

Institution: Bournemouth University
Unit of Assessment: UOA36
a. Context <p>One of the major societal challenges of the age is that of extending and deepening democracy. Much of our research is oriented towards that challenge, and the impact we aim to generate is therefore primarily on civil society and on public discourse. Practice and policy-making in the cultural sphere are also important impact target fields for some of our research.</p> <p>The health of democratic political cultures is fundamentally influenced by the crises and transformations currently experienced in the media and communication spheres. The future of news and current affairs, especially in the context of uncertainty about the future of public service broadcasting; the rise of populist and extremist politics; the continuing failure of Parliamentary democracies to engage electorates; what to do with the vast digital archive of the media; anxiety and ambivalence around the impact of consumer culture on citizenship and social values; the proper place in society and democracy of the promotional professions: these are key issues of the day, and are all issues to which our research is addressed, both at the level of professional practice and at the policy level.</p> <p>Beneficiaries of this research include: those involved in the news industry, those with professional involvement in political communication, those inside and outside the media for whom media archives are of interest, and those active in the production of persuasive communications to consuming publics. In addition, our work on the impact of socio-technical transformations on cultural forms and artefacts engages with policy and legal issues and with broad debates about trends in cultural consumption and the creative economy. Potential users in this area include arts and literary organisations, publishers and others in the cultural industries, regulators and others involved in cultural policy debates.</p>
b. Approach to impact <p>Our approach to impact is shaped and informed by long-established aspects of our research programme. The Media School at Bournemouth University (BU) has abundant and close links to the media industries and communication professionals. This industry-facing culture has strongly influenced the development of our research agendas and our approach to developing and sustaining impact.</p> <p>1. Targeting our research towards key societal challenges. One of our longest-standing areas of research is in broadcasting history: the roots of this work were fed by the involvement of its early BU pioneers (Ellis; Street) in the media industries, as content producers, and our historical research has been oriented towards present-day issues in policy and professional practice such as the future of public service broadcasting. Similarly, our work in politics, news and media has also been pursuing influence on policies and practices for a decade (e.g. on party political campaigning techniques - Lilleker). We are therefore able to draw on substantial histories of research which has been committed to having societal impact. We aim in the future both to enhance the production of impact and crucially to track its progression and document its effect more clearly.</p> <p>2. Engaging with major beneficiaries. We continue to establish and sustain long-term relationships with users of our most innovative areas of research, and to identify how our research links to their needs and the issues they face. For example, the Creative Enterprise Bureau (CEB), established with Higher Education Innovation Fund support in 2010, is a consultancy service for local, regional and national organisations, the most successful aspect of which is currently contract research based on the academic research skills of Emerging Consumer Cultures Group members (£133k turnover in 2012-13). This work includes literature reviews, analyses of third party primary data and original empirical work. Recent projects have included literature reviews for ITV on moving consumers from free to paid-for online content, for Toyota on UK car culture, for a national newspaper on its marketing strategy, and for Channel 4 on product placement, and on a study of the lived experience of disability and disabled sport commissioned by the channel as part of its analysis of the Paralympic games. In all of these projects, researchers have found it possible to bring some of their most developed and sophisticated research-based ideas to bear upon client</p>

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briefs, and have found their research agendas stimulated by the data collected and by the issues they have engaged with. Research questions posed by clients and data from contract projects have helped to shape our research agendas and have generated peer-reviewed outputs (e.g. the CEB work for ITV). In turn, this work feeds in to our future research agenda.

Similarly, our Centre for Excellence in Media Practice (CEMP) research on media pedagogy has been deployed in a number of practical ways working with various stakeholder groups, in the public, private and third sectors. CEMP has investigated media literacy in early years and primary education, worked with Magic Lantern Productions to explore how new media and play can facilitate learning, and with Tops Day Nurseries to investigate the use of e-learning strategies and tools within child development. CEMP has also researched the use by young people of informal learning tools and projects produced by Channel 4, specifically investigating how and in what ways these informal resources facilitate learning. It has carried out research for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) into the challenges faced by those returning to education after a period away, and recently completed an ESRC-funded Knowledge Transfer Project aimed at developing e-learning strategies with CiC, a leading provider of Employee Assistance Programmes to organisations including the Home Office and Thomson Reuters. The project resulted in CiC launching a range of digital services for its clients.

3. **Supporting staff to develop impact.** This is underwritten by BU resources and mission objectives as set out in BU2018. It is closely linked with BU's current strategy of 'Fusion' between education, research and knowledge transfer. Building on this strategy, the School encourages all senior researchers to pursue opportunities for undertaking specialist consultancy as a vital mode of knowledge transfer and a means of generating impact. The CEB has a full-time business development officer and there is substantial student involvement in many projects, thus fusing research and education with knowledge exchange. QR funds are used to bring target user groups into contact with researchers by enabling networking and the creation of knowledge transfer activities, e.g. a one-day workshop for senior advertising professionals held at the Institute for Practitioners in Advertising, and an evening seminar for journalists at the Frontline Club, both in London. The BU-wide Peer Review Research Service and the Quality Approval screening for research bids both involve scrutiny of impact plans in all research bids, and ensure that researched impact is pursued in all bidding activity.

4. **Supporting public engagement.** BU has invested in public engagement, and now has a dedicated officer to help with both engagement and impact creation. The institutional commitment to embedding impact through public engagement is evidenced through BU's signature on the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement Manifesto for Public Engagement. BU's first Festival of Learning for the general public in June 2013 saw UOA members lead seven research-based half-day sessions, on topics such as social media monitoring, science and the media, and extremism and the media. We have also organised other public events on topics linked to our research - to date, conferences on the Leveson Report, media coverage of extremism, and the future of multiculturalism – see REF5. In addition to this, we also encourage staff to participate in a wide range of other public engagement activities such as Café Scientifique (e.g. Moloney, MacRury).

c. Strategy and plans

Our strategic emphasis is on realising impact value within the areas in which we have greatest expertise, and we are now adopting a more formalised approach to this. Within our research groups there is strong awareness of the task of building impact at research programme level, i.e. of developing a body of research which is responsive to stakeholder views and needs. This is a long-term strategy, one that requires continuity in our research agenda and in impact planning, and that needs monitoring of pathways to impact, e.g. through systematic recording of dissemination, contacts follow-throughs, opportunity response logs. The strategy has four components:

1. **Strategic proactivity.** To install impact and influence at the heart of our work requires our Research Groups to have proactive plans for user engagement, for planning both reach and significance, and for the delivery of usable findings at project level. Allocation of QR funds to a group will follow the production of such a plan, with plans reviewed at termly Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees. Moreover, there will be continuous identification within each research group of projects with strong potential for impact, and additional QR funds will be

available where necessary to help realise such potential. Embedding impact means having on-going relationships with research users so that our research plans are intrinsically impact-oriented, and include the production of user-oriented outputs (see below). At the same time, we will continue as part of a university to be prepared to support some curiosity-driven and researcher-led inquiry, while exploring all potential avenues for applying research findings.

2. **Operationalising strategy.** We will embed the principle that every Research Group must identify its priority target user groups, and be actively in dialogue with leading representatives of those. These groups will heavily influence the choice and development of project topics. When researchers are making decisions about their next bid or next project, those topics where stakeholders recognise the need for and are receptive to research findings, or have an interest in evidence-based and theoretical analyses, will be more likely to be pursued. Individual researchers will be expected to make plans for outputs which can engage potential users (e.g. articles in professional and trade publications, web-based resources such as customised summaries of research for specific stakeholders) as naturally as they currently plan scholarly publications. Our strategy here is to elicit and support the creativity and initiative of individual researchers and research teams, wherein lies our capacity to identify opportunities and construct pathways to impact. Visiting attachments or short secondments of researchers to agencies and organisations to whom their research is relevant is one method we are exploring of deepening links and identifying non-academic research partners. To this end, the £3m p.a. Fusion Investment Fund which underpins BU2018 will support staff secondments, placements and study leave. Researchers will also be supported through mentorship from colleagues with experience of creating pathways to impact (**Chignell**, Watson). Training sessions on impact and public engagement are now also available for staff across BU, through the Grants Academy researcher support initiative (see REF5).

3. **Developing impact through consultancies.** Managing the relationship between research and enterprise is important to the development of our impact strategy. We expect that as well as being commercial undertakings for us, a number of our enterprise projects will bring 'impact', in the strategic implications for clients of the services we have delivered to them. These will often also include original data collection and other work that may constitute original research. We will continue to ensure that we aim for our primary impact to be through our generation of new insights rather than via the application of existing methods or paradigms.

4. **Maximising public engagement.** Another important plank of our impact strategy is the relationship between research and public engagement, embodied in the BU Festival of Learning and School events (see above). While partly a public service, such events can also function in long-term and sometimes unpredictable ways to open up pathways to impact. Staff will be supported to apply for external funding for public engagement (such as the ESRC Festival of Social Science) and training opportunities for this are now provided at university level, within the researcher development framework (see REF5).

d. Relationship to case studies

Of the studies we have submitted, two represent the 'policy' dimension and one focuses on impact on a 'professional practice'. The wider social types of impact are not represented here; since the systematic pursuit of impact, and of evidence for it, is of relatively recent origin, the studies we have developed to date have been to some degree retrospectively assembled. The indirect and poorly visible processes of influence and enrichment are less amenable to retrospective capture than is more concrete impact. We are seeking to establish proactive monitoring systems which will illuminate those less tangible impacts, and increase the range of topics and projects for which impact can be claimed.

All the studies illustrate the long-term and symbiotic nature of impact-generation. Over a decade of expertise in archiving and radio history research underpinned the initiative described in case 1. In case 2 our long association with the BU Centre for Intellectual Property Policy and Management led to the opportunity to undertake a study for DCMS. Case 3 describes how some well-established academic research, grounded in extensive experience in public relations, eventually came to influence professional practice in that field.