



Happy New Year 2004

ARCOM conference 2003



Dear ARCOM members and readers of the newsletter, welcome to the final issue of the ARCOM newsletter

for the year 2003, which has been a year full of achievements for ARCOM. The last issue reviewed the success of the ARCOM doctoral workshop, which was held prior to ARCOM 2003 conference.

In this issue Professor **David Greenwood** provides our readers with a review of the success of the ARCOM conference, which was held last September in Brighton.

Are you keen to improve your presentation skills?

Once again, **Professor Will Hughes** generously pours his valuable expertise and gives our readers some tips that are essential to improve their presentation skills at seminars, workshops or conferences. On behalf of the ARCOM committee, the editor thanks Will for his consistent and valuable contribution to the newsletter.

'Profiles' is a new column that has been introduced to the newsletter. In this issue, the *(Continued on back page)*



Many thanks to Kassim for organising the ARCOM conference at Brighton

On September 3rd in Brighton, one was reminded of the words of the Bard of Avon that *'summer's lease hath all too short a date'*, as over one hundred academics roused themselves from summers of cerebral inaction [at least those who managed a summer's recess] to attend the **19th Annual ARCOM Conference**. Delegates from all corners of the globe made their way to the premises of **University of Brighton** where we were hosted by the **School of the Environment**.

The keynote speech was delivered by **Professor Rodney Howes**. Rod needs no introduction to most of the academic community in the UK, and it is true to say that all present were inspired by his thoughts about the future of Built Environment research in UK universities. The topic was first put into its recent historical context, where a clear picture emerged of a strategy for the polarisation of resource towards fewer and fewer academic beneficiaries. Ultimately, however Professor Howes felt that it was *'increasingly unlikely that these institutions without collaboration will be able to fulfil the expectations placed upon them'*.

He advocated that the policy makers take full use of the academic and research potential across the 600 or so staff identified in the Built Environment 2001 RAE. Indeed, ARCOM has a role to play in making this happen.

Delegates were presented with two immaculate volumes of proceedings, representing over one hundred papers in areas including Cost and Financial Management, Design and Design Management, Human Resources and Culture, Economics and Strategy, Productivity, Performance and Risk, Project Management, Learning and Innovation, Information Technology and Visualization and Marketing and Inter-organizational Relations.

Special thanks must go from the editor to all the referees, and once again to **Dr. Will Hughes** for his tremendous efforts in pulling together the copy in electronic form, resulting in a first-rate publication. The evening of the second day of conference is traditionally illuminated by the major social event – the **Conference Dinner**. The venue was the Old Ship Hotel, on the Brighton seafront. An excellent meal was complemented by an excellent *digestif*, in the form of an amusing after-dinner speech by Professor **Tom Maver, of Strathclyde University**.



After dinner speaker Professor Tom Maver and Dr. David Greenwood presenting Dr Philip Ashton with the "Best Paper" award.

Afterwards, the award for **Best Paper – the Paul Townsend Memorial Prize** – was presented to a 'local' – Brighton University's **Dr. Philip Ashton**, for his paper entitled *'The development of a project and site investigation risk evaluation model'* [jointly written with **Dr. Kassim Gidado**].

Congratulations to Philip for this achievement. If there is one criticism of the current conference format, it is that sometimes delegates would like more time to discuss important issues that arise during proceedings and that there is insufficient time for this. The committee is looking at ways of alternative formats that might assist in improving the situation for the next conference.

Overall, though, the conference was a great success, and special thanks for this should go to Dr. Kassim Gidado and his colleagues at Brighton for a smoothly organised conference.

The venue for the **20th Annual ARCOM Conference** is **Edinburgh**, and the dates have been set for **Wednesday 1st to Friday 3rd September**. Our host institution will be **Heriot Watt University**, and on behalf of the Committee, I look forward to seeing you there.



ARCOM Chair: Dr David Greenwood

Please feel free to contact the ARCOM Chair;

Dr. David Greenwood, at david.greenwood@unn.ac.uk, or telephone: UK +44 (0) 191 227 4691.



Happy New

Successful organisational human practices...

This research, funded by the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), was carried out by **Athina-Nicolaides Bastien**, Senior Research Fellow, and supervised by **Paul A.B. Roberts**, Principal Fellow, within the Engineering Doctorate (Eng.D.) programme at the Warwick Manufacturing Group, University of Warwick.

The investigation set out to identify and share with practitioners, human and organisational factors and good practices that would help to improve UK construction. An innovative approach, using the Mind-mapping technique, was developed and led away from a prescriptive model towards an interactive, CD-ROM based framework that enables practitioners to delve into knowledge on good practice as implemented by industrialists and advocated by academics.

The research employed the qualitative methodologies of case study and evaluation, within a phenomenological research framework. Initially, the results of an in-depth literature review pointed out to a lack of team culture and collaboration in construction projects and failure of the fragmented UK construction industry to recognise people as an asset, generate profits or deliver high customer service. The Construction Task Force commissioned by the Government in 1998 confirmed these findings and suggested that industry and clients collaborate to reverse them by applying best practice. The Task Force identified key drivers for change and specified improvement areas.

Interestingly, it emerged that lessons from construction and other projects were not widely or adequately disseminated amongst construction professionals and the resultant information on existing best practice was not fully utilised.

Initially, a detailed case study of the Heathrow Express (HEX) railway construction project, incorporating in-depth interviews with the main project participants from the core organisations involved with the project, revealed human and organisational factors that led to success.

The research addressed the perceived lack of consolidated knowledge stemming from the lessons learnt within the industry. However, it steered beyond and away from the notion of 'best practice'. According to the contingency and non-prescriptive approach followed by Dr Bastien, it was recognised that bringing 'good practice' to the attention of practitioners would encourage those industrialists already interested in improvement and change, to take the initiative and perform in a more effective manner to satisfy their customers.

Overall, experience and literature suggested that appreciation of complex situations and informed decision-making rarely occur through application of prescriptive or best practice models. Rather, organisations develop by applying practices contingent to their particular situation. Therefore, using the HEX case study findings and the results from further in-depth study of the literature, a descriptive framework of good practice, entitled CONSTRUCT©, was created, focusing on four domains of knowledge:

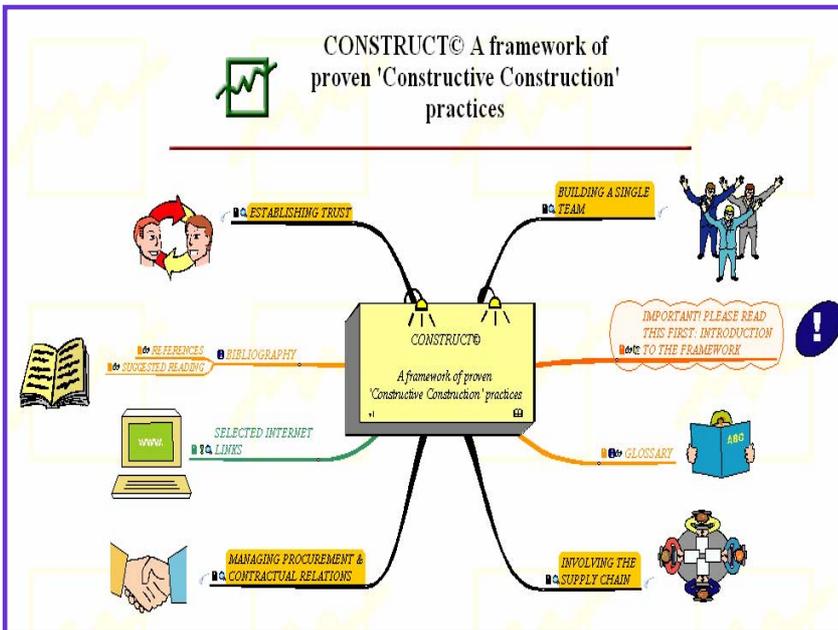
- building a single team
- establishing trust
- managing procurement and contractual relations, and
- involving the supply chain

Hence, CONSTRUCT© is proposed as a contribution to the sought improvement of UK construction industry through the application of good practice. It will help develop construction professionals' awareness of proven interventions thereby informing their project decisions.

The content and context of CONSTRUCT© were evaluated by 20 construction and other sector practitioners selected for their expert opinion. All the experts agreed on the applicability of CONSTRUCT© to project organisations and their majority found the framework to be useful,

(Continued on facing page)

"Successful Organisational & Human Practices in the UK Construction Industry: The CONSTRUCT© Framework of Good Practice" by Athina-Nicolaides BASTIEN University of Warwick





Profile—Professor Andrew Price



Prof Andy Price

Professor Andrew Price is a leading example of excellence within the academic community. His success and humble approach to research is reflected in his profile. ARCOM is privileged to share such success, which no doubt can be an inspiration to many members of the ARCOM community. **Professor Andrew Price** joined Loughborough University as a Research Assistant to **Frank Harris** in 1981 and was awarded his Professorship in 2000.

His main field of expertise is Construction Performance Improvement and his main area of success has been in the successful supervision of research students. Over the 15 years since his first PhD student, Professor **Paul Olomolaiye**, graduated in 1988, Prof Price has supervised 26 successful PhD students. Five of these have been home students and 21 have been overseas students from 18 different countries, thus providing a substantial international network. Prof Price is currently supervising seven PhD students and four Eng Doc students.

Many of Prof Price's students, such as **Hani Shawa** have progressed to senior positions in industry whilst others have gone on to achieve notable success in academia. Six (including his first five) of his students have been awarded Professorships. His more recent students are also making good progress and three have been appointed as Assistant Professors. In addition to this seven are either Deans or Head of Departments. His successful research students include the following.

Professor **Ghassan Aouad**,
Head of the School of Construction and Property Management at Salford University.

Professor **Ammar Kaka**,
Director of Industrial and External Affairs, School of the Built Environment, Heriot-Watt University.

Professor **Ananda Jayawardane**,
Head, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa.

Professor **Paul Olomolaiye**,
The Dean of the School of Engineering & the Built Environment at the University of Wolverhampton.

Professor **Joe Tah**,
School of Construction and Property Management, University of Salford.

Professor **Mohd. Razali Abdul Kadir**,
Asst. Professor Jawahar Nesan, Civil and Construction Engineering, Western Michigan University

Asst. Professor **NM Lema**,
Dean, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Built Environment University of Dar Es Salaam.

Asst. Professor **Sun Poon**,
Dept. of Real Estate and Construction, The University of Hong Kong.

Dr **Mundai Muya**,
Head Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Zambia.

Dr. **Hani Shawa**,
Chairman Board of Directors, Bank of Palestine Ltd.

In our next issue Professor Price will be advising us on how to supervise PhD students

Professor Andrew Price says:

"I do feel privileged to have been able to supervise so many excellent students from such a wide range of countries and cultures and have enjoyed see them develop and their careers flourish.

The relationships and friendships that have developed over this period of time have been extremely rewarding."

Successful organisational human practices continued

(Continued from page 2)
interesting and well-structured. Recommendations for future work comprise the updating of good practices presented by the framework and its further dissemination to the construction industry.

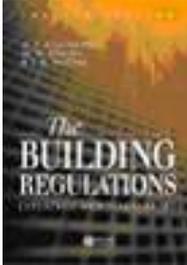
Dr Bastien, through her research role with the University of Warwick, endeavours to continue

and expand this research. For a draft evaluation copy of CONSTRUCT© or to discuss further, please email her at Athina.N.Bastien@warwick.ac.uk or contact her at the following address:

Warwick Manufacturing Group,
Advanced Technology
Centre, 3rd floor, University of Warwick,
Coventry CV4 7AL.



"Overall a very sound piece of work"
Construction Manager
"Essential reading"
ASI Journal



£39.95, 20th NOVEMBER 2003, 920 PAGES, ILLUSTRATED PAPERBACK, 0-632-05837-4
A sample chapter can be seen on www.blackwellpublishing.com

The Building Regulations

First produced forty years ago, the book continues to be *the* authoritative guide to the Building Regulations.

The latest edition includes new chapters on

- Part B - Fire,
- Part E - Resistance of passage of sound and Part L Conservation of fuel and power.

It also includes revisions to chapters on

- Part H drainage and waste disposal and Part J Heat producing appliances.

There are also updates to the legal and administrative chapters.

Auditing and Managing Inclusive Built Environments

Foreword from Richard Rogers Partnership.

The Access Manual covers the design, improvement, maintenance and management of accessible environments. It encourages those commissioning and designing new buildings (and those altering existing ones) to look at how they can provide and operate buildings, services and employment facilities in a way that allows independent and convenient use by everyone.

The book explains how to: be aware of the issues involved in accessibility; understand and commission audits; create and maintain acces-



NOVEMBER 2003, PAPERBACK, 192 PAGES, 0-632-05804-8 £24.99

Book

VR-NET Seminar "The Reality is

On Thursday, September 18 - 2003, the **VR-NET** (Network of Experts in Virtual Reality Applied to Construction Processes and Products) held "**The Reality is Virtual Seminar**" at the Centre for Construction Innovation (CCI) in Manchester.

The event attracted widespread participants of both the UK and International VR experts in the construction industry. The seminar was designed to offer practical demonstrations of recent VR applications in academic research and AEC engineering firms. The event created a successful opportunity for all participants to explore state-of-art VR application, raised useful discussion points, and shared the latest technology of VR visualisation.

The network's Principle Investigator **Professor Nash Dawood** at the University of Teesside welcomed the attendees and introduced the event. This seminar theme addressed key topics of "**VR Application to the Construction Industry**" to benefit those who are interested in the utilisation and application of VR technology to engineering.

The presentations offered all participants good information and gave strategic direction to research and development in the Industry.

Speakers included were Professor **Graham Winch** (UMIST), **Anthony Spreadborough** (Atkins Management Consultants), Professor **Miguel Dias** (ADETT), Dr. **Vian Ahmed** (University of Wolverhampton), **Karen Padmore** (The University of Salford), Dr. **Jennifer Whyte** (The Imperial College), and **Song Wu** (The University of Salford). The speeches covered a diverse and exciting range of topics involving: 4D virtual construction site planning; parametric engineering design of X3D technology; next generation of mixed (augmented) reality in AEC, VR in education; VR city models and virtual environments; business challenges for VR in construction, and nD modelling. More details about these presentations are at the network website www.sst.tees.ac.uk/vr-net.

There was a discussion between speakers and the target audience after the presentations regarding the potential value of VR technology. Dr. Whyte argued that for VR technology to be used in the construction sector "an effective business case study demonstrating real potentials of the technology will be useful". There was a unanimous support of the benefit of passing and sharing such business case studies among professional.

VR-NET Seminar "The Reality is Virtual"

Prof Nash Dawood



Year 2004



corner

sibility in buildings and working practices; respond effectively to the legal requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, with particular reference to those parts of the Act that come into force in 2004. The new British Standard on access to buildings (BS 8300), to which Keith Bright contributed, will be used by courts when deciding whether 'reasonable adjustments' have been made.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Access audits and appraisal

Chapter 2: Access management

Chapter 3: Legislation, regulations and standards

Chapter 4: Design criteria

Appendix A contains a number of sheets of 'general acceptability criteria', which can be used to highlight where access problems exist. Examples of sample audit reports are included in **Appendix B** and **Appendix C** gives sources of reference and further information.

A Guide to Real Estate and the Environment

In this book the authors identify, define and explain property-related environmental issues in an easy-to-follow style. These are explored with reference to current case studies; relevant background information; practical issues and problems posed.

Each section is structured in the same way: headline - the big issues and important questions; background - historical, legislative, technical; practical problems and solutions; discussion points; case studies; sources of information/further study.

FOUR KEY TOPICS

Location of Property

Contamination

Green Property

Procurement



THE ACCESS MANUAL by Ann Sawyer & Keith Bright
NOVEMBER 2003 264 PAGES, ILLUSTRATED PAPERBACK, 1-4051-0765-0, £35.00

Virtual

Finally, typical comments included:

"VR technology is of great value when engaging the public and clients at the beginning of projects", **Carl Abbot** (CCI).

"There are variations and clashes between business environments for using VR. A business vision is necessary to provide the financial benefits to industry, and promote the experience of VR technology", **Dr. Ahmed**.

Finally, Professor **Ghassan Aouad** stressed *"3D modelling of products and their processes is the future of achieving a practical application of VR in engineering"*.

Virtual reality visualisation is a technology hungry for 3D Models. Professor Dawood who encouraged the collaboration between the network's members about 'trends' in VR in the future events, made the closing of the seminar.

Important contacts: the network's principle investigator (Professor Dawood) n.dawood@tees.ac.uk and the network's secretary (Zaki Mallasi) z.mallasi@tees.ac.uk.

The next event is hoped to build upon discussions from previous events and online future vr-net forum.

Delegates at the conference dinner





Happy New

Effective conference presentations

The purpose of a presentation is to tell people what your work is about, why it is important, how you went about it and what you discovered that we did not already know. There are some common faults when making a presentation, each of which detracts from the quality of communication. This article provides guidance for making a conference presentation, but many of the points apply to other kinds of presentation.

Timing

Conferences run to a tight schedule, allowing a set time for each presentation. This is often ten or fifteen minutes, but sometimes as few as five or six. In such a short period, it is impractical to put over more than three real points. Remember that the audience have your paper and that they will be able to read it later, if you manage to interest them. Your aim in your presentation is simply to get them sufficiently interested in your work to generate discussion during the discussion period and to get them to want to read more, later. The golden rule is to simplify what you are trying to say and then exaggerate the points in order to generate interest. Forget the detail. Make sure that your talk progresses through a series of logical steps, so that you finish with a clear conclusion. The worst thing is to finish by saying "I was going to say something else but I have run out of time"! If you are not sure how much material will fill a ten minute presentation, practice it first with friends or colleagues.

Although some people complain about travelling half way round the world only to be given a few minutes in which to present their life's work, the purpose of a conference is not simply to provide an audience for researchers to practice their presentation skills. We assemble to discuss, argue, mingle, interact and develop a stronger feeling of identity among a particular group of specialists. In the spaces between the presentations, the serious business of the conference takes place in the discussion periods, in the corridors and in the breaks. The presentations are there just to provide an introduction to who is who and what one's current concerns focus upon. Thus, there is no need to waste everyone's time by trying to make a half hour presentation fit the time available. Some people are given a longer presentation to make a specific point or develop a complex, interesting argument, but these will usually be the keynote speakers. And you will notice that the best of the speakers at a conference will stick to their allotted time, no matter how much or how little they have.

Delivery

A common error made by inexperienced or shy speakers is to hide behind unnecessarily complicated or inflated language. If you have something important to say, it should be said in simple words, with short sentences. You will never get your point across if you are using long, complex and obscure words. If members of the audience need to reach for a dictionary during your presentation, chances are they will not have one to hand. Also, no one will thank you for trying to make them look a fool because they do not know the meaning of the words that you use.

Repetition is essential in a spoken presentation. People cough, sneeze, nod off or whatever; they miss things. The significant points must be introduced before they are made and reiterated afterwards. Towards the end of the talk, summarize the main points. People will be most likely to remember only the first things and the last things that you say. Therefore, speak at your loudest and clearest when you first open your mouth. Do not fumble through notes, slides, transparencies or "Power-Point" screens; get these ready beforehand. If possible, try out the room and the visual aids in a break before your talk. Also, if you are not the first speaker, you can practice talking to the particular audience by making comments or asking questions on other presentations.

Try to avoid stating the obvious. For example, I don't need to be told that I can read the paper later at my leisure. Neither do I need to be told that there is a lot more details than would fit in the time allocated for presentation.

It is important to project your voice into the audience. Some people have naturally large voices and can fill even a large room with their voices: most people don't. The way to project your voice is to

Effective Conference Presentations:
advice for
research students

Will Hughes
School of Construction
Management and
Engineering
University of Reading



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Effective conference presentations cont...

breathe deeply and expel the air by using the diaphragm, like a singer or wind instrument player. This involves different muscles and breath-control to ordinary speech, and is a technique worth developing. But it is not the same as shouting. Even if you have not had specialized training in projecting your voice, you can practice by imagining that you are talking to the person at the back of the room, not just the front row of the audience. This will help you to develop a bigger speaking voice.

When presenting your work, you need a different approach to the approach you take when lecturing. If you only have a few minutes, you probably do not need to spend two of your precious minutes in explaining the outline of your talk! All talks will share the same format, in that you will need to introduce the work, explain why it is important and what it is based upon, talk about how you went about it and what the problems were, show some data and describe the approach to your analysis, then make some conclusions based upon what you have done.

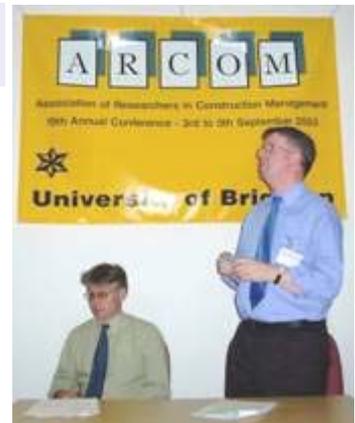
Lecturing should not be a part of conference presentations, in that there is no need to speak like a pedagogue. You are not making the presentation in order to teach the audience about something that is new to them all. You should expect that the audience is made up of informed professionals of some sort, not complete lay people. There may be people in the audience that do not understand the basics of the topic; they may not be expert in your subject. But you should be pitching your presentation to those who do understand the topic. The rest of us will enjoy the discourse and the questions and answers, even if we do not grasp the fundamentals. We will not enjoy being subject to a lesson on something that we have already chosen not to study! So, please, keep your teaching skills for the classroom.

... the article is continued in the next issue and shall describe how 'Eye Contact' and 'Visual Aids' help in making effective conference presentations



David Boyd at the Annual General Meeting

Attendees at an ARCOM Conference session



Andrew Dainty chairing a session at ARCOM

Happy New Year 2004

The ARCOM Newsletter
Dec 2003/Jan 2004 Volume 18 Issue 3

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profile of professor **Andrew Price** is reviewed. Professor Price is a leading example of a remarkable academic, who has produced a vast number of PhD students, of whom a significant number have become professors. The editor is grateful to Professor Price for sharing his great achievements with our readers.

The events of the VR-Net workshop is also reviewed in this issue. VR-Net is an EPSRC funded network, which is led by **Professor Nashwan Dawood**. The events was rich in content and attracted a number of experts from academia and industry.

Thanks to **Dr Athina Bastien** for sharing a very interesting research topic on "Successful Organisational & Human Practices in the UK Construction Industry". I am sure this article would of great interest to many of our readers.

Visit our **book corner**, and explore new titles of recently released books by Blackwell publishers.

On behalf of ARCOM, our congratulations go to those who have moved on in the academic community. Please read the 'new appointments' column.

Please note the change of my address at the back of the newsletter, as I have left the university of Wolverhampton to a new academic post at Salford University.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those who contributed to the newsletter for their support, and wish them all and our readers a very happy and prosperous new year.

Vian Ahmed
v.ahmed@salford.ac.uk

New appointments

Congratulations to **Joe Tah** on his new appointment at the University of Salford, School of Construction and Property Management as a Professor of Construction IT. Professor Tah moved from South Bank University last September.

Many congratulations to **Farzad Khosrowshahi** on his new appointment at the University of Salford, School of Construction and Property Management as a Professor of Construction IT. Professor Khosrowshahi moved from the University of Central England last September.

Last but not least our congratulations go to **Lamine Mahdjoubi** on his new chair at the University of West of England, Faculty of the Built Environment. Professor Mahdjoubi starts his new position in January 2004.

On behalf of ARCOM we wish them all the best in their future academic career.

Get in touch with us and contribute

For comments, ideas, articles, events, photographs, news in general, research experience, achievements, workshops, funny stories, serious storiesanything basically that you would like to share with other members, through this newsletter please contact the editor, **Dr Vian Ahmed**.

Committee Members

The Committee of ARCOM is elected each year at the Annual General Meeting, which is held during the Annual Conference.

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