Cardiff, United Kingdom

Barriers to Communicating Research in Commercially-Driven Design Projects

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What is the state of University-Industry collaboration?

Why evaluate design output?
CONTEMPORARY

• Economic and social impact of universities on industrial innovation (Cohen et al. 2002)

• Policies are being developed that promote and sustain university-industry collaboration (Dowling, 2015)

• Professional practitioners in academia

• Value Creation through design

• Role of the Research assessment exercises
Why PDR?

In our 2016/17 financial year, design practitioners at PDR undertook 411 projects with more than 95 clients.

As an award-winning design and research centre based in a university, there’s a lot of potential for its work to feature significant novel research.
This paper explores the **BARRIERS** to extracting research excellence from commercial projects
METHODOLOGY

Research design

• Qualitative research
• Grounded theory
• Snowball sampling (13 interviewees)
• Semi-structured interviews
• Inductive coding
METHODOLOGY

Research design

SECONDARY DATA

A contextual understanding

Context

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Interviews

Coding/Analysis

N-VIVO

Selection of the participants and data capturing

Data analysis

Analysis and Framework

Second set of interviews

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

N-VIVO

Testing

NOTES AND OBSERVATION

Testing the framework and receiving feedback

Interviewing internal designers to get detailed information about processes

Creation of the framework using the resulting themes
RESULTS

Three themes

THE NATURE OF THE COMMERCIAL/ACADEMIC RELATIONSHIP

THE NATURE OF THE PROJECT BEING UNDERTAKEN

THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCH QUALITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS
Nature of the commercial/academic relationship

- Willingness to engage
- Ethical considerations
- Impartiality
- Cost of research
- Commercial environment
- Risk aversion
- ‘Appropriate’ research
- Communication
RESULTS

Nature of the project being undertaken

- Academic relevance and/or commercial relevance
- Transferability
- Building evidence of impact
- Scale
- Speed
Nature of the research quality assessment process

- Academic metrics of success
- Accessibility of information
- Generalizability, Quantification and Validity of outcomes
- Appropriate evaluation
- Timescales for impact
- Originality, Rigour and Significance
What next?

- **Context**
  - A contextual understanding
- **Interviews**
  - Selection of the participants and data capturing
- **Coding/Analysis**
  - Data analysis
- **SECONDARY DATA**
- **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**
- **N-VIVO**
- **Analysis and Framework**
  - Interviewing internal designers to get detailed information about processes
  - Creation of the framework using the resulting themes
- **TESTING**
  - Testing the framework and receiving feedback

**NOTES AND OBSERVATION**
CONCLUSION

What next?

• Testing the framework
• Getting feedback from designers