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Information and debate from Roskilde University

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**How can RU and China
share ideas and start a movement?**

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How can RU and China share ideas and start a movement?

By Mette Reebirk, Director of International Affairs

“When China wakes up, the world will tremble,” Napoleon is supposed to have said. China has indeed woken up!

Globalisation is a trend that cannot be ignored by any university, and nor by RU. Having spent a good two weeks in China participating in fairs, visiting partners, signing a new partnership agreement, teaching innovation to Chinese students, meeting with Chinese RU alumni, dining with Chinese companies and partners, my conclusion is that RU has something it can offer China, and that China has something it can offer RU. The question is what is required to step up to the next level in the RU/China “serial story”, and what is the next “episode”?

The World Bank has issued an analysis stating that China and India will be the only major countries to achieve growth in 2009 and 2010. China will achieve a growth rate of 6.5% despite the country being hard hit by falling exports.

China is making large infrastructure investments, among other things, in the field of education, and several Chinese universities are prepared to encounter challenges within more creative learning environments focusing on innovation. If not already a fact, it will not take many years before China will transform from imitator to innovator. And if in Denmark we are inattentive, we will see ourselves overtaken on the inside by those countries that, traditionally, we consider low-wage countries. Already today, China is the second largest R&D investor in the world, and an increasing number of the world’s top-notch researchers are working in China.

What can RU bring to China’s transition?

On our journey, we met representatives from five Chinese universities and the Chinese Ministry of Education, who showed a strong interest in innovation and entrepreneurship. Our journey took us to Beijing, Linyi in the Shandong Province as well as to Shanghai.

I believe that, among other things, RU will be able to help its partners improve education standards and create learning environments supporting innovation and creativity. RU will have to develop new ways of thinking with respect to its Chinese relations. At RU, we may have a tendency to think “what’s in it for us – now we are going to think what is required from us”. The more we are able to influence and offer our Chinese partners, the stronger our relations, and the more interesting our knowledge sharing and coproduction will become.

One specific way of stepping up to the next level RU’s strong relations to China and bring them into play in a focused and strategic process is by seeking, during a period of two years, to have two or more externally financed research and education projects of a substantial volume adopted by EU and the Chinese state.

It is a requirement that RU has the courage to think and act with ambition and that senior management and the rest of us are courageous and focused in our attempts to embark on it. In addition, it is a requirement that the organisation and culture of RU is open to change and external learning. Teaching as well as administrative staff will have to muster their best efforts and collectively aim to bring RU into the future. I believe innovation is the answer to our prayers.

Innovation as a movement

I would like to invite everybody to start a movement that is far stronger than short-term bottom line tyranny. Doing that, however, requires that we start evaluating our way of viewing students/clients, the world and the different contexts we are part of. IMD Professor Seán Meehan calls it to wake up to the possibilities at hand and to explore new land! And this is where innovation comes into the picture.

In my view, innovation is not just about developing an idea. Innovation is about mastering a process that turns ideas into continuous innovation. For this to happen, it is a prerequisite that the individual and the environment that we form part of at RU hold innovation competences.

Change is the way to go

If we want innovation, we must be prepared for change. Over the years, we have experienced that due to organisational practices and habits many organisations prevent innovation from taking place. So if we want to see innovation, we will have to work on the organisational hurdles blocking the process.

In Denmark, the most common perception of creativity is that it is a talent held by some people from birth and by others to a very small extent. However, that is not true. Creativity is a talent that can be acquired and planned. Creativity is combinatorics; the ability to combine known knowledge and known ideas in a new way. Connecting the dots! Creativity arises when we get the opportunity to combine elements that have not been combined before. Let us try that at RU!

ligheder for at kombinere noget, der ikke før er blevet kombineret, så lad prøve det her på RUC.



Jan Pries-Heje

Information Systems Research Rankings

Ranking amongst the top 100 publications printed in the best periodicals in the world, RU is on the world map together with Jan Pries-Heje and the research group User-driven IT-innovation.

By Anne Frida Christiansen, RUGlobal

The survey that has been published by Association of Information Systems, AIS, an organisation serving researchers from all over the world who specialise in the Information Systems field, is ranking researchers working with information systems and is solely based on articles published in the best periodicals covering this research field. The survey is broken down into publications in the two, four or six best periodicals, respectively. The criterion for the ranking is authorship for articles, using a simple system calculating the ranking. Each article published yields 1.0 point. If two authors have co-authored an article, they will have to share the point, thus providing each of them with 0.5 points. Jan Pries-Heje, professor and research team leader of User-driven IT-innovation, CBIT, says that he has experienced writing an article together with four other authors, each co-author therefore receiving

0.2 points. In the rank order, researchers have been ranked on the basis of this criterion, thus constituting Information Systems Research Rankings, calculating who has published most articles in the best periodicals in the field.

Jan Pries-Heje ranking 51

Jan Pries-Heje ranks no. 51 in the survey covering publications in the two best periodicals, but he is also amongst the 100 best authors in the surveys covering four and six periodicals. Jan Pries-Heje is proud that the articles published are based on practice and problem-oriented research as well as action or design research. The articles have been produced in collaboration with organisations and companies. By way of an example, Jan Pries-Heje mentions an article discussing how to choose the best way of changing an organisation; another article discusses IT-innovation in practice. Jan Pries-Heje is hoping that his appointment will make the surrounding world aware, to a higher degree, that the research conducted at RU is practice-oriented as well as relevant and that it can also live up to international research standards.

Jan Pries-Heje says that he did not base his work on a special strategy with a view to achieving this ranking. He did, however, consciously try to write about his research findings in his articles, after which he submitted them to the best periodicals.

The research group User-driven IT-innovation

Jan Pries-Heje attaches great importance to his collaboration with the research group User-driven IT-innovation in relation to his ranking in the survey. "The articles would never have achieved such quality, had we not had such good dialogues in the group. We use the research group to discuss the articles we are writing", says Jan Pries-Heje. The research group counts twelve researchers plus a few more. Jan Pries-Heje also points out that the group has worked actively to place design scientific research on the agenda. In this context, the newly appointed professor of design studies, Jesper Simonsen, has just given an accession lecture on this subject.

In conclusion, Jan Pries-Heje says that all six senior researchers in the research group have actively committed to a major, three-year research project, SourceIT. "We help organisations and companies make improved decisions on sourcing. Nearly halfway through the project, we have already written 22 articles based on that subject; we are very good at motivating and encouraging each other to commit to the project. The majority of the articles have more than one senior researcher as co-author, so we are indeed collaborating to put the research group on the world map" says Jan Pries-Heje on a final note.

RuClubFrancophone

A group of RU students and teachers want to create a network focusing on France and French culture. Ideas for the contents of the network are many.

By Anne Frida Christiansen, RUGlobal

Expectations of and ideas for the network

About 20 people defied the pouring rain and dark winter afternoons when late afternoon on Monday 26 October they gathered at RU to share ideas and expectations for the creation of a student network focusing on professional knowledge of France at RU. The network first saw the light of day in an atmosphere of candle light, coffee and cake. The initiator is Heidi Bojsen, Assistant Professor, Cultural Encounters and French Studies, who during her own student years was a member of a network having "professional knowledge of France" as the focal point. As a student of French she was thrilled about the network, and the intention is therefore to prepare the breeding ground for the creation of a similar network at RU.

Many students from different parts of RU turned up for the meeting. By way of introduction, everybody briefly introduced themselves (most of them in French) and explained their motivation for joining the network. The students represented, among others, French Studies, HUM-BAS, Cultural Encounters and Public Administration. In addition to students, a number of teachers at RU also took an interest in the network. Lots of different ideas and subjects were introduced at the meeting. Some students of French Studies from RU had come to discuss their projects and other material of relevance to such studies; others wanted to use the network to maintain their French language skills that they had acquired at upper secondary school level or during their stay in French-speaking countries. Other participants suggested going to the cinema to watch French films or inviting guest speakers, e.g. in collaboration with Institut Francais, to come and speak on a specific subject.

While giving a brief PowerPoint presentation, Heidi Bojsen described her ideas for possible network activities such as museum, café and theatre visits and research projects. She also emphasised that the driving force behind the activities of the network is Francophone curiosity. "Life at university should not only be about marks and complying with rules in relation to programme regulations. It is also about gathering, asking questions and discussing subjects without having a definite curriculum, developing new targets for oneself and not just following those that others have set out for you." Also, network participation does not necessarily have to be time consuming, as Heidi

Bojsen emphasised that it is up to the individual student to decide how much time they want to spend on the network.

Future network events

After having had discussions in small groups, the meeting ended by all participants sharing their ideas for the future activities of the network, and small groups with different interests were set up. A couple of French exchange students offered interested students to come and speak to them in French to improve their French language skills. Conversation could for instance be based on topical French newspaper articles. Others decided to organise recurring social events such as cinema and theatre visits. French cooking with somebody from outside the university with knowledge of cooking was also suggested. This group will meet again at the beginning of December. Plans of a more long-term nature for the network are for instance to have a workshop in spring on francophone Africa. The students are now also working to organise a debate with participants from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institut Francais and possibly also the Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) and the Africa Commission. The debate will be on the need to develop the knowledge of France and francophone countries and on improvement of the conditions for French teaching in the Danish education system. The two latter groups will meet some time in January. Finally, it was also suggested that the students gather regularly to discuss literary as well as political and social matters. The first meeting for this purpose will be a reading and discussion of the novel *Monné, outrages et défis*, or in English *Monnew* by the Ivorian author Ahmadou Kourouma on 4 January 2010.

To conclude the meeting, Heidi Bojsen thanked all students for their participation and for taking an interest in the future network, and she emphasised that, naturally, other interested students are still welcome to participate as well.

As early as the following week, Ebbe Prag at IU took the initiative to start updating the French knowledge data bases at RU based on the suggestions by the network members. (Suggestions from non-network members are also welcome and can be sent to eprag@ruc.dk)

If the network has attracted your interest, feel free to contact Heidi Bojsen using this e-mail address: hbojsen@ruc.dk



Environmental historian Bo Poulsen, associate professor at Roskilde University, yesterday received the Best Research Year Award for 2009 from Vibeke Hjortlund, Videnskab.dk's editor in chief.

Readers choice: Roskilde University Fisheries Project Best Research Of The Year

By Camilla Buchardt, Information Office, RU

Roskilde University research is upfront with groundbreaking research and outreach

Environmental historian Bo Poulsen, associate professor at Roskilde University, yesterday received the Best Research Year Award for 2009 from science website Videnskab.dk for his mapping of historic fishing patterns and fish stocks.

The History of Marine Animal Populations (HMAP) project was voted the winner by readers of Videnskab.dk that were able to choose from among ten nominated projects.

Mapping historic fishing patterns shows how modern consumers have decisive impacts on the depletion of ocean resources around the globe. A few centuries ago, fish populations were up to ten times larger and much more diverse than today.

Skip tuna and tiger prawns

'The past is a unique window of human experiences that we can use to guide our actions today'. But, should we as consumers skip fish entirely? No, Poulsen says, 'but for the Danish consumer avoiding tuna and tiger prawns might be a good idea – something Sushi lovers will be sorry to hear.

' In a nutshell there's no reason to eat fish caught on the other side of the planet and flown in to Europe, when we have local products and transportation contributes to CO2 emissions,' Poulsen says. "As consumers, we should try to buy locally caught fish belonging to species that aren't threatened. We should get into the habit of asking at the fish market or the restaurant where the fish has been caught. We shouldn't stop eating fish – it's a healthy food. I had plaiçe for dinner on Saturday – but we should be careful about it.'

Roskilde University – making a difference

'Roskilde has a long tradition of teamwork and multi-disciplinary research. That's something we want to instil the value of in our students. Our project on the history of marine animal populations is a prime example. One scholar working on his own for a hundred years would never have ventured as far as we have together.'

Poulsen adds a word of advice to those considering a career in research.

'Follow your heart, and work hard. There are no shortcuts in science. But remember research is about the spirit of adventure, curiosity and imagination. You can embark on incredible journeys to places where no one has been before. And I hope our research project highlights this'.

Powerful impact

Even though Videnskab.dk bases the award on the voters' choice, Editor Peter Hyldgård has his own explanation for why Poulsen's research project came away the winner.

'It extends beyond the realm of science and into the world we live in,' Hyldgård says. "There's a lot of talk about climate and the environment at the moment, and this project shows that human activity does have an impact on the environment, and that the effects last for centuries. The fishing project's team proved that fish stocks have declined by 90 percent due to overfishing. That's both thought-provoking and unsettling.'

"What's more, they were good at explaining their research. You shouldn't underestimate the value of communication; this was what ensured that their research results have made such an impact."