



DEB VERHOEVEN AT THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES 2015 CONFERENCE

How many of you have already seen a COCKATOO? How about a KOALA? A KANGAROO? Has anyone seen a funnel web SPIDER? Has anyone met an Australian who actually says G'DAY? Now for that

Now I appreciate that you may not be able to understand what I'm saying because I haven't got a mansplainer on stage with me... So I'm going to slow it right down...and be very, very clear. Don't take this personally this is about a systemic problem.

SYSTEMIC & PERVASIVE

This is not about issuing another policy advisory for "inclusion". This is not about developing a new checklist to mitigate your biases. And its definitely not about inviting a token female speaker to join you all on the stage - this needs to be about your plans to **EXIT** the stage. This is not about learning how to do it better next time - this is about... **YOU LEAVING BEFORE THERE IS A NEXT TIME.**

This is not about approximating equity where 20% or 30% or 40% or even 50% is good enough. This is about letting everyone else in by letting go of your privileged positions. The problem is not how many of us there aren't

RAREST AND MOST ELUSIVE OF CREATURES....

How many of you have seen A WOMAN on the main stage of this global DH conference? Or pretty much anyone who isn't a standard issue bloke? So let's talk about what happened yesterday with the



Imagine for a moment what it's like for the rest of us attending a DH conference. When was the last time the conference air conditioning didn't feel right to you? When was the last time you had to queue to use the bathroom? When was the last time you thought twice about what to wear on stage so you could use a lapel mike? Why

are they even called lapel mikes?



PARADE OF PATRIARCHS

SERIOUSLY! WHAT IS GOING ON IN THIS FIELD...??!!

I took the theme of this year's conference Global DH to be a celebration of diversity not the universalization of one perspective.

SO BLOKES - I'M JUST GOING TO TALK TO YOU FOR A MOMENT...



When was the last time you saw seven consecutive women get up at a DH conference and speak about anything other than gender? You've made a world designed around ensuring your own personal comfort. But it's not comfortable for so many, many others.

WHAT TO DO?

For a start can we turn the aircon down.... Systemically, seriously - **I'M CALLING IT** - it's time for you guys to sweat.

WE ARE NOT THE PROBLEM YOU ARE

The problem is how many of you occupy the positions that get to speak. And let's face it - 50% representation for women going forward is not even close to equity!

Given the number of years women have existed and continue to exist as a shocking minority in this field - the closest we can get to equity would be for men to leave the stage proportionally for an equivalent number of years.

I WANT 80% WOMEN, 20% BLOKES

for the next thirty years and only then can we say the scales have been righted. But in reality I'm not even agitated by my own definition of equity. The last thirty years have been pretty horrible for so many of us and I'm not an especially vindictive person. I wouldn't impose the last thirty years on anyone else. **SO BLOKES, PLEASE, PLEASE JUST STOP IMPOSING IT ON US NOW.**

PRACTICAL TIPS TO LEAVE DH IN A BETTER PLACE THAN YOU FOUND IT:

1. Get quantitative and number your days. Preferably publicly.
2. Find someone who doesn't look and sound like you and mentor them, encourage them and invite them into your role.
3. Have a clear, purposeful succession plan and enact it.
4. And above all - **BE MORE THAN BINARY** - do this because you embrace diversity in all its complexity. Not because you have checklists or policies. But because you recognise that the real story of DH is more heterogenous and complex and vibrant than you have allowed it to be to date.



OK - WAS THAT CLEAR ENOUGH? 😊