

View from a bridge? **Professional journals in the gap between research and practice**

Many practitioner focussed professional organisations have their own journal, which is seen and 'sold' as an important membership benefit. For example, within the United Kingdom, the Archives and Records Association is also responsible for *Archives and Records* and something similar is replicated in other countries including; the United States (*The American Archivist* – Society of American Archivists), Canada (*Archivaria* – Association of Canadian Archivists), Australia (*Archives and Manuscripts* – Australian Society of Archivists) and New Zealand (*Archifacts* – Archives and Records Association of New Zealand). These journals also form part of the research landscape of traditional scholarly communication and, as such, should be an important bridge between research and practice. Speaking from her own experience of editing one of these journals, the author will suggest an alternative view, which sees them instead as a visible manifestation of the gap between research and practice.

For example, in mediating between academic and practitioner authors and peer reviewers, it becomes very clear that there are distinct, and to some extent incommensurate views at play. Research and practice operate on different terms of success, validity and promotion and ultimately do not agree on what is 'good' in the sense of worth publication (or the time of reading it). Then again, it also becomes apparent in this process of mediation that there are fundamental inequalities in terms of access to resources. For example, your average researcher (in an academic context) will probably have access to all the afore-mentioned journals and the research reported within them, your average practitioner (in an academic context) may also have such access, but your average practitioner without an academic context will not. The movement towards Open Access in scholarly communication is starting to address this particular inequality, but many others remain.

The paper will suggest that if journals of this kind are to reach their potential as a bridge between research and practice they should not be seen as a product or as a means of publication for research, but rather as a process or site of mediation between individuals whose share an interest in a particular practice despite the differences in their various practices of, yes perhaps undertaking research, but also perhaps running an archive service, teaching graduate students or managing the records of a multi-national organisation. The author will also offer her own suggestions for ways in which she would like to move beyond this view towards the implementation of actual sites of mediation, including perhaps reading groups, mentoring schemes and even open peer review, before inviting further discussion and suggestions from the audience.