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# Northumbria University asks the world to think differently

Northumbria University, Newcastle is playing a central role in a four-week long international, virtual festival curated by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which started on 20<sup>th</sup> October and runs through to 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

The Disruptive Innovation Festival (DIF) is a unique open access online festival that offers audiences from all over the world the chance to hear from influential thinkers, take part in design challenges, learn about business innovation and engage with like-minded people.

Northumbria University has been selected as one of only sixteen leading educational establishments taking part in the event, which also includes prestigious institutions such as Stanford University, UCL and the University of Edinburgh.

Throughout the four-week long event, Northumbria University will produce a wide variety of online content – including videos, webinars, and live streaming - which will be available to view via the DIF website. The purpose of which is to encourage virtual festival-goers to think about things differently and disrupt their established thought processes, whilst embracing new business and economic theories.

Mark Bailey, Northumbria University's Director of Innovation Design programmes who has played an integral part in organising the University's involvement with DIF, said: "The topics that Northumbria University will be exploring as part of DIF are broad: ranging from how designers can influence economic thinking; through to how 3D laser scanning can be used to challenge traditional approaches to building conservation.

"The scale of DIF and the aims of the festival, in terms of bringing together such a diverse range of thinkers, are unprecedented. It is an incredibly exciting thing for the University to be part of and we hope that it will further cement Northumbria's reputation as a progressive and forward-thinking institution."

Jules Hayward, Education Programme Lead at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, said: "The Disruptive Innovation Festival is about inspiring a generation to rethink how the global economy functions and discover the emerging opportunities within it. We are pleased to welcome Northumbria University as a Big Top Tent and welcome their involvement in offering education opportunities that are fit for a changing future.'

One of the topics central to DIF will be innovation through design. Northumbria University, in conjunction with Design Network North, will be hosting Design Means Business; a national conference designed to communicate and advance the value and benefits of design to business and the wider community.

The Design Means Business conference, which will be held at the Northern Design Centre in Gateshead on 13<sup>th</sup> November, will be streamed via a live

video link on the DIF website.

The conference will bring together senior designers from major industrial companies, top design agencies and leading practitioners to share their experiences of design and how it has impacted their bottom line. Speakers will include Northumbria University alumnus Mark Delaney, who is now Head of Design Strategy & Foresight for Microsoft Phones; Richard Stevens, Creative Director of British Airways; and Paul Howells, Vice President of Packaging at Unilever.

For more information about the Big Top Tent click [here](#).

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If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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