

RESEARCHERS OF THE FUTURE: 21ST CENTURY APPROACHES FOR EFFECTIVE, GLOBAL RESEARCH

Day 3 Discussion, 04th November 2015.

Topic 3: How would a shift in research practice impact on the capabilities of researchers in the future? This Panel presentation focused on a number of questions including: What tools and approaches can you use to exchange knowledge, share your research and be discovered by others? What areas do you need to work on in order to strengthen your capabilities in a range of research paradigms? What educational approaches could you use to improve the learning outcomes, and help shape critical thinkers and reflective early career scholars? How can educational-technologies assist the learning process and what you need to know to design e-resources in low-bandwidth countries?

What follows is a summary of the key points made in a series of **presentations** held on GoToWebinar on 4th November in a session facilitated by the AURA Programme Manager: **Siobhan Duvigneau**, IDS.

First Speaker: Sophie Marsden, IDS, focused on the theme: "How can digital technology be used to enhance research capabilities"? **Sophie Marsden** presented on joint teaching programmes (ARCADE project) <http://www.arcade-project.org/>; E-book: Implementation Research on Health Systems); as well as talking about the development of a series of planned How-to-guides to support professional skills (including twitter, policy guides, blogging) in areas that can sometimes be neglected within capacity building. Makerere University in Uganda, Stellenbosch University in South Africa and Karolinksa Institute in Sweden are using online blended learning and teaching to enrich their curriculums. Digital technology increases access to wider audiences globally making the creation of engaging learning content easier and quicker. Another learning generated is the connectivity between students and teachers outside of the classroom. Challenges remain; "A digital technological divide still exists, bandwidth and connectivity issues in research institutes impacts timing of projects, access doesn't mean quality and engagement, e-learning programmes and approaches are still in its infancy phase."

Second Speaker: Linda Waldman, IDS, focused on the theme: "How would a shift in research impact on the capabilities of researchers in the future" and highlighted current work including an online course exploring how using mobile phones to seek health information "mHealth" fits into health systems in low and middle income countries. Also how the course seeks to examine change and transition. In addition developing an understanding of how people find health information in Bangladesh through using ICTs in the changing health knowledge economy. Regarding the course outline, **Linda** highlighted that for learning to be embedded in an online platform, it is useful to introduce additional learning resources. She also spoke about the importance of going beyond the technology, to understand the political economy of ICTs and health, while reflecting on the use of mixed methods and interdisciplinary approaches that will explain how sociological theory informs mHealth. Referring to the development of the online course, key areas included: learning to become comfortable with using digital tools and getting to understand copyright issues. Another key area was in applying holistic and analytical approaches in the digital age, using mixed methods were useful to collect data. Some challenges encountered highlighted the way research questions are formulated when considering how we use digital technology to access health information. She concluded that gaps still exist in policy, in practice, and in social science research.

Third Speaker: Nason Bimbe, IDS, focused on the theme: "Shifting research practice and impact on the capabilities of researchers [of the future] in view of digital advancement." He explained that it is useful to benchmark the shifts based on the four functions of scholarship identified by Boyer (1990)

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in his influential book *Scholarship Reconsidered* namely; Discovery, Integration, Application and Teaching, which is a central element. **Nason Bimbe** further explains that changes in research practice have enabled digital technology to create, store, collaborate and share research data in much better ways. Key points included: technology is here to stay, we need to be aware how to take advantage of it. With open access, and there being so much more material available through the internet, enquiry and critical thinking are even more important because people don't find things by coming to the website, or going to the library, so - they go to google now. Librarians therefore have a crucial role to play behind the scenes, for example, in creating good meta-data and abstracts so that resources are easily discoverable through internet searches.

Fourth Conference: Speaker Anne Powell, INASP, presented on "INASP's perspectives and approaches" and how INASP supports librarians, IT staff, researchers, editors and policymakers in developing countries to support, connect up, and communicate scholarly material through initiatives such as Evidence Informed Policy Making (EVIPNET), AuthorAid and Journals OnLine. AuthorAid supports developing country researchers with writing and publishing processes and provides mentorship. INASP seeks to find sustainable approaches that are contextualized to countries' needs with the primary goal being for countries to be equipped to solve their own development challenges.

Fifth Speaker: Blessing Mawire, ITOCA (Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa), South Africa focused on the theme "Getting the best research literature for your search" and provided a context for analysing levels of literacy (Hierarchy of Literacy) and some of the common issues arising from searches that do not get the right results. **Blessing Mawire** then presented on a number of tools (mind mapping; concept clustering, tree structures, Boolean operators, Truncation etc.) and databases to help refine searches including a comprehensive introduction to Research4Life and examples of how using HINARI and PubMed can help you get the best results.

Two pre-recorded contributions were highlighted at the close of the panel session:

Laura Camfield, UEA, focused on the question: From 'paradigm wars' to 'paradigm peace'? and shares her experiences of working in an inter-disciplinary way. She responds to a number of areas including: what do terms like 'multi', 'inter', 'post', and 'trans' actually mean?; the increasingly complex and complicated nature of the problems that researchers and evaluators encounter; that, engaging in the complexity of interventions and research problems, means programmes need to be flexible and adaptive – and how inter-disciplinarity comes into play within this context.

Enrique Mendizabel, Founder of On Think Tanks gives a talk on the question "How would a shift in research practice, applied in the social and digital environment, impact on the capabilities of researchers in the future?" In order to be very good researchers, researchers of the future will need to be both good managers (particularly at the level of the research project, and in respect to their projects) and very good communicators (internally, and increasingly towards their intended audiences).