

ARCOM 2018: A Productive Relationship: Balancing Fragmentation and Integration Call for Track Proposals

ARCOM 2018 returns to Belfast, drawing on the hospitality of Queen's University in partnership with the Dublin Institute for Technology. Our research communities are coming together to achieve more than political rhetoric.

At a time when the modern world grapples with the challenges of divided nations, the need for greater collaboration to build communities of practice for resilience and sustainability seems paramount. Northern and Southern Ireland, not without their political challenges, are rich in communities and enterprise that surpass much of the divide. Important to this conference are the feats of great engineering borne from cultures that embrace technology and a willingness explore. The progressive mobile have and continue to shape our built environment. Without such transient and powerful workforces, holding on passionately to their culture, would we achieve so much?

In preparation for ARCOM 2018, we are currently calling for track proposals that address the central theme, 'Balancing fragmentation and integration'. Fragmentation of the construction industry has often been highlighted as a problem, and as a reason to integrate. Yet, there is a need to deepen our understanding of fragmentation and to understand whether it is not only problematic, but also a productive force for good. Questions are raised around whether fragmentation is necessarily a bad thing, and whether integration is always the solution. Should we be striving for a balance between fragmentation and integration? What does this balance look like, and what implications will balancing fragmentation and integration have on policy, practice and research in construction?

We welcome proposals up to 750 words (excluding the list of references) that build and respond to this central theme.

The ARCOM Conference is an inclusive conference that covers a wide range of topics pertinent to construction work. We therefore invite track proposers to reflect on the aforementioned theme when developing track proposals that may also address:

- Building information modelling
- Equality and diversity
- Human resources management
- Information management
- Infrastructure development
- Offsite construction
- Planning, productivity and quality
- Research and education
- Sustainability in the built environment
- Construction design & technology
- Disaster management
- Health, safety and well-being
- Law and contracts
- Other related themes considered

Informal queries and track proposals should be sent (in .doc, .docx, or .pdf formats) to tracks@arcom.ac.uk by **Friday 16 June 2017 at 2359hrs GMT**. Please include a title for your track proposal, and the name(s) and affiliation(s) of the track proposers. Decision on final track proposals for ARCOM 2018 will be communicated in June 2017 and accepted tracks will be published in the Call for Papers for ARCOM 2018.

Emerging themes

Construction and the digital divide (unequal distribution of who has access, skills and competence). Practices in the construction industry have recently been transformed with the use of more digital technologies. This is arguably pursued at the relative neglect (and expense) of the analogue world. There are questions raised around the unequal distribution of who has access, skills and competence to digitalise construction. Moreover, how policy-makers, practitioners and researchers value the non-digital in order to build a stronger, more productive construction industry?

Who counts as a stakeholder and how are they engaged

Who and what counts as a stakeholder and how do they count? Stakeholder engagement has been a longstanding matter of concern in managing construction. The call to balance integration and fragmentation has also, in recent times, been manifested in the tensions found between democratisation and privatisation of the built environment. Current scholarship on stakeholder engagement has also broadened to consider the influences of humans and non-humans alike. What do these developments mean for changing the ways in thinking about which stakeholders count and how stakeholder engagement is done?

Construction Management Research

Construction management as a research field has developed over the past few years to engage with scholarship in the wider management and organisational studies, as well as theories from the social sciences. While this engagement has resulted in more rigorous, theoretically-informed studies in construction management, there is also a need to maintain the distinctiveness of the field. In our attempts to mainstream construction management, how can we engage more fruitfully with the other disciplines and fields such that we maintain a strong sector-based identity while contributing to the mainstream?