Black Tech Fest: 3 days to celebrate diversity in tech in a post-COVID world

Black Tech Fest is a festival and cultural movement celebrating BAME people in tech and asking difficult questions to the companies that comprise it. With 10,000 people expected to attend it is clear that the message will be drummed home.

Temps de lecture : minute

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It really couldn't come at a better time given the events of this year. We've already seen evidence that BAME people will be disproportionately affected by the pandemic in both diminished job prospects and likelihood to fall into poverty.

The tech space was already lagging, but COVID has widened <u>inequality to an even more unacceptable point</u>. And following the death of George Floyd and the ensuing protests, Black Tech Fest has stepped up to offer a platform to BAME people in the industry who need to be heard.

Black Tech Fest (BTF) is a first-of-its-kind digital conference and movement aiming to help Black professionals expand their network and influence while celebrating the boldest innovations created by the Black community.

> *"We created Black Tech Fest as we believe that Tech has a huge role in both amplifying systemic issues of inequity but creating new innovations to*

> *solve it. Traditionally, initiatives around people of colour tend to be internally focussed rather than using their collective platforms to drive a wider discussion. Black Tech Fest will be a huge opportunity to take this conversation global." - Black Tech Fest Chairman and Founder of Colour In Tech, Dion McKenzie*

Running from 13-15 October, in the middle of Black History Month, the timing could not be more urgent. This year has been a turning point for Black people. As a matter of necessity, the Black Lives Matter movement has proliferated in 2020, while COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting BAME people. Black and minority ethnic people are twice as likely to be unemployed or live in poverty as a result of the pandemic.

BTF, as well as being a place where innovation, creativity, and excellence are celebrated, is a platform for Black people in the UK to voice their concerns to executives from some of the world's leading companies.

> ## *Advancing the conversation of inclusion and creating meaningful change*

Diversity in tech has a long way to go: Only three per cent of the UK's tech industry are Black and minority ethnic. They are three times less likely to be employed after graduating from university. Only one per cent of venture capital goes to Black founders. It is this and more that BTF will discuss, with no holds barred, over three days.

Alongside this pressing discussion, Black Tech Fest will celebrate the

diversity in tech that we do have, featuring executives from Microsoft, WPP, Adobe, DeepMind and Box.

It is built around three main pillars:

- C:code - Summit for young people (U25's) to explore career pathways in tech and finding job opportunities
- Showcase - An awards ceremony celebrating technologists and diversity champions
- Belonging – A flagship conference for mid-to-senior level leaders to explore inclusion through technology

Black Tech Fest will host roundtables with Government, HR Leaders, and Venture Capital firms to discuss how the entire tech space can go beyond advocacy and commitment, and instead, use its collective platforms to drive a wider discussion with meaningful, tangible, long-term action that can make a difference to the lives of Black people in the UK.

Black Tech Fest is brought to you by Colorintech, Europe's leading nonprofit focused on increasing diversity in the tech, and Informa Tech, the FTSE 100 media group which operates events and exhibitions across a range of sectors.

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