Writing Impact Case Studies for the Humanities:

Event Report

Irish Humanities Alliance

Background

Impact is an urgent policy issue for academics, higher education institutions (HEIs) and policy makers, and has become a major focus in funding, assessment and the evaluation of research. The direct impact of academic research has expanded with increasing access to research publications and it has become a key performance indicator for researchers and institutions alike. Understanding, assessing and increasing the impact of research is an urgent concern in all discipline areas. The importance of research for an increasing range of stakeholders has also assumed a new strategic priority, both in national systems and at EU level. However, the question remains, how should Humanities researchers communicate the impact of their research?

This workshop brought together those working on Impact within HEIs in Ireland, North and South, and took place on 9 November 2016 at University College Dublin. The participants discussed what Impact means for the university in the current environment and how Humanities researchers can write effective Impact case studies. The workshop aimed to develop a common understanding of Impact and to draft a Toolkit that can be used by all Humanities researchers.

Introductory Remarks

Professor Gerardine Meaney, Chair of the Irish Humanities Alliance and Professor of Cultural Theory, School of English, Drama and Film, UCD, opened the workshop by introducing The Irish Humanities Alliance (IHA) and its aims. She emphasized that writing effective humanities impact case studies is a crucial tool in promoting understanding of the contribution of the humanities to society and culture. It provides an opportunity to document and formalise traditional humanities strengths and demonstrate the importance of our vibrant research culture. She also outlined the contemporary relevance of skills provided by the study of the humanities. She identified the development of a model and skill set to best demonstrate the deep and wide-ranging impact of Irish arts and humanities research and teaching as the key task of the workshop. Ireland has a unique opportunity to shape and grow our own impact model and it is imperative that we develop tools, processes and policies in order to communicate our deliverables clearly and develop a model that is suitable. It is important to learn from international best practice, for example, by examining the strengths and weakness of current UK definitions of impact and knowledge exchange. Overall, the task of the workshop includes developing a workable, concise and clear definition, which accurately captures the impact of arts and humanities.

Dr Aoibhín de Búrca, Director of the Irish Humanities Alliance, provided a summary of the IHA Impact Case Studies project, and highlighted that the project's aim is to gather and collate information in one central place to provide an opportunity for HEIs to compare their approaches to impact, with the aim of policy development. Case Studies will be collected from the HEIs for the IHA website and then a toolkit will be created in order to evaluate and set forth best practices based on the cases.

Session One – Impact and the University

Professor Daniel Carey, Director of the Moore Institute at National University of Ireland, Galway, chaired the first session, *Impact and the University*. He noted that Ursula Kelly's expertise in the field of university impact was perfect for this session, especially considering her involvement in Impact in both the UK and Ireland, including DCU and UCD.

Ursula Kelly, **Director of Viewforth Consulting and the author of UCD's** *Delivering Impact* **Report, DCU's** *Capturing the Economic and Social Value of Higher Education* **Report and Universities UK's** *The Impact of Universities on the UK Economy* **Report**, began by stating that the study of universities' impact on the economy is relatively recent. It only began to be prominent in the early 1990s, and was primarily a pragmatic response to the frequent and driving questions as to why universities should receive funding and whether universities create jobs and help the economy. During her time at the University of Strathclyde, she was involved in a number of the early studies of university impact, on Scotland and on the UK as whole. This made a major contribution towards persuading government that universities brought economic benefits and were not just a drain on the public purse.

 However early studies focussed purely on the financial elements of these benefits – generation of economic activity, job creation and contribution to GDP. Subsequent work by Ursula and her colleagues sought to identify the value (economic and social) generated by what universities actually do (through teaching, research, community engagement, etc). This is a major theme of her current work, particularly investigating how to measure and impute value to some of the more 'intangible', non-financial outputs of universities.

 Overall in the UK and in other parts of Europe the biggest trends in measuring university impact have been focused on either the immediate economic activity generated (jobs created etc through university expenditure, universities as 'anchor institutions' in an area) and on the benefits arising from research and innovation (with universities as part of the innovation eco-system). There is also recognition that knowledge transfer through students is significant. The cultural impact of universities is sometimes acknowledged but has tended to be given less prominence.

 Methodologies to capture all of these benefits are still in their infancy and much more research on types of higher education impact, and the processes through which these are achieved, is badly needed. This has led at times to an over-reliance on the impacts that can be measured through money flows alone, with policy consequences. For instance, part of the argument in England for raising student fees significantly was that the Central (Westminster) government placed a greater emphasis on the private financial rates of return to graduates, and less emphasis on the broader social rate of return. (It should be noted that the conventional 'rates of return' literature is focussed on financial returns both for the individual and to the Exchequer and does not consider any wider social costs and benefits.) The devolved administrations in the UK took slightly different perspectives on this issue but the challenge remains to find ways to demonstrate wider social impact which would justify public investment. Demonstration has to involve quantitative as well as qualitative evidence to ensure its credibility. Whatever way you look at it, 'Impact' is here to stay. There is always going to be a need to demonstrate, to funders and to the wider public, the value of universities and why their work matters.

 The Arts and Humanities in the UK were initially hesitant to embrace the concept of impact and were decidedly hostile to it in some cases, partly through the perception that the 'impact agenda' was mainly 'instrumental' and about economic impact in the narrow, financial, sense. It did not seem immediately relevant to Arts and Humanities scholars. This was a mistaken approach because the lack of engagement was quite damaging, leading to the Arts and Humanities being accorded diminished importance and being undervalued by policy makers who focussed largely on STEM disciplines. As the 'impact agenda' is developing in Ireland it is an opportunity for the Arts and Humanities to grasp the nettle and help set and lead the agenda, not simply to follow it or have an agenda imposed on them. There is an opportunity in the Republic of Ireland to ensure that the

definition of impact used can be much more sensibly interpreted to include all aspects of a university's work – indeed correct interpretation of 'economic' impact would include non-financial and non-commercial impacts and influences, and not purely financial elements.

Universities need to improve their external communications, and better communicate to society all of the many and diverse ways they are of value to their students, surroundings and society. We should focus on clearly demonstrating and communicating the crucial importance of universities and the humanities are a core part of how universities deliver value.

Session One Discussion

The British Academy is proposing to broaden impact narratives, by widening the notion of evidence and loosening the tie between underpinning research and impact. In REF 2014, many impact areas in the humanities were driven by individuals, so the British Academy is proposing that future impact case studies should be organised by large clusters, and that public engagement and teaching should be valued more highly. This broader thematic and cluster-based approach is very welcome, as would be a rubric that values teaching and student engagement and learning, which the current REF does not address. It is also important to keep in mind that funding right now is jobs-focused, and we need to make the case for basic frontier research funding and demonstrate excellent frontier research.

An example of recent success is the #LoveIrishResearch campaign, which has been successful simply because it gives researchers an opportunity to tell the story of their research, and its success has helped attract more funding. It is important to demonstrate all of the excellent research that occurs in a clear and accessible way. Ireland has the opportunity to define impact and therefore to shape what we want to achieve. We would like to collate a coherent definition, which should include engagement, knowledge exchange, teaching, webs of influence, and social goods. All of these aspects should be included in the definition, to make sure that we correctly measure the total impact and avoid the stereotype of providing qualitative results for quantitative measurements. We must also be careful to avoid a mismatch between definition and scope, and to clearly communicate our definition and tailor the message to the audience.

The relevant policy bodies for Arts and Humanities have demonstrated a clear interest in this. For example, the HEA has asked us to come together to make the case for humanities impact, and the Department of Education and Skills will be setting an impact agenda with the IHA and the HEA. We need to make sure to create a definition of impact that is not too broad, as we must have a specific, clear definition and plan in place in order to create effective policy. Furthermore, we must keep in mind that outputs and impact are what we deliver, not what we do, and must be conscious of differentiating outputs, impact and outcomes in our definition.

Session Two – Writing Impact Case Studies

Dr Noel Fitzpatrick, Vice Chair of the IHA, Head of Research at the College of Arts and Tourism, and Dean of the Graduate School of Creative Arts and Media, DIT, chaired the second session. He introduced the three speakers, and articulated the tension between results and impact inherent in the process of creating a definition of impact for the humanities.

Dr Ciara Leonard, Public Affairs Manager for UCD Research and Innovation, shared the UCD experience of the impact agenda. In 2013, UCD set up a process to measure and evaluate impact, deciding to take a leadership approach, rather than a reactive one through the Beyond Publications Steering Committee. They then published a report, "UCD: Delivering Impact" which considered UCD's impact as a whole, inclusive of economic, social and cultural impact, with a primary audience of policy makers and funders in mind, in order to understand and communicate university impact for the first time in Ireland. They were able to demonstrate that UCD, as the largest university in Ireland with nearly 4,000 staff and 25,000 students, contributes 1.3 billion to the economy annually,

They then created case studies which encompassed many different aspects of university impact, from the campus as an amenity, to student volunteering in the community, to UCD's work to preserve cultural heritage in Ireland. The case studies were designed to appeal to broad audiences, to demonstrate to as many people as possible UCD's impact on and importance to students, staff, faculty, community, etc. An Impact Portal was then designed to organise all of the impact work undertaken at UCD. In designing the Impact Portal, they first recognized that academic excellence was a prerequisite of economic and social impact, and then turned to definitions of impact. They created one that reflected the UK's, Australia's, and the SFI's. They also focused on the Impact Lifecycle, from its design and inputs to its activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. They also found it important to differentiate between outputs, outcomes and impacts. The areas of impact were determined to be Cultural, Economic, Environmental, Health, Political, Scientific, Social, Technological and Training. These broad areas of impact were developed in order to appeal to the many different stakeholders' definitions of impact, and in order to apply to the interdisciplinary nature of the cases.

The portal includes case studies, which were designed with these definitions in mind, and developed and designed based on best practices from different countries. The site also includes supports and resources, which are meant to help guide the users through the different phases: planning, capturing and communicating and mentoring. The portal has been piloted across the university to serve as a guide throughout projects, from understanding the challenges of the research, to understanding who would benefit from the project, how the research would be funded, but also to help everyone build impact into the beginning of the planning, instead of at the end.

They have presented on challenges encountered so far, which include that the tool and impact are both new and that the majority of cases have been from the social sciences, a field which maps very easily onto the process, and more diversity of case fields is needed. It has also become clear that it is more difficult to encourage people to integrate impact into the early stages of projects, but UCD Impact's next phase is designed to address these challenges.

UCD is one of the first to develop university-wide tools for impact in Ireland, and these tools are merely the first step. They are next planning to run research impact workshops, a UCD Impact Seminar Series to encourage internal and external impact expertise-sharing, an impact case study competition to encourage researchers to consider the impact of their research and to illuminate and celebrate their research impact. and develop further resources and tools to help their community learn how to use future systems, as well as the ones they have already created.

Dr Claire Dewhirst, Head of the Centre for Educational Development at Queen's University Belfast began her presentation by introducing Impact at Queen's by outlining a few of their Case Studies. The first case study is from the Queen's School of Pharmacy, and focuses on a ring that was

developed to reduce the rates of HIV infection in women by seventy percent, providing health benefits and the opportunity for women to take control of their own health. It is a powerful piece of research and was easy to demonstrate its importance and impact. For case studies, it is important to demonstrate the impact of the research, but also important to demonstrate the impact of the research's narrative and articulate the difference it makes in the world.

Queen's learned that telling a story was crucial, as was identifying the stakeholders and beneficiaries involved and how they were involved in the research. In REF, emphasis was placed on evidence, and although this was initially a difficult element for humanities cases, Queen's learned that you can be very creative, broad and story-based in your approach to evidence. Some cases even worked with local groups to try to capture the evidence, and used DOIs to track policy documents. Another useful method they use to track information is through the knowledge exchange seminar series that runs among Queen's, Ulster University and the Open University. Another useful method they use to track information is through the Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS) http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/research-and-information-service-raise/knowledge-exchange/ which is a partnership between Raise at The Assembly and Queen's, Ulster and The Open Universities.

An important aspect of defining impact is regional significance – the research's maximum area and should be carefully considered and parameters set. Another important aspect is dissemination, and there was a disagreement as to whether dissemination constitutes impact or not. In the end, Queen's decided that if the project encompassed dissemination , then it should be included. Whilst dissemination was not considered as impact in terms of REF2014 it is still considered part of the impact process more generally.

The Republic of Ireland has the opportunity to carefully consider the many aspects of Impact, create its own definition, and where aspects like dissemination, communities and societies, and engagement all fit into the definition. Dr. Dewhirst then concluded by outlining lessons gleaned from the UK's REF process:

- It is important to be genuine and true to the research.
- Do not over-claim. Be realistic.
- Define Impact carefully. You do not have to be limited by REF.
- Have faith in your research. Everyone believes in their research, so make sure to capture why it is important to you so that you can communicate that importance to others.
- Percentages are useful in communicating scope and reach (for example, percentage of the population effected)
- Consider discipline contexts, even within the humanities.
- Carefully consider the scope of a project, and consider whether its impact is local or global. This is especially important considering that global impact is considered particularly valuable at the moment.
- Make sure to think about the voices of beneficiaries and stakeholders in the narrative, and how they fit into the process as a whole.
- If you are struggling to write a narrative, use an image. Maps and images can go far to help shape and communicate the story of your research.

Johan Robberecht, Executive Director for Research at the Institute for European Studies of the Université libre de Bruxelles (IEE-ULB – www.iee-ulb.eu), and Impact and Dissemination Work Package Leader for the H2020 ENLIGHTEN project and for the newly selected H2020 MSCA GEM-STONES European Joint Doctorate introduced the IEE-ULB, an interdisciplinary and interfaculty research and teaching institute. Its three main missions are education, research and public debate.

As a "Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence", the IEE-ULB is a recognised reservoir of expertise in European affairs. Its affiliates, academic lecturers, and researchers provide the necessary knowledge and disciplinary excellence which any interdisciplinary research institute must effectively base its research activities on.

Their research strives to bridge EU studies, Area studies and International studies; thus providing new comparative insights, be it in legal, political, historical or discursive terms. As a leading institution of an Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate (www.erasmusmundus-gem), a Marie Sklodowska Curie Joint Doctorate (www.gem-stones.eu), an academic network on criminal law (www.eclan.eu) and another on immigration and asylum (www.odysseus-network.eu), they act as coordinators of research networks involving more than 50 partners worldwide. In addition to national funding avenues, they have received/receive funding from several highly selective EU programmes (incl. Marie Curie, Erasmus Mundus, H2020, Erasmus +, etc.).

The IEE-ULB's specific approach to interdisciplinarity is a sustained effort to coax dialogue and confrontation by bridging several disciplinary concerns. It distinguishes itself from both multidisciplinarity, which risks being limited to a mere juxtaposition of disciplinary analyses; and transdisciplinarity, which at times can forego a deep disciplinary anchoring. By analogy, when it comes to drafting new interdisciplinary research projects on the EU, the IEE-ULB effectively favours an integrated "marbled cake model" rather than a cumulative "tiered cake" one. They currently have four transversal research themes: (1) Europe as an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice; (2) Europe as an Area of Economic and Social Regulation; (3) Europe as a Community of Norms and Values; and (4) Europe in the World.

The IEE-ULB's approach to Impact is focused on the optimisation of the capacity of research to "influence the world" by way of an exercise consisting in "bridging different expectations": those from academics and researchers, governmental organisations, civil society organisations, and any other stakeholder potentially impacted by the substance of their research.
To do so, they capitalize on their interdisciplinary specificity whilst taking into account four processes by which its research generates an external impact:

(1) through the aggregation of disciplinary perspectives present within the IEE-ULB – i.e. they structurally integrate the university's actors and their disciplinary activities in the area of European studies in their public relations strategy, thus developing an environment favourable to the emergence of transfaculty dynamics that can translate into setting up interdisciplinary projects anchored in disciplinary excellence;

(2) by going beyond the disciplinary limits – i.e. they promote the linking of disciplinary knowledge through interdisciplinary activities as well as convergence in the area of European and global studies;

(3) through the development of cooperation with third parties – i.e. they developed a specific academic/non-academic bridging methodology called AGORA Fora - www.agora-forum.eu -and mainstreamed it throughout their project;

(4) and through a participative approach – i.e. they develop sustainable partnerships with 'impact interfaces' of their research present on the Brussels scene and beyond, thus optimizing their comparative geographic advantage in terms of European studies.

At the IEE-ULB, writing impact strategies is not exclusively understood as the development of communication tools and products. It is an exercise aimed at optimizing the research (be it in the framework of project bids' writing, or through the IEE-ULB's efforts geared towards pushing its research activities at the scientific and societal forefronts). Those responsible for impact – who have to be able to understand the format AND the content of the research – are, from the onset, associated with the teams in charge of drafting the project's research agendas. Doing this enhances their capacity to purposefully: (1) identify the projects' end-users – i.e. usual categories include academics and researchers, students, practitioners, industry organisations and general audience at large; (2) identify the relevant societal challenges and needs; (3) define the adapted strategy to address these – i.e.

amongst other define where, when and how to associate the end-users to the research process; (4) define the instruments to fill in the identified gaps; and, (5) ultimately, design the impact "products" that are to be disseminated. These five steps having been completed, they will serve as a basis to integrate a coherent impact programme/plan articulated around the project specific and/or the transversal IEE-ULB's research agendas.

Whenever possible, the IEE-ULB strives to associate academic AND non-academic partners within the core scientific activities. The idea here is to create long-term intersectoral collaborations able to collaboratively produce scientific and non-scientific deliverables, which formats are adapted according to the target audiences (for instance: Research briefs focusing on puzzles, hypothesis, methods, etc. for researchers; Scientifically informed policy papers focusing on specific topics for decision makers ; Factsheets and video widgets for the more general public…).

Intersectoral events are also at the heart of the IEE-ULB's impact strategy. The above mentioned AGORA fora are the main tool for this. Academic and non-academic partners are asked to produce background notes (respectively focussing on research and on practice) related to the topic at hand.

These serve as the basis for discussions on roundtables composed of all partners + external academics, researchers, policy makers and civil society representatives. This enables us to collectively outline the main questions and desired takeaways while at the same guaranteeing respect of the scientific research process. Depending on whether these events take place at the start, in the middle or at the end of a specific research endeavour, they will respectively result in: interdisciplinary research briefs framing future research activities; initial findings' reports providing input for the fine-tuning of research end-products; or scientifically informed policy papers.

Two examples of IEE-ULB research projects were then presented to illustrate this approach:

1. ENLIGHTEN (www.enlightenproject.eu): an EU funded Horizon 2020 "Research in Action" project concerned with the evolving legitimacy of the European modes of governance after the crisis. The study of the four chosen case studies – i.e. Banking Crisis & Financial Sustainability; Deficit Reduction & Continuity in Public Services; and Youth Employment and Inclusive Growth – rests on a specific intersectoral partnership for each of them: one consortium's partner university plus one consortium non-academic partners included on the basis of the match between their core business and the substance of the research. This enables: (1) for researchers; privileged access to data and rapid expert feedback on their research enquiries; and (2) for non-academics; access to research networks and academic expertise on their core business. The impact strategy is as such mainstreamed within the scientific process. The impact plan (its implementation) is then articulated around a series of events, platforms and products that reflect the intersectoral dimension of the consortium. It indeed enables the production of both scientific and non-scientific deliverables which serve the specific interest of all partners involved and therefore have a better chance to impact the identified target audiences.
2. GEM-STONES (www.gem-stones.eu): an EU funded Horizon 2020 "Marie Sklodowska Curie Action" European Joint Doctorate, which studies how the European Union manages the world's growing institutional complexity. It is both a research project and a transnational PhD training programme based on a cohort of fifteen PhD students who are subject to double degree agreements linking two degree awarding HEIs. There too the consortium brings together academic and non-academic full partners. In addition to contributing to the research agenda, the later are also to act as mentors for the PhD fellows and provide them with a series of topical internships and skills-training modules.

In short: the IEE-ULB's impact strategy is based on interdisciplinarity and intersectoriality. It can be understood as an ongoing effort to structure a web of influence via its research and teaching activities. These then feed into the IEE-ULB's larger public debate activities and contribute sustainably position the institute as a centre of expertise.

Session Two Discussion

It is important to decide what exactly counts as impact – for example, do activities and outputs count, or can impact only be measured by whether the research makes a difference? This raises an obvious question: how can "making a difference" be quantified? Testimonials may be a crucial method of providing humanities-based evidence, but it is important to create rubrics for them and help to shape them to ensure that they refer to the actual research. Also, it is important to engage with the researchers and make them aware of testimonial impact from the beginning, as they may have collected useful testimonies without knowing it. It is also worth talking to colleagues in other disciplines when creating guidelines for evidence – engineers and medics, for example, have very interesting input on what makes useful evidence.

The idea of integrating doctoral training and industry partnerships into research, as the IES has done, is very interesting, and although labour-intensive, is something we should consider. There are many elements of the European policy framework that are applicable to our institutions, but we can also incorporate best practices and the storytelling approach of the UK into our plan.

Partnerships might be more difficult to identify for certain fields within the humanities. There are always partners to identify, and it brings an added value to research, because it forces the researcher to identify groups they might not otherwise have considered potential collaborators. For instance, a medieval architecture project could partner with cultural heritage or architectural preservation trusts, etc.

In order to demonstrate the value of the humanities as a whole, there is a need for both data and narrative, as one drives the other. There is also need for a definition of narrative and of evidence, in addition to a definition of impact, to make the evidence clear and focused as well as impactful and compelling.

The discussion concluded with discussion about the length of time involved in setting up the large-scale project of Impact at the Institute for European Studies. It took a significant investment of time to set up the work, the research, the website, and secure funding. However, once the word begins to spread, buy-in increased, especially from faculty and funders.

Conclusion

The workshop provided an excellent basis for IHA engagement with the development of an impact agenda which fully recognises and supports the long-term impact of the arts and humanities. The IHA came out of a context where the humanities disciplines were under unprecedented pressure to justify their existence, both on this island and internationally. From the start, the Alliance has sought to assert the intrinsic and distinctive importance of the Humanities.

Long before the age of impact statements, the humanities were adept in entering into dialogue with the citizens and society and translating research for a different audience. Humanities researchers and teachers have generations of experience in doing this through open seminars, public lectures, organising poetry readings, presenting at cultural festivals and local history societies. More recently we have taken to new media, to bring our research to the public very successfully through blogging, podcasting and apps. Writing impact case studies is, in many ways, simply a matter of documenting and building on very traditional humanities strengths and formalising them.

Michael Bhaskar in a recent book on the persistent power of that very old-fashioned sounding thing, expert curation of content, argues that, 'Far from disappearing, human curation and sensibilities have a new value in the age of algorithms.' Bhaskar is writing from the perspective of an industry where the ability to preserve and even exploit the human dimension is a matter of bare survival in the age of Amazon. As Bhaskar puts it, 'This is where the arts and humanities strike back in a world of machine learning. Here is a new generation of jobs...knowledge and subjective judgment are more valuable than ever. What we will see are hybrids: rich blends of human and machine curation that handle huge datasets while going far beyond narrow confines.'

It is very difficult here to draw clear lines between cultural and economic added value. And ultimately the claims we all want to make for the humanities exceed usefulness. But it is worth considering the paradox that in an age when almost everything can be counted, it is those things which cannot be calculated, which cannot be reduced to the zeros and ones of the digital age, that continue to confer value, even when we use digital means to communicate them. The question for the humanities is how we can make policy makers and the public at large understand how deep and wide ranging our impact is and the IHA's task in its next work cycle will need to include developing a skill-set to do that.

Appendix 1

Outline of proposed toolkit for humanities impact:

1. Identification of impact potential of the research at the early stages.
2. Engagement - how to identify and communicate effectively with the stakeholders and people you want to engage with your research at a very early stage. This includes local communities as well as cultural institutions.
3. Impact Planning - resources of time and money are finite, so it is crucial to prioritise and be realistic. It is extraordinarily difficult to influence Irish policy for example, which takes years of presentations and lobbying of civil servants and politicians who are often quite indifferent to cultural concerns. Is there a political angle? Urban renewal? Cultural tourism? It is often more realistic to engage with professional bodies e.g. associations of librarians, teachers or curators and seek to inform professional practice.
4. Internationalisation: how to use existing networks to enhance impact (e.g. COST networks and Erasmus +), how to target key conferences (e.g. there is much more impact from a panel at an international conference than a paper and often from organising a whole conference at national level). Similarly, proposing a journal special issue is very effective and will give you a lot more support in promoting your research than an edited collection may do, but don't expect to go straight into co-editing a special issue. Ideally, make sure you approach journals that know you and that have already published your work.
5. Professionalisation of publicity - Best way to get media to work to your advantage is to budget for communications and hire a professional PR person for at least one output. Journalists have very fixed ideas about academics and they need to be approached by a PR specialist in your field who can convince them your research is newsworthy and that they can provide them with good, clear, fluent content. Get recommendations from your colleagues or your publisher- someone who successfully promotes books, exhibitions or events in your field will know which journalists are interested. Sending press releases to news desks doesn't work anymore, there aren't enough journalists and they need to be spoon fed. (Shift analogous to the one from commissioning editors to agents.)
6. Digitisation - Make sure that one of your outputs is public facing open access content, that it is well designed and presented and that the average interested reader can make sense of it. Budget for design - don't go for cheap and cheerful if you can avoid it and don't be afraid of the technology, but don't complicate things unnecessarily. Podcasts and blogs are tried and tested and are good long-term investments so build them in but build them right. Audio needs to be as close to professional quality as possible. If you have a small budget, a well-designed blog on wordpress can work wonders if you update it regularly and promote it on Twitter and Facebook. If you have very little time, can you hire a postgrad to do this? A small budget for an RA one morning a week would work very well. Can a couple of people in your school get together to create a subject or cluster level resource? Remember that old media drives new media so larger scale success of this (despite expectations to the contrary) depends on professional PR above.
7. Loose control - You cannot maximise the impact of your research if you try to stay too much in control. Journalists will focus in on what they find interesting, not what you tell them is ground-breaking. Social media is capricious, so this isn't risk free, but remember a few critical tweets will not be the end of the world and some great academic debate happens on social media these days.

Further information

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