

ARCOM 2019
Productivity, Performance and Quality Conundrum
Call for Track Proposals

Leeds Beckett University will play host to the 2019 ARCOM Conference, returning to Leeds and the great County of Yorkshire.

We are calling on ARCOM research leaders and scholars to share their vision and experience, looking from within and outside of the field of construction. The main conference theme will focus on productivity and performance; this is nothing new for a County steeped in an ability to harness energy, transforming and delivering high quality products and services that extend around the globe. Yorkshire's industrial heritage would not have been so influential if it wasn't for the visionary leaders of the time that stepped outside of their traditional boundaries with technical and social innovation. Travel and the distribution networks were once extended to the world, by a Yorkshire carpenter, through the invention of John Harrison's timepiece, allowing safe navigation of the seas. Sir Titus Salt of Leeds, still considered a thought leader in modern day manufacture, historically challenged management convention with social and cultural advancement, creating environments to deliver products of exceptional quality from the largest factory in the world at that time. The positive impact on the local area and community, through the Salt's approach benefitting workers health, education and wellbeing is still evidenced today in Saltaire, awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. We are both encouraging scholars to experience Yorkshire and its welcoming community and to embrace the topic from different angles, stepping outside conventional wisdom, exposing new research and fields of enquiry.

Yorkshire is the largest county in England, best known for a strong industrial heritage stretching back to the 18th century when the textile industry grew from cottage-based production to collective, industrialised production. Apart from textiles, Yorkshire was also renowned for the production of steel in Sheffield and shipbuilding in Hull. By returning to the heart of Yorkshire in 2019, the ARCOM community will advance and trade ideas on the productivity conundrum. The concept of productivity has, of course, seen recent renewed policy interest. A decade on from the Global Financial Crisis, governments around the world are increasingly concerned about raising productivity with a view to increase standards of living. In the UK, the pursuit of productivity growth lies at the centre of the industrial strategy.

Yet, as old forms of production industries give way to the rise of new ways of working in the growing service economy, questions remain as to whether traditional notion of productivity is still relevant. We therefore call for track proposals that address the productivity, performance and quality conundrum in the construction industry. We welcome proposals of around 750 words (excluding the list of references) that respond to one or more of the following questions:

- Notwithstanding recent interest, the problem of low productivity appears to be a perennial challenge for the construction industry. To what extent is this 'problem' really a problem (and not one borne out of political rhetoric)? Are policy-makers, researchers and/or practitioners measuring the appropriate things when defining productivity (if indeed, productivity is measured at all)?

- Despite a litany of recommended antidotes to the productivity challenge, productivity levels seem to be stubbornly low. What improvement strategies matter? What empirical evidence exists to show that certain strategies work more than others?
- Is productivity still an appropriate measure, especially in post-industrial societies where the service sector dominates? Do 'performance' and 'quality' measures capture more adequately what complex, modern-day supply chains in construction do? Or are terms such as 'performance' and 'quality' too slippery to grasp?
- In developing metrics to capture productivity, performance and quality measures in construction, policy-makers, researchers and practitioners have tended to focus on quantitative approaches. What theoretical and methodological innovation can help us better blend quantitative and qualitative understandings of the productivity, performance and quality conundrum?
- What are the intended and unintended consequences of refocusing attention on productivity? How do these manifest, especially long after the built asset is constructed?

Informal queries and track proposals should be sent (in .doc, .docx, or .pdf formats) to tracks@arcom.ac.uk by **Friday 13 July 2018 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 2019 will be communicated by the end of July and accepted tracks will be published in the Call for Papers for ARCOM 2019.