

ARMA IMPACT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

NOTES FROM ARMA CONFERENCE SESSION 2/6/16

Summary: in this session, delegates were invited to list challenges and solutions for a range of impact topics. The responses are listed in the tables below.

IMPACT SYSTEMS	
CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's available? • Stages or readiness of external systems? • Integration? • Evaluation/comparison • What impact could/should you track? • Creating a sense of "impact ownership" with academics • How do you capture/track potential impact after a grant/award is finished? • Capturing ongoing impact – how? • Capturing different types of impact and differentiating between types • Interoperability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness • Sharing between systems • Interoperability

WRITING CASE STUDIES	
CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to provide the support needed • Writing for different audiences – REF, public • How much more competitive for the next REF? • Style? Substance? • Writing a clear and compelling pitch from the first line • Audience • Find new impact case studies • Whether existing case studies are eligible in the next round? Or as 'good' as new cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTFM • Pay for an advisor? • Whose voice? • Case author or advisor/consultant?

EVALUATING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES (EASILY)**CHALLENGES**

- Measure the differences made
- Short vs. long term
- Qualitative vs. quantitative
- Not all activities (impact) is measured in £
- Collecting evidence
- Appropriate metrics?

SOLUTIONS

- Tracking via alternative metrics / social media sources?
- Learning from public engagement
- Use a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative to generate quality data
- Learning from other external organisations eg. museums/galleries?
- Collecting evidence: use a variety of techniques with some common questions
- Appropriate metrics: think about what is realistic and measurable at the start and what data are available

COLLECTING EVIDENCE**CHALLENGES**

- What evidence is admissible
- Visibility for central teams
- Getting academics to record
- Intrinsic difficulty of getting politicians to 'admit' influence by academics
- Evidence by those who have been impacted can be hard to gain
- Knowing what impact people are doing
- Resources for evidence collection – who? How? When?
- What constitutes good evidence?
- Quality of evidence?
- Quality vs. quantity?
- Researchers do not have the time to record information that could lead to impact
- How do we capture it practically?
- Data integration

SOLUTIONS

- Good relationships with users
- Utilising intermediaries who can provide evidence of your impact
- Use Symplectic impact module
- Use PURE
- Create impact toolkit
- Change team from a causation mindset to an influence mindset
- Ensure all end users/stakeholder are 'briefed' to know what would be valuable evidence to provide

ENGAGING ACADEMICS	
CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language used is different • Need to repeat a lot before understand • No one size fits all • Getting senior academics to learn / be trained • If trust is lost, grudges last a long time • Pathway to Impact is last thing to be considered – afterthought • For grants with upper limit of funding, no money left for impact • Having to prioritise some academics impact support over others • They are already “too busy” to do impact “as well” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top down support • Face to face targeted better than written • Reduce admin burden of academics to free up useful time to think about impact • Build personal relationships • Impact managers having capacity to ‘do’ not just give advice • Clear “what’s in it for me”? • Funding • Reward good evidence of impact • Incentivising impact from academics • Show the ‘value’ of impact and embed in infrastructure • Create precedent for impact culture

CO-CREATION OF IMPACT (WHO IS INVOLVED AND WORKING TOGETHER)	
CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different concepts • Think about impact too late • Adapting research • Still a difficult concept for some academics • Managing the process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear of loss of research independence / dilution of the questions - At proposal stage and through the lifetime of the project • No dedicated impact personnel • Non-linear long term impact – how fit within REF framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start right away • Use knowledge with research support office • Professional facilitation may help • Improve/use research managers’ facilitation skills • Internal workshops – designing PTI and evidencing your impact • Define what your impact will be: indications to demonstrate and evidence impact • Communications and marketing teams can be used

PRIORITISING IMPACT (WHICH KINDS OF IMPACT ARE MOST IMPORTANT / ACHIEVABLE)	
CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it be only those that shout the most? • Short term / long term view • Depends what is the object? • Priority of researcher / funder / university(REF) • Reluctance to take risks eg. practice based research impact • + financial return on case studies • Partners: priorities may differ from university/researchers • Is the global challenges fund a short term impact fix? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on quality and quantity of impact • Consider “significance” and “reach” • Co-production • Create culture which recognises all type of impact, not just REF related

DEVELOPING AND MANAGING PARTNERSHIPS	
CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training academics to articulate their evidence needs to partners and collaborators • How to tap into/make best use of existing networks • How to maintain partnership and trust after end of collaboration and for project(s) • Maintaining the relationship when activities /opportunities are not here – keeping it open when the opportunity comes up • How to build relationships with end-users early when project is still embryonic – can be difficult to catch their interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ‘relevant’ stakeholders and earliest stage in the project. Build into the PTI • Sustain communication with former partners – keep in touch on a regular basis • Partnership skills for academics • Ongoing relationships • Encourage partners to connect and form ongoing networks • Making results of partnership

BALANCING REF IMPACT AND IMPACT CULTURE	
CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance • Recognition • Some people don’t think REF case studies are their responsibility / problem • Creating a sustainable culture • What about people who aren’t picked for REF or aren’t eligible but doing great work? • Too focused on the ‘top’ impact and winners • Personal development • 2* research underpinning research is a distorting artefact from REF • Career progression • Impact plans for individual researchers • Future proofing for policy changes • REF is one of many outputs • Impact culture / REF culture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building impact into the research lifecycle • Recognition of the role of all staff in impactful research through institutional impact strategy • Implement/encourage computer based tools for all staff • Provide more resources for potential case studies • Embed good impact practice • REF as one of many outputs: True, put all the evidence together to report on all the changes • Institutional management and ownership of impact

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN IMPACT ROLES	
CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not available for non-academic administrators • Having the wider picture (research and HE context) • No certified route for impact specific • There is clearly an unmet need • Wider spectrum of roles encompassing elements of impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSc in Research Management and Administration – launching in 2017 Cardiff Business School • Appoint Directors of Impact in each faculty and ensure they are on the management team • Role descriptors for impact • Better consistency of roles • Levels of difference between understanding / careers

BUILDING IMPACT INTO PROJECT DELIVERY	
CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact not seen as increasing esteem from peers • Impact tagged on rather than implementation from outset/project idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of impact through organisation • Consider impact as a research aim at idea-stage • Impact as opportunity to extend networks and attract partnerships and collaboration

WRITING PATHWAYS TO IMPACT	
CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How realistic do you need to be? • Making it more than a tickbox exercise • How to build in costings for impact • Avoiding following standard templates • No 'boiler plate' text – individualised approach • Gaining true 'buy in' from academics to what is being said • Costing up impact creating activities • How to be creative and avoid relying on the same few ideas for impact activities • Seen as necessary evil rather than essential building block 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn from best examples • Get academics to provide details of planned impact – full costings in PTI statement • Reassure academics that PTI is not binding • Work with stakeholder to engage them at the beginning and understand their needs • Encourage academics to consider the cost of their PTI activities • Communicate distinction between PTI and impact summary • Foster understanding that PI is not required to personally undertake impact activities