coloured, non-anglophone and non-Western bodies, including those below the equator and of the Global South.

Furthermore, this practice has a self-reproducing effect of positioning DiGRA to become increasingly inaccessible to academic bodies outside of Northwestern Europe and North America; to the extent that it might become increasingly less likely to attract conference attendees *as well as* organizers from other regions; thereby perpetuating and amplifying the situation. The result is that some communities have created local chapters as an alternative to the ‘main’ DiGRA conference. Those include, currently and in the past, Nordic DiGRA, DiGRA China, DiGRA Australia and, notably, DiGRA Japan – more on local chapters can be found in the article by Wirman (2017) in this volume.

Fundamentally, a paradox arises from the recommendation to host away from Eurocentric locations. While Eurocentric locations are often expensive, difficult to reach from the Global South and other areas, and unaffordable for those bodies with the least resources; hosting in the Global South, the Middle-East, the third world and other regions, by contrast, adds other problems of inaccessibility. These include inaccessibility for bodies that would be discriminated against or could not physically attend, whether those are disabled bodies, practically; queer bodies, politically; bodies declined visa, and so on. Regardless, there are many possible conference locations outside of these two extremes – including in Africa, Asia, Australia and Latin-America that should be considered (see: Hannabach & Shaw, 2017).

Local

Furthermore, it is apparent that many bodies do not find access to DiGRA because of a lack of (information regarding) local options. Although the issue of local DiGRA chapters is more elaborately treated by Wirman in this volume (2017), the survey offers some indications of what kind of policies are needed.

Firstly, many bodies reported not knowing how to access chapters. Simply displaying and updating local chapter details and events through the central DiGRA website provides a reliable way to find access to these local organizations. Many chapters appear to be misrepresented on the DiGRA website through outdated information; while chapters provide an accessible and affordable way of entering into the academic community – particularly for underfunded and early career researchers.

Secondly, there is currently no clear encouragement upon registration (either for the mailing list, membership or conference-attendance) to additionally join a local chapter. A clearer referral to the local chapters upon registration would benefit all parties.

Symbolic

Although we recognize the cost and labour implied by some of the policies above, a final category of proposed policies is largely symbolic and performative, but nonetheless impactful. Looking at the open questions, specifically as filled in by participants in precarious positions, we note a large number of requests that are as easy to implement as they are to forget, regardless of their importance. These include a safe space policy; and clear statements of inclusivity, accessibility and welcome for diverse bodies including non-male and non-binary bodies, bodies of colour, and independent scholars. Requests included mentoring for inexperienced attendees, promotional efforts to researchers from the Global South; and quality standards and training for reviewers, volunteers and session chairs when dealing with diversity-related aspects. All of these are free, relatively effortless and nonetheless important to implement in order to be inclusive.

Conclusion

The survey that forms the basis of this article started out as a way to identify the current problems of the DiGRA community. In short, we aimed to indicate which bodies had access and which had difficulties accessing the DiGRA community. By surveying 174 bodies selected from that community's mailing list, the data at hand provides an initial overview of the bodies inhabiting the community, the bodies in its periphery, and the kinds of practices that complicate access for those bodies. Furthermore, by thinking of academics as bodies – rather than minds or voices – we have attempted to materially consider access as a physical movement of intersectional bodies: who flies out to conferences; who is welcomed into social groups; who feels safe; who requires help.

Who finds access to the DiGRA conference and its wider community? Predominantly young male bodies from Northwestern Europe and North America. Within this community, vulnerable bodies are, by contrast, overwhelmingly students; non-male, non-binary, and non-Western bodies. These bodies, we argued, require attention in order to improve their access to DiGRA; in order for its community and conferences to attempt to be more inclusive and diverse.

How do different bodies experience problems with such access? Vulnerable bodies are confronted with both economic and social inaccessibility: they overwhelmingly lack the means to attend conferences, travel and stays abroad; or they are excluded from countries and hegemonic social groups. Which practices uphold this inaccessibility? Wage gaps, unequal conference fees, difficulties to address harassment, and a plethora of other practices which contribute to the exclusion and discouragement of vulnerable bodies.

How can we improve on or negate those practices? We proposed a set of concrete policies, based on the survey data and its discussion in the Diversity working group's "Gaming the Systems" Workshop in Melbourne at DiGRA in 2017. To this end, we encourage not just the relevant organizations – including the DiGRA board, its local chapters and the conference organizers – to consider, and implement, the recommendations and policies we have set out above, as well as expand and develop them more rigorously, and continue to consider the problems raised.

Additionally, we believe that this survey and its policies have relevance outside of the DiGRA community itself. It serves as a case study of one academic community; and should prove relevant to other fields, its bodies and also their struggles. If anything, this article should be taken as a call to repeat, to replicate and to improve all academic communities.

In all, we believe this research and the article itself are only a first step in performatively and informatively surveying the challenges that academic communities as a whole face in becoming inclusive. The notion of *becoming*is vital here: we hope to have shown that the process of diversifying is a continual process of reflection, refinement and reconsideration. Indeed, the survey itself is by no means final. This version of the survey would benefit from additional attention and elaboration of questions on harassment, race, able-bodiedness and other underemphasized intersectionalities; it sometimes arbitrarily divided regions; and sometimes ambiguously phrased questions that, upon reflection, deserve more specificity.

Let us, then, end this article with our own continuing contribution to the process of DiGRA becoming inclusive. That is, our intention to make the survey iterative, and in doing so, to continually set out to inform, to improve, to include: to diversify.

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