Now that Spring has sprung, we're getting even more excited about the upcoming 20 In Data And Technology event on May 20th - and we couldn't be more thrilled about our keynote speaker.

Caroline Criado Perez OBE is one of the most insightful voices on equality in tech, with her 2019 book 'Invisible Women' challenging preconceptions on a broad range of gender issues. Of particular interest to us here at Women in Data is her examination of the issues of systematic, although often unconscious, bias in the data we use for everyday interactions.

With just 17% of those working in the tech sector being women, it is unsurprising that this bias exists, but it was Caroline's granular dissection of the implications to our daily lives that makes it such a strong work. If the algorithms that inform our every decision, from search to profiling, are 83% constructed by men - but apply to a population which is predominately female - it's clear that something has to change.

Caroline is a perfect fit for this year's event. Working from home, we are more reliant than ever upon the digital world, with our interactions - social, professional, and economic - all moving online. As such, the algorithms that lie behind these interactions are critical to how we engage with the world. Any gender bias (even unintentional or unconscious) that shapes these can have an enormous ripple effect, negatively impacting outcomes for women across a range of issues.

Caroline's written work expertly addresses these concerns, but she is so much more than just an observer. She has championed women's rights across the spectrum, campaigning, for example, against the removal of Elizabeth Fry from banknotes, which would have led to the Queen being the sole remaining woman represented on UK currency. While the Bank of England's subsequent choice of Jane Austen was not Caroline's top pick, she did see some benefits:

"She spent her time poking fun at the establishment. All her books are about how women are trapped and misrepresented. It is really sad that she was saying that 200 years ago and I am still having to say that today"

It is this combination of fierce intellectual rigour, wit, and tireless campaigning for a more equal society that makes Caroline such a perfect choice for this year's keynote speaker. We are hugely excited to hear her views on the current gender imbalance within data and technology, how we can address it and what changes a year of extraordinary change and turbulence has had upon our social landscape.

It promises to be an unmissable speech, be sure to register now for this year's event.

Caroline Criado Perez OBE

Writer, journalist and campaigner Caroline Criado Perez is the author of Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men. A leading voice on equality and feminist issues in technology, health and the media, Caroline has also led high-profile campaigns to publicly recognise the contribution of women in British history.

Invisible Women reveals the systematic, and often unconscious bias behind the data and assumptions that construct our everyday life. One of the key areas of examination is the increasing reliance in all areas on algorithms which are usually designed by, and using large amounts of data on, men which affects everything from internet search results to job applications. She uses numerous cases to exemplify how male data has always been treated as the norm, ignoring at least half the population, and reviews the effects of this imbalance on women and society as a whole. Alongside widespread critical acclaim, Invisible Women also won the prestigious Royal Society Science Book prize.