

NatCen

Social Research that works for society

Independent review to determine the quality of the Diamond dataset

Authors: The National Centre for Social Research

Date: 7th December 2018

Prepared for: Creative Diversity Network

At NatCen Social Research we believe that social research has the power to make life better. By really understanding the complexity of people's lives and what they think about the issues that affect them, we give the public a powerful and influential role in shaping decisions and services that can make a difference to everyone. And as an independent, not for profit organisation we're able to put all our time and energy into delivering social research that works for society.

NatCen Social Research
35 Northampton Square
London EC1V 0AX
T 020 7250 1866
www.natcen.ac.uk

A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England No.4392418.
A Charity registered in England and Wales (1091768) and Scotland
(SC038454)
This project was carried out in compliance with ISO20252

1 Introduction

Project Diamond has been developed by the Creative Diversity Network (CDN) as a mechanism for collecting and reporting diversity data. Project Diamond enables production companies to facilitate the collection of consistent diversity data from programme contributors (actual contributions), and to monitor diversity as portrayed on-screen (perceived contributions).

The over-arching aim of the Project Diamond is to provide industry-wide data to answer two key questions:

- Who is on UK TV?
- Who makes UK TV?

This will allow us to see whether the industry represents the UK both on- and off-screen.

Although there have been a number of monitoring reports and employment surveys of the creative industries in previous years, Project Diamond is a ground-breaking project due to its innovative cross industry approach where competing broadcasters collect and publish diversity data together. Given the new methodologies and technologies deployed in the collection of this data, the CDN has commissioned the National Centre for Social Research to review the strength and weaknesses of the data collected since August 2016, in advance of publication of the second annual report due in December 2018.

This advice is intended to give the CDN an overview of the reliability of the Project Diamond data and evaluates the analysis and interpretation of the emerging trends in the data. The report concludes with recommendations for future work to make use of the data's key strengths.

2 Aims

As agreed with the Creative Diversity Network, the aims of this review were to:

- Ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the dataset, and advise CDN as to the likely quality and accuracy of the data being collected
- Compare CDN with other known (publically available) data sets of a similar nature in terms of sample size, expected return rates, uniqueness, and likely accuracy
- Review the analysis of the data ensuring that the analysis follows general good practice
- Comment on the draft report which highlights any risks and poor analysis and recommend improvements with regards to the way the data is analysed and what is included in the report
- Recommend to CDN how this review should inform their analysis and presentation of the data, indicating how this might affect confidence in conclusions drawn from the data at this current time

3 Review

This review evaluates a comprehensive set of analyses based on information about an individual's protected characteristics which have been volunteered to the Project Diamond database by individuals completing a disclosure form, or data on the perceived characteristics of an individual inputted by a third party. The analyses examine the diversity of individual contributors involved in TV production, as well as assessing the number of contributions that each person makes to the production process. Importantly, the diversity profiles of those presented on-screen or off-screen have been investigated and analysed separately.

3.1 Strengths of the Project Diamond dataset

3.1.1 Unpicking the relationship between individual contributors and their contributions

The Second Cut of the Project Diamond dataset comprises over 18,499 individual contributors and a total of 380,129 contributions to the industry made between 1st August 2017 and 31st July 2018. It is important to understand the relationship between these two measures as each one can be used to describe the workforce in different ways. Data about **contributors** (individual people with a protected characteristic of interest) allow us to estimate the representation of particular characteristics in the national workforce. Meanwhile, data about **contributions** (the number of times the contributors have worked on a given show) provide a measure of how much work has been performed by people with these characteristics and could be used as a proxy measure for the impact they have. The existence of these two measures represents a significant strength of the data. First, it enables us to identify inequitable patterns of employment within the industry, where a particular set of personal characteristics are under- or over-represented in terms of their contribution. Second, it allows us to see whether these patterns are underpinned by their representation within the workforce.

On the other hand, it is important to note that individuals with a given set of protected characteristics may *contribute* more times on average, compared with others with different profiles, and this could lead to an overestimation of these characteristics. This was a potential drawback of earlier work. For example, is the high proportion of on-screen contributions made by those identifying as BAME a consequence of a small number of BAME individuals appearing multiple times, or is the high proportion due to many individuals each contributing a relatively smaller number of contributions? The First Cut of Project Diamond¹ did not explore the relationship between individuals and the number of contributions being made, potentially masking important inequalities in workforce representation. It is a major strength of the Second Cut that both sets of data are presented.

Furthermore, the data suggests a good degree of correspondence between proportions with a given protected characteristic and the contributions that they make. In other

¹ <http://creativitydiversitynetwork.com/diversity-in-practice/resources/diamond-the-first-cut-pdf/>

words, there is no suggestion that a small number of contributors with particular characteristics are responsible for the levels of contribution for any of the protected characteristics.

3.2 Potential limitations of the Project Diamond dataset

3.2.1 Overall response rates

The response rate for the first year of Project Diamond was 24.4 % and this increased slightly in the second year to 25.2%.² The stable response is noteworthy in the context of declining response rates to most data collection exercises taking place in the UK currently. Reasons for these declining rates are contested, but explanations generally focus on a loss of trust in government, brands and professions collecting the data, declining availability and peoples' increasing time pressures and people becoming less accessible as their everyday mobility increases. Project Diamond's consistent yearly response rate suggests that the methodology for data collection appears to have overcome these barriers so far. The suggestion is that current trust in the project is undiminished and that the data collection procedures are as effective in accessing participants and giving them the ability to submit their information as they were last year. One challenge to data collection in the future will be response fatigue. This is where participants become less likely to respond to data collection due to repeated requests. This is an issue for on-going data collection from the same sample, such as that targeted by Project Diamond. Researchers designing future data collections building on the work of Project Diamond could consider a survey sampling approach which may illicit a higher response rate.

Overall, a 25.2% response rate is a remarkable achievement given the outcomes of previous efforts to collect diversity data in the TV Production Industry. As was documented in the critical review of the First Cut report, the 2012 ScreenSkills census, which collected data on many of the same indicators of diversity, yielded only a 4% response from over 20,000 companies³. Similarly, the 2014 Workforce survey resulted in a 2.3% response rate.

Nevertheless, the response rate is low in absolute terms and non-response bias is an inevitable possibility, whereby there is a systematic underlying reason why some respondents completed their return whereas others did not. The Project Diamond sample response rate is the same as last year meaning that many of the caveats applied to the First Cut must again be considered in the latest cut of data. It is worth stating that no survey yields 100% response and rates below this threshold do not necessarily invalidate conclusions which can be drawn from the data collected. In the case of Project Diamond, it is possible to place a high level of confidence in many of

² The response rate was defined as the percentage of all individuals contacted who consented to receive data collection emails and who completed the survey. Around 6% of individuals did not consent to data collection emails.

³<http://www.yourspaceonline.net/pdf/Creative%20Skillset%20Employment%20census%202012.pdf>

the findings based on relative differences between groups of people or across genres as response rates tend not to be related to the characteristics being measured.

3.2.2 Internal validity

A strength of the Project Diamond data is that the response rate across genres was highly consistent. The column shown in bold in Table 1 shows that, with the exception of music, response rates varied between 25.0% and 28.9%. This narrow range lends validity to comparisons of the diversity profile between genres (under the assumption that response behaviours and therefore the degree and direction of any non-response bias are similar.)

This validity of such comparisons can be further tested by investigating disclosure rates for protected characteristics in each genre, also shown in Table 1. Disclosure for each characteristic was exceptionally high and did not vary by characteristic (ranging from 89.3%-99.3%). Although age had the lowest disclosure rate, it was still fairly high (around 90%) and consistent across genres. Again this lends credence to any conclusions drawn from comparisons between genres.

Table 1: Disclosure rates and overall response rates by genre

Disclosure rate (%)							
	Gender	Gender Identity	Age	Ethnic Origin	Sexual Orientation	Disability	Overall Response
Arts	98.5	99.6	88.3	98.1	94.6	97.6	27.1
Children's	98.6	99.1	86.5	97.2	96.3	96.4	28.8
Comedy	98.8	98.6	86.5	96.9	95.1	97.2	25.9
Current Affairs	98.6	99.3	87.6	97.4	96.6	97.0	26.7
Drama	98.8	99.3	85.7	98.1	96.9	97.6	27.3
Education	98.0	99.6	87.4	96.6	98.7	95.6	28.9
Entertainment	99.0	99.2	90.0	98.0	97.8	97.5	25.0
Factual	98.9	99.4	89.8	98.1	97.4	97.6	25.2
Factual Ent	98.8	99.4	90.2	97.9	97.4	97.2	26.0
Leisure	99.2	99.4	90.4	98.6	98.2	98.3	26.9
Music	98.5	98.3	89.5	99.2	94.0	97.7	13.1
Religion	98.8	98.6	87.7	96.4	97.2	96.7	26.5

Assuming the overall level of response remains stable and these patterns are replicated in other years, a further implication is that trends in diversity profiles can be reliably tracked over time. (In other words it can be assumed that any bias in the results is consistent over time.) This means that even if baseline proportions are not true representations of the populations of the broadcasters, estimates of relative change year-on-year should be reliable. However, it will be important to ensure that no major methodological changes to data collection takes place as this may lead to shifts in non-response and internal validity will be compromised.

3.3 Comparisons with other data sources

Comparisons to previous data are essential to validate the findings of the Project Diamond data. As previously noted, there is the possibility that the data collected is unrepresentative of the TV Production workforce as not all participants responded. Cross-referencing the diversity profiles of individual contributors in the Project Diamond data with the profiles of the findings of the 2014 workforce survey⁴, the CAMEo Research Institute for Cultural and Media Economies⁵ and the Ofcom ‘Diversity and equal opportunities in television’ report⁶ provides a benchmark comparison and thereby some indication of the degree of confidence we can place in the representativeness of the Project Diamond data. If Project Diamond is broadly in line with previous data and literature reviews then reproducibility suggests it is likely to be a reliable estimate of the workforce characteristics, enabling further comparisons to be made with the national profile of diversity.

It is important to note that each of these sources has deployed different methodologies to capture slightly different samples of people working in television production and precise overlap of estimates cannot be expected. The CAMEo figures are taken from a range of different sources and the Workforce census included all cable/satellite, terrestrial and independent television companies. Although the Ofcom study is similar to Project Diamond in that it focusses on the main 5 broadcasters, it uses a considerably different methodology to Project Diamond to derive estimates. Project Diamond is the first initiative to try and capture the television production workforce on and off screen. It collects information on how individuals personally identify themselves whereas the Ofcom survey is dependent on broadcasters completing the return, and the Ofcom return includes all Broadcaster employees as opposed to Diamond’s focus on those working in production⁷. It is worth stating that generally the collection of diversity data is often perceived as a “personal sensitive” disclosure of information making full and accurate data collection a highly challenging task. Differences in study populations and especially data collection methods are therefore highly likely to contribute to the variation in estimates seen across studies and surveys, particularly when the disclosure of sensitive information may be influenced by how appropriately it is collected.

The comparisons show that Project Diamond is capturing a higher number of contributors for all diversity indicators (aside from transgender identity, where collected) compared to other sources. For example, the proportion of BAME (15.6%) is considerably higher than that observed in the 2012 Workforce Survey; however, this figure lies much closer to the proportion of people identifying as BAME in the general population (approximately 14%)⁸. One explanation might be that BAME contributors are simply more willing to contribute to the Project Diamond data collection than in previous studies. However, Project Diamond disclosure rates show that diversity information was not widely withheld once they had opted to complete a disclosure form, meaning

⁴https://creativitydiversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/SS8088_WS2015_TV_4.pdf

⁵<https://www2.le.ac.uk/institutes/comeo/publications/comeo-workforce-diversity-report-2018>

⁶https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/121683/diversity-in-TV-2018-report.PDF

⁷https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/121682/diversity-in-TV-2018-methodology.pdf

⁸<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/2011censusanalysisethnicityandreligionofthenonukbornpopulationinenglandandwales/2015-06-18>

there is unlikely to be a social desirability bias or other non-reporting effect at play. This effect may be due to a more efficient data collection process which minimises under-reporting. This could also explain the higher proportion of individuals identifying as LGB in Project Diamond, due to the more sophisticated data collection process which gives individuals a higher level of personal control and perceived confidentiality than the more administrative methods of data collection used by the Ofcom study for example.

A further difference is the age profile of Project Diamond. This appears to be older than in the 2014 workforce survey (and compared to Channel 4), though, in much the same way as for BAME prevalence, the Project Diamond estimate lies closer to patterns observed in the general working population⁹.

Table 2: Comparison of the prevalence of diversity indicators between the Project Diamond dataset and the 2014 workforce survey, CAMEo 2018 review and the annual Ofcom report 2017/18

Indicator	Diamond ¹⁰ (%)	2014 Workforce Survey (%)	CAMEo (%)	Ofcom 2017/18 (%)
Gender (% Female)	53.3	49.0	45.0**	46.0
Transgender identity (%)	0.7 ¹¹	1.0	-	-
Age >50 years (%)	25.3	16.0	10-18.4*	16.0
Ethnic origin (%BAME)	15.6	7.5 ¹²	7.5**	13.0
Sexual orientation (% LGB)	11.5	8.0	8.0***	4.0
Has a disability (%)	6.8	5.0	2.0**	6.0

* No overall prevalence given: examples given for different broadcasters, i.e. 10% of Channel 4's and 18.4% of BBC's workforce.

** Estimates drawn from the 2012 Workforce Survey

*** Estimate drawn from the 2014 Workforce Survey

Overall, the Diamond data is broadly comparable to the 2014 survey, and other sources used to compile estimates in the CAMEo report. Although all sources are similarly compromised by non-response, the general comparability between sources does provide some assurance that they are capturing the demographic profiles of the

⁹ Office for National Statistics. Social Survey Division, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Central Survey Unit. (2017). *Quarterly Labour Force Survey, January - March, 2017*

¹⁰ Diamond data for on- and off-screen has been extracted from the Second Cut report and summed for comparison

¹¹ On-screen figure only for this group due to redacted off-screen figures

¹² The % BAME was not reported in the 2014 survey; the figure of 7.5% is from the 2012 survey

workplace to the same extent, increasing our confidence that the Project Diamond estimates are not outliers.

3.4 Analysis and interpretation

Where possible, statistical tests should be carried out in future to ensure that differences between two groups are unlikely to be due to chance and that they do in fact represent real and significant differences between groups. This will be of future importance when analysis will focus on changes over time. These temporal changes are likely to be small whereas comparisons made in the current report, for example by genre, identify very large differences and can be safely assumed to be 'significant' in most cases. The ability to test for significant differences between groups within or across years is a considerable strength of the dataset. This is possible due to the large sample size which has been achieved, meaning that there is a high level of precision around the proportions of individuals or contributions for each given characteristic.

Care should be taken when comparing the age profile of Project Diamond contributors to national estimates. On screen contributors are likely to cover the entire age range represented by national estimates, whereas the off screen age profile will more closely resemble the national working age profile. The CDN have acknowledged these differences and account for job roles during comparative analysis.

The relationship between the contributor and the number of contributions must be considered carefully when interpreting the analysis. The data enables us to monitor the *impact of individuals* from diverse backgrounds, as evaluated using the number of contributions they make. Alternatively, it can estimate the absolute number of individuals in the workforce with certain characteristics to assess *whether the workforce is representative* of the national working age population. Either approach is acceptable, but it should be made clear which approach is being adopted in the interpretation.

A final note of caution concerns the reliability of perceived data. It should be remembered that perceptions may not be true reflections of reality when interpreting on-screen perceived characteristics. Perceptions are recorded based on how a person can be "perceived to identify as", and whilst specific reference to a protected characteristic is requested in the data collection guidance, this may still be interpreted subjectively.

3.5 Summary and recommendations

Overall, the Project Diamond data represents the demographic characteristics of the population of the TV production industry who have opted to provide information. It aligns closely with previously collected data on the industry, and where differences are observed, there are plausible reasons which might account for these, based on the differing methodologies and response rates. Nevertheless, there is the inevitable possibility of reporting bias due to non-response as a consequence of the low response rate, and this caveat must be included in any description of the methodology, and results interpreted with a degree of caution. Nevertheless, the data has a good degree of internal validity; comparisons across genres in the current data are deemed to be valid. Going forward the Project Diamond dataset will be a strong source of information

for plotting temporal changes in the diversity of the TV production industry, as any biases (should they exist) are less relevant when making comparisons over time. A key strength to be exploited will be the large sample size achieved which offers multiple opportunities to significance test for small changes in the diversity of the workforce.