First Global Conference on Research Integration and Implementation 2013

Evaluation report #2: Reasons for attending plus post-conference activities, including an on-going network

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What attracted participants to the conference?

The topic or theme was, unsurprisingly, what attracted most participants to the conference and this was mentioned by 99 (67%) of the 166 respondents (18 skipped this question) across all participation sites (Canberra, the co-conferences, online and "ended up not participating"). Eighteen mentioned that the topic was directly relevant to their research or studies. Some people were more specific about the aspects of the topic which were the attractors, with between two and 17 mentioning:

- inter- and/or trans-disciplinarity
- the aim of getting different groups together
- Integration and Implementation Sciences
- implementation
- integration
- complexity, and
- systems thinking.

Other attractors mentioned by between 13 and 21 respondents were:
- the plenary speakers
- the other participants, especially the opportunity to meet those of like-mind
- the conference format
- convenience: either proximity in Canberra or a co-conference site or the online availability.

Six of the ten members of an Australian National University-based undergraduate group came because it was promoted in specific courses (known as the Vice-Chancellor's courses; see digital poster 713 for more information at www.i2sconference.org) or by the ANU Cross-Disciplinary Students Academy (XSA see http://www.anuxsa.org/).

Between two and 11 came because 1) they were directly connected as an invitee or organiser, 2) they knew or were impressed by the conference organisers (in Canberra or at a co-conference), 3) others had recommended the conference or 4) they thought something ground-breaking was happening.

Many respondents gave more than one reason, with the following examples illustrating the answers:
I have always yearned for a platform to bring together the disparate range of researchers and practitioners working in the space of inter and trans-disciplinary sustainability work. Your description really spoke to me as I have not heard many others call to bring together these groups in this way before. (Canberra participant)

The opportunity to be part of this very important effort, and the chance to learn more about aspects of I2S with which I'm unfamiliar (e.g., implementation science, action research) (Canberra participant)

The topic and subject matter and concept of being a global conference (Canberra participant)

I am involved in an interdisciplinary project and wished to learn more about advancing this. The conference was also a convenient way to get across some of the main topics in this area and meet some key people (Canberra participant)

The interdisciplinary research focus, great keynote speakers, being in Canberra, affordable cost (Canberra participant)

I was impressed by the event itself, I had the feeling there is something groundbreaking going on (German co-conference participant).

The topic, the fact that I did not have to travel to Australia, the programme (Dutch co-conference participant)

The issues it addressed and the possibility of exchanging between different countries (Uruguay co-conference participant)

The opportunity to interact with experts and professionals from the most diverse set of disciplines and interests around real-world problems, supported by a variety of participating mechanisms (Online participant)

An interest in research translation/implementation. I am hoping to do a PhD in this area and wanted to get an overall picture of how different sectors described and used translational research in their fields (Online participant)

Post-conference: On-going Network

Participants were asked if they would like to be part of an on-going network (Table 1). As a LinkedIn group was established for the conference (the Global Network for Research Integration and Implementation: http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Global-Network-Research-Integration-Implementation-4888295), they were then asked whether the existing LinkedIn group would be suitable (Table 2). Those who answered 'maybe' or 'no' were invited to give reasons. Finally participants were asked what other follow-up activities they would like to see.

Most participants (72%) wanted to be part of an on-going network, but a substantial proportion (25%) were also not sure (Table 1). While many were already members of (24%), or willing to join (34%), the LinkedIn group established for the conference, a substantial proportion were dubious (32%) or opposed (9%). Of the 61 respondents who answered 'maybe' or 'no', 52 gave reasons. Six people who ticked another response category also added their hesitations about the LinkedIn group.

Many of the issues (mentioned by between 12 and 17 respondents) centred on LinkedIn or social media more generally, particularly:
- not being a member of LinkedIn (some indicated that they planned to join)
- disliking LinkedIn or some aspects of it
- having reservations about or disliking social media more generally.

A smaller number (between 4 and 7) commented on:
- not liking that kind of discussion or feeling it would not be productive
- lack of time or already being involved in a number of networks
- the topic not being their primary focus or having nothing to contribute.

Illustrative comments include:

I don't know the LinkedIn group, but will become a member after this survey (Dutch co-conference participant)

Not currently a member of LinkedIn and tend not to be a very active member of online groups (Canberra participant)

I am not a fan of LinkedIn. Conservative thinking, yes. But l want to protect a sense of privacy (Online participant)

Just a general hesitation regarding the use of social media, and putting even more information about myself "out there" (Canberra participant)

I don't join any of the network groups -- too much time and too little benefit (Online participant)

Dealing with information overload, dislike of LinkedIn nagging (Canberra participant)

I do not want to be involved in one more network like this (German co-conference participant)

I need more information about the activities that will be specified by the network (Uruguay co-conference participant)

Discussion groups don't ever seem to really get off the ground unless they are very targeted on a specific project (Online participant)

I am not sure yet whether this is the topic to stay with for me (German co-conference participant)

This topic is not my main concern. Therefore, I am interested in messages about papers and calls for conferences etc but not so much in active online debate (Dutch co-conference participant)

Table 1. Responses to "Would you like to be part of an on-going network?" (N (%))

	Yes	No	Maybe	No response
Onsite in Canberra	61 (78%)	2 (3%)	15 (19%)	0
German co-conference	8 (73%)	0	3 (27%)	0
Dutch co-conference	12 (60%)	0	8 (40%)	0
Uruguay co-conference	4 (44%)	0	5 (56%)	0
Online	25 (74%)	2 (6%)	7 (21%)	0
I ended up not participating	2	0	1	11
TOTAL for participants only	110 (72%)	4 (3%)	38 (25%)	-

Table 2. Responses to "If the network was a continuation of the existing LinkedIn group (http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Global-Network-Research-Integration-Implementation-4888295) would you join?" (N (%))

	Don't want to be part of an on-going network	Already a member	Yes	No	Maybe	No response
Onsite in Canberra	1 (1%)	20 (26%)	24 (31%)	4 (5%)	28 (36%)	1 (1%)
German co-conference	0	1 (9%)	4 (36%)	1 (9%)	5 (45%)	0
Dutch co-conference	0	7 (35%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	6 (30%)	0
Uruguay co-conference	0	2 (22%)	4 (44%)	0	3 (33%)	0
Online	1 (3%)	7 (21%)	14 (41%)	6 (18%)	6 (18%)	0
I ended up not participating	0	0	1	0	2	11
TOTAL for participants only	2 (1%)	37 (24%)	51 (34%)	13 (9%)	48 (32%)	1 (1%)

Post-conference: Other follow-up activities

Of the 166 respondents, 72 suggested other follow-up activities, with between five and 19 mentioning:

- another conference or regular conferences (some only mentioned activities they would like to see at future conferences, including a 'transdisciplinary jam', postgraduate day, thematic streams, session on methodology for research integration). It is noteworthy that most of these responses came from Canberra participants
- other kinds of interaction, including mini-conferences (potentially linked to other conferences), masterclasses or workshops, domain-specific (eg health, sustainability) activities, cross-country hook-ups, creating opportunities for collaborative work or advice on research design, staff exchanges, joint seminars, writing workshops, regional or Canberra-based meetings
- establishing a network or community of practice and an online blog or discussion forum
- a newsletter and/or database or inventory, or updates of projects and/or people
- allowing ongoing access to the conference materials, including for teaching purposes
- one or more publications based on the conference
- updates on, or more involvement in discussions about, the development of Integration and Implementation Sciences (I2S) as a discipline.

A small number reported on-going self-organised activities and discussions.

Illustrative examples include:

Annual conferences, either stand-alone or linked with other transdisciplinary events (Canberra participant)

Creation of a more formalised community of practice. A directory of contacts and their expertise, experiences. Masterclasses or workshops on specific areas such as soft systems, action research, the Toolbox project; topic-specific webinar talks (develop a series); creation of a mentoring program for inexperienced interdisciplinary researchers, investigate opportunity for a postgraduate day for future conference, creation maybe of thematic streams for the next conference? (Canberra participant)

Perhaps workshops to discuss research design for projects that are about to start (Dutch co-conference participant)

Domain specific events and networks around I2S in health, sustainability, etc to bring it closer to and engage with stakeholders from the field (Dutch co-conference participant)

To start/continue building a (online) codified inventory of integration methods, integrative concepts, examples of transdisciplinary curricula (undergraduate, graduate) (German co-conference participant)

A digital magazine or web page with articles over these thematics (Uruguay co-conference participant)

If possible, prepare online material for teaching; use existing platform for further workshops on specific issues to deepen exchange (German co-conference participant)

Keeping the online material as an archive to which we can refer in future (Online participant)

Repository, a book containing a selection of texts produced from the e-posters, an article published in a relevant periodical launching the idea of I2S as a scientific field (Canberra participant)

There was discussion about the development of a discipline in this area, I would like to see that progress and a common place to find information, education etc. (Online participant)

Transparency about the decision regarding becoming a discipline - whether it is taken, who takes it, what is envisioned if it is or is not, the extent to which the field will be involved in the decision and is consequences; ongoing dialogue with a local/national network (Canberra participant)