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**TRACING PATHS THROUGH UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE WORK IN THE INFORMATION FIELDS (Panel)**

**Abstract** This panel addresses the need to make academic research more accessible, relevant, and useful to non-academic and marginalised communities, focusing on the roles information researchers and professionals can play in these efforts. It offers a retrospective on a multi-year partnership development project, highlighting insights from a community-engaged project to develop tools, training and services for university-community knowledge exchange.

**1. Introduction**

This panel addresses how to make academic research more accessible, relevant, and useful to non-academic and marginalised communities, focusing on the roles information researchers and professionals can play in these efforts. In alignment with the conference theme of leaps and stumbles, the panel will offer a retrospective on the Supporting Transparent and Open Research Engagement and Exchange (STOREE) project, which launched in 2017 as a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council-funded Partnership Development Grant and is now drawing to a close. The panel will highlight team members' experiences in reaching new insights and coping with challenges across 6 years of collaboration through various project initiatives. This is a unique opportunity to bracket a major research project, first introduced to the CAIS-ACSI community in a panel presentation in its early stages (De Forest et. al., 2019).

**2. Problem Statement**

Within Library and Information Science (LIS), knowledge transfer and mobilisation have long been associated with the sometimes elusive goal of moving "research into practice" (Eve & Schenk, 2006). LIS researchers and practitioners also engage in open science and open access initiatives, to broaden and increase equity in access to academic research (Burpee & Fernandez, 2014). However, much of this work is focused on research informing policy and practice, rather than directly reaching members of the public (Courtney, 2009). The COVID-19 pandemic stands as a stark example of why people need access to research, as noted by the United Nations: "Access to accurate and timely information helps people make safe choices, for themselves and their families" (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020, p.2). Relational approaches to this issue require a shift in perspective from knowledge transfer to knowledge exchange (KE), the "two-way process of sharing knowledge between different groups of people" (Shaxson et al., 2012, p.2). This involves engaging and partnering with communities

to make both the research and sustained access to it meaningful to them (e.g., Carson et al., 2020; Courtney, 2009; McCauley & Towle, 2022; Paris & Costley White, 2023).

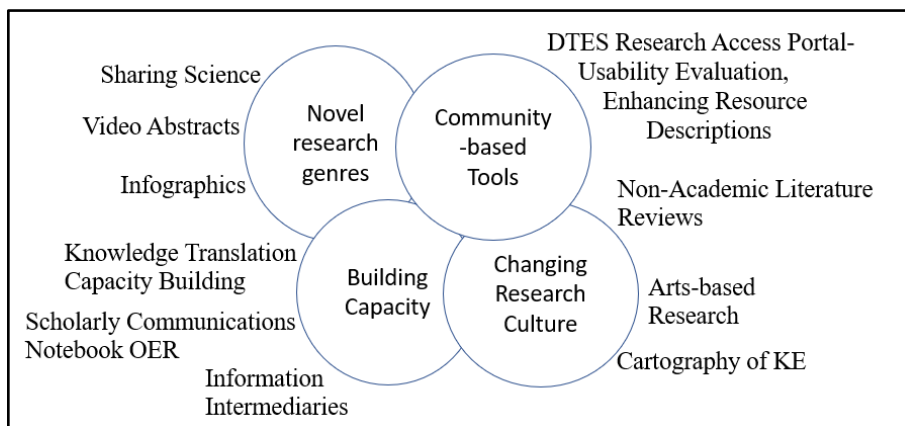
The need for university-community KE is particularly acute within communities that have experienced extractive research practices (Gaudry, 2011), including the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver (DTES) (Ubels et al., 2020). The Research 101 Manifesto, written in collaboration with people living in the DTES, emphasises the frequent lack of reciprocity in university research: “In many peoples’ experience, [bringing research back to community] almost never happens, and if it does, it is entirely inadequate” (Boilevin et al., 2019). Approaches grounded in KE offer a means to shift practices and build trust by requiring reciprocity at all stages of the research process.

A premise of this project is that academic libraries and librarians are particularly well-situated to support university-community KE, given their resources and expertise in relation to research practices, services, and collections, even while this work is not considered a core area of practice (Courtney, 2009). An interview study carried out as part of the STOREE project found that librarians are, indeed, engaged in KE, acting as information intermediaries and brokers for communities outside the university, but with limited training, support, or recognition (O’Brien et al., 2023, 2022). Bridging this gap by providing examples, inspiration, and guidance has been one of the primary aims of STOREE.

### 3. Supporting Community-Based Knowledge Exchange

Over the past six years, the STOREE project has sought opportunities to confront and advance practices for increasing the availability and accessibility of research. A team of seven core investigators, three academic collaborators, four partner organisations, and fifteen graduate students carried out multiple sub-projects across several thematic areas (Figure 1). While some of these sub-projects were planned from the outset, others emerged organically, based on team interests and constraints posed by the pandemic, which had a major impact on the project.

Figure 1: Thematic Areas (centre) and Sub-Projects



A novel reflexive practice informs our retrospective view of the project. In August, 2023, a co-investigator and graduate student team member interviewed the project researchers about their experiences working on the project, connections they saw between sub-projects, the learnings they would take forward with them in their own practice or thinking, and the opportunities they saw for STOREE's findings. Themes were extracted from the interviews, compiled in a summative report, and shared back to the team. This followed a similar process conducted midway through the project, which had proved valuable in refocusing and planning efforts. Summative themes regarding project outcomes included:

- The opportunity gap between high enthusiasm among scholars and authors to make their work more accessible to the public, and the lack of infrastructure to support this goal;
- The rich landscape of scholarly and non-scholarly genres available and the extent of practice-based knowledge involved in making dissemination choices;
- The need for collaborative, local, and value-based design approaches to develop tools and systems in support of KE;
- Librarians' contributions to KE are important, but are often informal, unacknowledged, and motivated by personal interests and connections in the community;
- Institutional changes with respect to policy, practice, and priorities are needed in universities and academic libraries to support KE practices better and establish relationships of trust and value between universities and members of the public;
- Project participation afforded a transformational learning experience for many of those involved.

The team also identified two important themes related to STOREE's own processes. The first stemmed from the pandemic, which provided an opportunity to think differently about how research and KE could or should be undertaken and what it really means to "make research accessible." The second—and related—theme centred on the breadth of STOREE's sub-projects. As team members branched out to lead their own research, STOREE provided a space for informal interpersonal learning and enabled team members to build iteratively on their sub-projects' designs. Within the constraints of this pandemic-spanning project, new opportunities arose.

#### **4. Panel Composition and Structure**

This panel brings together 5 project team members to share tangible learnings from a range of KE initiatives. Each will discuss their work in terms of leaps and stumbles and offer insights into the team's processes, which were non-linear, and reflect, in many ways, the agility and flexibility required of KE professionals in their work. Each panellist will speak for 10-12 minutes, with time remaining for a question and answer and discussion period.

Heather O'Brien (Professor, UBC iSchool) is the Principal Investigator on the STOREE project. She will introduce the project and panel members and moderate the discussion.

Julia Bullard (Assistant Professor, UBC iSchool) co-supervised student work on the DTES Research Access Portal, helping to align the platform's metadata with the larger STOREE goals of accessibility and respect for local knowledge. She will speak about how largely invisible systems like metadata can hinder or advance such goals and the sub-project's success in engaging with stakeholders and local knowledge to redesign subject access.

Kristina McDavid (Librarian, UBC) is a Collaborator on the STOREE project and co-lead on two sub-projects. Kristina will speak about the interview study (conducted with Heather O'Brien) that examined the role of information professionals in KE work. She will share some examples of the KE work interview participants described and will discuss how they engaged in this work (roles, attributes, skills) and some of the challenges they reported.

Melissa Nelson (Graduate Student, UBC iSchool) is a research assistant with STOREE and Knowledge Translation professional in the health sector, who assisted with a number of STOREE initiatives. Melissa worked on the summative interviews and report (with Co-PI Angela Towle), and will speak about the process, the themes that emerged, and insights gained as part of the project team.

Luanne Sinnamon (Associate Professor, UBC iSchool) is a Co-Investigator on the STOREE project and co-lead on several sub-projects. She will speak about the motivations and constraints on the uptake of new scholarly genres for KE and the need for new methods and protocols for conducting and evaluating community-engaged design research.

Sam Snodgrass (Graduate Student, UBC iSchool) worked with STOREE as a research assistant. Sam will speak about a project (conducted alongside Heather De Forest and Kristina McDavid) to provide guidance on conducting literature reviews for nonprofit organisations and community groups given their unique needs and resources. She will speak about gathering useful resources and tailoring content for these groups, incorporating feedback from library colleagues and members of our target audience, and designing a physical postcard to spread awareness about the resource.

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