Editorial

Welcome to the sixth edition of the Faculty Research and Enterprise Newsletter. I hope you find it informative and interesting – I would urge you to find out more about, or even get involved in, research and enterprise activity within the Faculty.

Research and enterprise continue to grow in CEBE, as does the quality of the work being produced. This edition of the newsletter is a great example of this as, amongst the contents, there is news of one of our newest research students already winning a prize at a conference, an update on the LILA project and details of the new Knowledge ExCHANGE Research Centre. This edition of the newsletter also underlines the international nature of the research and enterprise work carried out in CEBE, with colleagues representing the Faculty in America, Ghana and China.

Professor Hanifa Shah
Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise)

Knowledge ExCHANGE Research Centre Update

CEBE’s Knowledge ExCHANGE Research Centre is being launched online this month. The Centre is working across a wide range of academic disciplines and in close collaboration with policy-makers and practitioners to generate new ideas to help communities adapt to environmental change, tackle conflicts arising from rapid social change through alternative dispute resolution, and understand how people can work together to better understand changing values around the built and natural environment.

The Centre brings together an international team of researchers with a strong collaborative track record and a shared enthusiasm for doing research that makes a difference in the real world. In addition to their own research and advisory roles, members of the group run a highly successful international knowledge exchange course, training researchers how to embed impact in their work.

Highlights from the last month include:

- 5 new peer-reviewed journal articles and a United Nations report published
- Four bids for research funding worth >£3M to BCU have been submitted for Research Council and EU funding, and a further three are under development, worth a further £5M to BCU if funded
- PhD student, Abby Jackson has published her first peer-reviewed paper and presented at the Housing Law Symposium at University of Groningen, where she was awarded “best paper”
- PhD student, Rosi Neumann has had papers published in Science magazine and in Science & Public Policy, and has had an interview published in German media about her research
- BCU academic staff Mark Reed (Director), Julian Sidoli del Ceno (Deputy Director) and Abdul-Rasheed Amidu, and PhD students Rosi Neumann and Abby Jackson have been joined by Visiting Fellow Steven Vella and are working with Prof Lindsay Stringer (University of Leeds), Prof Ioan Fazey (University of Dundee), Dr Ana Attlee (Project Maya) and Dr Michel Vols (University of Groningen), who have all applied to become Visiting Professors at the Centre

Find out more about the Centre at: http://www.bcu.ac.uk/change

Invited Talks in China

William Campbell from CTN recently gave invited research talks at Shanxi University, Taiyuan Institute of Technology and North University of China. He was accompanied by Aaron Ji and Mark Cai from the BCU Shanghai Office. The talk, entitled “A Cross-cultural Survey of the Impact of Organizational Culture on the Adoption of Green IT”, was based on a number of recent research papers on ‘Green IT’, including a joint paper with a recent student on the MSc Business Computing, Abbas Akano. The presentation used statistical techniques to explore the role of organizational culture in determining the extent to which companies are open to taking account of green issues in their use of IT; it also considered the impact of the overall context of the national culture.

William is pictured here talking to staff and students at North University of China
Ninth IEEE International Conference on Semantic Computing (IEEE-ICSC 2015), Anaheim, California, USA. February 7-9, 2015

The chance to give a talk at the recently held ninth IEEE International Conference on Semantic Computing in California proved a successful event for EnAlgae and BioenNW projects. Novel decision support tools from BioenNW and EnAlgae projects were presented at the prestigious Semantic Computing conference by Dr Krishna Sapkota and Dr Pathmeswaran Raju from the Centre for Knowledge Based Engineering.

As part of these INTERREG funded projects, a novel ICT method is developed to represent and compute economics in Bioenergy projects. In particular, the method leverages the Semantic Web technologies to represent the knowledge about the bioenergy and biofuel economics and infers the equations and other values required for economic calculations. The semantic economic model aims to help the stakeholders in bioenergy/biomass domain and any other related domains for computing the bioenergy economics semantically.

“The feedback from the audience was positive,” said Dr Raju. “There was one delegate who wanted to know whether he can reuse the algorithm we developed for the economic model, as he finds it interesting how we applied the ‘semantic technology’ to enhance the reusability and extendibility of economic models.”

In addition to giving talk to a large group of audience, Dr Raju and Dr Sapkota were also invited to chair two sessions at the conference, focusing on semantic mining, analytics and applications. Semantic Computing (SC) is computing based on Semantics (“meaning”, “context”, “intention”). It addresses all types of resource including data, document, tool, device, process and people.

Leading researchers from ICT and semantic computing domains attended the conference and therefore it has been beneficial to demonstrate the methods and tools that we developed as part of the INTERREG projects. The publication and the presentation will be showcase for NW Europe’s research and knowledge transfer excellence and will help to promote NW Europe’s economic and environmental future through our BioenNW and EnAlgae projects.

Paper accepted

Munevver Kokuer has had a paper entitled “HMM-based modelling of individual syllables for bird species recognition from audio field recordings” accepted for the IEEE International Conference on Acoustic, Speech and Signal Processing (ICASSP). ICASSP is the world’s largest and most comprehensive technical conference focused on signal processing and its applications and it is the second most cited publication venue (after IEEE Trans. ASLP) for audio or acoustics or music or multimedia based on the Google Scholar Metrics.
LILA project gathers pace!

The LILA project has been gathering momentum in recent months, hosting a series of ‘labs’ for local and European entrepreneurs working in the digital and green space to test and adapt their products and services to targeted markets. The team have worked tirelessly to run 9 further labs since the last newsletter! The most recent event saw the largest and most diverse audiences yet as one start-up from France, and two from the UK, pitched their ideas to potential users of their products and services to gain critical feedback.

This exciting and interactive event kicked-off with the French entrepreneur presenting EdStore - a platform which captures and validates student skills from their academic projects and provides a web portal for potential employers – to industry experts. Next to pitch was Birmingham-based start-up J-Tech Design, who presented their innovative digital web design services to the Birmingham Post Growth Fund’s SME network.

Craig Cooksley, Head of Agency and Innovations at Trinity Mirror Group discussed the innovative approach to development and enterprise at Birmingham Post. An emphasis was placed on how their online presence is enabling the sustainability and development of the newspaper in a digital age. Craig also talked about the opportunities for funding small to medium sized local businesses through the Birmingham Post Growth Fund in collaboration with their partner Bournville College.

An inspiring key note from Professor Rob Pritchard (Consultant, Former Britvic CIO and Professor of Applied Information Technology and Corporate Strategy at the university) followed, which shed light on how Digital Enablement is fundamental to the growth, profitability and competitiveness of every non-tech business.

The event culminated in a sell-out lab session for another home grown start-up – Green Teach Tech. The passionate entrepreneurs pitched their educational concept, VegPi, to an audience including IET and BCS members, lecturers, teachers and individuals with a keen interest in Raspberry Pi or programming.

VegPi is a 21st century solution for educating children about sustainability by using the low-cost Raspberry Pi computer to help children grow their own produce by monitoring temperature, moisture levels and sending alerts to when growing conditions are not optimal. The user group were impressed with the entrepreneurs and engaged in an active discussion about the concept, its features, channels for distribution and the product name.

Green Teach Tech received constructive feedback and recommendations from the lab participants about how the product should be adapted to ensure that it meets the needs of end users to reduce its risk of failure when it goes out to market. The entrepreneurs will now make further improvements to their product based on the feedback received and will organise more labs with potential users to test VegPi.

The evening session completed with an introductory workshop to Raspberry Pi from Prabjot Singh Founder of TechSurgeons and fellow academic with a bespoke lab providing users with the opportunity to gain practical experience with programmable electronics.

To find out more about the LILA project and to keep up to date with the entrepreneurs’ progress, visit http://bcu.lilaproject.eu or contact Rehan Bhana at Rehan.Bhana@bcu.ac.uk. You can also follow and tweet the LILA team at @CEBEenterprise on Twitter.
The Centre for Software Engineering
at Birmingham City University

Zhiming Liu and Jonathan P. Bowen

The Centre for Software Engineering in a research centre, formed in late 2013 with the appointments of Professor Jonathan Bowen to the Chair of Computer Science and Professor Zhiming Liu to the Chair for Software Engineering. The Centre aims to work in the area of both empirical and formal software engineering, and the combination of the two, encouraging interdisciplinary research.

The Centre is led by Professor Zhiming Liu as the head and Professor Jonathan Bowen as the deputy head. It currently has about ten scientific staff members with expertise in formal methods, programming language, open source software, algorithms, robotics, eHealth, and green technology. It deals with problems in complex applications on different system platforms with technologies and tools underpinned by solid theories and methods. Technologies and tools are also developed with the support and for the theories and methods.

The focused research areas of the Centre are defined with the consideration of the application-oriented research and a strong link to industry, the Faculty, and the University. Within the school, the Centre for Cyber Security and the Centre for Software Engineering are twins and will work closely together in the overlapping areas of modelling, analysis, design, verification and implementation of software with security requirements.

Internationally, leading members of the Centre have wide contacts and collaborations in emerging countries, industrial countries and in developing countries.

The mission of the Centre is to develop research that can be attributed with scientific significance, rigour, and impact. The scientific significance is to be largely reflected in the focused areas where research is being conducted and the challenges and problems that will be addressed; rigour will come from the theoretical foundations, the method and tools that are used; and the impact will be generated through partnerships with industry, society and knowledge transfer. The aim is to develop a culture that all members of the Centre will feel able to contribute to its research in achieving these three attributes. The objective is to significantly increase number of returns and improve the quality in the submission to the next REF return. This will be achieved with contributions from all members of the Centre through joint publications and projects.

For more information
- Visit the website of the Centre: http://tinyurl.com/bcu-cse
- Contact Zhiming Liu via zhiming.liu@bcu.ac.uk, http://www.bcu.ac.uk/tee/our-staff/ctn-staff/zhiming-liu, or Jonathan Bowen via jonathan.bowen@bcu.ac.uk, http://www.bcu.ac.uk/tee/our-staff/jonathan-bowen


Veronica Barry (PhD student in BSBE) reports on an exciting conference which she recently attended.

Planning healthy weight environments.

This practical workshop led on from the launch of the recent joint publication by TCPA and Public Health England, in December 2014. The report ‘Planning healthy weight environments- a TCPA reuniting health with planning project’, written by Andrew Ross and Michael Chang was developed following a series of consultation workshops across England with local partner authorities. The report identified the potential for planners and public health officers to work together to support people in lifestyles that will help them to maintain a healthy weight.

Drawing on current evidence and experience, the report aims to assist practitioners in identifying common ground, and areas with the potential for collaboration. With almost two thirds of adults and one third of children in England overweight or obese, obesity presents a major challenge. The causes of obesity are complex, but there is growing evidence that the impact of the built environment plays a part. The publication is timely as Public Health England steps up efforts to reduce obesity through a ‘whole-systems’ approach to tackling obesity, and as planning and public health move to work more collaboratively within local authority settings.

Speakers at the event included Dr Tim Townshend, Director of Planning and Urban Design, Newcastle University and Andre Pinto, [Public Health Manager, Healthy Places], from Public Health England, both giving a broad overview of the evidence and links between built environment and weight. Dr Dan Lewis, a health geographer from LSHTM, outlined his current research on the Olympic Regeneration in East London (ORIEL). The project aims to evaluate the impact of the Olympic legacy to urban regeneration on the health and well-being of young
people and their parents in East London. An ongoing project in particular is assessing any contribution to health and wellbeing to residents moving into the newly built Olympic Park East Village, a residential development designed to promote walking and cycling.

Afternoon workshops included practical sessions, looking in detail at two case studies of planning where features of health weight environment planning had been considered. A large scale development, was presented by James Cutting, from Suffolk County Council, showing how cycling, walking and green space had been incorporated into plans for a new housing development in Sudbury. Chimeme Egbutah, from Luton Council, described the challenges of collaborative working, across community and local authorities in the regeneration of part of the Marsh Farm Estate. Both examples highlighted the need for cross disciplinary working and collaboration in order to tackle the impact of poor physical environment on obesity.


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**Email etiquette**

E-mail can be an extremely useful tool, however if used inappropriately it can cause a number of problems. Email is intended to be a convenient and effective way to: communicate with multiple recipients at the same time, to share information and exchange views in a less time-consuming manner, save paper (if emails are not printed) and keep a record of the communication. However email becomes obstructive to good working practice if messages sent are poorly timed, not relevant to all recipients, where the tone or content can be open to misinterpretation and intentionally or unintentionally cause distress or anxiety to others, requires an instant response or acknowledgement of receipt when face-to-face discussions or telephone conversation would be preferable.

So before hitting the send button here is a summary of some questions to ask and some guiding principles that might be useful:

1. **Ask if email is really the best form of communication?**
   - Could it be misinterpreted or would be better delivered face to face?
   - Could it constitute bullying or harassment?
   - Would a face-to-face, or telephone, conversation be more appropriate?

2. **Are the recipients appropriate?**
   - Does an email group exists or could be created to narrow down the recipients appropriately?
   - Don’t copy to people who the e-mail has no relevance to;
   - The “reply to all” function should only be used where it is genuinely necessary.

3. **Is the content and timing of your email appropriate?**
   - Never sending an email in anger or frustration. Always save as a draft any such communication and go back to it later or the following day;
   - Write constructively, remembering, as stated above, that your email could be read by a disciplinary panel, the courts or even at a public investigation;
   - Use proper spelling, punctuation and grammar. We are an educational establishment;

4. **Should emails or attachments be printed?**
   - Recipients should carefully consider whether an email or attachment needs to be printed, bearing in mind that it may be more appropriate to file the email electronically for later reference.

5. **Is training necessary?**
   - Training is available in the University and provides a wide range of tools for making the use of email work for us, rather than us for it.

6. **Emails between staff - Managing expectations**
   - Staff are recommended to check their emails at various stages of the day, including when working from home;
   - Staff will normally be expected to reply to emails from colleagues that require a reply as soon as practicable but in any event within 2 working days. Staff should not expect a reply to emails sent outside normal working hours.

7. **Subject lines**
   - Emails should always have a clear title in the subject line indicating what the email relates to.
   - Care should be taken to ensure that the subject line is unlikely to cause the recipient undue anxiety.

8. **Content**
   - Do not forward potentially sensitive or problematic information onwards without the author’s consent.

9. **And finally – Using the red exclamation mark on emails.**
   - The red exclamation mark icon in Outlook should only be used where the matter is genuinely urgent! (And, if it is that urgent, email might not be the most effective way to deal with it...)

Dr Andrew Millward
Chair, Faculty Academic Ethics Committee
Publications

Jonathan Bowen & Peter Breuer

Munevver Kokuer

Peter Larkham
Larkham, P. (2015) 'The Financial Times discovers planning history'
http://blogs.bcu.ac.uk/bsbe/the-financial-times-discovers-planning-history/

Mohammad Mayouf

Rosmarie Neumann

Julian Sidoli del Ceno & Mark Reed

Julian Sidoli del Ceno


Sidoli del Ceno, J. [2014] 'Artikel 8 EVRM en Engels recht/Article 8 Rights in English Law' -Invited Research Symposium, Centre for Public Order, Faculty of Law, University of Groningen, 9th October 2014.

Sidoli del Ceno, J. [2014] 'Alternatieve geschilbeslechting en rechtvaardigheid/ADR and the question of justice' - Invited Lecture, Faculty of Law, University of Groningen, 8th October 2014.


Mark Reed


Alister Scott