

Data, Tech, & Black Communities

March 2021

AGENDA

- What we did (in brief)
- Project findings
- Discussion
- Next steps
- Conversations
- Close & Thank you!

DATA, TECH & BLACK COMMUNITIES: WHAT WE DID

1. We conducted n=17 semi structured interviews and many calls/e-mails with individuals (n=182) and representatives of organisations working in the four areas we focused on & digital/human rights.
2. We've started compiling relevant resources using the bookmark manager, [Raindrop](#).

DATA, TECH & BLACK COMMUNITIES: WHAT WE DID

3. We held four roundtables: health, education, employment & enterprise and crime & justice n=30.

4. We learned a lot from those roundtables and we're going to share those insights today.

WE KNOW THE SYSTEM: WE HAVE SOME DATA!

The statistics and case studies we discussed often reflected the disproportionately negative outcomes experienced by Black people in the UK in areas such as:

- mental health;
- interactions with the police (e.g. stop and search);
- educational experiences (e.g. school exclusion);
- employment opportunities (e.g. low employment rates).

WE KNOW THE SYSTEM: WE DON'T HAVE THE DATA!

All four roundtable discussions:

- quickly yielded ideas about missing or inaccessible datasets e.g. data related to the gig economy
- highlighted issues around the politics of data collection and curation as well as who has access to it.

Is data that's about us, also for us?

DATA IS NOT ENOUGH!

Lammy Recommendation 4:

...**‘explain or reform’**
should apply to every
CJS institution.



ALJAZEERA

News

Coronavirus

Features

Economy

Opinion

Video

Europe's racism problem

Structural racism can be combatted only if there is political will, not more data.



Nani Jansen Reventlow

Nani Jansen Reventlow is the founding Director of the Digital Freedom Fund (DFF).



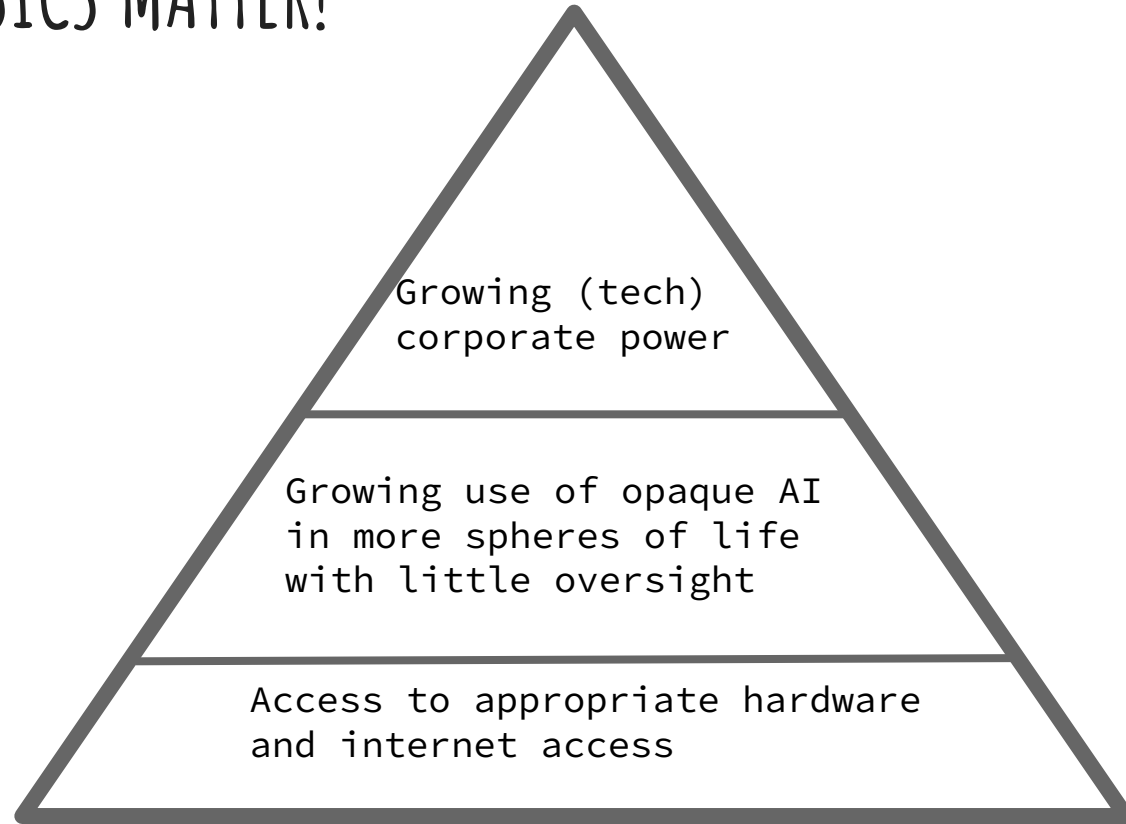
29 Jul 2020



Protesters raise their fists during a protest in memory of Adama Traore, a 24-year-old black Frenchman who died in police custody, in Lille, France on June 4, 2020 [Reuters/Pascal Rossignol]

TECHNOLOGY USE - THE BASICS MATTER!

There is some appreciation of the risks of the **increased use of ML** and concern about **monopolisation** BUT worries around **digital inclusion** loom larger.



HIERARCHY OF PRIORITIES FOR TECH USE

TECHNOLOGY USE: OUR CONCERNS

There were five consistent concerns around the uses of technology within our areas of focus:

1. Digital exclusion and the risk of 'lock out'
2. Embedding of increased surveillance
3. Embedding and amplification of existing bias

TECHNOLOGY USE: OUR CONCERNS (CONTD.)

4. Opacity and a lack of accountability when things go wrong

- a. Evidence of efficacy is often limited?
- b. Limited tools and systems for assessment & auditing make it hard to answer the questions: does it work? Is it harmful?

5. The rise of corporate (tech) power. This is playing out as:

- a. a lack of diversity
- b. growing power imbalance between tech companies and workers/small businesses
- c. A lack of choice i.e. opting out of using big tech platforms is becoming increasingly unviable

SUMMARY

Many of the problems aren't new; data and technology didn't create them but they aren't neutral factors either.

- Data is useful when we can get our hands on it (but this isn't a given)
- Data alone isn't enough to bring about reform
- Technology ownership is a new factor in data collection and access but the old power dynamics (government and adjacent institutions) are still at play

SUMMARY

- Data-centric technologies need extra scrutiny
 - Bias in, bias sped up and amplified
 - But where are the levers for audits
- How do we shift power when it comes to collecting/curating data and designing/building digital technologies?
 - What could community-driven or community-centered data collection and access like?
 - Could better representation result in better designed technology?
 - How is the emergence of corporate technology monopolies affecting Black businesses?

STATE OF PLAY: WORK TO HOLD DATA/TECH POWERS TO ACCOUNT

Justice, Equality and Tech project based at London School of Economics and Political Science

- Developing a European wide civil society network to engage with automated discrimination issues

Decolonising Digital Rights partnership between Digital Freedom Fund and European Digital Rights (EDRi)

- Developing networks and pushing digital rights organisations to encompass social, racial, economic equality

Data Driven Policing: The hard wiring of discriminatory policing practices across Europe. Patrick Williams and Eric Kind looking to take work forward

Digital Action: Temí Lasade Anderson

STATE OF PLAY: WORK TO HOLD DATA/TECH POWERS TO ACCOUNT

Funders interested in this area of work:

- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Open Society Foundation
- Luminate

BUT

We are unaware of UK Black-led organisations working on the impact of data and digital technologies on the lived experience of Black people.

USA: Data for Black Lives, Algorithmic Justice League

COMPLEX PROBLEMS REQUIRE MULTI- PRONGED APPROACHES

More Black Data/Tech workers

- Increase Digital/Data/Tech skills
- Tech companies pressured to create welcoming environments

Raise awareness in Black Communities

- Greater levels of digital inclusion
- More Black People aware of the socio-economic implications of tech
- Increased stories in media discussing data & technology
- Charity/Community leaders feel equipped to ask questions about the use of data and digital technology, in relation to their stakeholders

COMPLEX PROBLEMS REQUIRE MULTI- PRONGED APPROACHES

New laws and better enforcement

- Campaigning for increased regulation of automated decision making, especially in ways that mitigate the negative impact on marginalised groups

Collaborations

- Identifying and linking technologists and academics with relevant expertise, with charitable/community leaders, practitioners and general public
- Opening up conversations between tech companies and Black communities
- Collaborations across low income groups and marginalised communities of all incomes

DATA & TECH AS A RESOURCE NOT A TOOL OF OPPRESSION

The change is:



We create/use

Shift of current power dynamics: Data/Tech enhances Black lives

Our own agenda

Our own data

Our own stories

Space/
platforms for
comms

Pressure
in & out
govt/tech
corps

Work to be done



More Black
Data/Tech
workers &
innovators

Raised
awareness of
Data/Tech

New laws,
better
enforcement

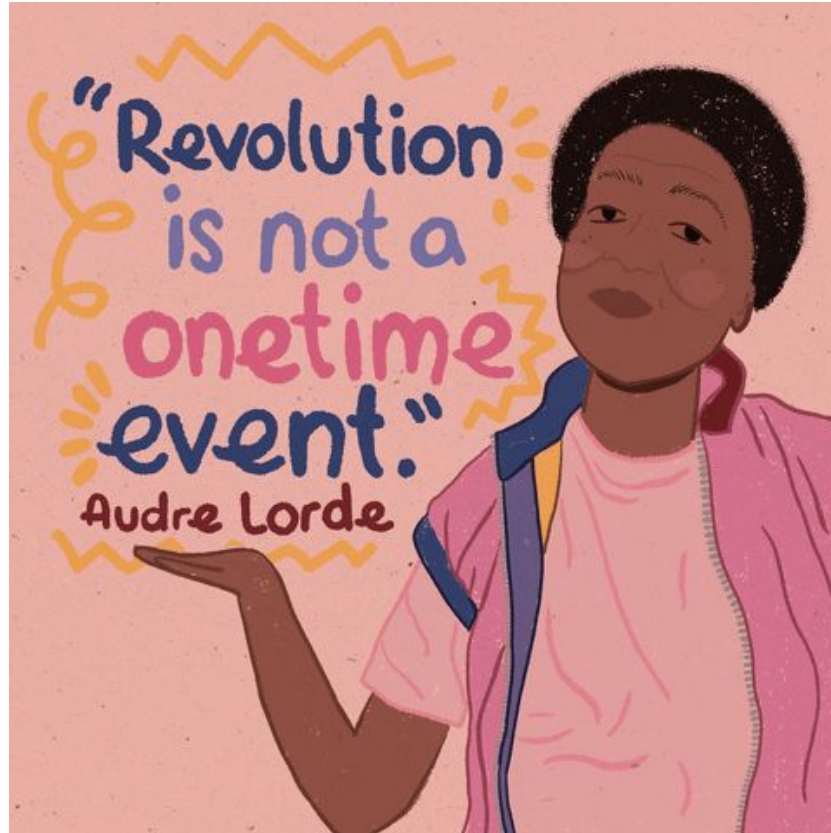
Collaborations



Enabling factors

Community builders; clear values; inclusive language; access to finance; access to hardware & internet access

REFLECT AND SHARE



MOVING FORWARDS: OUR BELIEFS

We believe that it is the **power of a network of engaged individuals** informed by their own experience and those of other black communities that can most effectively push for new terms of engagement with data and tech

Those affected by the negative externalities of data and tech along with those engaged in working with impacted communities, **should have a key role in proposing solutions.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

Help us raise awareness

- Tell us your stories (remember Chatham House Rule);
- Send resources (articles, videos, reports) our way;
- Tell us lines of enquiries the network should be exploring.

Help us build the network

- Sign up to keep in touch with us. Be part of the network;
- Stay engaged – share your thoughts and ideas;
- Raise awareness of this work within your networks;

NEXT STEPS

- **Taking a break to think**
- **Provide recommendations to TNLCF**
- **Share findings with those who have been involved in this work**
- **Create the network?**

Data, Tech & Black
Communities

*THANK
YOU!*

From Ade, Edafe, Hillary, Mollie,
& Tracey

