This issue of the KMi Review has a special feature on the “20 years of knowledge media” celebration held in May 2015, which brought together the original founders of the Institute with international guests and the new generation of knowledge media researchers. Happy birthday KMi.

20 Years of Knowledge Media Celebration

Looking to the future of Knowledge Media

On 20th May 2015, we marked twenty years of The Knowledge Media Institute (KMi) with an event at the OU, including opening remarks from Vice Chancellor Peter Horrocks, reflective talks and a showcase of KMi’s work. We invited pioneering speakers to establish what shape Knowledge Media will take in the future. Special guests included KMi’s founders: Marc Eisenstadt, Tom Vincent and Kitty Chisholm.

Opening the event, OU Vice Chancellor Peter Horrocks reflected on the great achievements of KMi over the last twenty years.

“I need KMi’s brilliance to be directly applied to the challenges of the OU and also to the wider challenges of education. Of course KMi needs to be free to pursue its research instincts, to follow its nose. But it should always aim to bring as much of that as possible back to the heart of the University and its mission.” – Peter Horrocks

We wholeheartedly agree.

Other articles in this issue

- FORGE in Bulgaria
- Another key KMi contribution at ESWC
- The OU and Cisco @ the exp.at Conference

http://kmi.open.ac.uk/
We were also honoured to be joined by former OU Vice Chancellor (1990-2001), Sir John Daniel, who presented an insightful journey through the history of the OU and KMi's inception.

He joined the lab in celebrating, commenting: "...of all the OU's innovations in the 1990s, this is the one of which I am most proud."

One audience member highlighted on Twitter how the speakers at our 20th celebration returned time again to the theme of Knowledge Media research with a social conscience. This was also touched upon by KMi's founding Director, Marc Eisenstadt in his inspirational presentation on KMi's recipe for success. Marc's words chimed with current Director, Peter Scott's later talk by focusing on the community of people and high quality expertise essential for the lab's success. He also made clear the need for sufficient funding to fuel the creative atmosphere.

Quoting JFK, Professor Emeritus Eisenstadt insisted "We must be bold." This theme was reinforced by Professor Scott's thought-provoking talk, encouraging passionate researchers to look potential failure in the face, not fear failure and learn to fearlessly push forward.

Next up - Frank van Harmelen, Professor in Knowledge Representation and Reasoning in the Computer Science department at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Marcus Specht, Professor for Advanced Learning Technologies at The Open University of the Netherlands brought external perspectives on Knowledge Media to this event.

Sir John Daniel
VC of The OU (1990-2001)

Sir John Daniel was the Vice Chancellor of The Open University between 1990-2001 and was instrumental in setting up KMi in 1995. His career has taken him on a variety of international appointments and the three countries where he has lived and worked the longest have recognised his contributions with national honours.

Prof Marc Eisenstadt
Co-founder of KMi

Marc Eisenstadt co-founded KMi in 1994 with Tom Vincent and Kitty Chisholm, served as KMi Director until 2000 and became Chief Scientist until his retirement in 2007.

“Great resources, great people, stir repeat.”

“Think and rethink… innovation must disrupt.”
- Peter Scott
Frank discussed the history of problem solving methods and the emergence of semantics, knowledge representation and ontologies and Marcus mused on chaos and structure in the learning environment.

Lady Kitty Chisholm was the Director of Development at The Open University when she helped to bring KMi into existence. She was involved in pioneering work in corporate learning with The Open University. She is now Director of Boardwalk Leadership, a boutique research and training company specialising in women in leadership.

http://kmi.open.ac.uk/
And in other news…

The Open University and Cisco at the exp.at conference.

The 3rd Experiment@International Conference (exp.at ’15) took place in the first week of June, in the beautiful island of Sao Miguel in the Azores. This biannual conference is dedicated to online experimentation, providing a forum of discussion and collaboration between academics, researchers, web designers, K-12 teachers and industry, bridging the gap between academic applications and results as well as real world needs and experiences.

The results of the ongoing collaboration between members of The Open University and the Cisco Networking Academy were presented at the exp.at conference. Alexander Mikroyannidis (Knowledge Media Institute) and Andrew Smith (Faculty of Mathematics Computing and Technology) from The Open University, together with Nuno Guarda (Head of Corporate Affairs for Cisco in the UK and Ireland), presented the latest developments related to the transformation of Cisco’s Packet Tracer educational software into a web platform that can be accessed by any web browser, as well as embedded and used inside an online course or an interactive eBook.

This work is funded by the FORGE project, as part of its initiative in driving and promoting the concept of experimentally driven research in education by using experiments as an interactive learning and training channel for both students and professionals.

Rutgers workshop on social and collaborative information

PhD student, Simon Knight returned from a week at the School of Communications and Information at Rutgers University where he was an invited attendee of the DIMACS (Center for Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science) funded Workshop on Social and Collaborative Information Seeking (SCIS) held under the auspices of the Special Focus on Information Sharing and Dynamic Data Analysis. The workshop was an opportunity for interdisciplinary researchers to present their work around SCIS and discuss future development of research agendas, collaborations, funding, and the general development of the field.
Another key KMi contribution at ESWC

This year, the 12th edition of the Extended Semantic Web conference (ESWC 2015) was celebrated in Portoroz, Slovenia with a very significant KMi presence!

The KMi team was strongly involved in the conference organisation with John Domingue as President of STI, Carlos Pedrinaci as co-chair of the Services, Web APIs, and the Web of Things Track and Miriam Fernandez as co-chair of the Semantic Web and Web Science track. KMi members were also inspiring the new generations of Semantic Web researchers, with Enrico Motta as an invited speaker at the PhD Symposium, with a talk entitled “Reflections on Research”.

Regarding the presence of KMi papers, Enrico Daga was a presenter at two workshops, SALAD (in a co-authored paper with Luca Panziera and Carlos Pedrinaci) and LeDa-Swan. Alessandro Adamou was a presenter at the PROFILES15 workshop and Shuangyan Liu was a presenter at the LDQ2015 workshop. There was also a significant presence of ex-KMi members at the conference, with Marta Sabou as Program Chair of the conference, Vanesa Lopez as co-chair of the In-Use & Industrial Track and Stefan Dietze as co-chair of the Linked Data track.

The conference was celebrated close to the sea side, an inspiring environment for new and exciting Semantic Web ideas!

FORGE in Bulgaria

A two-day event was held in Troyan (Bulgaria) to present new ICT solutions to Bulgarian universities. In this event, John Domingue presented the FORGE project to members of Bulgarian universities. The audience became aware of the possibility of using world class Future Internet Research and Experimentation (FIRE) experimentation facilities for teaching purposes and how FORGE can facilitate this. John presented the ongoing Open Call which will provide training and support to any associate partner interested in reusing or creating new courses using FORGE’s tools and processes. This presentation was complemented by a hands-on session where more technical insights, about both the project and its Open Call, were presented. First, Daan Pareit (iMinds, Ghent University) presented some sample FIRE experiment facilities and their typical lifecycle. Afterwards, he showed how to use FORGE’s tools to operate a sample testbed. Finally, Alexander
Mikroyannidis guided the audience on how to produce an iBook which contains FORGE’s resources. The event was jointly organised by the Bulgarian Research and Education Network (BREN) and Kontrax.

EATEL SIG Remote Labs and Online Experimentation is established

The European projects FORGE and Go-Lab have jointly established the Special Interest Group (SIG): Remote Labs and Online Experimentation. The SIG has been established within the European Association of Technology Enhanced Learning (EATEL). EATEL supports a network of European research laboratories and groups via free services, sponsoring high profile TEL events, knowledge interchange, and a set of very active Special Interest Groups.

The main goal of the new SIG is to drive and promote remote labs and online experimentation and to offer technologies that can aid stakeholders build experimental infrastructures and use them across different domains. The SIG aims to create an open community and ecosystem where a wide range of educational resources and different setups for scientific experimentation are shared among the community members. The SIG also plans to develop best pedagogical and technical practices to broaden the adoption of remote labs and online experimentation in both teacher and provider communities.

Knowledge Media for OU staff

The Open University’s Charter Day celebrations concluded with the Learn About Fair. People from all over the OU found out more about a variety KMi projects, including Engage and EDV. It was a particularly good opportunity for the latter to showcase the Democratic Replay tool, as we were quickly approaching the UK General Election. The two day fair was well attended and we exhibited to several VIP guests. Prof Zdrahal was pleased to discuss OU Analyse with Chancellor, Martha-Lane Fox, who showed a real interest in the work behind it. Members of MK:Smart were also given the chance to meet Vice Chancellor Peter Horrocks and Mark Lancaster, MP for North East Milton Keynes. There was clear interest in our technologies from different faculties. We were approached about exhibiting our Augmented Reality demo and CORE work at an OU conference in June and there was lots of interest in Paul Hogan’s AR app promoting MK:Smart.
Case Study of the Week for the OU's SUPI project

The Open University’s Schools University Partnership Initiative (SUPI) is being featured as the ‘Case Study of the Week’ on the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement’s (NCCPE’s) website.

Over the last year Trevor Collins (KMi), Peter Devine (IET), Rick Holliman (Science) and Mark Russell (Denbigh School) ran a series of participatory design workshops to explore the perceptions of school-university partnerships held by young people and university researchers, with the purpose of developing some information resources for schools and researchers that communicate the values underpinning the initiative. A case study explaining the approach was written up as part of the annual report for the initiative and has been selected for publication on the NCCPE site along with some supporting resources.

Through a series of five school sessions and one university session we worked with six school pupils and twelve university researchers to draw, group and review a set of positive and negative attributes they associate with school-university engagement practices. Once started, the pupils and researchers found drawing a quick and easy way of generating attributes that would have been more challenging to write as a list of words. Comparing and contrasting the attributes identified by students and university researchers led to further discussions around the form and format of engagement activities. We then worked with the Denbigh pupils to develop a design for a wristband that will be used as a means to communicate and promote the values of the partnership initiative.

In this case, collaboration through participatory design led to an outcome that neither group would have produced individually. Working together was the only way to gain an insight into the priorities and values held by pupils and researchers, which was a necessary foundation for communicating effectively the goals of the initiative. Being showcased by the NCCPE brings this work to national attention and provides a further means for sharing the participatory design approach with the wider engagement community.
Farewell Celebration for Peter Scott

Members of KMi and colleagues from across the University gathered in the lab on 18 June to say goodbye to our Director. Peter will be sorely missed in his role as a leader and a mentor in KMi. After twenty years of service to The Open University, and seven years as KMi’s Director, Professor Scott will soon become Assistant Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. KMi’s Director-designate, Professor John Domingue, gave a talk reflecting on the many years they’d spent working together and on Professor Scott’s contribution to the lab. Having joined the lab when it was set up twenty years ago, Professor Domingue, will be beginning his role as Director on 1 August.

KMi project wins Storage Award at annual event

The OU-led digital initiative, MK:Smart, was successful at the 22nd annual Storage Awards, held at the prestigious Grand Connaught Rooms in London. The MK Data Hub was nominated (and won!) in the “Best Storage Solution” category for its “Data protection project”, which was built in conjunction with NCE Europe, Arcserve and CMS Distribution. Attending and receiving the award were staff from NCE, Arcserve and CMS and from KMi representing The Open University were Paul Alexander, Jane Whild and Jai Gadhvi.

“It's pleasing to both be nominated and successful in receiving the award”, noted Technical Operations Lead of the Data Hub Technical Operations (DTOP) Paul Alexander. “The work put in by the team to build the MK Data Hub was immense, with everyone working long hours in a short space of time to get it up and running. So it’s especially pleasing for their efforts to be recognised and I’m keen for us to take this forward as a motivational tool to gain more success”.

The MK Data Hub infrastructure is at the heart of the project, running in central Milton Keynes. It supports the acquisition and management of vast amounts of data relevant to city systems from a variety of sources, such as local and national open data repositories; data streams from both key infrastructure networks (energy, transport, water) and other relevant sensor networks (e.g., weather and pollution data); satellite data; data crowdsourced from social media and through specialised apps.
Choose to study at KMi

Simon Knight did…

Simon is hoping to submit by October 2015 before joining ex-KMi’er Simon Buckingham Shum at The University of Technology Sydney as a Research Fellow. Let’s take a closer look at his thesis:

The ways we look for and process information give insight into how we’re thinking about the problem we’re trying to solve – what the parameters of the problem are, how the bits of information connect, what resources are credible (or not). Research in educational psychology describes this thinking as ‘epistemic cognition.’ Increasing access to data in learning contexts, and new technologies to facilitate that data capture (using, for example, browser add-ons) enables research into trace data rather than relying on self-report or observation. In Simon’s research, he designed some tasks asking students to collaboratively write a report describing the best supported claims of the risks of a substance (a food supplement or fertiliser). The participants used a browser add-on to collaborate, so we have access to: the pages they visited, their queries, their chat logs, and the etherpad output. Simon is making use of this data to explore the relationships between self-reported epistemic cognition, trace data, and the qualities of the written reports. He is particularly interested in how we can support students to better evaluate and synthesise information as they look for it/find it.

5 PhD Studentships on Data Science available starting October 2015

KMi are delighted to announce new studentships available starting this year on Data Science, this will be part of setting up Data Science as a key research priority for the lab. Join us as a home with internationally recognised researchers in semantic technologies, educational multimedia, collaboration technologies, AI, cognitive Science and human-computer interaction.

As Data Science is becoming increasingly critical in most areas of business, academia and indeed everyday life, we are looking for the next generation of bright researchers to investigate key challengers of Data Science.

To find out more and apply visit - http://kmi.open.ac.uk/studentships/vacancies/

Applications close 13 July 2015.

http://kmi.open.ac.uk/
KMi's World Stage
and Closer to Home

Brian Pluss attended TVX 2015 in Brussels (01-06 June).

Allan Third, attended the CARRE project meeting in Luton (18-22 May).

John Domingue, travels to Innsbruck for an STI meeting (as part of his President priorities), also to a FIRE Board Meeting to discuss the sustainability of FIRE in Paris (26-28 June).

John Domingue, Alex Mikroyannidis and Aneta Tumilowicz travelled to Dubrovnik for the EDSA project Plenary (15-16 June).

Enrico Motta, Harith Alani and many other KMiers attended ESWC 2015 in Slovenia (31 May-4 Jun).


Enrico Motta, Harith Alani, and many other KMiers attended ESWC 2015 in Slovenia (31 May-4 Jun).

Fridolin Wild and Beppe Scavo attended the Augmented Work Expo (AWE) 2015, California (8-10 June 2015).

Alan Fletcher and Fridolin Wild are travelling to Ireland to a lead workshop with The Ireland Prison service. (17-18 June).

KMi Future

Upcoming Knowledge Media Events...

• MK:Smart Plenary and Partner Board are being hosted in KMi, 16 July 2015, including all partners in the project.

• John Domingue is the Director and is supported by Rachel Yarrien for the ESWC Summer School 2015 in Crete (31 Aug - 5 Sept). Mathieu d’Aquin is also Directing a similar summer school in Italy (6-10 July).

Coming NEXT ...

...taking a closer look at Social Semantics and Web Science.