

JISC  
Di Martin - University of Hertfordshire  
Importance of BCE  
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Good morning everybody. Thank you very much for inviting me this morning, I am really interested in finding out more about these projects today, but I'm afraid I have to earn my keep first, so I'll try and do that in the next half an hour.

My remit this morning is to set the context really for all the hard work that's been going on, on these projects, and to really give an overview about the importance of the business and community engagement. Now I'm really conscious that in the title of this session that I was asked to speak to, there's a sort of implicit assumption that Business and Community Engagement is important. I guess you wouldn't all be sitting here if you didn't think it was, because you've come to find out how other people may have developed things that you could use to enhance your collaboration and perhaps make it work more effectively in your business and community engagement. But I do hope that as I go through this overview, we might see a little bit about how it might be important and not just because groups of people in the institutions who have worked so hard on this actually got funding for the project out of the BCE programme.

So what I'd like to do is just start with reminding you all what the JISC definition of BCE is. I'm not going to read it out because it's on the screen and I'm sure you will have seen it previously. But I do have to say that in the early days of the JISC starting the BCE programme, a lot of time was spent trying to define what business and community engagement was. Now at that stage, that seemed to be really important, but I think my take on this is that as time has gone on perhaps that is less important, because what we're seeing is a lot of initiatives and innovation in education, this is actually taking that agenda forward.

But if you look at the objective here on the screen, it's very ambitious; benefits to the economy and society resulting in a highly skilled workforce, more efficient dynamic and sustainable economy, and a more cohesive knowledge enabled society. It sounds a little bit like trying to put the world right, but it is an ambitious agenda. What I'm really pleased about though is the BCE programme that the JISC is taking forward, and it's been running for, I think, just coming up to 3 years now, but it started off very much as a very exploratory divergent programme trying to define what BCE is, was, and really to find out what might be sensible activities for JISC to invest in.

We've moved on a long way from that and key priorities have really become very transparent out of that learning work, and are moving forward into sorts of projects that you're going to find out about today, these really tangible deliverables, and that's really what today is about, focusing on those deliverables that will help the collaborative effort to achieve this objective, which is really very ambitious.

So what I'd like to look at in the next 20 to 30 minutes or so is a number of dimensions here. I'd like to look at economic growth, I'd like to look at the wider issues of shaping society, but I'd also like to look at how that impacts on our business, education, and the future of our business, and a little bit about how it impacts on us as individuals and our personal wellbeing.

Now I have used a number of quotations as we go through this, and there's one here from the recent David Willets' speech to UUK, and I just really want to say upfront, a lot of these quotations use the word 'Universities' but clearly we're talking here about a wider agenda, about further and higher education and the contribution of education, so please bear with me in the use of the word 'Universities'.

I think the other point that I really would like to make, and I think that comes out quite strongly here, is that engagement is two way; this isn't about education doing things to other organisations or people, this is about collaboration and two way engagement, and that permeates, I think, all of the BCE activities.

So what I'd like to do is start with a few observations about government policy. We've had an election last May, we've got a coalition government, but what can be seen is a real common thread running through from the previous labour government into the new coalition government. I think we'll all be familiar with some of the much earlier reports, the Sainsbury Review about the enterprise economy, about the Leitch Report on skills for the UK workforce, and so on. Innovation Nation White Paper in 2008... And then if you look at the BIS website now you'll find these statements there. There is a real common thread going forward. I think what I would say is that it's very much with renewed vigour because of the so-called 'economic austerity' that this country, perhaps other countries, are facing.

So we have the Technology Strategy Board continuing, and I'm grateful to a colleague for advising me about the Technology Strategy Board launching a new portal that is drawing together, in quite promising initial activities, the work of 15 different knowledge transfer networks.

We've had recent reports, the Hauser Report on Technology and Innovation Centres, which is about a much bigger agenda for shared services and collaboration in addressing business and community engagement. We've had the Dyson Report on the Ingenious Britain, which backs up that premise, and more recently the Strategy for Sustainable Growth, in July, which is available on this website.

So I think we've got a real driver here and it is government policy which is in position to actually incentivise and change regulations, and if it's available, funding to stimulate BCE.

So, what about economic growth? I've picked out 5 dimensions here; relationships, skilled workforce, talent stream, knowledge exchange, enterprise and innovation, and I'd just like to explore a little bit about each of those. I have to say they are not in a particular order on this screen because they all interlock and support each other, but you'll notice as I go through this, that the same key words keep cropping up in quotations from government and other bodies, and here we have 'skills, science, research and innovation', 'essential' investments in the UK economy, because it is a focus

on developing that economy with new products and services, and it is about the place of UK PLC in the global marketplace.

So let's have a look at knowledge exchange first. Some of you may be involved in activities around knowledge transfer partnerships, KTPs, researching and consultancy in collaboration with business, with other public sector bodies, with SMEs, with all sorts of organisations, and so on.

KTPs were an early form of incentivisation for BCE, they've been running for a number of years now. I think the observation I would make about KTPs is that they have really now become very productive, but there's a lead time, and I think if you look at the early years of KTPs, there was an awful lot of settling down and finding out how they might best work, going on, and now they're in a position where they are being very productive and they can be taken forward and invested in further. So we have to be prepared to assess what the lead-time is, I think, on the effectiveness on some of our activities and engagements.

That of course is about providing support for good ideas, about taking good ideas and translating them into good business. It's about knowledge creation, in education perhaps, or supported by education and research and translating those into practical deliverables.

The benefit to education perhaps is that we can take those research, that new knowledge, those findings, and take them a step further. I'm not suggesting that other organisations might just be our test bed, because test beds can fail, but actually it is an opportunity for practical application with what has actually been developed in what is really part of our core business with creative new knowledge and new activities.

Perhaps not a direct analogy, but I was recently in the British Museum at the History of Printing in China exhibition, and I was staggered to find that the first printed document dated from the 9th Century, and the reason that the Chinese had printing was because they wanted to disseminate more widely the knowledge and the teachings, in this case Buddhism, across to other communities. When you think about it, printing in the Western world was with Gutenberg and was in the 15th Century, 600 years difference, and then when

printing started in this country, there were all sorts of legislative barriers put in place; initially it wasn't allowed to be done outside of London. So I think we need to learn a lesson from that and this is all about dissemination, knowledge transfer, not sitting on what we have and protecting it, but actually making sure that we disseminate to the wider world and best use is made of our knowledge.

I mentioned the technology information centres earlier, really just to note that the proposal here, although it's not agreed at the moment, is really for shared centres, shared services, not just between education organisations but with other partners and other organisations as well, to help incentivise and drive forward this sharing and dissemination of knowledge.

Now, I have called it 'knowledge exchange' because it is two way and this isn't just about education delivering its outputs to other people, it is about us learning from other organisations, and I'll come back to that in a short while.

I think the other point that I might make in terms of the potential benefit for us is that if we can actually use our knowledge and our developments to help other organisations to become more efficient, more productive, maybe there's more cash in hand that they could invest in other things such as skilling the workforce, that might create new business there.

What about the talent stream? Graduate employment is not a good market at the moment, there's a big agenda here for BCE in terms of supporting our graduates into employment. One of the biggest difficulties I think is not so much with large organisations who perhaps recognise already the value of graduate skills to their businesses, but the enormous SME markets, small and medium size enterprises, who perhaps living in a more hand to mouth existence and where perhaps the value of graduate skills to their future business growth isn't quite as transparent as it is for other organisations. How can we actually develop and work with that SME agenda to provide opportunities for them but also opportunities for our graduates and our qualified students coming out and going into the workplace?

Apprenticeships have taken on a new lease of life, there are proposals for extending apprenticeships to Level 3, another route into that value of what a

person can bring, with entrepreneurship and employable skills, into the workplace.

One of the things that I think, the other thing that I think needs to be addressed here, and perhaps part of the issues that are arising with employers saying that graduates don't have the skills that are needed for the workplace, and part of that, I think, is a generational technological gap. Our students today, and perhaps yourselves in this room, are used to social networking, used to Twitter, perhaps even used to Linked In, there's a continual communication, wherever they are. I've been into organisations and had discussions about their technological infrastructure and how they use technology, and some of them seem to feel quite terrified about even letting people have access to the internet in the office, fearful of their organisation's security, and yet we have graduates who have grown up in this culture of online communication and social networking, going into the workplace and then finding the culture is radically different from how they've been used to behaving in their studies and with their friends.

So there are a few things here that I think there are some agendas that we might think about in terms of our collaboration and how we establish more of a common culture that will provide the right environment for the talent stream to move smoothly into the workplace, because there isn't any organisation that doesn't need new blood and new ideas coming through.

What about the workforce? I think we have all been aware of the speeches over many years from politicians suddenly realising that the highest percentage of those who should be studying are already in the workplace, they are not 18 year olds coming through, or 16 year olds coming through into further education. So there's a big agenda here for upskilling, for retraining, for flexibility and lifelong learning going forward into the future. Many educational institutions are already contributing tremendously to this agenda, whether it's through short course, online learning or, as is becoming increasingly the case, accrediting programmes that already exist in the workplace and giving them more of a formal standing qualification.

I think there's probably an issue though, a number of employers are very sceptical about giving qualifications and credit at the end of workplace learning, fearful perhaps, as perhaps we are in our own organisations, that if someone has those credentials, it's a personal passport to a better job, to moving on elsewhere, so I think this goes hand in glove. We are talking through opportunities within the workplace, for using those skills and that accreditation to contribute more to the organisation people are already in.

In some ways it can become quite fragmented in educational organisations and we worry about, 'Well is this workplace learning at higher education level, or is this a further education level? Can we count it in our HESA return?' We've got to get better at our collaboration between ourselves so that we can offer other organisations more of a seamless route for workplace learning.

And what about relationships? Many of our alumni where lots of other hats, they could be the MD of the organisation, they could be the team leader, they could be the person with one year's experience in that organisation. We all know that in the States, alumni relationships with their alma mater are much more developed than they are in this country, and I think we're catching up fast. But we need to make sure that we recognise that those people we're collaborating with have many dimensions and many roles, they may be our alumni, they may be leading in an organisation we are working with, they may also sit on an influential body that we regards as one of our stakeholders, so we need to make sure those dynamics in collaboration work very well as well.

At Hertfordshire we've had quite a lot of discussion about what we call the 'ladder of relationships' as well, and really trying to bear in mind the 'depths', if you like, and development of those relationships, starting perhaps from being just a customer supply relationship, through to what the business might call a 'key account', to really establishing real partnerships, real collaborations, possibly even joint ventures, and then jointly working in some sort of umbrella alliance, which is where perhaps these technology innovation centres may also come in, in the future.

Relationships are difficult, they take a lot of hard work, and one of the barriers, we are as guilty as anybody else, is about protecting our business. We label things 'commercially confident' and we don't want to share with other people. I don't know if any of you have seen that Julia Roberts film called 'Duplicity'? Not her best, by any means, but if you have seen it you will know it's a real woven web of industrial espionage between various different organisations, and at the end... maybe I shouldn't tell you the end. (Laughter). But the key players get double-crossed as well. But it's an extreme portrait but actually you have to realise that there's a balance to be struck between protecting business interest and sharing ideas and it's moving that dividing line, perhaps nearer the sharing thing.

And then perhaps the big prize, enterprise and innovation, which is actually of course about making money, it's about business sense, it's about survival. We all talk about spin in / spin out companies, when actually it's about commercialisation, it's about taking those jewels in our crown, that new knowledge, those ideas, and taking them that bit further and making them work to achieve economic growth, a better society and so on. And there are various initiatives around open innovation and shared services, but it's also about working in a global marketplace, and I think one of the issues that happens a lot with the BCE agenda is that we tend to focus back down on local communities. Now, they are very important, but actually this is an international agenda as well, and our alliances and our collaborations may not just be with those we see locally or that are easy to visit, they may be people on the other side of the world, and with emerging economies in China and India and so on, we really need to bear that in mind.

I'm going to move on now to 'shaping society', and I've spent rather a long time on economic growth and I can assure you I'm not going to talk about each of these bubbles in the same depth as I have with economic growth, but I think what I would really like to say is that that economic growth is just one part of this bigger agenda of shaping our society. There are lots of quotations around the value of science, and I think we should really take the word 'science' in its widest possible connotation. It is about, 'What do we want our

society to be like? How can we use those great strengths that we have, not just for economic growth, but for our health and welfare, for our future leaders, for our environment?' Now, the JISC has done a lot of work on carbon reduction, the greening of ICT and so on can we combine that with the BCE agenda? Are there things that we can actually take forward that are good practice in education, given the targets we've got for carbon reduction, and transfer that good practice into other organisations, so that overall the cumulative effect of that is much better for our society? And you can see the other examples that have been picked out here by government departments. There's a lot of work going on in education that contributes to health and welfare, and not just in medicine and the other aspects of the health professions, but I'm really mindful of some of the work going on in robotics where the purpose of the robots is to support people in old age, or in a case I know of in Hertfordshire where our Kaspar robot is working with children with autism, to actually help them to live a more communicative and socially aware life.

So there's enormous number of things that we can bring to bear to this wider agenda. And I think we'd be the first to recognise that perhaps in terms of the JISC BCE programme, the community engagement and this public value has not been quite as developed in the previous years as it needed to be, and so the use of new key priorities emerging here about public value specific engagement.

The last point I'd like to make before I leave this slide is about our future leaders. Now many of you in this room will be an awful lot younger than I am, but I have a vested interest in what the next generations are doing to make sure the society I live in, when I retire from the society I live in, is where I want to be. That's a personal agenda, but actually there's a broader agenda here, we have a responsibility in education to make sure that we are educating those future leaders to develop the economies in society that actually will be of benefit to them and to all of us. Just a little quote at the bottom there, I thought it was really interesting that there's a new magazine

called 'Future Leaders' and it is highlighting highflying graduates and others who are coming into play in taking things forward.

So what about our own businesses? Well there are a lot of things on here and I think we're all aware of the financial constraints and the impending comprehensive spending review that's due to be published at the end of October, and we may find out more then.

I'd like to just pick out a couple of things from here. On the left hand end here, 'playing to our strengths', an agenda for some time now, particularly in higher education, about differentiation across the sector. BCE can pick up on this, this is about playing to our strengths. What do we do well in our own organisations that we can actually develop in this BCE agenda? We don't have to do everything, but let's make sure that what we *do* do is productive and effective.

Coming down the track we've got 'changes for research excellence with the research excellence framework.' I'm not sure if anyone in the room is involved in any of the impact pilots for the REF, but quite interesting to look at the words that are being used, at the moment anyway, for pilots and exploring how research impact might be assessed, and they talk about the economy, about society, about public policy, about the environment, about international development and the quality of life. Now, the walls are not yet fixed around impact assessment for the REF, but that agenda is those common words again, running right through.

The green box (on the slide), 'business like efficiency', one of the things that was really interesting in some of the workshops we've held at the BCE over the last two or three years is the examples that are emerging about how the groups of people addressing the BCE agenda and the collaboration from their institutions are actually having a knock-on effect *inside* their institutions, in terms of changed working practices, in terms of efficiency, in terms of a better experience for everybody and not just the people they initially started out to work with. From simple examples like just how do you use space, room allocation, fitting in short courses and so on, which actually had a spin-off in one organisation to be a much better experience for all students; also, how

do we manage supply chains, how do we do all sorts of processes and working practices, efficiencies across the organisation? So there's a spin *in* if you like, from the BCE agenda, into how we do everything in our organisations, that may go to help us with this difficult funding agenda and our efficiency.

I was told earlier this week about a real example from BP and about how they had leveraged better value for money out of their procurement processes. There's also issues for us, and this is the reverse knowledge exchange, to learn from what other organisations are doing and how can we bring that back into our organisations for, not just economic advantage, but advantage in terms of all of our experiences.

Business intelligence is clearly vital. We're getting better at it but we are nowhere near as good as many organisations are yet. How do we know we're making the right planning decisions? How do we know we're focusing our resources and effort on the things that are going to bear fruit? We need that external business intelligence, political awareness, knowledge of the organisations we're working with, thinking ahead to what's coming down the track, and using our own management information, our internal data, better.

The JISC has had a strand in the BCE programme for customer relationship management, CRM, and I think one of the things that's been quite revealing about the work that's been done so far on that strand is the conclusion that most of our educational organisations aren't really quite ready yet to use CRM to its fullest potential, because our mindset isn't there, our cultural sharing information *within* our organisations isn't there, and we really need to work very hard on that. And that's really the relationship management.

This last comment before I leave this slide is on student experience, where again, we've got the transparency agenda gathering pace in terms of the information that we will need to be able to provide, and quite rightly customers expect that. But it's also about making sure we have relevant courses and curricula, and this is the reverse knowledge exchange as well. Many organisations already bring in advisers from professions, from business and from other organisations, but could we do more of that? Could we make

sure that there's much more of a joint approach to education our students and producing the graduates in that talent stream?

Right, I'm going to move on because I'm running out of time here... Just another few comments about personal wellbeing, and I think the main point I'd really like to flag up here is that we are in for a period of substantial change; some of that may be painful. There will be change in our organisations, there will probably be new roles and skills needed; how do we manage collaboration, how do we manage contracts, how do we manage those relationships, how do we work more differently? Perhaps it's more of an external focus than an internal focus that many staff in our organisations will have had.

I'm sure you will be aware of the news in the press this week about the deliberations of Suffolk County Council and how they might end up as a local authority that is very small and, to use the words of the press, 'just managing contracts' because all the service delivery might be somewhere else. That's not far different from one of the scenarios that came out of the scenario planning day we had a couple of years ago, looking at the future of higher education. I'm not saying that that is the agenda we should be going down, but I think it's an example of the sort of change that might be talked about going forward.

But what matters to everybody, of course, is what's on the right hand side here, it's not just about job prospects and it's not just about creating new knowledge or creating graduates, I think we all get a greater sense of achievement from actually making sure that what we have done and developed and produced can then be used further, and it is that 'using it further' that our collaboration can drive forward.

So in summing up, coming back to collaboration, it's vital, it's the bedrock of taking some of this forward, but it's about people; it's not about organisations, it's about the individuals, the people who need to make that collaboration work. It's hearts and minds. Collaborations can be in any form at all, local, national, international, public, private, large, small... It needs a certain fluidity. We shouldn't have collaborations for the sake of it, they need

to be productive. But we also have an opportunity here to create communities, and that's to everybody's advantage. We hear a lot in the news about fragmentation, people who feel they don't belong. We've got a role to play here.

What makes a successful collaboration? Well you have to have some sort of shared values and shared purpose, you need to build trust, it doesn't work otherwise. And there has to be some mutual benefit, some goal, some added value, which is also of course the financial imperative here.

Now the work that's been going on in these projects, and its target for all of us is that we have to make collaboration easy. If it's difficult, people won't do it, people give up, and to that end, in the JISC context, we need to focus on using technology to make it easy, technology to deliver, not technology for its own sake, not because somebody just says, 'Oh wouldn't it be a good idea to use x, y and z?' Technology can be transformational if it's used properly.

So, going back to the importance of BCE; there are a number of key drivers here, and of course, that would conclude it's important, and as I said at the beginning, I don't think you'd be sitting here if you didn't think it was either. We have drivers in government policy and strategy, it's for economic viability, it's for quality of life, it's for benefits realisation. It's about our future, and perhaps most importantly, it's about the future of our young people going forward.

Now, I'm not saying that there is no agenda for education, no value in education for its own sake; don't get me wrong, there is, but there's a much wider agenda here as well, and as I said earlier, education for its own sake, if you study something and you feel achievement with that, how much more achievement do you feel if you can then use that to greater advantage in your life ahead?

So I hope you'll take from today some really good messages that you might be able to collaborate amongst yourselves, how you may be able to use what is being developed and take it that step further in your own work, to progress your BCE engagement.

That's enough from me in terms of the overview now, and I'm looking forward to moving on to hearing about how our entrepreneurs have used their innovative use of online collaboration to further the business community engagement agenda. Thank you.

(Applause).