Towards an open research university: extending the OU’s “ecology of openness”

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Engaging Research Research Blog: http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/per
Overview

- A little scene setting
- From open science to open research
- The OU’s “ecology of openness”
- Connecting research, UK policy and support with RCUK’s PER Catalyst initiative
- Framing organisational change at the OU
- Self-assessing the OU
- Reflecting on OU approaches, interventions & challenges
- Q&A
Open science: Making science public; making public science; publics making science

1.3

(In)authentic sciences and (im)partial publics: (re)constructing the science outreach and public engagement agenda

3.2

Practising Science Communication in the Information Age
Theorising professional practices

4.2

Investigating Science Communication in the Information Age
Implications for public engagement and popular media

Edited by Richard Halliman, Elizabeth Whitelegg, Eileen Scanlon, Sam Scott, and Jeff Thomas
Mainstreaming open research? Some “starters for ten…”

• What is a university for in the 21st Century?
• What should academic scholarship encompass?
• Should citizens have roles in shaping research priorities and contributing to research?
  – How should these contributions be supported & recognised?
• How should (open) research be funded?
• How should excellence in (open) research be recognised & rewarded?
• Is there a shared understanding of open research?
• Is open research a valued activity?
Scholarship reconsidered

- discovery – open research
- integration – open publishing
- application – open engagement
- teaching – open education

(Boyer, 1990, 1996; Pearce et al., 2010)

- mapping (changes to) academic practices
Interviewee

I don't want to be a private intellectual. Too much is real, too much at stake, in the public sphere. The interaction between the scholar and the world should not be solely within the classroom or the lab or through the occasional snippet quoted by a journalist.

All the tools are at hand for scholars to be public intellectuals. It truly does not require a rocket scientist to communicate with the entire world online.

But it may require someone who is not a scientist or scholar to believe he or she has the right and privilege to express and develop ideas without first seeking peer permission to publish those ideas.
From analogue towards digital scholarship

“…forms of scholarship that are more information-intensive, data-intensive, distributed, collaborative, and multidisciplinary”

(Borgman, 2008)

Comment

ROAD MAPS FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY RESEARCH IN SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

From analogue to digital scholarship: implications for science communication researchers

Richard Holliman
Open scholarship: facilitating lifelong engagement with research

“The Open Scholar is someone who makes their intellectual projects and processes digitally visible and who invites and encourages ongoing criticism of their work and secondary uses of any or all parts of it—at any stage of its development.”

(Burton, 2009, Academic Evolution)
Challenges of open science/research
Open access, open source, open peer review, open data

Building on History: Religion in London

Future project development ...

The funding for our project has now come to an end and so we are currently exploring options for future funding and project development. We would very much welcome your ideas and suggestions in these regards. In the meantime, please also visit our Building on...
An “ecology of openness”

- open and distance learning institution
- open to people, places, methods and ideas
- open educational resources

**Open Learning at a Distance:**

**Lessons for Struggling MOOCs**

Patrick McAndrew* and Eileen Scanlon

Free education is changing how people think about learning online. The rise of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (1) shows that large numbers of learners can be reached.

Laboratory builds a collection of tools to combine remote access, virtual experiments, and citizen science (8) into the curriculum.

Advice: Interactions between student-teacher,
Open Learn; www.open.edu/openlearn
2013 = 5.2m unique browser visits
YouTube; youtube.com/user/TheOpenUniversity
2013 = 2.4m unique visitors + 5.1m views
iTunes-U; open.edu/itunes/subjects/science
2013 = 1.7m unique visitors + 8.7m downloads
Welcome to Open Research Online

Open Research Online is the Open University’s repository of research publications and other research outputs. It is an Open Access resource that can be searched and browsed freely by members of the public. For more information see FAQs.

Search Repository
Search using simple and advanced search options.

Browse
- Academic Unit/Department
- Interdisciplinary Research Centre
- Year
- Journal
- OU Author/Editor

User Area
Deposit your research here. OU academics and research staff may submit their research outputs to Open Research Online.

ORO Blog | Contact: ORO Team

ORO Blog Headlines
December Statistics

Pause | Resume |
The OU is a world leader in open learning. In developing and implementing a strategy for public engagement with research we will foster an ‘ecology of openness’ ([Wilks and Pearce, 2011](#)), changing the culture of our research, and aligning this with our mission to be ‘open to people, places, methods and ideas’.
PER Mandate

mainstreaming open research?

1. A strategic commitment to public engagement
2. Researchers are recognised and valued for excellent PER
3. Appropriate training, support and opportunities
4. Regular reviews of sector’s progress
Beacons for Public Engagement

Beacons for Public Engagement are university-based collaborative centres to help support, recognise, reward and build capacity for public engagement work across the UK. Together with our partners, the UK funding councils and the Wellcome Trust, we are investing into this initiative in order to support a step-change in recognition for public engagement across the higher education sector. There are six Beacons around the UK, and one National Co-ordinating Centre.

For more information about the initiative read our launch brochure or visit the National Co-ordinating Centre website.

An independent review of the Beacons has now been carried out by People Science and Policy. A copy of the review document is available here.

The Beacons were asked to provide final reports and evaluations to document the lessons they learned. These can be accessed here.

**The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement**

The National Co-ordinating Centre is made up of the University of Bristol, University of the West of England and other partners. The National Co-ordinating Centre will build networks across the other Beacons and provide a single point of contact as well as an overview of their activities. It will also work strategically with key national partners who are also interested in understanding and listening to audiences better and generating knowledge with them. These organisations, including the BSC, the Museums, Libraries and Archives, and the volunteering organisation v, AlphaGalileo and Inform will help to professionalise how Higher Education engages with the public.

Visit the National Co-ordinating Centre website.

**The Beacons for Public Engagement**

**Beacon North East**

Beacon North East is a partnership between Newcastle University, Durham University and the Centre for Life and local community groups, to pioneer a series of conversations informing key research issues such as; energy and the environment; social inclusion and social justice; and ageing and vitality.

**University of Manchester / Manchester Metropolitan / University of Salford / Museum of Science and Industry / Manchester/Knowledge Capital**

The Manchester Beacon’s activities will be shaped and informed by the creativity and dynamism of the people of Manchester and Salford to ensure that all members of the community, particularly residents from the poorest and most excluded neighbourhoods, benefit from their work.

They will focus on “reaching out”, “listening to” and “learning from” local people. Their programme of activities will be delivered in partnership with a wide range of local businesses, sports clubs, cultural venues, community groups and media organisations.
1 narrative: an open research university
3 themes: 9 sub-plots

- Mission
- Leadership
- Communication

- Support
- Learning
- Reward

- Staff
- Students
- Publics

Clarify your PURPOSE for engaging publics with your research
Invest in PROCESSES that support good quality public engagement with research
Focus on effective support and involvement of PEOPLE
Towards an open research university

How embedded is PER at the Open University? - 2011 assessment

Where does the Open University want to be in March 2015?
initial diagnostic exploration

• mapping PER strategies, practices, resources & support mechanisms
• investigating processes of PER innovation
• reviewed internal/external strategic documentation + research literature
• 15 interviews with ADRs and Research Centre Directors
• CROS and PIRLS survey

• defining and valuing PER
  – ‘communicating to…’ vs. ‘engaging with…’
  – PER vs. PE vs. research impact
• few PER leadership roles & lacking strategy
• issues of control
• diversity, e.g. people, places, methods and ideas
• quality and performance
• self-censorship of researchers
communication vs. engagement

“I've been really shocked by at various levels across the university is the lack of understanding between dissemination and impact.

Not helped by the work we do with the BBC in a way that could have impact, all sorts of things we do could have impact. But it's not the same...”
communication vs. engagement

“I think we should be much more proactive in defending large-scale public engagement, including broadcast work and [to] defend that as legitimate impact.

I have actually worked with a video... a, sort of, TV director who had worked for [XXX] and it was a nightmare, frankly.

And that is what I’ve heard from every single other academic [...] that it’s a constant negotiation between your academic complexity and integrity and their need for nice headlines...”
quality and (lack of) recognition

“...there’s a conflicting degree of un-clarity as to how you measure these things...
in terms of what we do, I would argue it does have public benefit. But to measure that public benefit would be an extremely, well in the first place complex and time consuming, but also misguided process to kind of nail down well the amount of benefit from…
I think it’s fair to say that we probably slightly under appreciate people who do that type of activity but probably no more than we under appreciate people who excel in research...”
PURPOSE
Embedding a commitment to public engagement with research in institutional mission and strategy, and championing that commitment at all levels.

MISSION
Sign-up to the NCCPE Manifesto for Public Engagement.
Create a shared understanding of the purpose, value, meaning and role of public engagement with research with staff and embed this in the OU’s strategy & mission.
Working definition of public engagement with research.

LEADERSHIP
Introduce a University Champion for Public Engagement with Research.
Support engaged research champions across the organisation and departments.

COMMUNICATION
Communicate consistent, clear messages to validate, support and celebrate public engagement with research, both within the OU and externally. (e.g. blog, Spotlight, Awards Scheme, Seed Funding call, publication. PER Fellows, NCCPE PE Ambassadors).
Participatory design of digital infrastructure to facilitate open engagement with members of the public, user communities, stakeholders and community organisations.
(distributed) Leadership

- PVC (RSQ)
- First OU Champion for PER
  - seconded to the RSQ Unit
  - ‘third stream professional’?
- Connecting strategy and action
  - Engaged project management
  - Mission creep
- Raising awareness vs. identifying, assessing and showcasing excellence
- 9 CAUs
- Departments
  - Research Centres
- Roles and responsibilities
- Development plans
- Will there be a 2nd PER Champion?
complementing the OU mission

“In embedding the principles, values and reflective practices of public engagement within the Open University, we want to

enhance our research capacity. By embedding the principles of public

engagement within our research environment, we are better able to

serve our mission as we become a truly open research university.”
Communication

- “Research with people at the centre”
- Working definition of “engaging research”

Excellent public engagement with research is reflected in the different ways that researchers meaningfully connect and share research with various stakeholders, user communities and members of the public. Done well, public engagement with research will generate benefits, changes and effects for all participants as they share knowledge, expertise and skills. Excellence will be demonstrated partly through recognition of the contributions that all participants make to the shaping of research agendas, the processes of conducting research, and in the products of that research.
### REWARD
Recognise and reward staff involvement within **recruitment**, **promotion**, **workload plans** and **performance reviews**, and celebrate success with **awards** or prizes.

### SUPPORT
Mapping current activity and strategies; **research-led**.

Co-ordinate the delivery of public engagement with research to maximise efficiency, target support, improve quality, foster innovation, join up thinking and monitor involvement and impact. (e.g. **self-organising networks**, **SUPI**, **evaluation**).

### LEARNING
Offer opportunities for learning and reflection and provide support for continuing professional development and training; **generic vs. bespoke**; **impact vs. PER**; **induction**; not just **PGRs**; connect with existing schemes.

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**Focal points for embedding public engagement with research**

**PROCESS**
Investing in systems and processes that facilitate involvement, maximise impact and help to ensure quality and value for money.
• Awards scheme
  – criteria for assessment

• Seed funding scheme: evidence
## Focal points for embedding public engagement with research

### PEOPLE
Involving staff, students and representatives of the public and using their energy, expertise and feedback to shape the strategy and its delivery

### STAFF
Ensure that all staff – in academic and support roles – have **opportunities** to get involved in informal and formal ways.

Calls for **seed-funded projects**, reviewed and supported.

### STUDENTS
Proactively include and involve students in shaping the mission and in the delivery of the strategy, and maximise **opportunities** for their involvement.

### PUBLIC
Invest in people, processes and infrastructure to support and nurture the involvement of individuals and organisations external to the OU, e.g. SUPI and **DTSA**; Participation Now and **opendemocracy.net**; Brilliant Club and PGRs; **Earthwatch** and citizen science; Tate and art history; CRC and Girl Guides; Enduring Love? and Relate.
Open research?
Starters for ten…

- What is a university for?
- What should scholarship encompass?
- Should citizens have roles in shaping research priorities and contributing to research?
  - How should these contributions be recognised?
- How should research be funded?
- How should excellence be recognised and rewarded?
- Is there a shared understanding of public engagement with research?
- Is public engagement with research a valued activity?

FROM PEER REVIEW TO MERIT REVIEW
Any questions?

An engaging thesis?

http://nccpe.wordpress.com/an-engaging-thesis

Engaging Research

http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/per

An engaging thesis

As part of our Engaged Futures consultation, we have asked people to share their visions of what the engaged university might be like in the future. Here Richard Holliman, University Champion for Public Engagement with Research, The Open University ( Richard.Holliman@open.ac.uk, www.open.ac.uk/blogs/per) shares his views.

Imagine it is January 2033. You are one of a small team of prospective co-supervisors for a postgraduate research project. The supervision team has advertised for a new postgraduate research student to begin work in autumn 2033. The studentship is fully funded, covering fees and a stipend for living expenses. It is based on a 1+3...