



COMPUTATIONALLY INTENSIVE RESEARCH

Digital Research Infrastructure Retreat 2025

January 2025

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Welcome to the 2025 DRI Retreat! Building on the success of the pilot program we ran in 2022, we are happy to be back in Manchester organization & vision has come from N8 CIR.

We are excited to have around 100 in-person attendees this year, and over 40 online in a fully hybrid event. You are all very welcome. We hope you will find this event different from anything else you have attended. The intention is not to have experts tell you what to do with lots of PowerPoint, but rather to have facilitated panels and open-to-the-floor discussions, where everyone can share their experiences and learn from each other. Hence, the focus is on research software engineers, infrastructure engineers, and data managers at any stage of their careers, especially those new to these fields. Whoever you are, and whatever your career stage, we hope you will find this retreat to be informative and useful, an opportunity to reflect on your skills and needs, and a chance to network with others in the community.

Have fun, and enjoy the retreat!

Matt Probert, Director of N8 CIR.

Keynote Speaker: Anita Banerji

Integrating learnings and networks developed during the retreat into your career

Anita joined the Software Sustainability Institute in February 2022 and is based in the Department of Computer Science at Manchester University. Her work includes evaluating the impact of the SSI Fellowship Programme and exploring Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity in the RSE community.

Anita originally has a science background having studied Physics at Newcastle University and Computer Science at Manchester University. She was awarded a PhD in Medical Image Analysis and has worked as a post-doc in this field as well as a commercial software engineer. More recently Anita has become interested in teaching, training and development, and how we can create inclusive environments. She has done post-doc projects in Education Research and co-produced an evaluation project in Student Mental Health.

Anita also really enjoys playing her violin - particularly in quartet - and is an accredited Mindfulness teacher.

Field of expertise: software engineering, physics, mental health, mindfulness

Monday 13th January: Collaboration and Communication

09:00-10:30	Welcome and Registration
10:30-10:45	Introductory address <i>Alan Real (Durham University)</i>
10:45-11:30	Building trust and effective communication between DRI professionals and researchers from different disciplines Chair: Saranjeet Kaur Bhogal (Imperial College London) Panellists: Arianna Ciula (King's College London), Kirsty Merrett (University of Bristol), Paul Niklas Ruth (ARC, University of Durham), Massimiliano Fasi (University of Leeds), Tobias Weinzierl (University of Durham)
11:30-12:00	Break
12:00-13:00 <i>Round Table Discussion Session</i>	Linking all DRI Roles, how do we ensure collaboration across the professions? Facilitated by: Sophie Janacek (UKRI)
13:00-14:00	LUNCH
14:00-15:00	Provision of training materials and digital support networks for academics Chair: Chris Jewell (Lancaster University) Panellists: Eamonn Bell (University of Durham), Fernando Andreu (University of Durham), Keming Yang (University of Durham), Stephanie Thompson (University of Birmingham), Tristan Martin (University of Manchester)
15:00-15:30	Break
15:30-16:15	Making connections as the 'lone' DRI professional in you workspace and hybrid working solutions Chair: Manhui Wang (University of Liverpool) Panellists: Ben Pietras (University of Liverpool), Diego Alonso Alvarez (Imperial College London), Martin Wolstencroft (University of Bradford), Saranjeet Kaur Bhogal (Imperial College London), Sam Bland (University of York)

Tuesday 14th January: Finding Answers to Your Questions

09:30-10:15	<p>Data collection, sustainability and integrity Chair: Bill Ayres (University of Manchester) Panellists: Fred Sonnenwald (University of Sheffield), Keming Yang (Durham University), Kirsty Merrett (University of Bristol), Michael Holliday (University College London), Adrian Clark (Figshare/Digital Science)</p>
10:15-10:45	Break
10:45-11:30	<p>Building relationships with industrial partners Chair: Skylar Wan (University of Leeds) Panellists: David Baldwin (University of Leeds), Massimiliano Fasi (University of Leeds), Neil Dullaway (Lancaster University), Owen Thomas (Red Oak Consulting), Wil Mayers (Alces Flight Ltd)</p>
11:30-12:00	Break
12:00-13:00 <i>Round Table Discussion Session</i>	<p>Barriers encountered accessing digital infrastructure Facilitated by: David Baldwin (University of Leeds)</p>
13:00-14:00	LUNCH
14:00-15:00	<p>Strategy development, business cases and securing funding Chair: Stewart Clark (University of Durham) Panellists: Arianna Ciula (King's College London), Li Convey (EPSRC, UKRI), Tobias Weinzierl (University of Durham), Sophie Janacek (UKRI)</p>
15:00-15:30	Break
15:30-16:15	<p>The funding landscape and making connections to align with UKRI calls Chair: Matt Probert (University of York) Panellists: Jeremy Cohen (Imperial College London), Jools Kasmire (University of Manchester), Li Convey (EPSRC, UKRI), Martin Turner (University of Manchester)</p>
19:00-23:00	<p>Conference Dinner, The Midland Hotel 16 Peter Street, Manchester, M60 2DS</p>

Wednesday 15th January: Emerging Technologies and The Future Of DRI

09:30-10:15	<p>The impact of AI and machine learning on DRI workflows Chair: <i>Martin Callaghan (Red Oak Consulting)</i> Panellists: Jianping Meng (University of Liverpool), Jools Kasmire (University of Manchester), Keming Yang (Durham University), Stephen Mander (Lancaster University)</p>
10:15-10:45	Break
10:45-11:30	<p>The environmental impacts of infrastructure Chair: <i>Samantha Ahern (University College London)</i> Panellists: Bill Ayres (University of Manchester), Fred Sonnenwald (University of Sheffield), Michael Rudgyard (Alces Flight Ltd), Polly Eccleston (University of Bristol)</p>
11:30-12:00	Break
12:00-13:00 Round Table Discussion Session	<p>DRI beyond HPC and RSE Facilitated by: <i>Mariann Hardey (Durham University, online)</i></p>
13:00-14:00	LUNCH
14:00-15:00	<p>Security and compliance Chair: <i>Jools Kasmire (University of Manchester)</i> Panellists: Adrian Harwood (University of Manchester), Bill Ayres (University of Manchester), Dave Love (University of Manchester), Matt Penn (King's College London), Saul Cozens (University of Sheffield)</p>
15:00-15:30	Break
15:30-16:15	<p>Preparing for the next generation of research computing infrastructure Chair: <i>Matt Probert (University of York)</i> Panellists: David Baldwin (University of Leeds), Manhui Wang (University of Liverpool), Michael Holliday (University College London), Tobias Weinzierl (Durham University)</p>

Thursday 16th January: Leadership and Career Development

09:30-10:15	<p>Career progression pathways for DRI professionals Chair: <i>Jeremy Cohen (Imperial College London)</i> Panellists: Adrian Harwood (University of Manchester), Andrew (Ed) Edmondson (University of Birmingham), Diego Alonso Alvarez (Imperial College London), Kirsty Merrett (University of Bristol), Stephen Longshaw (UKRI STFC)</p>
10:15-10:45	Break
10:45-11:30	<p>Accessible training and staying relevant in a rapidly changing environment Chair: <i>Kirsty Merrett (University of Bristol)</i> Panellists: Bill Ayres (University of Manchester), Manhui Wang (University of Liverpool), Samantha Ahern (University College London), Skylar Wan (University of Leeds)</p>
11:30-12:00	Break
12:00-13:00 Round Table Discussion Session	<p>Recruitment and diversity. How should it change? Facilitated by: <i>Cristin Merritt (Alces Flight Ltd.)</i></p>
13:00-14:00	LUNCH
14:00-15:00	<p>Developing leadership skills for DRI professionals Chair: <i>Sarah Jaffa (University of Manchester)</i> Panellists: Diego Alonso Alvarez (Imperial College London), Michael Holliday (University College London), Stephen Longshaw (UKRI STFC), Santiago Molina (UKRI)</p>
15:00-15:30	Break
15:30-16:15	<p>Mentorship in DRI Chair: <i>Matt Probert (University of York)</i> Panellists: Alan Real (Durham University), Adrian Harwood (University of Manchester), Andrew (Ed) Edmondson (University of Birmingham), Stephen Mander (Lancaster University)</p>

Friday 17th January: The Way Forward for Dri Professionals

09:30-10:15	<i>Stories from the trenches: the good, the bad and the ugly</i>
10:15-10:45	Break
10:45-11:30 <i>Round Table Discussion Session</i>	Integrating learnings and networks developed during the retreat into your career Facilitated by: Anita Banerji
11:30-12:00	Break
12:00-12:45	Keynote speaker: Anita Banerji (University of Manchester, Software Sustainability Institute)
12:45-13:00	Closing address <i>Alan Real and Matt Probert (N8 CIR)</i>
13:00-14:00	LUNCH