

METHOD 2017 CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Wednesday May 3rd 2017, Cantor Building.

Following on from the success of the previous C3Ri (Cultural, Communication and Computing Research Institute) conferences **METHOD 2015 and 2016**, we are delighted to open the call for abstracts for **METHOD 2017**. This will be our final **METHOD** conference as we move on to address another part of research craft in 2018.

METHOD 2017 is a conference exploring the ingenuity embedded in research methods, across disciplines. This year **all doctoral researchers at SHU are invited to participate.**

All C3Ri researchers must have presented in METHOD at one point in their PhD career as it is an essential part of training. All doctoral researchers are welcome to participate more than once.

If you are a doctoral researcher and would like to participate please submit an abstract by 2nd April, 13.00. If you are a research supervisor, please encourage your student to present and give guidance with their abstract.

We intend to take all submitted abstracts however we reserve the right to refuse abstracts that are of low quality or do not adequately explore method.

Below you will find three lots of information:

1. About the conference
 2. Submission details
 3. A training session for **METHOD** to assist with producing the abstract.
- We also offer a training session for research students to help prepare the **METHOD 2017** abstract.

About METHOD 2017

METHOD 2017 is an inter-disciplinary doctoral conference exploring research method. The event offers an intense, condensed one-day training session focused on how we plan, scrutinize and articulate our methods. This learning feeds directly into the preparation needed for Confirmation (RF2).

Every research student must use a method to find something out, or gain

new insights, and must be able to articulate their process in a way that others inside and outside of their field can understand. **METHOD 2017**, then, offers a context where we might find some common ground as well as explore our differences.

Across the University disciplines there are enormous differences of practice and culture that can be seen in: the way we understand and collect data; our differing relationships to objectivity and subjectivity; the ways we use text and written voice; the way we work with participants and the ways we frame the researcher- amongst many, many other differences. These sit within the often unsaid and unacknowledged histories, codes, and styles of our specific disciplines.

The format for **METHOD** was developed with a steering group of students from across C3ri. While it is inevitable that research content will be discussed, the conference focuses on the practice of research: *how* research students build and relate structures of method. Every research student must be able to understand what methods are available and what will work effectively to answer their research inquiry. However, they must also be able to articulate this decision making journey, make a case for their chosen direction, and reflect on whether it was the best path. **METHOD** offers a training opportunity for students to articulate their process, and also to challenge and enrich their understanding of method by exposure to methods from other fields.

When we try to find something out using a planned method, sometimes the process isn't simple. Tried and tested methods initially thought useful, can become redundant, disregarded or even disapproved of. Sometimes we innovate, borrowing some part from one method and combining it with another, or we allow ourselves to reflect on 'problematic' data, just in case there's something unexpected to be discovered. Sometimes we reinstate an overlooked old method. At another point we may identify something we need that comes from a different academic world altogether. Problems should be identified before research begins, but sometimes the unexpected happens and we must think on our feet, wondering how we might get round the problem whilst maintaining the integrity of our research. These decisions demand ingenuity and criticality, and occur in research across all fields.

Usually at conferences we are tasked to articulate our findings and how they contribute to our discipline, to colleagues in the same field. In **METHOD**, we create a context where the critical thinking and

creativity embedded in research methods is made tangible.

METHOD is not without risks- perhaps we won't understand each other and we will struggle to find adequate vocabulary within and beyond known disciplinary languages. Perhaps there will be uncomfortable silences as we grapple to understand a discipline that doesn't abide by the same rules as our own. This type of risk is essential if we are to grow our unusual multi-disciplinary research environment to its full potential. Risk is also unavoidable if we are to garner new understanding, and foster a confident spirit of inquiry.

The audience for **METHOD 2017** is SHU research students and staff. Tickets for attendance will be advertised shortly and will be bookable via Eventbrite. Booking priority will be given to research students then supervisors and research staff.

Abstract guidance for research students

Submission deadline: April 2nd 13.00

Send to: b.shaw@shu.ac.uk

The abstract should be a maximum of 300 words, summarizing a 15 minute presentation. It should be in English that is intelligible to others outside of your discipline. If you need to use subject-specific terminology then you need to provide definitions in the body of the text.

The abstract *must* address the theme of the conference: method. To do this you will need to briefly describe the aims of your research, then move on to exploring how you have formed a method. In developing your method you may have needed to be innovative, to borrow methods from other disciplines, to postulate new methods, to use existing methods in different ways or contexts etc. It is assumed that you will draw on the research of others and the methods they have used to explore this. It might also be that aspects of the delivery of your method has led to reflections and the need for changes, reconsiderations, introduction of additional methods etc- any of these issues and more can be reflected upon at **METHOD**. If you are close to the end of your research you may be in the position to explore the success or limitations of your method.

As part of exploring your method you may want to think about these:

- Research methods used by others and why they are valuable to your inquiry- where are the strengths and weaknesses of these and do you have to adapt them?
- Distinctive and experimental aspects of your method
- Strategies you have adopted to get around problems with methods
- Methods borrowed from other disciplines or known methods used in novel ways.
- Planning and structuring of research process
- Methods that haven't worked as you wanted or expected and how you have tackled this issue.

In the last two **METHOD** conferences we have used themes including these (to give you a sense of the types of territory we have explored but not predicting the scope of 2017): 'Insiders turned Researchers' as part of a general theme on reflexivity in research; managing research encounters and researcher identities; 'researching with and about others' - covering topics such as gaining access to research environments, gaining trust, co-research, working with, vs about; ethical dilemmas in research practice; data construction and problems in 'cleaning' dirty data; building models; using design as research method rather than product to test; objects in research; and assessing measurement tools.

There will be a scheduled training session on March 15th to help you prepare for your presentation for **METHOD 2017**. This will help you focus on METHOD and will give you direct feedback on a draft abstract.

We intend that ALL abstracts proposed will be accepted, so begin to prepare your presentation as soon as your abstract is submitted. We may also send feedback and ask for the abstract to be rewritten or corrected so it is of professional conference standard. If this is the case for you, please discuss with a member of your supervision team and use it as the basis of a supervision session.

METHOD 2017 Training Session

Training on abstract writing, with a METHOD focus

Wednesday 15th March, 10-12, Charles Street 12.4.17

Lead by Kathy Doherty (Head of Research Degrees ACES) and Becky Shaw (Postgraduate Research Tutor ADRC).

Please bring with you a draft of your abstract, or some ideas, so we can help you shape your individual submission.

Many Best Wishes

Postgraduate Research Team C3Ri

Any inquiries contact:

Becky Shaw

b.shaw@shu.ac.uk

