

Notes of conversations with members of the community on the survey questions

The interview should open with an explanation of the purpose of the exercise, the approach being adopted and the use to which the information gathered is being put.

The task of the interviewer is to establish him/herself as a good listener, yet, at the same time, a constructive participant in the conversation.

Normally [this is] in reactive mode, seeking clarification, asking for amplification or feeding back what has just been heard. Sometimes, however, it is necessary, and profitable, to share and stimulate the discussion by way of reciprocity of views or recounting of anecdotes. This has to be infrequent and very carefully judged.

Encourage the participant to consider the future when the response is status quo.

If the answers are very broad, ask for details; if they are very detailed, ask for generalities.

If the person asks “what do you mean by [x]” ask them what they feel is the most important [x] to be considered in the next 10 to 15 years.

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Participants: Laura Paglione (LP), Alex Stuart (AS)

Fourth conversation (20190508: 9 am EDT)

How long have you been involved professionally with research, scholarship, or education?

AS: in federation world around 7 years (started mid-career)

LP: been in education, scholarly, research for years but AAI for 5 years

What is your current role?

LP: independent consultant ORCID, I2 COmanage, Crossref Metadata 2020

AS: technical support UKfed, operations, some projects in JISC

If a representative someone from 10-15 years in the future could answer the questions you have today about how to best support collaboration among researchers, teachers, and learners, what three things would you most like to ask them?

LP: Curious about who is considered to be a researcher in their world now.

Role of commercial vendors (Google, Facebook, Twitter, Github, etc.) - Are they part of core infrastructure for learning and research or still on the outskirts?

How (de)centralised collaboration is? Researcher = fairly independent but still affiliated with institution, but more and more virtual collaborations. Who decides the rules/playing field?

Funders or institutions?

Tom: isn't the question who pays? LP: very similar question. Trend is to fund individual, not institution (except for Gates foundation).

AS: How can people (operation staff) keep their software up to date?

"Things" are moving fast, access management technologies

Technical view of attribute aggregation. There are very few attributes that IdPs are willing to release - also, users informed consent, how to insert own attributes (from other systems) into that flow.

What do you value about how research, education and scholarship are conducted?

Which values are important?

LP: Openness is important, flexibility is important - where 'truth' can be pursued , translation of basic research into innovation that benefits society

AS: the openness. From s/w point of view, open source model. Being able to put one's ideas 'out there' and getting feedback.

Focus is on research & education (services) but let's not forget there are lots of professional services relevant as well (e.g. to book meetings).

Everyone says that they keep things working but the operational people are always involved and are the most important aspect to keep all this working.

LP: I agree - the operations side of things is important. Commercial people trying to provide services but only need one good solution.

Tom: if you had to choose between society as a whole or just your personal interests, what would it be?

AS: bit of altruism here. Learned a lot personally from participating in Open Source projects.

LP: sense of community needs not to be lost / not mutually exclusive. Things will evolve, yes, happens anyway. Tough question. Keep eyes open.

What do you imagine as desirable settings for the conduct of research, education and scholarship? What parts of those experiences are most important to you?

LP: Technology has structured things (life). Our working methods have been constrained by the way technology works (or doesn't work) This negatively affects creativity, will we lose that as society as a whole? If I could wave a magic wand to fix this it would provide a space to allow unstructured things to happen

AS: slightly different route; open technology has no structure, lots of flexibility. New artefacts can lead to new creativity.

AT: FREEDOM!

Tom sums up: technology can be constraining but also enabling. Big data and its care and feeding. A large and growing fraction of researchers are now spending more time on this aspect (data management etc).

LP: the technology isn't really the thing that is constraining. It's the way that's brought about structuring/influencing our methods, our way of working. Analogy of tool crafting (brush not good, make a new one...maybe not a brush but it allows the paint to be applied as wanted). Tools define how we work - a select few can write their own (spend more time coding than direct researching). Too much emphasis on how a tool works.

What do you fear could threaten those desirable settings or your experience of them?

AS: (covered above - needs edit)

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AT: (covered above - needs edit)

Thinking of the values and settings you've mentioned above, which practices, tools, organisations, or infrastructures that support achievement of them should be continued? Do you see those as being sustainable over the next 10-15 years? Are there other practices, tools, organisations, or infrastructures that should be created to support those values or settings?

AS: Things that are templated are often fine , it's the bespoke solutions that will lead to future issues.

Not just tools, people too (?) (on open source)

So much software/libraries available, how do you know which is good (too much crap out there ;-))

JB: what elements are sustainable/should be kept?

AS: Free support very important. Also, open software (but everything now is going down the software as a service route)

LP: The biggest thing that is supporting it is funders. Research funders and educational funders supporting/funding openness. There is a movement/expectation of things being open. This will cause huge disruption to the status quo - publishers eg trying to create a closed-community of open (they have their own businesses to sustain). People haven't figured out how to operate (monetize even) the openness model.

Public utility connector for all the tools - EOSC European Open Science Cloud

What major professional decisions with long-term implications are you facing at the moment?

AS: I'm not a decision maker..so this is personal and not political. There are organisations that have participated initially in the federation space but they have become stale. How do we support them in their continuation of using services to support their researchers. Also the other end - other organisations that need this sort of service. How to signpost them?

Balancing supporting organisations that are (already) satisfied while at the same time supporting organisations who want to push forward and do new things

LP: I do consulting - often in strategic space. People often ask me to push the envelope - often into spaces in which i'm not comfortable. I'm constantly looking for something that I can make a lasting impact on - not just at the organisation level but for society as a whole.

Hard to discern where pivot points are which will make a difference, so many bleeding edge things. Hard where meaningful boundaries are.

Tom: managing change. Inherently tough. Are you struggling with that professionally?

LP: Yes, we all are.

What major constraints do you experience in enabling collaboration among researchers, teachers, and learners?

If all constraints were removed, and you could direct what is done, what would you do?

If we'd like to follow up with you about your answers, would you be willing? If so, please supply an email address.

Laura: doesn't fit above: resource issue is potential barrier. Just enough skilled individuals in this space, particularly in this community, feels like more people are retiring than are coming in, and we are losing skills....