Bridging the Research-Practice Divide:
Harnessing expertise collaboration in making a wider set of contributions

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Abstract

Understanding how we develop research contributions which go beyond conversations in the academic field is an enduring challenge. While much has been written on the importance of academic-practitioner relationships in the research process more is needed on conceptualizing how we develop a wider set of contributions. In this paper, we call for researchers to be reflective as to how different forms of expertise can be drawn on during collaborative relationships to bridge the research – practice divide. We develop a framework which combines different levels of expertise with varying forms of academic-practitioner collaboration to   widen the impact of our research. Four strategies are proposed by which academics may leverage their expertise in collaborative relationships with practitioners to develop research impact and contributions to knowledge (RICK). These include: maintaining *critical distance, promoting deeper engagement, developing prescience, and achieving hybrid practices*. We discuss implementation approaches for each of these RICK strategies and suggest writing genres to help increase engagement by practitioners in research contributions.

Introduction

Making contributions from our research is an enduring and vexing question for scholars regardless of where they are on their career trajectory (Barrett and Walsham 2004). For example, editors and reviewers constantly remind authors of the need to develop their contributions and point to the inherent merits of extending knowledge through theoretical insights (e.g. Dubin 1978, Whetten 1989, Van de Ven 1989, Webster and Watson 2002). Scholars have also highlighted the pragmatic virtue of simplicity in developing one's contributions (Weick 1989) as well as the importance of coherence (Shepherd and Sutcliffe 2011).

Corley and Gioia (2011) develop a more expansive understanding of theoretical contributions. They highlight two key dimensions of a contribution, namely its originality (i.e. revelatory) and utility (i.e. practical or scientific usefulness). Building on the rigor versus relevance debate (Gulati 2007; Tushman & O'Reilly 2007), they note the ongoing neglect of our contributions' practical utility. One often cited rationale for this is the need for purity in academic inquiry which comes with distance, independence, and academic detachment (Caswill and Shove 2000, Van de Ven 2018).

Another related stream of research emphasises the need for collaborative academic -practitioner relationships. For example, scholars highlight academia's lack of engagement with practitioners and how this limits the scope of theorising (Bartunek 2007, Van de Ven and Johnson 2006, Dutton and Dukerich 2006). Van de Van (2018-this issue) points out that academic and practical knowledge are two distinct domains of knowledge and both are critical for understanding complex issues. He highlights that there is a common misguided assumption that practical forms of knowledge are necessarily derived from academic research (Van de Ven and Johnson 2006). In doing so, he argues that we miss the distinct competencies that practitioners have and their insight into complex problems (Van de Ven 2007). Relatedly, Bartunek (2007) argues for 'a relational scholarship of integration' so that academics can learn to work with practitioners in new ways and on a more equal footing. Such relationships can be fostered by understanding the complexity of practitioners' expertise and knowledge (Bartunek & Trullen, 2007). In this way, an engaged scholarship

perspective challenges key debates as to whether our conceptualization of expertise should be exclusively associated with analytic abstraction (Caswill & Shove, 2000).

We build on these two streams of literature to examine how researchers can widen their contributions through a deeper understanding of expertise. In the following section, we start by discussing further the challenge of bridging academic-practitioner relationships in expanding the scope of our contributions. We subsequently draw on Collins and Evans (2009) problematization of expertise as being both contributory and interactional, to develop an expertise- collaboration framework.   We conclude by discussing how our RICK framework is related to specific research strategies and suggest how they may be connected to specific genres of academic writing to widen the accessibility of academic contributions to practice.

Bridging academic practitioner relationships through knowledge exchange

Corley and Gioia (2011) highlight the 'uncomfortable silence' which often follows when practitioners listen to research presented in academic meetings. The common view is that academics 'talk funny' using specialized language which obfuscates (hides) the practical utility of their theoretical contributions. And this problem is noted not just by practitioners but also by celebrated and reputable researchers in management. Donald Hambrick, recognized as one of the 24 most original and impactful management theorists (Cornelissen and Durand 2014), suggests that the problem may also begin at the early development of a research project. He suggests that theory can often distort the straightforward beauty of an original research idea. The problem progressively gets worse and by the end of the research project the published article can be 'a contorted, misshapen, inelegant product, in which an inherently interesting phenomenon has been subjugated by an ill-fitting theoretical framework' (Hambrick 2007, pp. 1349).

In addition to being 'lost in translation' whereby researchers have a hard time explaining the relevance of theories to practice, Shapiro, Kirkman, and Courtney (2007) also note the equally

challenging 'lost before translation' problem which works against the potential for research to have relevance and impact. In this situation, ideas are developed which are irrelevant to practice. The consequence may be that theory is being used for theory's sake rather than for the sake of practical utility (Corley and Gioia 2011).

The challenge for academics is to learn how to connect tacit and explicit dimensions of practitioners' knowledge so as to discern how academics' knowledge might link to their way of knowing. Polanyi's paired concepts of *sense giving* and *sense reading* in knowledge exchange (Barrett, Cappleman, Shoib, and Walsham 2004) can aid "giving sense" of our knowledge to wider communities. Having tacit understanding of other communities' knowledge domains enables academics to clarify and translate the meaning of their theoretical contributions. In the same way, practitioner communities with a tacit understanding of academic knowledge domains are able to *sense read* the theoretical contributions leading to practical utility of the findings. Some practitioners, however, may view theoretical contributions as 'funny talk' not only because of the difficulties they have with academic language but because of their more limited tacit understanding and expertise to effectively engage with the research.

Contributory and Interactional forms of expertise

In this section, we draw on a relational view of expertise (Collins and Evans 2007) to examine how we can increase the practical utility of our academic knowledge. Specifically, we problematize expertise as being both interactional and contributory (Collins and Evans 2007) and suggest that these forms of expertise can be drawn on in knowledge exchange across different academic-practitioner relationships.

Contributory expertise refers to experts having such a high level of proficiency and tacit understanding of a domain of knowledge that they can add to that body of knowledge. Contributory experts can add to the knowledge in their domain of expertise. They have become immersed and socialised within their expert field so they can make judgments about new insights according to the accepted criteria of the field. To do an activity with competence requires contributory expertise (Collins and Evans 2009). For example, academics may be contributory experts to the literature on knowledge and collaboration in online communities and may therefore publish papers in their academic field to convey their contribution.

Collins and Evans (2009) suggest that, in the absence of such a high level of contributory expertise, people may be able to develop what they refer to as interactional expertise. Such expertise is gained by becoming familiar (or fluent) with the language of a domain of expertise. Interactional experts, according to Collins and Evans, have been immersed in a domain to such an extent that they have internalized the rules and forms of expression and are able to understand and discuss expert insights. By gaining interactional expertise, individuals can converse with those who are (contributory) experts in the field, even though individuals with interactional expertise may have little if any practical competence in the subject. In Polanyi's terms, practitioners, by developing their interactional expertise can enhance their tacit power in sense reading theoretical contributions. Similarly, with interactional expertise, academics can sense read knowledge in the practitioner's field.

These forms of expertise can be developed through different levels of academic practitioner relationships. For example, as contributory experts, researchers often undertake field research in various practical domains, such as healthcare or car manufacturing. In so doing, they may develop interactional expertise to understand the 'concepts-in-use' in the practitioner's field setting. This may require researchers to assume a participatory role as a member in the organization, and to become familiar with the site's language to engage participants. Over time, the field site's

knowledge becomes increasingly obvious rather than strange and the new technical learning is limited with fewer inputs being observed. Through the fieldwork, academics develop their interactional expertise to the point where they collect data which eventually leads to theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin 1998).   This interactional expertise in the practice domain allows researchers to contribute to their academic domain (e.g. journal publication).

The Opportunities and Limits of Expertise in Making Contributions

As reflective academics aiming to widen the scope of our contributions, we need to recognize the limits of our contributory expertise as well as the possibilities afforded in building interactional expertise with other stakeholders. For example, academics can have opportunity for impact by helping audiences develop interactional expertise in the emerging (academic) concepts. Practitioner stakeholders, as contributory experts in their own domain, can also use this newly formed interactional expertise (from academics) to contribute to their own practice.

However, as Collins and Evans (2009) highlight, we need to distinguish between when an academic can exercise contributory expertise in their own specialist domain and when their opportunity for impact in other (e.g. practice) domains is likely.   This will vary depending on the level of expertise and the tacit power of understanding beyond one's own knowledge domain.

For example, a big data statistician may be able to contribute their expertise to practice domains such as fingerprint identification via the development of interactional expertise in fingerprinting (Collins and Evans 2009). Over time, the domain of statistics may become an integral part of the field of fingerprinting which is (re)configured by big data techniques and technologies. In this situation, the statistician will become a contributory expert to the emerging fingerprinting domain even though his or her core expertise (in statistics) has not changed.   However, such a possibility may not be the case in other situations where the nature of expertise is more diffuse than that of big data statisticians and fingerprinting. For example, in projects involving sociologists and engineers,

the former may be able to connect to the specialist domain via emerging interactional expertise, but it may very well be that their contributory expertise is not able to influence the wider domain of engineering.

These cases highlight that academics need to be reflective of the possibilities and limits of expertise in widening the scope of their theoretical contributions to other domains. Furthermore, these examples emphasise the role of academic-practitioner collaborative relationships in apprehending the relevance of research for other stakeholders.

A Research Impact and Contributions to Knowledge (RICK) Framework

We build on the above insights to develop a Research Impact and Contributions to Knowledge (RICK) Framework which combines levels of expertise with different forms of collaboration. Specifically, our framework combines contributory and interactional expertise with forms of collaboration (e.g. loosely coupled or tightly coupled) to understand how to widen research impact. The starting point in the framework (Table 1) is that the academic, in developing theoretical contributions, can collaborate with other domains (e.g. practice or policy) with different consequences for research impact. The first row focuses on how academics, as experts in conceptual knowledge, can gain interactional expertise in another domain, for example that of a professional practice. As discussed above, gaining interactional expertise entails learning the language of a domain to converse fluently with experts in that domain (such as designing connected cars or implementing HIT in a cancer hospital). Thus, the focus of interactional expertise is to understand what domain experts are doing, how they talk, the meaning of concepts used, and relationships among key stakeholders.

To gain fluency, academics can immerse themselves in the domain of a practitioner through such methodologies as ethnographic or participatory observation, as well as learning the craft of expert practitioners through perspective taking (Boland and Tenkasi 1995). As indicated in Table 1, academics can connect with expert practitioners at two different levels of collaboration, namely

loosely coupled and more tightly coupled forms of collaboration. A loosely coupled collaboration

may be in effect when a knowledge transfer worldview is privileged. For example, when as Van de

Ven (this issue P. XX), notes 'academics are less interested in the client's particular problem, but

more interested in the general class of phenomena of which the particular problem is a part'.   Even

in such situations where loosely coupled collaboration is common academics can develop

interactional expertise while maintaining a critical distance. Secondly, they can promote deeper

engagement through a more tightly coupled mode of collaboration. This level of collaboration

privileges the co-production of knowledge by academics and practitioners for understanding

complex issues. Practitioners involved in co-producing knowledge may be more likely to find the

knowledge useful, leading to potential impact in influencing the practice domain.   In both cases,

academics can widen the impact of their theoretical contribution to the practitioner domain in

distinct ways. Looser engagement might offer impact to a range of domains beyond the one

researched since the findings are less contextualised and more easily generalised to new domains.

Deeper engagement has more opportunities for impact across the gamut of the research process to

the particular domain and context being studied as suggested by the Engaged Scholarship Diamond

Model (Van de ven 2018 this issue; 2007).

The second row indicates how academics can go beyond becoming more fluent in the language of

the practice domain, and develop a more tacit understanding of the practice. This may include

anticipating insights about the future of the practitioner's domain using their academic

(contributory) expertise. Such types of impact are rare and more challenging to achieve but being

bold in making such forward looking contributions from our research is increasingly valued. Where

knowledge is developed through hybrid practices involving both academic and practitioner domains

becoming tightly coupled, there is an opportunity to achieve high levels of practical utility as well as

novel areas of academic contribution.

	Loosely coupled Academic-Practitioner Collaboration	Tightly coupled Academic-Practitioner Collaboration
Levels of academic expertise		
Gaining interactional expertise of another domain to develop theoretical contributions	**Maintaining critical distance** *Developing theoretical contribution is the focus with reflective practitioners largely responsible for projecting and cultivating practical insights*	**Promoting deeper engagement** *Ensuring practical utility by making academic expertise more accessible to practitioners through joint co-creation efforts*
Challenging and building contributory expertise of another domain from theoretical contributions	**Developing prescience** *Anticipating future problems in practice domains by drawing on theoretical contributions to challenge existing assumptions*	**Achieving hybrid practices** *Developing high levels of impact and practical utility through knowledge being developed across both academic and practice domains. This may entail the formation of a new hybrid domain of knowledge.*

Table 1: A RICK Framework

We now elaborate each of the strategies represented by the four cells of our 2*2 RICK framework, namely: *maintaining critical distance, promoting deeper engagement, developing prescience, and achieving hybrid practices*. These categories may be useful for academics to reflect on and in discussing their research methods as well as crafting contributions in their papers.

1) *Maintaining critical distance*

Academics may adopt a strategy of maintaining critical distance in how they engage in academic-practitioner relationships for a variety of reasons. They may want to retain control over how the subject of their investigation is framed. Alternatively, their primary focus may be on developing new academic learning rather than directly influencing practice.   While debatable (Van de Ven 2007, 2018 this issue), resisting a strong practice orientation may help to guard researchers against an undue focus on small and intellectually trivial problems, or by limiting the development of critical theory about managerial action (Huff, 2000; Kilduff and Kelleman, 2001).

While this knowledge collaboration approach more closely reflects a paradigm of knowledge transfer, some impact may be achieved through the ongoing exchanges and dialogue about one's theoretical contribution with practitioners. As individuals from across academia and industry collaborate, practitioners can gain insight through their ability to give sense to the theoretical contributions provided by academics.   A structured way to do this would be to hold forums or dissemination workshops that facilitate boundary crossing of research ideas.   Bartunek (2007) suggests two types of forums that might foster knowledge collaboration for groups of practitioners and academics, namely forums to flesh out journal articles' implications for practice and forums to discuss topics about which there is shared interest. The former can help address the problem of translating the utility of new knowledge to a practical domain, thereby enabling impact. The latter can go a step further in helping to develop interactional expertise between participants which can further the development of useful insights while enabling academic research to be more accessible to practitioners.

Indeed, this is perhaps the most common way in which academics demonstrate impact on a practice domain. By developing their interactional expertise from the domain of study, the academic's primary goal is to develop a theoretical contribution through journal publication. While more modest in practical utility, they can cultivate practical insights from their theoretical contributions through forums, other convening structures and processes of knowledge translation.

2) *Promoting deeper engagement*

Another strategy, namely deep engagement, would promote the idea of academics immersing themselves in another domain so that they become expert at interacting with others from that domain. For example, an academic may spend a sabbatical as an observer in a hospital or policy unit. By immersing themselves in the expertise of others, they become more fluent in a new language and learn about another domain of practical expertise. They also learn how they can relate this new domain of practice to their academic domain. Further, through closer collaboration, the

academic can focus their efforts on addressing innovative research questions which go beyond 'gap spotting' the established literature and rather problematize existing assumptions (Sandberg and Alvesson 2013) while being of relevance to practitioners.   Importantly, this collaborative arrangement also gives more power to practitioners to steer and guide the type of research questions being investigated while requiring academics to adopt a perspective taking stance and a willingness to prioritize practice issues and questions as they are uncovered.   Such an approach recognizes that, by acting alone, researchers are necessarily myopic in addressing a complex phenomenon where their discipline, experience, and prior research is of limited value (Van de Ven 2007). An alternative approach would be to shift from a knowledge transfer paradigm to a co-production of knowledge approach. Researchers (and practitioners) would instead step outside of themselves and engage others in appreciating wider views about complex issues (Van de Ven 2018 in this issue).

For example, in developing research on climate change, management scientist Dr Chris Hope widened his contribution of the PAGE model beyond important publications in academic journals (Hope 2006). His model has been highly influential in the renowned Stern Review on climate change which has been used by governments around the world in their policy formation. His publications in academic journals have provided an important evidence base in support of policy change and development while his recent research (building on the PAGE model) emerged through a co-production strategy initiated by tweets on social media to stakeholders in the climate change ecosystem.

For the academic, the balance struck when co-designing research with practitioners may lead to theoretical novelty being compromised. The consequences may be a loss of control over the novelty of the research questions and potentially a more incremental opportunity for theory building, as the focus for practical utility takes precedence.   However, the close collaboration and deeper engagement may enable increased interactional expertise so that academics are better able to

understand the phenomenon of interest beyond the current literature. This may be significant in framing key issues and research questions that lead to theoretical contributions which further the academic field. As such, engaged scholarship may allow for a wider set of study activities beyond problem formulation to include research design and even theory building (Van de Ven 2018, Bartunek 2007, Bartunek and Rynes 2014).

Finally, the process of co-design may be a genuine two-way process where neither practical knowledge nor the current research literature is privileged. Rather, there is a process of exchange involving mutual respect for the value of the knowledge bases with both groups gaining interactional expertise of each other's domains. As discussed below, this two-way process recognizes the way in which the practitioner as well as the academic gain interactional expertise in the process. In this situation, academics may be able to demonstrate wider impact by relating established research findings to the practice domain on a similar issue but in another context. Similarly, practitioners may be able to access and use research findings more easily, given the interactional expertise they gained during the research process.

3) *Developing Prescience*

Corley and Gioia (2011) advocated an orientation towards what they term *prescience*, a process of anticipating what we need to know, and thereby influencing the intellectual framing to enhance receptivity across multiple audiences. By providing a degree of foresight, a strategy of prescience would aim to anticipate, conceptualize, and influence significant problems that might arise in domains over time. Academics, who have already established interactional expertise in a practice domain, possibly through the engagement strategies described in the first two quadrants or from prior work experience, may be able to draw on what they know from their academic domain of expertise to anticipate new issues for the practice domain. In so doing, they are widening their impact on the practice domain by projecting possible future scenarios that they can (uniquely) anticipate as they are looking at issues from a particular (or extreme) case or from a wider

ecosystem vantage point. In this sense, the academic may be able to project possible futures by thinking 'outside the box' and be distinctive from practitioners. They may be well positioned to develop new insight into what future problems or scenarios might develop in fields of practice such as digital work (Orlikowski 2017).   Another example of a digital futures contribution would be where academics anticipate the changing nature of working, coordinating and organizing in the age of the learning algorithm (Faraj, Pachidi, Sayegh 2018 this issue).

In the area of AI, research on digitization in manufacturing might be developed by an academic with expertise in Big Data who has developed interactional expertise in car manufacturing. In such a scenario, practitioners working on the connected car in manufacturing may have sufficient interactional expertise on Big Data to apprehend the academic insights, and use them to develop their field of practice. Once again, the process of development of interactional expertise is evident in a bi-directional manner for both academic and practitioner alike. Anticipating a possible future development is likely visionary, and the projected insights may effectively pre-empt a preferred direction in practice while offering useful policy recommendations.

4) *Achieving hybrid practices*

Academics can also expand their network of relations by developing a tightly coupled collaboration with other domain experts during the research process to solve complex problems. We suggest that such engaged scholarship (Van de Ven 2007, 2018 this issue) may allow academics and practitioners to not only hone their interaction expertise in each other's domains, but also to generate an entirely new field of hybrid practice. Such a practice requires a new multidisciplinary approach that draws together experts from several domains. Each collaborator in the academic practitioner relationship is developing a new arena of expertise through aligning insights, and adopting evaluation techniques and methods of inquiry from across respective domains.

For example, computational computer scientists collaborating with cancer researchers (in the field of biology) may work together with clinicians to create a new field of systems biology (Bruns 2013).

Alternatively, computer scientists working with architects may develop a field of computer aided design (Boland et al 2007) in the practice of designing buildings. In both examples, insight is developed through shared practices that align findings across fields. This may create symmetry between fields in a novel manner which allows for contributory expertise across both domains and necessarily depends on the extent to which interactional expertise may be developed by both academics and practitioners in the process. Importantly, these collaborations of shared practices may lead to new domains of knowledge or new academic fields.

Table 2 summarises the primary goals, supporting convening strategies, and research outcomes associated with each of the four strategies depicted in the RICK framework.

RICK Strategy	Primary Goal	Convening Strategies	Research Outcomes (Illustrative Examples)
Maintaining Critical Distance	Developing a theoretical contribution and informing practice	Knowledge Transfer Forums & Workshops	Journal article in academic field; research feedback presentation to reflective practitioners
Promoting Deeper Engagement	Solving problems of direct relevance to practice	Co-production of knowledge; practitioner conferences	Models of wider practical relevance; policy Impact at national and intergovernmental levels; Publication in practice facing journal
Developing Prescience	Anticipating future challenges associated with a practice domain from research	Engaging with breadth of stakeholders; gaining ecosystem insight; work experience	Publication in high impact practitioner outlets or white paper; policy changes
Achieving Hybrid Practices	Creating a new field of work and inquiry through shared practices	Work together to form new forms of practice; using tools or technology in new ways	Creating new academic field; journal article in academic field; setting up new academic journal

Table 2: Developing and Implementing RICK Strategies

A Broad Research Agenda for RICK

In this paper, we draw on the concept of expertise and the literature on academic-practitioner relationships to understand how academics may widen the scope of their contributions. To this end, we develop a (RICK) framework which combines levels of expertise with different forms of collaboration. More specifically, we examine how the development of *interactional expertise* with others at loosely and more tightly coupled levels of collaboration allows for different forms of engaged scholarship. For example, *interactional expertise* with a more *independent and limited* collaboration reflects a knowledge transfer paradigm capitalising on the independence inherent in maintaining a critical distance. Secondly, *interactional expertise* and *tightly coupled collaboration* can promote deeper engagement by allowing knowledge co-production across a wider set of activities including research design and theory building. Future work could usefully explore how interactional expertise may best be developed in these different collaborative relationships to enhance (or not) practical utility. Understanding the boundary conditions as to how, when and where would be valuable.

Thirdly, our framework also examines how the development of *contributory expertise* with others can allow for what we term *developing prescience*. Here academics can draw on their contributory expertise in the academic domain to challenge assumptions and anticipating future problems in practice. Fourthly, in *achieving hybrid practices,* academics can draw on contributory expertise in tightly coupled collaborative relationships with practitioners; high levels of practical utility may be achieved through the entanglement of practices with the unique potential for new knowledge being developed in both domains. Future work could usefully assess and understand how, when and why developing prescience and achieving hybrid practices may be achieved or not.

The RICK framework is motivated by recent scholarship (Sandberg and Alvesson 2011, Alvesson and Sandberg 2011, Alvesson and Sandberg 2013) that aims to promote the development of more interesting and innovative academic papers. This literature has implored researchers to go beyond

traditional 'gap spotting' in reviewing the existing literature and developing the context of contribution (Golden-Biddle and Locke 1997, 2007) from which research questions are subsequently generated. Instead, they argue that the emphasis should be on problematizing and challenging the assumptions underlying existing literature when constructing carefully grounded research questions. The RICK framework is sympathetic to such approaches which challenge the gap spotting habitus and is supportive of alternative strategies which balance developing significant theoretical contribution alongside developing significant practical utility. To do so, the emphasis is on understanding the limits/potential of different levels of expertise and combining this with collaborative academic-practitioner relationships to widen research impact and relevance.

For pragmatic and other well intentioned reasons, academics may necessarily adapt the balance of relevance and impact over time. It is important for academics to be reflective of how their researcher identity can grow in terms of the rigor and relevance balance over the course of their careers. While there are understandable pressures for younger pre-tenure researchers to publish in the 'right' journals shaped by popular rankings, we should be careful that this does not come at the expense of 'wanting to do really novel, challenging and significant research' (Alvesson and Sandberg 2013).   It is important for researchers to avoid being stunted by straightjacket requirements of rigorous academic work. Instead, young academics should start cultivating roots and shoots of high impact relevant research early on in one's career.

Such a focus on impact is supported by recent institutional research audits to promote public accountability, such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK and the ERA in Australia. Over the last decade these national audits pressure academics to go beyond a rather narrow set of designated journal lists. They are giving significant weightage to measuring the impact and quality of research with important consequences for allocation of funding. At the same time there is a rising social consciousness amongst academics who are purpose driven and genuinely want to make a

difference through their research. Many have grown up in an open collaborative social network and more readily embrace a wider range of metrics which promote visibility and impact of their research online and globally.

There are valuable practice based journals such as MISQ Executive and the CACM in the IS field which offer academics increased accessibility and visibility of their work to wider audiences (mainly practitioners). However, some practitioner oriented papers may ironically come at the expense of being narrow in scope, in part due to the specific genre of writing required for purposes of attempting to increase accessibility of the scholarship. Indeed it is unfortunate that their focus on being accessible may come at the expense of original research being highly distilled and purposely devoid of references which can serve to dilute the effectiveness of research as being impactful. We propose different genres of articles be cultivated which are both accessible while retaining, and crystallizing, key insights of the research and preserving key references. Below, we propose and outline different genres of articles that offer such an opportunity to widen our contributions to knowledge.

Proposed RICK Genres of Articles to Widen Contributions to Knowledge

The RICK section established in the Information & Organization journal provides a space for different genres of articles (Davidson and Barrett 2018 this issue). Below, we discuss how these various genres relate to the different options as suggested by each cell of our RICK framework.

 The top left cell of our framework 'Maintaining Critical Distance' could be nurtured through the genre of a traditional research article which may be captured by the '*Conceptual article*' as well as '*Review article' which are being offered in the new RICK section of this journal*. In such an article, the academic researcher would bring together accumulated research knowledge to articulate how important information systems phenomena have been addressed over time and where new research emphases are needed. Such articles could offer a broad synthesis while critically unpacking,

reviewing, and developing a specific research stream. It would be important for such articles to reflect on how the reviewed material has relevance for other (non-academic) domains. Another RICK genre of article is the *'Translational research article'* which engages with co –produced research. In this genre, researchers seek a deeper engagement with practice by extending the implications of scholarly research for practice and/or for policy. An example of this genre is exemplified by Baird, Davidson and Mathiasson (2017) where an action research approach is used to reflect on small healthcare firms might adopt information systems in a more integrative manner. These articles differ from conceptual articles (above) or descriptive reports of practice (practice-based research) to examine how research in a specified domain has (or may) influence practice. Where appropriate, joint development and authorship are encouraged, reflecting the academic practitioner relationship and in so doing promote co-production of knowledge across domains.

We suggest the RICK genre of *'Digital futures'* articles provide a writing space for Developing Prescience as shown in the bottom left cell of our framework. For this genre we suggest researchers will draw on their contributory expertise to extend the discussion of research impact beyond implications of an individual research study for current phenomena. Instead, articles in this category might aim to project from current cumulative research knowledge towards what might be potential consequences for societal and organizational futures (e.g. Faraj et al. 2018 this issue)

Finally, in an increasingly complex and uncertain world, the articles using the RICK genre of a '*Global challenges article*' can have significant impact by bringing together various types of contributory expertise to address global grand challenges (e.g. technology enabled poverty alleviation, organizing refugee crises). Given the complexity of global challenges, more than one domain of knowledge often needs to be coordinated to have real impact. Stakeholders within these domains often need to have a very deep understanding of the issues from the perspective of the other domains, and thus may be expected to draw on tightly coupled collaborations. Research on the genre of Grand Challenges are of increasing importance (e.g. Special Issues in MISQ, and the AMD) and may lead to

the development of a new hybrid domain of knowledge with the potential for high levels of impact and practical utility.

Future work could usefully challenge the procedures used by established journals to provide a richer, more diverse genre of articles. We argue that these could go beyond traditional practice facing or 'bridge media journals' (Birkinshaw et al. 2016). Further, they need to be supported by a new evaluative infrastructure and be recognized for their research impact using a broader range of metrics which are becoming legitimized by ranking bodies. We encourage established journals to support new genres of articles that involve engaged scholarship produced by multidisciplinary teams of researchers, practitioners and policy makers, as recently spearheaded by journals such as the Academy of Management Discovery and more recently the RICK section of Information & Organization.

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