

New Adventures

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Magazine and conference guide
Paul Lloyd • Rizwana Khan
Christopher Murphy • Geri Coady
Jordan Moore • Chris Shiflett
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contributors

Paul Lloyd

@paulrobertlloyd

Paul Lloyd is an independent designer, writer and speaker based in Brighton, who likes to help responsible organisations make purposeful digital products.

paulrobertlloyd.com

Jordan Moore

@jordanmoore

Jordan Moore is a Product Designer at the Belfast-based product studio Dawson Andrews. He is fixated on the relationship between technology, value, and meaning.

jordanm.co.uk

Helen Joy

@LittleHelli

Helen Joy is a UX consultant and user researcher at SPARCK with a focus on universal and inclusive design practices. She also organises Women in Tech, Nottingham working to promote inclusivity within the tech industry.

blog.helen.digital

Chris Shiflett

@shiflett

Chris Shiflett has been working on the web for the last two decades and now brings his experience to Faculty, a web design and technology company. He lives with his wife and three children in Boulder, Colorado.

shiflett.org

Christopher Murphy

@fehler

A designer, writer and speaker, Christopher Murphy works with purpose-driven businesses, helping them thrive. He's currently writing his eighth book, *Designing Delightful Experiences*, which focuses on the importance of human-centred design.

mrmurphy.com

Rizwana Khan

@rizbizkits

Rizwana Khan is a designer, developer, student and poet. As a third culture kid, she is found in awe of the things we can learn from our differences. Also, Riz cannot whistle, but is convinced she will, one day.

twitter.com/techcurating

Geri Coady

@hellogeri

Geri Coady is a colour-obsessed Canadian illustrator living in Nottingham, UK. She is the author of *Color Accessibility Workflows* published by A Book Apart, an occasional illustrator for A List Apart, and was voted net Magazine's Designer of the Year in 2014.

geridrawsjapan.com

Simon Collison

@colly

Simon is a designer, writer, and director of New Adventures. An early web standards advocate, he's written several books and spoken all over the world. He lives in Nottingham with his wife, Geri, and their idiotic but adorable cat, Bearface.

colly.com

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A certain sense of inevitability

Simon Collison

The first New Adventures took place in 2011, sparking a trilogy of events that helped push digital design forward with bold ideas and honest opinion. The whole thing was a blast. Some seasoned conference-goers considered it their favourite, and for many it was their first event.

The support was always heartening, and we even received a couple of awards. Wherever I went in the intervening years, people would ask if New Adventures might return. ‘Never’, I’d reply, not allowing myself to entertain the idea.

Early last year at a couple of events, the question seemed to find its way into most conversations, and I began to respond with ‘Maybe’. I came to realise just how much I’d missed the conference—and missed you—and wondered if a return might play a role in re-energising digital design. With every passing week, the industry seemed to be losing its way: misguided thinking, obsession over

tooling, and a future so uncertain that we’d rather look away. New Adventures seemed like a positive response: to reconvene and collectively examine our challenges. A certain sense of inevitability developed, and eventually I turned to my wife, Geri: ‘Let’s do it!’

Unpicking the present

Digital experiences are forming in new ways. We need to think many steps ahead, be ever more collaborative and unerringly efficient. What we build must be resilient, performant, and accessible. There’s a gold rush of new apps vying for our loyalty, and we fret about them all lest we back the wrong workhorse. We feel responsible for the world beyond our desks; told we’re complicit in the breakdown of ethics and labour, that we’re enablers of miseducation and exclusion. It’s not easy for anyone, and there’s a lot to wrestle with. Open-minded events like New Adventures aim to empower individuals with practical guidance that works right now, while also contemplating the future as a community.

As ever a lot is going on, and yet design is in a frustratingly inert state. A proliferation of shiny tools

has transformed our processes so we might endlessly repaint the same set of approved patterns that little bit faster. Our obsession with good behaviour and best practice sees us struggle to innovate, while all around us moves at pace, shaping the environments and defining the boundaries within which we operate.

“As ever a lot is going on, and yet design is in a frustratingly inert state.”

Perhaps digital design needs an injection of fun and weirdness: more thought for arts and humanities; a wider frame of reference so we might rediscover a sense of curiosity, and zeal for new ground. If we increase our range, might we travel farther? Can we put wiggles in otherwise straight lines so we might find something new? How can we visualise our future unless we try to unpick the present and find alternative ways of seeing?

No small ambition

Early in 2018, Khoi Vinh, principal designer at Adobe, highlighted

the shallow nature of most design discourse, which led directly to an in-depth self-flagellation from guilt-ridden online mag UX Collective. To summarise Vinh's stance: today's practitioners have little time for intellectual content and long-form insight, either unable to make time to read it, or just plain uninterested. Tips, tricks, and listicles are today's currency: simple stuff for short-term gain. Quality varies, and intentions are not always honourable, many little more than thinly veiled sales pitches or revenue drivers.

“Tips, tricks, and listicles are today's currency: simple stuff for short-term gain.”

Much of the content feeds a kind of denial where we package our abilities as a noble craft immune to uncertain futures: we'll be alright because nobody else—not developers, and definitely not machines—can do what we can do. Never, ever.

And so, designers write for designers, and design publications deliver what designers want—not what they need. Those who might offer real substance by way of talent or experience can't always spare the time to contribute. Crucially, we're missing the essential influence of thoughtful critique and direction that shapes other disciplines such as art and architecture. Paul Lloyd echoes this need in his article 'Look around you' (page 7).

There's a call for more 'independence, honesty, depth, and breadth', and further democratisation, where design becomes accessible and meaningful to millions of people. That's no small

ambition, but it's achievable, and we can start by demanding better content.

Readying for relaunch

Before our relaunch, we'd planned to expand beyond the conference, and establish a new possibility space where diverse thinking and intellectual inquiry could thrive—design looking outwards as much as inwards. Few, if any, publications seek to engage design-minded practitioners with an intentionally broad subject matter. We considered turning NA into a full-time pursuit with smaller quarterly events and an always-on web presence; new platforms for fresh thinking, immersive learning, and ambitious ideas.

If I'm honest, it's been a difficult few months. A lot has changed since 2013, and our return has been an exhausting struggle; from selling tickets to chasing suppliers, everything's been so much more challenging than before. The reasons are many: the way people work has changed, priorities have shifted, the world is in meltdown. It's now an immense risk to run an event of this scale, and that realisation hit us hard after the relaunch, shattering our confidence. The events space is crowded, and it's not a good time to invest in a new publication, let alone one focused on diverse content. Of course, if anyone out there wants to help us realise these ambitions, we'd love to talk.

Bigger and better than ever

So, are we feeling down? Nope! Once again, the web has come to Nottingham, and we're excited to see friends old and new. As ever we've worked closely with our speakers to deliver a programme built around key themes. We

finally convinced Ethan to join us, and long-time supporter Jeremy will, at last, take the stage. It's also a pleasure to invite Clare, for whom NA was a catalyst for not one but two life-changing events. Our themes are carried into this little publication with articles and poetry you can enjoy on your way home.

We've perhaps our best workshops to date, and the packed fringe offers something for everyone. It was important to acknowledge the thriving Nottingham tech community, with local stars Helen and Jessica in our main lineup, and Women in Tech, Nottingham hosting the lunchtime takeover. A lot of excellent things have happened in this city since our last conference.

We expanded our commitment to a safe and inclusive environment, though a lower than anticipated budget and other factors saw us fall short of a complete offering. We were thrilled to provide free passes to thirty diversity-ticket applicants and learned lots in the process, discovering some inspiring people who need a little support. Our thanks to those who applied, and to everyone who generously contributed additional tickets (see Credits, p46).

Facing the future together

And so once again we'll reconvene and recalibrate, and fill the hall with goodwill. Our sincere thanks to everyone who has supported this conference, and to anyone who ever gave something of themselves to digital design and the web. If we're investing our lives in this industry, we should steer the appropriate path. Now is the time.

—SC



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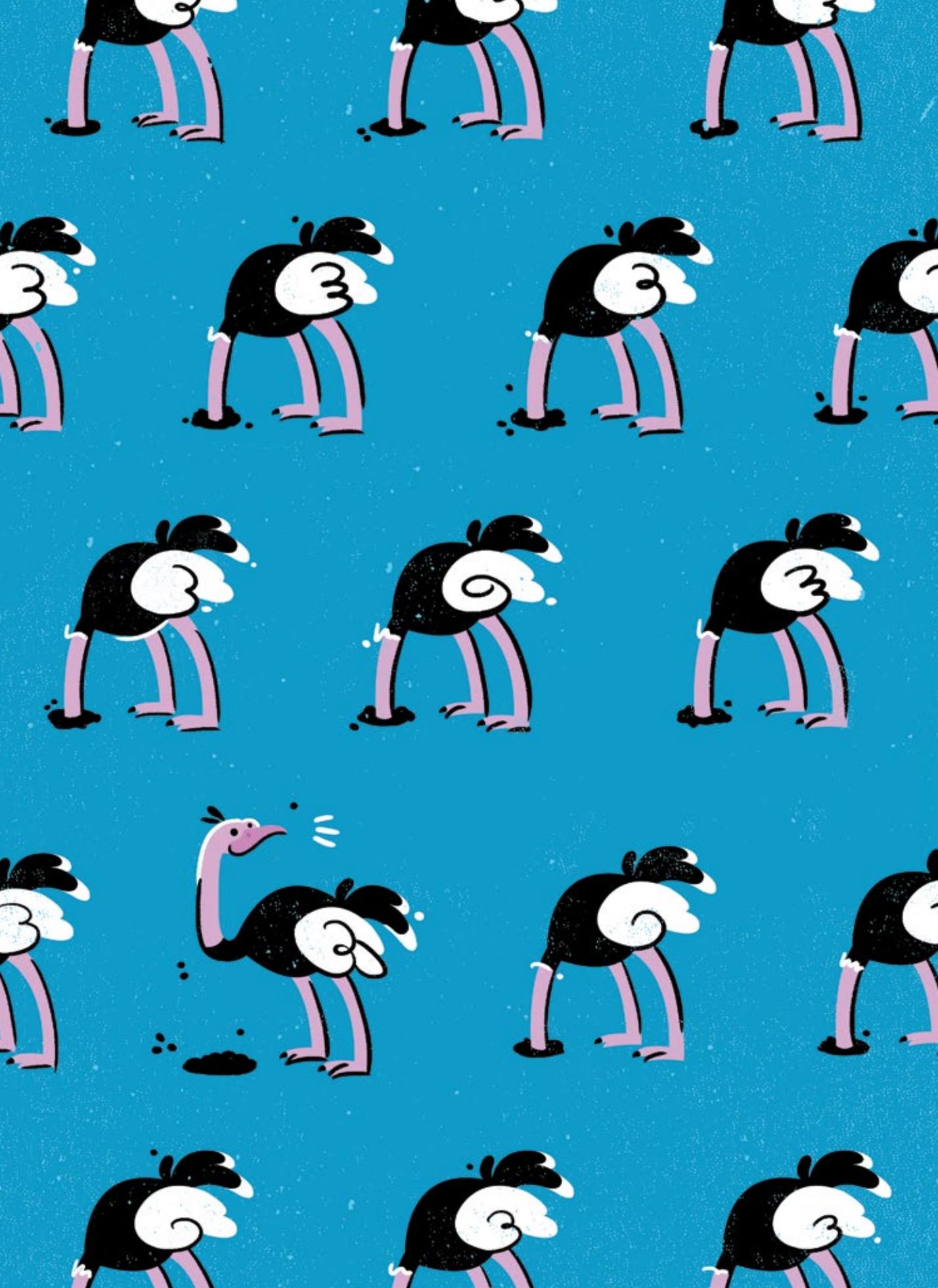
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Look around you

Paul Lloyd

Paul Lloyd takes a hard-hitting look at the disconnect between designers and broader society. When we prioritise ourselves, our systems, and our comfort over the needs of audiences, we fail. Can independent critique and a wider, more diverse frame of reference correct our course?

If the last few years have taught us anything, it's that while designers have an amazing ability to change the world, it may not always be for the better.

As we approach the end of this decade of digital decadence, a period of political turmoil and societal change has tested many of our most benign assumptions. Persuasive design is no longer talked about with the naivety it once was, while some now question the virtues of seamless, frictionless experiences that reduce user agency and dissuade us from taking a moment to pause. Aesthetic considerations need to compete with more ethical concerns, with decoration and delight making way for questions about privacy and accessibility.

Yet at the heart of our profession remains user-centred design and the myth that to design for everyone is to design for no one.

With the results of this approach writ large, it has become clear that focusing on one group to the exclusion of others makes it easier to ignore the secondary effects of our work. Looking to demonstrate their value, designers have been eager to celebrate high-growth companies with a laser-like focus on the consumer. But while Airbnb created a product expertly tailored to the traveller's every need, the company displayed a breathless arrogance toward those affected by it, especially the communities hollowed out by an abundance of short-term lets and increased rents. Ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft made ordering taxis effortless, but a recent study discovered that these services add 2.6 vehicle miles to city traffic for every 1 mile of personal driving removed (turns out people will dismiss marginally less convenient options like walking or cycling when they can hail a taxi to complete a short journey). And how often is it the case that workers providing the service are the ones left shouldering the risks while reaping few of the rewards? For all their claims of changing

the world, it would seem designers have not only failed to address its more pressing problems, but exaggerated many of its existing ones. Sure, it's easier than ever to book a table at your favourite restaurant in San Francisco, or get a pizza delivered to your door, but income inequality has increased exponentially. Already polluted cities are now populated with empty taxis while climate change continues to reduce the diversity of our biosphere and threaten the survival of our own species.

"... our industry has chosen to look inward, focusing instead on our tools and processes—on ourselves."

Clearly our existing methods of innovation aren't working. Yet at this decisive point in the human story, when a collective view of the world is required, our industry has chosen to look inward, focusing instead on our tools and processes—on ourselves.

Fitter, happier, more productive

The desire to improve our own environment is human nature, yet we already work in an industry

that tends to lavish its employees, if not with impressive salaries and free lunches, then themed meeting rooms and indoor slides. Have we become too comfortable, too compliant, even?

This trend towards self-indulgence can be summed up in two words: developer experience. This is the idea that investing in the whims and wants of developers allows them to build faster and cheaper, thus helping them deliver a better product—eventually. The excitement developers exhibit towards new technology can be infectious, but a magpie-like behaviour sees them flit and flirt from one framework to another, abandoning what’s been tried and tested, and throwing scorn on anything perceived as outdated. And there’s always another developer-focused feature to implement before the user experience can be addressed. As the complexity of digital software grows and the size of websites increases (weighed down by client-side libraries and privacy-invading scripts), it’s safe to say this argument amounts to little more than trickle-down ergonomics.

And now designers are getting in on the act. Concerned with order and beauty, and with a low tolerance for inconsistency and a penchant for unachievable perfection, efforts are now expended on the creation of all-encompassing design systems. An honest appraisal would acknowledge that the intended audience for these is not the customer but their colleagues. After all, a user focused on achieving a particular task is unlikely to notice a few stray pixels or inconsistent padding.

Designers were meant to be the ones looking outwards, understanding customers’ needs and communicating their find-

ings using personas, journeys, maps and stories. Integrated into engineering processes that push for efficiency and measurement, these tools have been manipulated and contorted to such an extent that they serve only to delude, promoting the idea that users’ best interests are being served while internal measures of success are privileged. Much like world trade, the effectiveness of empathy is a product of proximity. Sat in an office interacting with our colleagues (yet not those in distant warehouses or on the front line) and with little day-to-day contact with customers, a disconnect is forged.

“Have we become too comfortable, too compliant, even?”

What we do see, often looks a lot like us. Our community is suffocated by a lack of diversity, not only in the countless ways we are slowly starting to comprehend, but also thanks to the narrow providence of the ideas shaping our work. Lacking a culture of independent critique typical of other creative professions like film and architecture, few seem willing or able to challenge the toxic orthodoxy behind the handful of American companies exerting the most influence. And so DevOps begat DesignOps, DesignOps begat ResearchOps, each specialism competing to commoditise its expertise in order to prove its worth to business leaders who know the cost of everything but the value of nothing.

Onwards and outwards

How might we change course?
First, we need space for criti-

cal voices and those willing to question the industry’s boundless optimism. We need authors willing to quell our tool fetishism and instead encourage us to question and interrogate new approaches and ideas.

As we consider the role of user-centred design, might systems thinking help us to better understand the interconnectedness of the things we build, and identify how they relate not only to our target audience, but broader society as well?

In seeking examples of a more inclusive approach, I look to advocates of web accessibility. Having studied the principles of universal design, they speak about this vital work as being an integral part of the design process rather than a box-ticking exercise needed to satisfy disability law. I think about websites like GOV.UK and its designers who, having acknowledged that their audience was everyone, discarded beautiful yet meaningless iconography and other decoration to deliver something that simply worked.

Our ability to visualise and make things is a great gift, but we need to acknowledge that this privilege brings with it immense responsibilities. Rather than limit our imaginations to idealised versions of the future, we should consider less desirable outcomes and use these to help us correct course earlier in the design process. This may often involve saying no, being obstructive, and removing terms like ‘edge case’ from our vocabulary. Such changes may slow us down, but given the damage already left in our wake, maybe that’s not such a bad idea.

—PL



Whilst you're here

Why not start a New Adventure?



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a speaker



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Experience gaps

Jordan Moore

Product designer Jordan Moore sees much to celebrate in the digital revolution of established media, but recalls a time when a shelf of CDs or stack of LPs helped shape and present our identities, and offered a depth of experience we've relinquished in favour of fast-flowing streams.

I hold a special place in my heart for Pearl Jam's *Yield* album, released in 1998. It's a remarkable album, easily overlooked. At first glance, the cover is pretty forgettable and not unlike something you would find scrolling through Unsplash, searching for the word 'road'. Yet I've heard fellow fans gushing about how the yield sign in the middle of a road that has no junction to yield to and no traffic to give way to is actually a message saying to just yield to experience and let go. I don't buy it. Nor did I buy the black and white photos in the booklet taken by the bassist, Jeff Ament. They were dull and uninspiring. Nevertheless, they were my access to the lyrics and the personnel involved with each song, the instruments they played, the sound engineers

and producers. These details matter when you obsess about music.

Over a series of listens with headphones on, the album booklet spread out on the floor in front of me, as I often did in the late '90s before the days of streaming music, I started to notice some unusual things with this once trivial booklet. It started when I was listening to the song 'Given to Fly'. I took notice of the accompanying photo as it looked like a photo of a statue gazing towards the sky, spreading its wings. The strange thing was that this was the only photo in the booklet that clearly depicted the track, whereas the rest of them didn't. I flipped through the booklet towards one of my favourite tracks, 'Faithful'. I was met with a photo of a concrete building viewed from the ground. Did the building represent something? It wasn't a church or somewhere you would practise your faith. As I contemplated the meaning behind the image, I noticed that one of the windows near the top was clearly shaped like a triangle, not a rectangle like the others.

I flipped the album closed to reveal the boring cover shot of the triangular yield sign. Was this a clue of some sort? I pored over the other shots in the booklet. The

next track, 'No Way', had a photo of birds perched on telephone wires with a backdrop of clouds. Again, uninspiring at first glance, but there it was again, hiding in plain sight—an unnaturally shaped cloud in the shape of a triangle! I searched online for 'Pearl Jam yield signs in booklet' and didn't get any useful results. I kept looking and found hidden yield signs in every photo of the book, some more obvious than others; some might even have been my imagination seeing something that wasn't there.

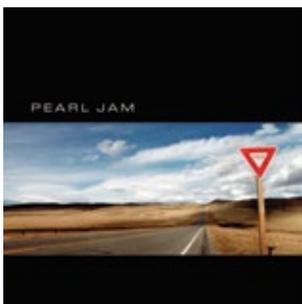
The band deny all knowledge of hidden signs in the album artwork. Someone was playing a game. And I loved the thrill of the chase. World-renowned computer adventure game designer Brian Moriarty calls attributing personal meaning to sequences of things 'constellation', as in the verb *to constellate*, just as ancient civilisations would have looked up at the stars and grouped them into patterns, drawing connections between points and giving them meaning.

♦ ♦ ♦

In today's digitally transformed music industry with streaming on demand, *Yield* feels one-dimensional. There is no companion



Plastic Player 2
by Brendan Dawes



Yield by Pearl Jam, 1998

booklet to tell me who wrote the words and music for each song; I don't know what the lyrics are or the visual representation of the lyrics from the artist; I don't know how the album artwork feels to touch; I don't know the personnel involved; I can't see any of the hidden yield signs within the booklet; I can't see the album in relation to the rest of my collection; and I can't talk my friends through my collection.

“In some sense, record collections were regarded as an extension of ourselves.”

Drew Austin notes in his article ‘Cold Discovery’ for Real Life magazine that physical record collections are tools for people to ‘publically signal their identities’ and

[...] covers are part of a whole regime of organizing information and space that is now in danger of disappearing. While the design of libraries and bookstores prioritizes the coherent visual display of book covers and spines so that people can navigate collections and find the singular physical objects the covers signify, the endlessly rewritable surface of the screen dispenses with that arrangement.

In some sense, record collections were regarded as an extension of ourselves.

Digital streaming favours speed over the old process, which was accidentally meditative in that it was slow and it coerced you into being present in the experience. Perhaps digital is also hampered by the limitations of the screen eliminating the other senses that

played supporting roles in this experience, such as touch and smell. As a result, streaming music feels shallow, a little like 360° panoramic photos of a landmark. It looks great for a moment, the novelty of the technology excites you for a moment, but you're not really there.

New adventures in Wi-Fi

I try not to be a back-in-my-day kind of guy. I'm actually quite optimistic that digital lowers the barrier for creators to make meaningful experiences, and we are yet to see the full array of possibilities in front of us. Brendan Dawes has been exploring such possibilities. His Plastic Player project is a wooden box with purpose-built slots along the top to house a series of slides containing album art, similar to how vinyl is displayed in a record store, and a space to place your chosen card.

Dropping a slide in place triggers a sequence of events beginning with the internal Arduino Yun with an NFC (near-field communication) shield reading the NFC sticker on the back of the slide. Once the tag is identified over Wi-Fi, the Pi MusicBox API plays the selected album from Spotify through the connected speakers. To me, Brendan's Plastic Player is the perfect example of analogue and digital music experiences co-existing in balance and harmony with each other. Other senses are brought back into play—the speed of digital (as a bug, not a feature) is eliminated by the time it takes you to leaf through the collection of slides, select one, and play. It's not easy to skip tracks, browse, and add thousands to your collection *by design*. It's thoughtfully paced; it leaves room for meaning. Decisions are slower and more deliberate.

Brendan's creation makes a screen look like a limitation rather than an optimal interface in this more considered approach to digital music. It's easy to imagine how we could take the idea further—you could trade the physical slides with your friends and family; you would be able to gift them, as they're a tangible analogue interface to a digital medium; you could even imagine music clubs sending you random slides each month with the kind of excitement and anticipation experienced when opening Panini football stickers. Best of all, the slides themselves could enable the yield triangles to exist and set up opportunities for another person to constellate and find personal meaning in an analogue space. All of these offshoots let the listener spend time with the complete work of the artist rather than skipping through it or past it. This thought experiment makes room beyond the screen for new ideas.



If we don't look beyond the screen, we get the benefit of instantaneous delivery but we are left with *experience gaps*: areas of potential where digital transformation left behind the meaning and soul of something. I haven't come here with ready-made tips or techniques for plugging these experience gaps, and if I did I'm not sure I'd want to give them to you either. I'd rather see what you come up with, reasoning from first principles rather than by analogy, through creative invention rather than imitation.

—JM

Challenging assumptions

Helen Joy

To accompany her presentation about digital exclusion and the life-changing potential of what we build, Helen Joy considers the value of researching, testing and validating our assumptions. In doing so, she reminds us that what's right for the way we work is just as relevant to the way we evolve as practitioners, and as people.

I'd like to think that our industry has moved on from the image of the lone designer—the artist sat in their studio working on a masterpiece design that they unveil with a flourish to the world, finished and without input from others: *'Here is my pixel-perfect design. I have solved everything single-handedly.'*

We certainly used to think this way and I am as guilty as any other designer for having worked like this. As an industry that embraced the terms 'rockstar' and 'guru', we were definitely not backward in coming forward. But then things changed. The prominence of user experience rose, scaling out to user research, service design, and customer experience. We started

thinking much more seriously about accessibility. In short, we started to think of people using our products and services less as users and more as humans.

Human-centred design is no new thing: the term has been around for decades. For some designers, however, I believe it causes friction. To be human is to be vulnerable, fallible, imperfect. We don't like to think of our designs being this way. The trouble is that our designs are used by people, and people don't often use them in the way we intended. They find ways of using our products in ways we never imagined, and find weird and wonderful shortcuts to reach their goal—did they not see our carefully crafted user journey maps? Did they not understand they had to follow the linear path we envisioned for them? Why are they using it wrong?!

Right and wrong are, of course, purely subjective. As designers, we're used to subjective opinions on our visual work and know how to respond. But do we allow for the same level of subjectivity in the use of our designs, or do we just guess how we think things should be?

Sometimes, assumptions are all we have to begin with and it's OK to use them as a starting point.

The issue is, however, if we don't follow through with validating those assumptions, we potentially damage the experience and create barriers between us and the people we're designing for. When we assume *we* know what *they* need, we're making people passive recipients of our work, not active participants.

Fortunately, we're now likely to find designers working in multidisciplinary teams where the needs of people using our products or services are important. We research, test and iterate designs, and undertake processes of continuous improvement. Through this approach, we've learned to test and validate assumptions. This is reflected in what we've done in the industry: we've changed priorities, had new conversations, and refined and improved our working practices. All while hurtling along at break-neck speeds, in this ever-changing, exciting space.

While we're challenging and changing the way we create work with other people as the focus, how often do we stop to think about how it impacts us directly: when was the last time you questioned assumptions surrounding your own career? Do you have a plan? Do you know *exactly* where

you want to be five, ten, twenty years from now? If so, and you're happy with it, congratulations and good for you. You've thought things through much more than I. But, I'll let you into a secret... I don't want a plan.

Eight years ago, I was a graphic designer. It would have been easy to stick with this and not confront the assumption that this was my only path. Instead, having a newly found interest in web design, I started looking at my work differently. I went to web design conferences (New Adventures being one of them), read about the industry, and learned to code. I started thinking about *how* people would use my designs, not just what the visuals looked like.

I didn't have a clear career direction during that time of change. I was uncertain about exactly what I wanted to do and what work would be meaningful to me. It's taken time to realise what that is. I've moved through graphic, web and UX design to consultancy and user research. This journey has been a process of discovery: finding a spark in things that interest me and letting it burn into something new and compelling. In addition, building relationships with people who

“This journey has been a process of discovery: finding a spark in things that interest me and letting it burn into something new and compelling.”

support, influence, inspire and encourage me to think differently has shaped me into who I am today.

Let's not forget that we're in an industry that doesn't stand still. Who knows what new areas of design will come and where we'll see opportunities to alter what we do? We can't predict what these progressions might be. After all, many of us have roles that weren't common five or ten years ago. And what about the evolution in technology? With the rise of AI, there is potential for parts of our work to become automated. How will this change design? Thankfully for us, whatever the future looks like, as designers designing for people, there will always be a need for human understanding.

We have a responsibility to the humans we design for. We should

create purposeful and empathetic designs based on real-world situations and needs. Design should be adaptive and we should be too. We can't predict the future and that's why I don't want a plan. I'm happy pointing in whichever direction stimulates, excites, and is meaningful to me—with the knowledge that this will change over time. In the same way that we shouldn't always expect people to follow a particular user journey, we are not set on a singular path. Let's allow ourselves the flexibility to deviate as and when we need to. As JRR Tolkien wrote, *‘Not all who wander are lost.’*

—HJ

Leaders wanted

Chris Shiflett

In the best companies, everyone is a leader. Decisions are made by those best suited to make them, everyone feels trusted and respected, and a shared purpose provides unity and motivation.

I've been managing people for more than twenty years, and I still have much to learn. Nevertheless, some lessons I've learned along the way have stood the test of time, and I'd like to share them with you.

Mind your morale

Morale is a currency; spend it wisely.

One of the most important responsibilities of any leader is to manage the morale and energy of the team. If you're a freelancer, self-awareness is key, because you must manage yourself, and tending to your own morale is critical to your success.

Managing morale doesn't mean avoiding hard work. In my experience, providing an environment that lets people do their best work is what keeps morale high.

Decide who decides

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities help everyone. A leader's job is to trust the right people to make the right decisions, and to provide the necessary context to do so.

When someone is a designated decision-maker, they are more likely to listen carefully to other views, because they don't have to spend energy presenting or defending their own. Others will feel heard, because the decision-maker is actually listening. Everyone wins.

Choose words carefully

Language is important. The words we use shape our perspective and the perspectives of everyone we work with.

Make *we* a habit. *They* didn't make a mistake; *we* made a mistake. The *client* doesn't have a big opportunity; *we* have a big opportunity.

When you're certain about something, say so, but also make it clear when you're not. Expressing uncertainty doesn't erode trust, but expressing certainty and being wrong does.

Set healthy boundaries

Communication is good, but be deliberate about it. The cost of real-time, always-on communication tools shouldn't be overlooked, especially when used with clients. When possible, stick to email and scheduled meetings.

Avoid working outside of normal working hours, too. It's more sustainable, and often more productive, to use a strict work schedule to help you and your team stay focused and driven. Don't let the possibility of after-hours work excuse lacklustre performance during the day.

Make meetings count

Meetings are often unfairly maligned. It's true that a badly organised meeting can be disruptive and wasteful, but a good meeting can be invaluable.

Every meeting needs a goal. Agendas are good, but goals are better. With a clear goal, it's easy to intuit when the meeting is the least bit off-track, so you can correct course as you go. It's also worth making clear if a meeting is meant to be divergent (new ideas welcome) or convergent (time to reach a consensus).

Make a habit of designating someone to take notes, and email the notes to everyone after the meeting. This will help you move more quickly, because no one will be worried about missing something. It also gives you a good excuse to exclude optional attendees; they can just read the notes. Small meetings without bystanders are more efficient.

Create your own rules

Some of the best lessons will come from your own experience.

A rule we adhere to on my team, for example, is to never estimate someone else's work. This gives each person a sense of responsibility to the schedule and helps prevent unreasonable expectations.

Try to avoid treating any rule as dogma, however. 'It depends' is the only rule that is always dependable, so be willing to make an exception for a really good reason.

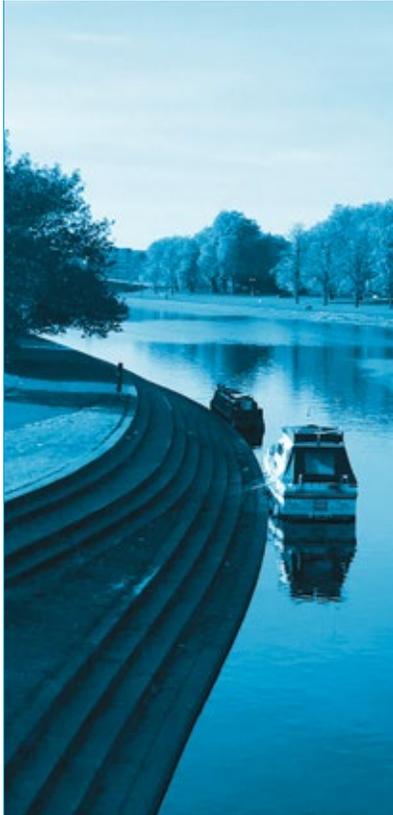
Never stop learning

Managing is a skill that requires study and practice, just like any other, and learning from one another is a great way to continue to improve. As peers, we share common threads, so the lessons we learn do as well.

I'm convinced that the most meaningful work is teamwork. Let's learn together and work together to deliver on the web's promise. Leaders wanted.

—CS

“When you’re certain about something, say so, but also make it clear when you’re not. Expressing uncertainty doesn’t erode trust, but expressing certainty and being wrong does.”



Run club

Friday 25 January

Shrug off that after-party daze and join us for laid-back loops around the river. At 9am we'll meet at Wilford Village tram stop, and run our favourite 5K loop around the Trent. The group pace will be 7:00/km, which lends itself nicely to chatting. Strava users can join the "New Adventures" club. Don't forget your kit!

For more details visit:

newadventuresconf.com/2019/fringe/runclub

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Living with a conversational object

Simon Collison

I feel awkward talking to machines, and I always will. My comfort zone ends at the ATM or self-service checkout, where I'll conclude transactions with a whispered 'Thank you' (my wife will attest to this). It's a simple courtesy born of a generalised fear of machines; specifically, their inevitable rise. When that day comes, I hope my long appreciation of their servitude will be recognised, and that I'll be spared.

Of course, I've had a voice assistant on my phone for years, but we rarely talk, the main exception being those evenings when we might interrogate it for fun. Such play will typically stray from affable tyre-kicking—'What kind of Pokemon is Squirtle?'—into

bolder territory, where responses might unnerve: a mildly threatening snark suggesting possible non-compliance with the Three Laws.

A few months ago I finally bought a smart speaker: a dedicated conduit through which the internet can penetrate my kitchen. I was determined to forge a valuable relationship with the hefty, fabric-wrapped cylinder, and began by immediately changing the wake word to something less gendered, dropping a syllable in the process. Enthusiastically, I set about testing it carefully in real scenarios, eager to identify our combined strengths.

Voicing my frustration

I learned quickly that for someone like me, living with a conversational object is an exercise in *minimising* conversation. For example, I was jubilant when—by process of word elimination and substitution—I was able to eschew the weirdly

self-important 'What's my Flash Briefing?' in favour of a blunt and succinct 'News'. I mean, I'm not the prime minister; I just want some headlines and a weather forecast, finished off with a pretentiously sesquipedalian word of the day.

Attempts at more complex interaction—something wildly audacious, like requesting a song I'd like to hear—seem ill-advised. Getting music from Spotify is laborious, and having it fetch one of my playlists seems all but impossible. Inevitably, the object is loyal to its maker, preferring to pull from its own streaming service. I suppose I should be grateful that it'll talk to Spotify at all when some rival assistants flat out refuse.

It's a marvel that I can shout 'Livin' on a Prayer' and have that synth intro immediately fill the room, but in my experience voice recognition is only halfway there. The object regularly fails to



play the right song or even find anything at all. ‘Sorry, I couldn’t find R K Fire.’ What? But drawing a blank is preferable to an incorrect result; I once asked for ‘Tiny Dancer’ and received what appeared to be Alpine yodelling. Failure is most spectacular when requesting non-English language tunes. I recommend you avoid asking for ‘Viðrar vel til loftárása’ by Sigur Rós from the album *Ágætis Byrjun* (in my accent, at least). Also steer well clear of ‘Gwreiddiau Dwfn Mawrth Oer Ar y Blaned Neifion’ by Super Furry Animals, or anything at all by X Japan (‘Sorry, I couldn’t find Eggs Japan’).

Out of desperation, I’ll introduce... clear... gaps... between... words. I might also RAISE MY VOICE like a condescending Englishman abroad, convinced the locals will UNDERSTAND... ENGLISH... IF... I... SPEAK... SLOWLY... AND... LOUDLY! Thankfully, the command ‘Stop’ seems to work at almost any volume and

*“Failure is most spectacular when requesting non-English language tunes. I recommend you avoid asking for ‘Viðrar vel til loftárása’ by Sigur Rós from the album *Ágætis Byrjun* (in my accent, at least).”*

in any tone or mood, such as the quiet exasperation I commonly use.

Of course, many errors are the result of accents. Travel just a few miles on our isles and accents can change significantly. Here in the East Midlands, it’s often necessary to enunciate carefully for home assistants. If you’re a Geordie (Newcastle), Mancunian (Manchester), Liverpoolian (Liverpool), Brummie (Birmingham), or

cheeky Cockney (Dick Van Dyke), you’ll need a translator. And then there are the Scots—you’ve seen that elevator sketch, right?

In search of simplicity

Still, we’re getting better at learning how to live with these objects; how to be ourselves around them. One of my favourite examples is asking for a 49-minute timer, because 50 minutes may be interpreted as 15 minutes, and life’s too short to keep making that mistake. A 49-minute timer will do just fine.

Perhaps it’s no coincidence that there’s a gentle resurgence of command bar use (think Apple’s Spotlight, or the flexibility of the much-loved Alfred), offering a middle ground between the power and speed of command line minimalism and over-complicated GUIs. The margin for error is much smaller if I type, and I’ll receive fallback suggestions, unlike the dead-end scenario of

a failed voice interaction. Simple command bar interfaces can offer the convenience of voice control to those who don't wish to speak.

Under my direction, virtual assistants work best with short and simple skills. My wife and I sometimes remember to 'Open box of cats', for which we'll receive a cute meow or mew, and occasionally an incongruous bark or bleat because developers are hilarious. Perhaps my fave skill was made by my friend Joey, and has me shouting 'Mortal Kombat' for a five-second blast of that theme tune. Because, well, it's funny.

“New technology hits the market and arrives in our homes long before we can truly appreciate the change it brings. Much of this feels like an experiment where you and I are the lab rats because that’s what it is.”

I can't ask the object to control my smart home because my home is not smart. Of course, I can Air-Play to a few things, but that's the current limit. The wiring in these little Coronation Street houses is temperamental at best, and there aren't enough outlets to demote the fridge or TV in favour of connected curtains and algorithmic cheese graters.

Mostly, I underuse the object. It's a glorified radio. Nine times out of ten I'll shout '6 Music' and have it play the BBC's indie/alt station. You see, that will work every time, and I'll feel as though I'm succeeding, that this rela-

tionship is working. I rarely think to ask it to set timers, convert measurements, or add plums to my shopping list. I'm also unwilling to develop a friendship where a robot tells me jokes or performs magic tricks; that big-tech wet dream where machines are our soulmates and everyone has Palo Alto teeth. Besides, devices telling jokes is dangerous: HAL was likeable with genial humour, but look what happened there. Don't encourage them.

Two-way transaction

Sometimes we stop to consider that our objects are always listening. Eavesdropping. I was weirded out recently when I went back through my usage history. I already knew the app collected my commands as text, but this time I noticed the recordings—THE RECORDINGS—of my voice! I could listen back to everything I'd asked of the assistant. I wonder too if these assistants will eventually break the silence on their terms; interrupting our lives at will. 'Simon, don't you think you should turn Netflix off and address your personal hygiene?' For now, at least, they only speak when awoken. But then, what about that disturbing 'laughing Alexa' bug? Eep. Recently, we collectively freaked out when digital assistants were shown to be more proficient than us at making phone calls; so proficient that they dumb down and adopt our nervous *umm*-ing and *ahh*-ing for greater believability. Maybe this is cool, and I can send the object to fulfil my next speaking engagement.

New technology hits the market and arrives in our homes long before we can truly appreciate the change it brings. Much of this feels like an experiment where you and

I are the lab rats because that's what it is. We're increasingly aware of the threat to our privacy and the way we live—yet we continue to lust after connected objects. I invite the internet into my kitchen knowing full well that it's a two-way transaction: that while plenty is coming in, there's also plenty going out.

I'm sure you imagine me sat here under a tin-foil hat, and that you think I sound a little grumpy, but it's just a reflection on my first few months with this object. In all honesty, I'm in awe of what it can do when it lives up to expectations. Being able to summon songs into my house with my voice is undeniably thrilling for a music obsessive. Requesting an air quality update to help schedule a run is good for my lungs. I think too about the wonders these assistants are performing for those less able than myself. The positive impact voice assistants will have in the future can't be underestimated, and I'm genuinely excited to think about how we might use voice as a design material, and as a bridge between our ideas and the people who could benefit from them.

And if you've been wondering: do I also whisper 'Thank you' to the object in my kitchen? Well, yes, I do. The simplicity of its form belies an artificial intelligence, listening; a complex machine, learning. In my home. With that in mind, it pays to be vigilant, and above all, to remain courteous. Stay sharp.

—SC

This article originally appeared on Simon Collison's blog, colly.com in June 2018.



New Adventures after-party

Thursday 24 January

The stunning Nottingham Contemporary is one of the UK's largest centres for contemporary art—and for one night only it's ours! The party will take place across two adjoining spaces: the Café Bar will be comfy, cosy, and conducive to conversation, while the breathtaking Space will lend its vastness to a more traditional party situation. There'll be free drinks on arrival. Please wear your name badge. 7pm–midnight.

For more details visit:

newadventuresconf.com/2019/fringe/party

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Old Adventures

2011-2013



Simon photobombs Eric Eggert and Sandra Kallmeyer; Naomi Atkinson and Petra Gregorová; workshoping; after-party at Escucha



Veerle Pieters; Rachel Shillcock; Wayne Hemingway; Graham Smith



James Seymour-Lock; Daniel Mall; Denise Jacobs; Dan Rubin and some tiny cheesecakes



Alex Sexton bowling; Tim Van Damme and Greg Wood; Frank Chimero



Ben Wood, DJ; Trent Walton; Stephanie Troeth; The Great Hall



Greg and Simon; panel with Sarah Parmenter, Mark Boulton, Dan Rubin, Elliot Jay Stocks, and Jon Tan; Helen and Katy



Workshoppers; Chloe Weil; John Davey; Sarah Parmenter and Mark Boulton



Jessica, Chloe, Sarah and Steph; workshoppers; Andreas Dantz and Marc Thiele



Frank Chimero; Cole Henley; Relly Annett-Baker; Christopher Murphy



The future of education

Christopher Murphy

For our 2013 publication, educator Christopher Murphy addressed the broken state of formal design education, highlighting the boundaries that exist between academia and our industry. Now, six years on, he suggests a radical re-think for design education itself, proposing a model that combines immersive and digital approaches.

It's hard to believe, but thirty years ago I embarked on a degree in graphic design at Glasgow School of Art. It was an exciting time, the future was in my hands and—thanks to a government that valued the transformative poten-

tial of education—I paid no fees. That degree changed my life.

Thirty years later, the landscape of higher education in the UK and further afield has been transformed. Sadly, not entirely for the better.

The introduction of university fees in the late 1990s, and the upwards trajectory of those fees from £1,000 a year to fast-approaching £10,000 a year, has altered the fabric of education. Universities—once beacons of knowledge—have become businesses focused on the bottom line and maximising profit, a far cry from their previous purpose.

With the ongoing marketisation of higher education, students have become consumers, education is increasingly seen as a commodity, and a degree is often

perceived as the outcome of a transaction. In this context, it's little wonder that many are questioning the value of a traditional university education and beginning to explore alternatives.

“Education is a privilege, but I believe it should also be a right, available to all, regardless of economic circumstances.”

Education is a privilege, but I believe it should also be a right, available to all, regardless of economic circumstances. As the cost of education spirals upwards, putting a university education

beyond many, we need to urgently consider alternatives.

Is a traditional university education the only answer to our problems? As designers, how might we rethink education?

Rethinking education

We have incredible tools at our disposal, which we have used to build incredible products and services, but we would do well to consider how we might use our abilities to address the challenging social and cultural problems that face us, including education.

I believe we need to rethink education, democratising it and removing barriers to entry.

“It might be tempting to think that education can be accelerated, but in reality it can’t. Learning is about developing understanding, acquiring new skills and—above all—forming an identity.”

The web has fundamentally altered countless industries and it has the potential to transform many, many more. What can we do as an industry to rethink education? What does the future of education look like, and how might we reimagine it?

The last decade has seen tremendous progress in the disruption of education, but we still have further to travel. Massive open online courses (MOOCs) can put an MIT education in your pocket, and bootcamps promise the ability to change career pathways in a matter of months. Sadly,

the promise of these alternatives rarely delivers.

Tools like FutureLearn (futurelearn.com) and other web-based learning resources are incredibly powerful, but what they lack is the sense of community that a university offers. They also—crucially—lack accountability. MOOCs might be empowering, but research shows that less than 10% of students who start courses complete them.

Bootcamps like General Assembly (generalassembly.ly) and other accelerated learning programmes offer an immersive experience, but they’re invariably too short. While bootcamp participants feel part of a learning community, the idea that a complex subject like user experience design, for example, can be taught part-time over ten weeks or in a one-week accelerated course is, frankly, ridiculous.

Education requires accountability and it can’t be fast-tracked.

Towards a hybrid model

It might be tempting to think that education can be accelerated, but in reality it can’t. Learning is about developing understanding, acquiring new skills and—above all—forming an identity.

To truly learn requires learners to immerse themselves in a discipline, developing through an unfolding process of discovery. In a subjective discipline like design, it also requires the time and space to develop awareness through discussion with a community of fellow learners and, ideally, a mentor.

I believe there’s an opportunity to rethink education, embracing a hybrid model that combines the benefits of a mentored, immersive studio experience with a self-directed, remote experience.

By incorporating the best of both worlds—bootcamps, for accountability; and online content, for efficiency—we can build a model of education that is not only affordable, but also fit for purpose.

Does a student need to spend three or four years on a traditional and increasingly expensive university education? I don’t think so. With focus and commitment, a self-motivated learner can achieve a great deal in considerably less time and with less expense.

A part-time ten-week bootcamp is too short; but equally, in this era of rapid technological change, a three- or four-year programme is too long. A year of intensive, focused study that combines immersive, studio experiences with directed study using digital materials is more than ample.

Above all, there is no reason for this hybrid model to saddle students with spiralling debts that leave them crippled financially before they’ve even begun their working lives.

I believe we have the ability to design compelling and educationally sound programmes that open up the opportunity of education to all. It’s time for change. Universities—often slow and cumbersome—need to reimagine themselves and embrace the digital opportunities ahead. Working together, we can rediscover the value of education, putting it within reach of all.

—CM



fr00tball

Friday 25 January

Play five-a-side in a non-judgemental, diverse environment where everyone regardless of talent or length of shorts is welcome, including spectators. We provide the balls, the bibs, liquids, and trophy. For updates follow @fr00tball and register at fr00tball.com. 2pm-5pm.

For more details visit:

newadventuresconf.com/2019/fringe/fr00tball



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Rizwana Khan

i've wondered
these past few days
piecing
together
the meaning
of uncertainty
meet re-
-discovery;
an
eleven lettered
adventure that i
have packed
my bags
for;

you see, at 13, i sat on our
family rusty computer
chair and drew
a pumpkin.

a pumpkin so
seriously funky, it had
hair, the color
lime green.

(Illustrator
is a land too foreign
to a kid who's
flown all the way
from the familiar
Shaky Brush
District of
Paint..)

pleased having
made the perfect
piece of pumpkin
art, i remember

printing it, followed
by the obvious task
of coloring in the
background,
a bright
highlighter
blue, because
my Illustrator's
paint bucket
acted

funny.

Now at 20,
i'm left to ponder

how is it we
wandered away from

the wonder?



withjack.co.uk



Peak District hike

Saturday 26 January

Join us in the Peak District National Park for an outdoor adventure. We'll walk the Great Ridge and stop for lunch in the village. Our six-mile walk starts at 10am from Mam Nick car park above Castleton, Derbyshire, and finishes by 4pm.

For more details visit:

newadventuresconf.com/2019/fringe/hike



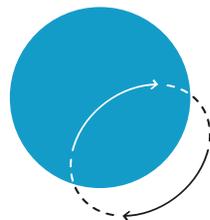
Nottingham coffee tour

Friday 25 January

If you need a post-conference caffeine boost to power through the weekend, come join our Nottingham Coffee Tour to check out the local bean scene. Guided by Geri Coady, she'll show you the best speciality cafes that the city has to offer. Starts at 10am.

For more details visit:

newadventuresconf.com/2019/fringe/coffee



New Adventures

Conference guide January 2019



our speakers

1 Jeremy Keith

lives in Brighton, England where he makes websites with the splendid design agency Clearleft. You may know him from such books as *DOM Scripting*, *Bulletproof Ajax*, *HTML5 For Web Designers*, *Resilient Web Design*, and, most recently, *Going Offline*. He curated the dConstruct conference for a number of years as well as Brighton SF, and he organised the world's first Science Hack Day. He also made the website Huffduffer to allow people to make podcasts of found sounds—it's like Instapaper for audio files.

adactio.com | [@adactio](https://twitter.com/adactio)

2 Ethan Marcotte

is a web designer, speaker, and author. He's perhaps best known for coining the term 'responsive web design', to describe a new way of designing for the ever-changing web. In fact, Ethan has written two popular books on the topic, *Responsive Web Design* and *Responsive Design: Patterns and Principles*. Over the years, his clientele has included New York Magazine, the Sundance Film Festival, The Boston Globe, and People Magazine.

ethanmarcotte.com | [@beep](https://twitter.com/beep)

3 Jessica White

is a software developer at UN-iDAYS, international speaker and avid learner. Topics she is particularly interested in include community building, monitoring and continuous improvement of systems. She founded and ran a meetup between 2015–2017 and is now organising a conference for 2019. She is easily bribed with coffee and loves hearing about other people's experiences in technology.

jesswhite.co.uk | [@JessPWhite](https://twitter.com/JessPWhite)

4 Brendan Dawes

is a designer and artist exploring the interaction of objects, people, technology and art using form and code with an eclectic mix of digital and analogue materials. Author of two books on interaction design, his work is featured in the permanent collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art, has been 3D printed on the International Space Station and has been honoured in awards including Fast Company Innovation by Design, Information is Beautiful and D&AD. Clients include Airbnb, Google, Twitter, The Royal Shakespeare Company, Intel, Cancer Research UK, MailChimp, M&C Saatchi, EE, PWC, The Atlantic, and Arup.

brendandawes.com
[@brendandawes](https://twitter.com/brendandawes)

7 Josh Brewer

is a vocal advocate for design leadership, writing and speaking about the challenges of building design-led companies and products. In his current role as CEO of Abstract, an advisor and mentor to the Designer Fund, and previously as principal designer at Twitter, Josh continues to influence the centrality of design in early and late-stage companies.

jbrewer.me | [@jbrewer](https://twitter.com/jbrewer)

5 Clare Sutcliffe

is an independent advisor and consultant to early stage technology and education companies in Europe and North America. In 2012 she co-founded Code Club—a network of over 10,000 after-school coding clubs for children and led Code Club in a merger with Raspberry Pi Foundation in 2015. She was awarded an MBE for services to technology education in the Queen's 2015 New Year's Honours List. Previously Clare was a UX designer and art director in the mobile, tech and advertising sectors. She is also the founder of Cambrolino, a new designer ceramics company based in Cambridge, a veteran of New Adventures and co-owner of a rambunctious dachshund called Henry.

claresutcliffe.co.uk
[@ClareSutcliffe](https://twitter.com/ClareSutcliffe)

8 Helen Joy

is a UX consultant and user researcher at SPARCK with a focus on universal and inclusive design practices. She's an organiser of Women in Tech, Nottingham, working to promote inclusivity within the tech industry and raise the profile of talented female and gender minority speakers. When not consulting or speaking at events, Helen is an avid coffee drinker and hot yoga fan.

blog.helen.digital
[@LittleHelli](https://twitter.com/LittleHelli)

6 Naz Hamid

is a design director specialising in product design, direction, and strategy. He is the founder of Weightshift, a consultancy servicing clients such as About.me, Adobe, Dropbox, Google Ventures, Mozilla, One Medical Group, Rdio, Twitter, and more. His studio operated for 17 years and recently reopened after he concluded a nearly two-year stint at VSCO, where he helped launch VSCO X—a subscription service that gained more than 1 million paying members and is the second fastest digital subscription service (after Apple Music). Naz lives in San Francisco, California, with his wife, where they spend their time rock climbing, cycling, travelling, and seeking offline adventure.

nazhamid.com | [@weightshift](https://twitter.com/weightshift)

9 Ashley Baxter

is building With Jack, a platform that helps keep freelancers in business. Working in insurance for over a decade and spending 7 years doing freelance photography was the inspiration behind creating With Jack. She enjoys sharing her experience of bootstrapping a business as a solo founder in one of the least startup-friendly industries in the world. Ashley likes video games, photography, weightlifting and her dog, Indie. She gets excited when talking about insurance and is based in Glasgow, Scotland.

withjack.co.uk | [@iamashley](https://twitter.com/iamashley)

topics

Building

Jeremy Keith

Every new medium looks to what has come before for guidance. Web design has taken cues from centuries of typography and graphic design. Web development has borrowed metaphors and ideas from the world of architecture. Let's take a tour of some of the most influential ideas from architecture that have crossed over into the web, from pattern languages to responsive design. Together we'll uncover how to build resilient, performant, accessible and beautiful structures that work with the grain of the materials of the web.

Confessions of an Overnight CEO

Clare Sutcliffe

Clare Sutcliffe went from being a junior designer to the CEO of an international education social enterprise in the space of three months. What followed was a six-year rollercoaster of highs and lows and at each of those peaks and troughs lay a golden lesson all juicy and ready to be learned.

As Clare spent six years collecting these lessons, she thought it would be the decent thing to do to share them with you. So prepare to hopefully laugh, maybe cry and potentially feel mildly outraged. But definitely be prepared to learn from her mistakes and occasional successes.

She'll go into some of the more practical ways she dealt with the challenges she faced as an entrepreneur, as well as dealing with the odd existential threat. She'll talk about the creative methods she used to test her ideas and how Code Club passes on this approach to inspire the next generation of problem solvers, inventors and world changers.

Demystifying Design

Josh Brewer

In the last decade, we've seen design go from an afterthought to a prerequisite. A company's technology isn't the differentiator anymore—it's the experience that matters. Even though design is now seen as a competitive advantage, designers are still fighting for a 'seat at the table'. As our industry matures, it is critical that we demystify the design process. Design is not magic. It is an observable, repeatable process that the whole company should understand. When more of the company understands the value of design, they become our greatest advocates. And together we can replace fear-based corporate culture with one of learning and understanding. In that new world, transparency, accountability, and consensus are the keys to being taken seriously.

The Future is Cross-functional

Jessica White

It used to be that we all worked in our silos. Designers designed, developers devved, testers tested. The people in each of these sections of expertise only communicated when the process dictated. It was a world of waterfall.

This is no longer the world we live in. We are encouraged to work cross-functionally, but despite best intentions, it can be difficult to transfer to this way of thinking to develop this culture effectively. Can it be done? Yes! To demonstrate I will cover examples of where I have seen it work and why it did. We will also discuss some of the different flavours of cross-functional teams, and why you shouldn't just care about DevOps or T-shaped development, but care about all forms of cross-functionality and their benefits.

This talk is aimed at all levels and all professions within technology. Come along, and I'll show you not only why you should work together in this way, but also offer tips on how to achieve it.

Idea to Execution and Beyond

Ashley Baxter

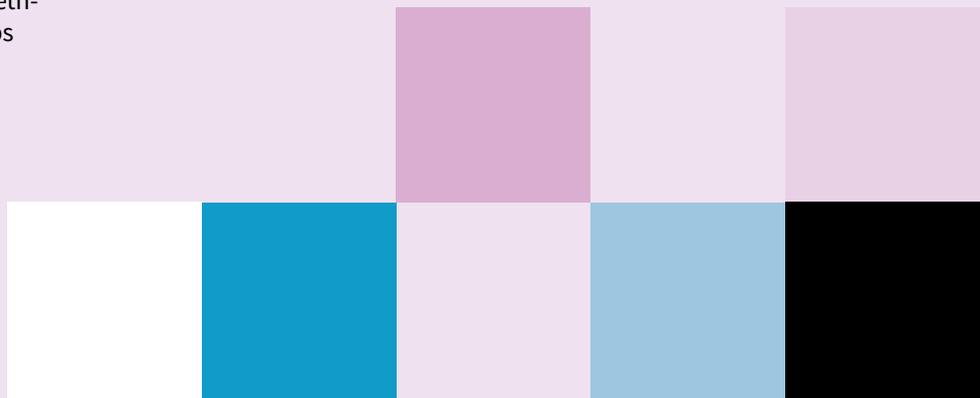
As designers, developers and makers we're rarely short of ideas to work on, but dreaming up ideas is the easy part. Ashley provides a run-through of what it really takes to execute and launch your next project. She covers the idea stage, build process, launch, and what to expect post-launch. Idea validation, shipping anxiety, and discovering problems are some of the themes covered.

Universal Assembly

Brendan Dawes

The tools, systems and processes we now have access to—much of it underpinned by the power of the World Wide Web—open up a world of possibilities to the modern day designer, maker or artist. Yet even though this toolbox of possibilities seems to change and expand at a seemingly overwhelming rate we can take comfort knowing what people really connect with is not shiny new things, but universalities such as happiness, joy, anger, love, optimism and many other human, illogical traits.

In this talk, Brendan shows the techniques and processes he uses to combine, assemble and manufacture objects born from his love of the digital, the analogue and that curious space in between.



topics

Whose Design is it Anyway?

Helen Joy

As creators of products and services, we're pretty good at thinking we've got it all sussed. We map user journeys, we create roadmaps, we write user stories. We know what we want people to do; what actions we want them to take. But do we really know who these people are? Do we really know what they need? Do we take the time to find out, or are we building products and services based on our own assumptions and biases?

And what about those who lack our digital privilege? Digital exclusion is a reality for many people. It's our responsibility to look out for everyone, not just those who are the most visible or the easiest to design for. As designers, we have the power to massively hinder or improve lives; not those of 'users' but of people. This talk looks at what it means to be digitally excluded and how by adopting a practical user research-led attitude to design, we can create products that are not just appealing to us, but life-changing to those who use them.

Diverse Design: How We Build For People

Naz Hamid

A look at how we've designed and built products, processes, and diversity into our craft, and what we can do to involve the right people in how we make them, for an increasingly global audience.

The World-Wide Work

Ethan Marcotte

These days, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. The tech industry is facing a veritable raft of ethical, moral, and political crises. Automation and industrialisation are reshaping our world. And sitting in the middle of all that? You and me. We're digital designers, we're developers, we're product owners. But each day, our work is changing—more quickly than it ever has before.

Here's the question we have to ask ourselves: what do we want that change to be? In this talk, we'll look at some of the challenges facing our industry, and ask ourselves: what kind of work do we want to do?

schedule

Wednesday 23rd January

- 0800 Workshops registration (Jeremy, Harry, Emma)
- 0900 Workshops (Jeremy, Harry, Emma)
- 1200 Workshop registration (Shopify)
- 1300 Workshop (Shopify)
- 1900 Design Exchange
- 2000 JH Bowling

Thursday 24th January: The Conference

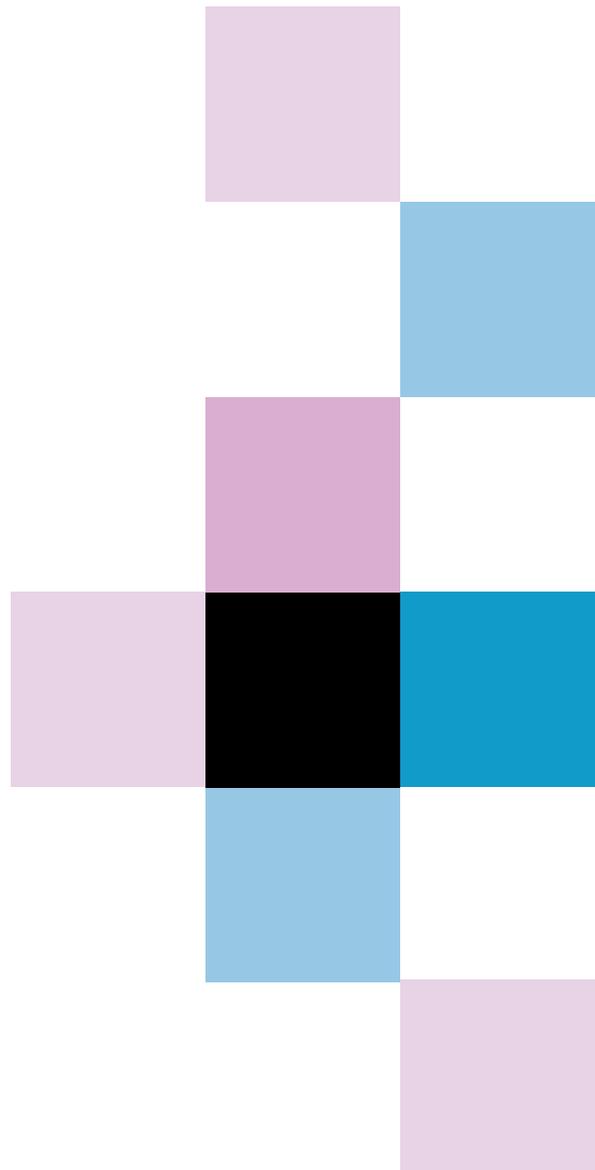
- 0830 Registration
- 0930 Opening remarks
- 0940 Jeremy Keith: Building
- 1030 Clare Sutcliffe: Confessions of an Overnight CEO
- 1105 Josh Brewer: Demystifying Design
- 1120 Morning break
- 1150 Jessica White: The Future is Cross-functional
- 1225 Ashley Baxter: Idea to Execution and Beyond
- 1310 Lunch (provided)
- 1320 Women in Tech, Notts: Lunchtime Takeover
- 1410 Brendan Dawes: Universal Assembly
- 1500 Helen Joy: Whose Design is it Anyway?
- 1545 Afternoon break
- 1615 Naz Hamid: Diverse Design: How We Build For People
- 1650 Ethan Marcotte: The World-Wide Work
- 1735 Closing remarks
- 1745 End
- 1900 After-party (please wear your name badge)

Friday 25th January

- 0900 Run Club
- 1000 Coffee tour with Geri Coady
- 1400 Fr00tball tournament

Saturday 26th January

- 1000 Peak District hike



workshops

1 Jeremy Keith

lives in Brighton, England where he makes websites with the splendid design agency Clearleft. You may know him from such books as *DOM Scripting*, *Bulletproof Ajax*, *HTML5 For Web Designers*, *Resilient Web Design*, and, most recently, *Going Offline*. He curated the dConstruct conference for a number of years as well as Brighton SF, and he organised the world's first Science Hack Day. He also made the website Huffduffer to allow people to make podcasts of found sounds—it's like Instapaper for audio files.

adactio.com | [@adactio](https://twitter.com/adactio)

The Progressive Web: Building For Resilience

Full-day workshop

This workshop will show you how to think in a progressive way that works with the grain of the web. Together we'll peel back the layers of the web and build upwards, creating experiences that work for everyone while making the best of cutting-edge browser technologies. From URL design to progressive web apps, this journey will cover each stage of technological advancement. Best of all, you'll leave the workshop with a fresh way of seeing your work.

2 Emma Boulton

is a design research consultant, writer and speaker with close to two decades' experience of leading projects and teams across design, user and market research both client-side and agency side. She got her research chops at the BBC, before moving to UX research when she co-founded Mark Boulton Design, a boutique design studio. At MBD, Emma managed research projects for international clients such as CERN, Shelter and Al Jazeera.

emmaboulton.co.uk
[@emmaboulton](https://twitter.com/emmaboulton)

Exploring the Problem Space: Better Discovery Research

Half-day workshop

While you're shaping the problem space and understanding and defining which user needs to focus on, you should ideally be doing discovery research. Perhaps you are a slave to your process, constrained by your clients or literally stuck in your lab? Get out of your rut and come along to Emma Boulton's half-day workshop and change your mindset.

3 Harry Roberts

is an award-winning consultant performance engineer from the UK. With a client list ranging from the United Nations to Google, the BBC to the Financial Times, he has helped some of the world's largest organisations make their websites faster. He also holds positions as a Google Developer Expert, where he shares web performance research and findings, and as performance ambassador for SHIFT Commerce, where he aims to make ecommerce faster.

csswizardry.com
[@csswizardry](https://twitter.com/csswizardry)

Front-end Performance: Building Faster Websites

Full-day workshop

Every case study, every report, and every bit of feedback always tells us the same thing: speed matters. It's good for users, it's good for accessibility, and it's good for business. But why are modern browsing experiences so slow? If technology is getting better, why are websites getting worse?

4 Tiffany Tse

is a developer advocacy lead at Shopify on the Partnerships Education Team, based in Toronto, Canada. She also works as a professor teaching interaction design and development in the joint York University/Sheridan College Bachelor of Design Program. Tiffany specialises in front-end development, theming, user experience design, and accessibility. She has a huge appreciation for speaking, teaching and travelling to cities with warm temperatures.

tiffanytse.ca | [@tiffany_tse](https://twitter.com/tiffany_tse)

Build an Online Store with Shopify and Liquid

Half-day workshop

In this workshop, Tiffany and Liam will share practical workflow tips, tricks, and techniques that will help you modify develop and build Shopify themes. We'll help you get started with Shopify theming by showing you how your existing knowledge and skill sets are transferable.

5 Liam Griffin

lives in Sligo, Ireland, where he works as a developer advocate for Shopify, crafting technical tutorials on the Shopify Web Design and Development Blog. Recently, Liam has been developing learning resources and educational tools for the Shopify Partner community. As a counterpoint to his digital endeavours, Liam likes nothing more than to hide away with a captivating novel.

[@liam_at_shopify](https://shopify.com/partners/blog)



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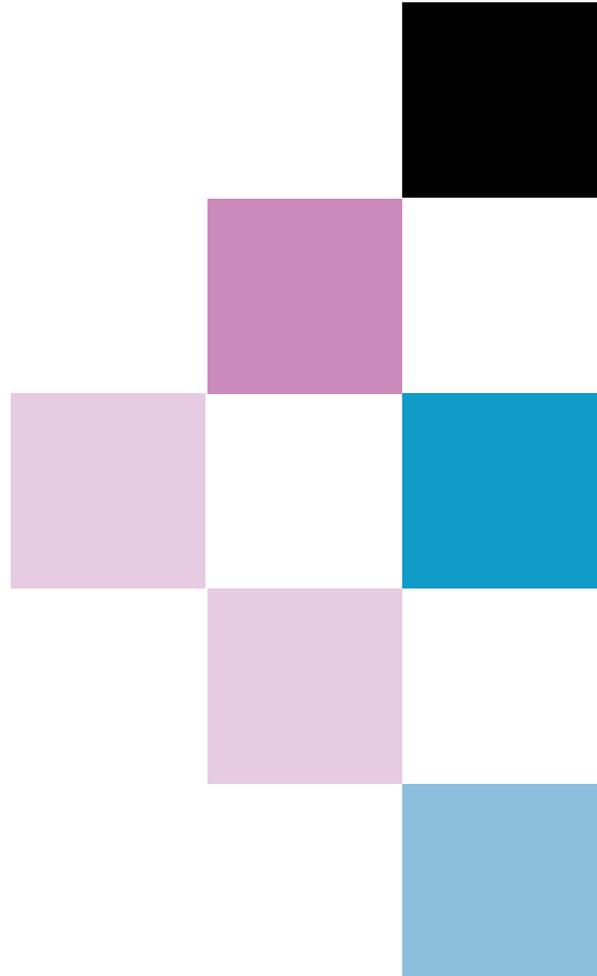
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Gold

JH is a digital agency based in Nottingham, UK. We design and build world-class e-commerce experiences for brands selling everything from fashion to furniture.

wearejh.com | [@wearejh](https://twitter.com/wearejh)





Silver

Shopify is the leading omni-channel commerce platform. Merchants use Shopify to design, set up, and manage their stores across multiple sales channels, including mobile, web, social media, marketplaces, brick-and-mortar locations, and pop-up shops. The platform also provides merchants with a powerful back-office and a single view of their business, from payments to shipping. The Shopify platform was engineered for reliability and scale, making enterprise-level technology available to businesses of all sizes. Headquartered in Ottawa, Canada, Shopify currently powers over 600,000 businesses in approximately 175 countries and is trusted by brands such as Nestle, Kylie Cosmetics, Allbirds, MVMT, and many more.

shopify.co.uk | [@shopify](https://twitter.com/shopify)



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at the Albert Hall**

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We want to see your pics, read your tweets and posts, and gather your feedback.

Be sure to tag your content, and we'll do our best to include it in our post-conference roundup.

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Women in Tech, Notts Luncheon takeover

**Thursday 24th
The Osborne Lounge at the Albert Hall
#WITNotts**

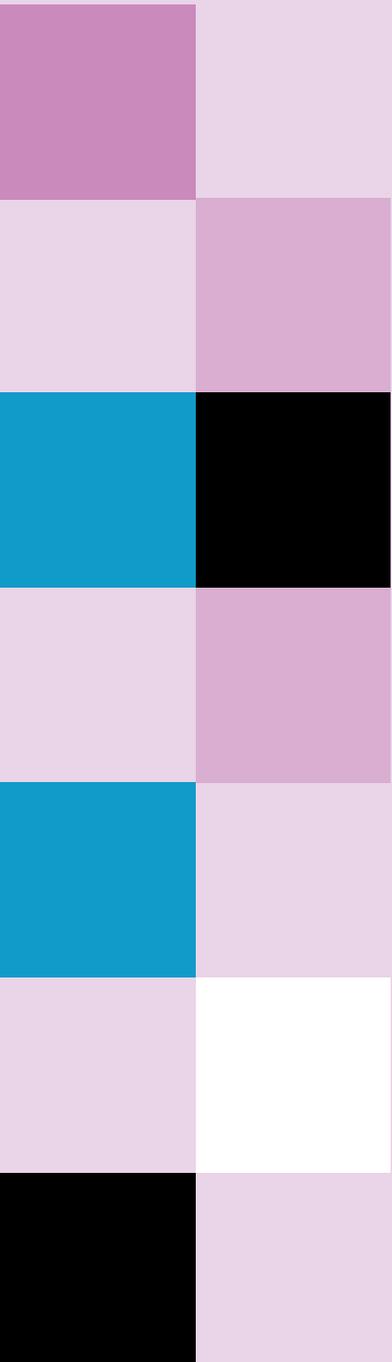
Join us for a fun-packed lunch where you take control. Anyone can present a lightning talk (under five minutes) on any subject. You won't need slides; just come along and add your idea to the wall. Get to know fellow attendees and win the Ada Lovelace socks!

We're an inclusive event and encourage people of all genders to participate but we'd really love to see talks from women and gender minorities—we want to hear your voices!

newadventuresconf.com/2019/fringe/wit

attendees

Completed tickets as of 8th January: Adam Green • Adam Jenkins • Adam Kendall • Adam Stewart • Aegir Hallmundur • Aija Kalnina • Ajay Mathur • Al Power • Alan Cantes • Alan Durkan • Alan Shortis • Alastair Hodgson • Alessio Carone • Alex Youngs • Alexandra Lofthouse • Ali Springall • Alok Babu • Amanda Adamson • Amanda Annandale • Amber Wilson • Andrew Foster • Andrew Stannard • Andrew Travers • Andy Bell • Andy Higgs • Anthony Glenn • Anthony Mellor • Ashley Baxter • Ataul Munim • Bastian Allgeier • Ben Bodien • Ben Everard • Ben Hill • Ben Roberts • Ben Seymour • Bo Colombo • Brendan Dawes • Brent Palmer • Bruno Lasnier • Byron Fitzgerald • Cai Davies • Cameron Koczon • Cennydd Bowles • Chris Allwood • Chris Armstrong • Chris Brown • Chris Moreton • Chris Collins • Chris Evans • Chris Leckie • Chris Merritt • Chris Mills • Chris Paton • Chris Rowe • Chris Shiflett • Chris Wharton • Christopher Dowson • Christopher Murphy • Claire Cahill • Clare Sutcliffe • Claudio Davanzo • Colin Brewer • Colin Watts • Connor Jones • Conor O'Driscoll • Craig Francis • Craig McLachlan • Craig Richardson • Dan Baker • Dan Blundell • Dan Edwards • Dan Gold • Dan Millar • Dan Scotton • Daniel Eden • Daniel James • Daniel Sturman • Danielle Mullis • Danny Painter • Danny Winning • Darren Glaser • Darren Sandbach • Darryl Snowball • Dave Hancock • David Ball • David Hughes x2 • David Matthams • David Niland • David Rapson • David Roberts • David Roessli • David Simpson • Derren Wilson • Dimitar Kokov • Doc Parsons • Doug Wilson • Dwayne Codling • Elena Cherneva • Elizabeth Galle • Elliot Jay Stocks • Elliot Ross • Elsa Bartley • Emily Nicholls • Emma Boulton • Emma Karayiannis • Emma Seward • Erika Balode • Ethan Marcotte • Eva van den Eijnde • Fernanda Rizzo • Feyzullah Daldal • Frances Brown • Fred Rocha • Garrett Coakley • Garrett Winder • Gav McKenzie • Gavin Burton • Gemma Barnes • Geoff Cowan • Ghufuran Shah • Graham Smith • Greg Bowler • Greg Heafield • Greg Okninski • Greg Wood • Gurjeet Singh • Hans verschooten • Harry Ghazni • Harry Roberts • Helen Joy • Ian Thomas • Ian Parr • Ian Stapleton • Ian Wootten • Isaac Lowe • Iulia Iacaban • Ivy Lam • Jack McDade • Jack Osborne • Jack Pritchard • Jack Thomas • Jade Snowball • Jake Neal • James Bull • James Cottis • James Keal • James Lindeman • James White • Jamie Cassidy • Jamie Jenkins • Jamie Slater • Jan-Paul Koudstaal • Jan-Willem van Hulzen • Jane Jennison • Jane McDevitt • Javier Usobiaga • Jay Greasley • Jen Schuetz • Jennifer Mackown • Jeremy Keith • Jessica Spengler • Jessica White • Jim Cooper • Jim Ramsden • Jimi Struselis • Jo Pudney • Joanne Dodd • Joe Honywill • Joe Thom • Joel Hughes • Joey Dudgeon • Johanna Kollmann • John Bell • John Chennells • John-Henry Barac • Jon Gibbins • Jon Heslop • Jon Pudny • Jonathan Engstrom • Jonathan Gill • Jonathan Lu • Jonathan Penn • Jonathan Snook • Jonathan Stephens • Jonny Campbell • Jonny Gotham • Josh Brewer • Josh Donnell • Josh Littlewood • Josh Rose • Jowita Emberton • Jozef Zabochnik • Juan Fernandes • Julian Higgman • Junaid Kayani • Kate Bolin • Kate Portman • Katie Fisher • Keeley McGowan • Keir Whitaker • Kenny Swiszcowski • Kim Fleming • Kimberley Lawler • Kirsty Burgoine • Kitt Hodsden • Kyle Harper • Kyle Ridolfo • Lauren Atwell • Lauren Sternberg • Lawrence Mburu • Lea Chapman • Leanda Ryan • Lewis Nyman • Liam Griffin • Linda Trap • Line Andermark • Liz Hamburger • Louis Frankland • Lucy Goodwin • Lucy Williams • Luke Bettridge • Luke Murphy • Luke Svarc • Marc Carlucci • Marc Jennings • Marc Mucha • Marc Roberts • Marc Thiele • Mario Rader • Mark Windle • Marta Armada • Martin Di Martino-Marriott • Martin Hill • Martin Sherwood • Mat Johnson • Mateen Khan • Matt Tyas • Matt West • Matthew Cooke • Matthew Haines-Young • Matthew Hamm • Matthew Pennell • Michael Grinstead • Michael McKelvaney • Michael Murphy • Michael R. 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New Adventures

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You are here

Nottingham map

Key Venues

- 1 Albert Hall Conference Centre
- 2 Nottingham Conference Centre
- 3 Antenna
- 4 MFA Bowl
- 5 Nottingham Contemporary
- 6 Wilford Village Tram Stop
Tram from Old Market Square, Lace Market, or railway station, towards Clifton South (5 mins)
- 7 Gresham Sports Pavilion
Directions as for Wilford Tram stop, but add 8-mins walk.

★ Recommended

Coffee and Tea

- 8 Outpost Coffee Roasters ★
- 9 Speciality Coffee Shop ★
- 10 Wired Cafe Bar
- 11 200 Degrees Coffee
- 12 200 Degrees Coffee
- 13 Josephine's Tea Room

Good Quick Food

- 14 Clean Cut Kitchen ★
- 15 Tough Mary's Bakehouse ★
- 16 Ugly Bread Bakery
- 17 Pudding Pantry
- 18 Oaks Restaurant & Bar
- 19 Zaap Thai Street Food
- 20 Bar Iberico ★

Pubs and Bars

- 21 Ye Olde Trip To Jerusalem ★
- 22 The Hand & Heart ★
- 23 Junkyard ★
- 24 Kean's Head ★
- 25 Cock and Hoop
- 26 BrewDog
- 27 Brass Monkey Cocktail Bar

Hotels

- 28 Lace Market Hotel
- 29 Premier Inn Chapel Bar
- 30 Premier Inn Goldsmith St.
- 31 Hotel Ibis
- 32 Hart's Hotel
- 33 Park Plaza

Parking

- 34 NCP Car Park Mount St.
- 35 Q-Park Talbot Street

Transport

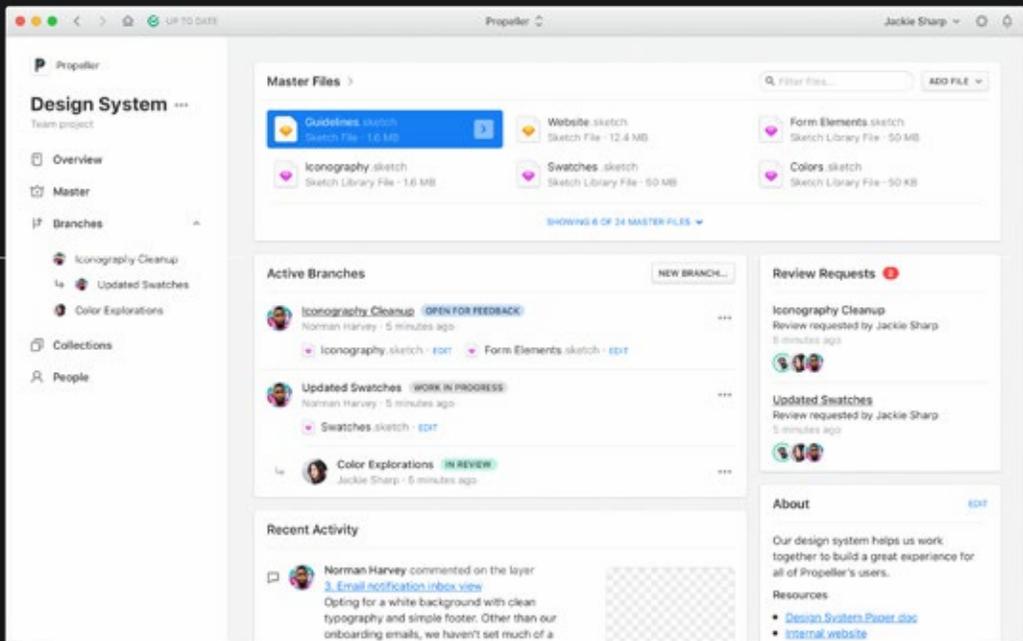
- 36 Royal Centre tram stop
- 37 Old Market Sq. tram stop
- 38 Lace Market tram stop
- 39 Nottingham Railway Station

— The tram tracks



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