Showcasing research for impact

Early career researcher workshop summary, York

November 2017
ARCC network

The Adaptation and Resilience in the Context of Change (ARCC) network is hosted by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) and funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

The workshop was facilitated by Dr Pete Walton, KE Fellow, University of Oxford.

UKCIP helps organisations, sectors and government adapt to the changing climate through practice-based research and by providing support and advice. The programme is based at the Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford.

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This report should be referenced as:


www.arcc-network.org.uk
Introduction

“Continuous effort – not strength or influence – is the key to unlocking our potential.” Winston Churchill

Each researcher is in the best position to communicate their own research – any communications manager who tells you otherwise is kidding themselves. You know your research inside and out, so with some tips and tricks around motivation, available platforms, appropriate language and knowing your audience, you can do your communications team out of a job!

This was the final ARCC early career researcher workshop, or at least it was intended to be. Due to many requests for ‘just one more’ from this group, there may be another.

Thanks must go to the group itself – what a fantastic bunch of engaged researchers who have the potential to be leaders in their fields within no time.

Objectives:

• Highlight the options available to researchers to showcase their research
• Raise motivation in attendees to do this for themselves
• Provide a safe space to practice some of these new skills
• Encourage interdisciplinary networking for those diverse fields all with application to the built environment and infrastructure sectors
Day One

Elevator pitch
Benny Hill helped us get walking around the room and mingling, then when the music stopped it was a chance to do a 30-second elevator pitch of your research. Given four opportunities to practice this, key lessons shared by the group were to:

• Refine what you say until you get it right
• Think about how to best get your three key points across
• Adjust what you’re saying to match the level of understanding of your audience i.e. more or less technical

Homework – what makes a good video?
In watching a selection of the videos selected by participants before coming to the event, it was clear that:

• A video can evoke different emotions in individual viewers
• You can use sound to punctuate a key point
• Complicated data doesn’t have to be complicated; speak to someone who knows about visualisation
• Using a physical landmark is useful as a reference point for scale, e.g. the equivalent of Yankee stadium
• There are opportunities for video to change the perception of a ‘boring subject’
• Animations can be used.

Digital Film School: Track 1 is a resource from Open University that might be helpful. See the Appendix for links to other videos.
Introducing video and our Video Vigilante

We were pleased to have international award-winning video journalist Zoe Broughton with us to take us through some of her work in video, with key commentary around:

- The emotions that video can evoke
- Video itself being the driver for community engagement, bringing people together who would not otherwise have spoken to each other
- The importance of thinking about the audience first.

Zoe led the group through interview techniques – ECRs, this is such an opportunity for you as there are increasing occasions for you to interview and be interviewed as part of your research, for example, conference online channels that seek your views as you attend conferences – these are opportunities you should take hold of!

Before you film:

- Learn to read what is in a film... watch films and notice how audio and video are layered together.
- The audio will possibly include interviews, a narrator, music and the wild track that accompanies the footage, i.e. the sound of the wheels of a car on the road.
- Cutaways – these are shots relevant to what is being said, make the footage more engaging and may to help explain the narrative. These can be close-up, medium, or wide. They often include some action or movement. They set the scene, establishing where we are filming, and can also include logos, name captions, a title etc.

Don’t forget: Watch films you like or are similar to how you would like your film and break down what they have done to make that film work.

Interviews… think about:

- The framing of your interviewee – don’t have too much head room. Position them slightly to one side of the frame and have them looking across the screen to someone who is close to the opposite side of the camera.
- Where should the interviewee look – tell them! i.e. at the person asking the questions, not the camera. Presenters talk straight to the camera.
- The background – you don’t want objects to look like they are sticking out of the interviewee’s head, such as coat stands or branches. Don’t have a distracting background. Include something relevant to the interview if possible, i.e. a lab if they are a scientist, a poster of the conference if they are at an event.
- The sound – try and interview away from background noise such as traffic or in a busy room full of people chatting. If you are filming on your phone, consider getting a Rode Smart Phone clip microphone to improve your audio and cut out background noise.
• **Lighting**: try to get good lighting on the face of the person you are interviewing. On your phone you can adjust the focus by tapping on their face and then slide the light symbol up or down until the interviewee’s face is correctly exposed.

• **Hold the phone horizontally** – not vertically! – so your picture fits the computer / TV / projector screen.

• **Try and hold it steady** or invest in a tripod or monopod. Avoid movement whilst they are talking, such as zooming in. Make any adjustments needed during the next question.

**Interview tips**

Film Oxford – *How to film an interview*

• Start by asking the interviewee their name and how to spell it.

• Ask the interviewee to say how they want to be captioned, i.e. are they Chair of x group, local campaigner, CEO of x company etc.

• Remind the interviewee to look at the person asking the questions. If this feels awkward, then ask them to look at the interviewer’s ear nearest to the camera!

• Ask the interviewee to answer in full sentences so you don’t need to include the question in your edit.

Don’t be awkward about asking them to repeat an answer – be positive, pointing out that what they said, they said well, but suggest that you need the response to be more concise or that you had a technical problem and could they repeat that answer, etc. Give them advice which would make a better answer for you.

• Getting them to include some of the question in the answer helps this.

• You can give them a few words to begin their answer, as a prompt.

**Phone filming**

• When filming on your phone check that you are not blocking the microphone with your finger – it’s usually at one end of the camera.

• Make sure that your lens is clean – use a proper lens cleaner – as this will help the camera to focus.

• The camera and the interviewer need to be at roughly the same height as the interviewee.

• Consider whether or not you want to edit – *Hugh Hedgehog video* is an example of a no-edit film. Keep it short, with props to hand and good imagery in the background.

• If you are editing on your phone, there are lots of editing apps which enable you to trim clips, choose the order of the clips and add music. For example Adobe Premiere Clip is free to download.

And now – happy filming!
Dinner speaker: Dr Mark Bevan, University of York

Have you ever considered using poetry to showcase your research? The Co-Motion project led by the University of York did just that in communicating their findings around ageing and mobility, particularly in raising awareness of the travel needs of older people. Mark shared some experiences of balancing the integrity of the research with the creativity applied by the poet, and particularly some feedback from 18–25 year-olds who said they are unlikely to read that much text on a bus… this is important to realise; know your audience!

(T)here
(iii)
That time in your twenties your hands stopped working – curling back into a baby's fists – you had to drop everything and swore that if you ever got your old self back you wouldn't take your hands for granted but you would give space to the person travelling in front of you tackling the enormity of the bus steps and you did, for a while, and then you didn’t.

Anna Woodford
3 in a series of 7 poems commissioned by Co-Motion
Day Two

Showcasing – “be incredibly strategic”
With Professor Alison Heppenstall and Dr Nick Malleson, University of Leeds

With some more background and practical experience of using video to showcase research, now it is time to consider other ways of showcasing, and also WHY this is important:

- What do you want to be known for?
- Where do you want your articles to be?
- Who do you want to work with?
- You ARE expected to tweet and blog, balance of how much time this takes
- Opportunity to WOW those sitting on future interview panels.

The Conversation
Academic rigour, journalistic flair

Founded in Melbourne, Australia in April 2010, The Conversation is an independent, not-for-profit media outlet that sources its content from the academic and research community. Here in the UK, it launched in 2013, so it is still a relatively new platform for showcasing research. It also operates in the Canada, US, France, Africa, Indonesia, and globally.

Alison shared two experiences with The Conversation:

- Very focused article, well-considered academic piece got 1750 views
- Navel-gazing commentary that more loosely linked their research to a contemporary online game got 20k views! This resulted in an immediate impact, increased citations, invitations to events, requests to sit on panels etc.
Nick shared some experiences with journals, Twitter and blogs:

**Journal selection – what is important?**
- Impact factor
- Publishing time
- Readership
- Who are you citing and what journals do they publish in?
- Quality of journal
- Open access.

**Twitter**
- All the ‘cool kids’ are doing it
- Summarise new research
- Push out new papers
- Let your own institution know that you are tweeting – self-promotion
- What about negative comments?
- Need to follow beyond accounts of people you like, search for the alternative views you need to know about
- Engage with those you want to influence, academic leaders
- Is this your academic profile only or you as an individual? – if they are different

**Blogs**
You can use blogs to start a conversation, students can learn more easily through this informal style, link to other resources, tell people about your research in a non-academic way.

The ARCC network can support you with the process of blog writing – and has the network website available for you to use as a platform.

*Note: Dr Jannik Giesekam from the University of Leeds was unable to present due to a sporting injury – he was to highlight the benefits of industry liaison, and speaking and exhibiting at trade shows. This may be included in the next ARCC workshop if possible.*
Return of our Vigilante

Zoe took the group through the elements of a video, knowing what to look to make a good video that will help you transform your own research into a thing of beauty. This is especially useful if you are out in the field, using photos to create a quick video, link to your blog and push out via Twitter:

- What can you hear and see?
- Logos
- Combining text and image
- Keep things moving – one image, one line of text, rotating, changing
- Build up your own image library
- Consider an Impact Accelerator Account grant to animate your research.

Before you film...

- Think about what the narrative and aim of the film is
- Can you recce (check out) where you will be filming? Think about good backgrounds, quiet audio, good imagery, good light
- Get your kit ready – card space to record onto and battery power (take a battery pack!)
- Think about shots you’d like to get
- What questions might you ask?
- What footage can you get?
- Health and safety – be aware of your surroundings, not just what’s through the lens.

Showcasing your research

This was the final exercise of the two days (sob!)…

- Consider audience first, then message
- What are the mechanisms you will use?
- Feedback – EVALUATION!!
- Why is my research important?
- Use images to stress the message
- Social media to push it out – use analytics for evaluation
- Consider timing, not during an extreme event, for example
- Trade shows
- Newsletters
- Architectural regeneration; use the building that people are walking past to generate interest, the use of art
• Use Twitter to push people to a blog
• Music copyright – be careful! Always check with your media services group
• Storyboard your research, make it a performance!
• QR codes can be useful
• Illustrations, for example here is a recent cartoon drawn by Clive Goddard for the UKCIP 20th anniversary event held in Oxford on 20 November:

Please also visit the ARCC Bag of tricks for more information.
## Appendices

### Attendees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olalekan Adekola</td>
<td>UWE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Adu-Amankwah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>Baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Bassett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Blay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivien</td>
<td>Chow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alessandra</td>
<td>Coda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Dolan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inji</td>
<td>Kenawy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fulvio</td>
<td>Lopane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaun</td>
<td>Maskrey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camilla</td>
<td>Pezzica</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Pregnolato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barenda</td>
<td>Rundle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisham</td>
<td>Tariq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Vercruysse</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Video links:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What made it a good video?</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pete</td>
<td>Humour, uplifting, the characters themselves.</td>
<td>Trouble (Lip-sync video) by Sean Hayes &amp; Scott Icenogle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan</td>
<td>Tim himself, his character, his story, less about the video production but what he is saying… and the Chancellor in the back, classic facials.</td>
<td>Tim Minchin – Occasional address and Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluvio</td>
<td>Clear, the dot visualisation really in perspective, explain it to everyone, complicated data doesn't have to be complicated… contextualised for the viewer… didn't shy away from data but presented it in a clear way… most Americans know Yankee stadium is a big stadium, reference back to things your audience would know about…</td>
<td>How fentanyl is making the opioid epidemic even worse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camilla</td>
<td>The sounds, the emphasis on the underlying point, makes you follow… movement in the images and sound to build the rhythm… punctuating a key point with sound, reinforcing the story… pop art effect (but consider visual appeal of what you are communicating).</td>
<td>The social life of the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Funny, but importance of health and safety, communicated in a comic way… humour is a very powerful communication tool, but fine line between too much slapstick.</td>
<td>Man crushed by cement prank – Just for laughs gags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inji</td>
<td>Climate change rap (Manchester Climate Change conference – launch new strategy)… summarising all the information that happened at the conference, he was taking notes the entire conference… actually accurate, think outside the box… he asked if he missed anything, then added more in… what a legend!</td>
<td>Manchester climate conference – visceral performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>A lot of people don't understand the importance of soil, relative facts to highlight just how importance (amount of nutrients etc)… steady, presents the information as a good intro to the science behind soil… visualisation carbon dioxide as bubbles (not everyone even knows that it is a gas!).</td>
<td>Soil solutions to climate problems – narrated by Michael Pollan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivien</td>
<td>Used for communities involved in redevelopment. Doesn't have to be a talking head, or illustrations etc… could be an animation that is created to support the understanding…</td>
<td>My neighbourhood – observe, listen, decide, explore, plan</td>
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**Other video links:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lekan</th>
<th>Policy briefs introduction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>Brené Brown on empathy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Nature is speaking – Julia Roberts is Mother Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Civen App</td>
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