

Taking it to the streets – mainstreaming research

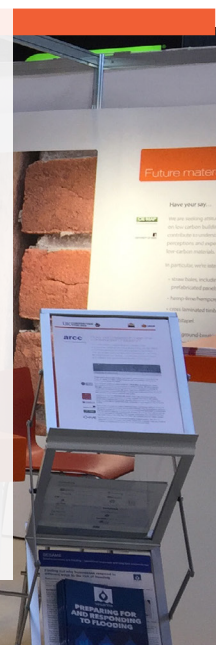
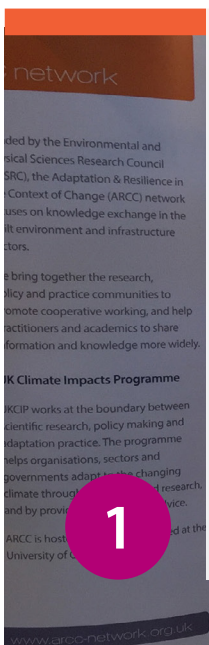
As a knowledge exchange network, sometimes the best strategy is to make sure the audience gets your message ‘straight from the horse’s mouth’. At ARCC, our main role is to build a bridge between academia and the policy and practice communities – what better way to do that than set up shop where 35,000 industry professionals would visit over three days?

Welcome to UK Construction Week 2016!

We wanted to share the latest research directly with industry, to start conversations with professionals about the research arena, and outline the opportunities of working with universities in a move towards a more adapted and resilient future.

Our stand was designed around four main themes:

- Future materials; showcasing self-healing cement from Cardiff, Cambridge and Bath Universities as well as other natural materials from the Bath BRE Centre for Innovative Construction Materials, and perceptions into eco-construction materials from the University of Leeds. Testing facilities at The Hive were also promoted.
- Flood Risk; particularly for SMEs, with guidance from Sheffield and Huddersfield Universities.
- Building performance; modelling tools to help reduce energy use from Oxford Brookes and Heriot-Watt Universities, as well as research into future weather from the University of Bath.
- Design for safety in construction through the University of the West of England.



The skills development element of the event was one of the drivers to getting involved – the event maintained a strong focus on sustainability, despite other significant industry challenges such as post-Brexit uncertainty, and skills shortages.

The lessons here have been really valuable for our network, in building relationships with the event organisers, relevant stakeholders, and in taking bold steps to support the interaction between research and industry.

Another great benefit of being at such a large industry event was the ability to meet with other exhibitors we hadn't had the opportunity to engage with before. For the ARCC network, this included membership bodies who could benefit from increased exposure to adaptation and resilience research for the construction industry. We also found other universities that weren't aware of our knowledge exchange network, so there is always some common ground to be found!

We set out to achieve meaningful impact for the research through a coordinated presence at UK Construction Week; and we think we did a great job for us and our research partners; 35 on-stand interactions, 3 seminar presentations, and some great social media activity with over 4,200 Twitter impressions for our campaign in the lead up, and during the event.

The ARCC knowledge exchange network is funded by EPSRC and has a broad remit to bring together research, and the policy and practice communities in the built environment and infrastructure sectors. We promote co-operative working between practitioners and academics, and particularly help researchers to share research knowledge more widely in ways that industry can use.

There is still an opportunity to be involved with our next big industry event, Ecobuild 2017 in London from 7-9 March. It's the UK's largest industry event dedicated to creating a more sustainable built environment... If you are a researcher working on future materials and processes research, please get in touch.

Tanya Wilkins joined the ARCC network in February 2016, with a background in communication and marketing of government programmes. Her role is to synthesise, translate and communicate critical research outputs for use by decision-making communities through a range of resources.



@wiltm001



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