Strategies for the management and adoption of impact capture processes within research information management systems

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Why is impact information important: Higher Education context and drivers

Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) – academic outputs only

Up to 30% of an organisations turnover - highly varied

Public accountability requirement leads to the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014)

PLUS impact (20% weighting)

Increasing funding drivers
- E.g. Horizon 2020

Formal information management system solution required
Overview

Coventry University is the leading UK, modern university

Vertigo Ventures is an impact consultancy

Vertigo Ventures, has been using and expanding its tool- **VV-Impact Metrics** with UK universities to **support their REF submissions** by identifying impact pathways, impact indicators, evidence collection and analysis **to improve the quality of the evidence and narrative in section 4 of their REF case studies**.

Vertigo Ventures has been working with **Coventry University** to use its **VV-Impact Metrics tool in their self-service module (ERIC) to create a systemised data capture platform** that can be readily used by the academic community to input data.
What is impact

• Impact definition by Research Councils UK

• ‘The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. Economic and societal impacts embrace all the extremely diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations...’
Kellogg’s Foundation Logic model:

- Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact

Impact going forward:

- Need to capture information for each step in real time
- Systematic approach required for information storage
# Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) Standardisation of impact</th>
<th>2) Intangibility</th>
<th>3) Determining achievement</th>
<th>4) Attribution and ownership</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of consensus over impact meaning and application across disciplines • Proximal vs. distal effects • Translation • Lineation</td>
<td>• Impacts not observable or tangible • Proxy measures • Viability and acceptability • Continuing need to assess suitability of alternative measures.</td>
<td>• Iterative and evolving context • Determining when an impact has been ‘achieved’. • Judgements of scale/success • Overarching monitoring requirements • Beneficiary group stability</td>
<td>• Impacts are rarely generated alone • Intellectual property • Time lags</td>
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Secondary, indirect impacts or ‘ripple effects’:
Ripple effects:

Conceptual diagram of primary, secondary and ‘ripple’ impacts

VV-Impact Pathway Model (copyright Vertigo Ventures Ltd 2014)
## Role of information management

### Information management solutions need to:

| 1) Enable **multiple end users** to appraise and collect high quality impact evidence rather simply focusing on data input |
| 2) Optimise **ease of capture and storage of impact data** to support facilitated/self service use and institutional reporting |
| 3) Support adoption and engagement through clear impact planning pathways and appropriate vocabulary |
1. Cited in papers and builds on the Kellogg's Foundation Logic Model

2. User-tested taxonomy across disciplines
   • In use as part of an impact capture system for a UK university
   • Been used with UK-wide universities to evidence REF case studies

3. Replicable, simple process to identify impact

4. Precise indicators for evidencing impact

5. Actively maintained by Vertigo

www.vertigoventures.com
VV-Impact Metrics

- Vertigo Ventures ([www.vertigoventures.com](http://www.vertigoventures.com)) was founded in 2009 to support organisations demonstrate their social, financial and environmental impact using empirical evidence. Vertigo Ventures developed a database of impact information – called VV-Impact Metrics – providing a framework for identifying and capturing pathways to impact at the organisational and project levels. The system supports impact pathway planning and monitoring to generate greater impact with evolving metrics\(^\text{11}\). VV-Impact Metrics has been developed for use across sectors (including industry), is aligned with international reporting guidelines and has already been used for impact reporting across academic disciplines. It builds on the Kellogg’s Foundation Logic Model approach, and aligns with the CERIF schema for impact data management\(^\text{12}\). VV-Impact Metrics provides:
  - Consistent and standardised indicators, providing comparability and opportunity for data aggregation.
  - Structured impact data, allowing central teams to generate organisational performance reports for key stakeholders and providing defendable, attributable data for monitoring and grant writing (e.g. Horizon 2020)
  - A flexible and evolving framework which grows with use and the impact agenda
  - An institutional memory to overcome issues of academics moving between organisations
  - Interoperability between the impact system and existing CRIS and related systems.
  - Interoperability and commonality across academic and non-academic sectors for outcomes based reporting
  - Auditable data via real-time impact evidence collection along a defined pathway. Organisations can track impact and monitor impact, amplify the reach and significance and accurately demonstrate the role of the research in generating this.
  - Identification of both prospective and retrospective impact pathways to support impact planning from project inception
  - VV-Impact Metrics has been incorporated into Coventry University’s Impact Capture system and continues to evolve through live use.
"Embedding Research Impact at Coventry" (ERIC)

- JISC funded project, May-Nov 2012 to develop and test a prototype Impact Capture System

- Programme of work to develop system and engage academic staff across university

Prototype mandate:

- Build and monitor ongoing impact portfolios within existing CRIS (institutional memory)
- Reduce reporting burden for REF 2020
- Support funding bids/reports to funders
- Support marketing, case studies and reputation building
ERIC Development process

1. Needs assessment
2. Content development
3. Technical development
4. Testing

Prototype development → Extending the system → Engagement and feedback → Launch

- Consultation
- System modifications
- Formal release

External literature/guidance

Embedding
Impact Capture System Overview

- Add details of (multiple) planned impacts, those which occur unexpectedly or remove those which do not transpire.
- Plan, collect and store evidence for the impacts
- Four steps to add an impact (based on VV-Impact Metrics):
**Coventry consultation feedback: Engaging with impact**

- In-depth consultation with academic (multiple disciplines), business/research support staff and strategic leads (total of 30 individual interviews plus series of discussions with strategic groups)

- Barriers and facilitators to using ERIC:

**Barriers**

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<tr>
<th>Time / workload</th>
<th>System familiarity</th>
<th>Impact awareness</th>
<th>System difficulties</th>
<th>Attribution and tracking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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**Facilitators**

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<th>Training</th>
<th>Raise awareness</th>
<th>System edits</th>
<th>Link across university</th>
<th>Utilise data</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Increase relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>1</td>
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Strategies employed by Coventry to support adoption

- Phased launch with academic groups
- Training for academics and Research leads
- 1-2-1 support for academics
- Alignment with funding team
  - Offline use by academics for proposal writing
- Academic advice-seeking about impact
- Communications campaign to broaden the impact agenda beyond REF
## Opportunities

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<th>Build academic awareness of the impact capture system</th>
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<td>Embed impact and behaviour change</td>
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<td>Growth of impact culture through training</td>
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<td>Develop tools for enhancing impact planning/measurement to amplify research impact</td>
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<td>Work with university teams to identify opportunities to scale research impact early on</td>
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<td>Upgrade current CRIS and evolve impact infrastructure</td>
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Making it work….

**Collaboration between teams is key**

- Change management process: Top-down support for bottom-up development
- ‘Engage not enrage’ academics
- Across-university system interaction
- Continued dialogue and revision with impact champions/system users
- Centralised and committed approach, locally translated
- Additional centralised support for system users
- Reward and recognise impact
Concluding thoughts

Urgent need for smart and integrated management of impact data across the Higher Education sector

Solutions must incorporate culture and behaviour change

Solutions must use a standardised impact taxonomy
Thank you

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