Advice from Researchers on how to approach cross-disciplinary research

From researchers funded through the EPSRC 2017 call in Cross-Disciplinarity and Co-Creation in ICT Research

Launch workshop, 30-1-19

1. **Developing the ideas**
   - Build on existing collaborations, where trust has been developed and there is a culture where ideas can be challenged
   - Choose the right collaborators, identifying their unique strengths. The team may change as an idea is developed
   - Understand what each member of the collaboration needs so that the work can be designed so that all participants benefit. For example, consider where you will publish the outputs of your research.
   - Learn enough from other disciplines, including terminology, so that collaborators understand each other's challenges
   - Have an open mindset; be prepared to explore and do not always require a clear outcome for each meeting.
   - Consider co-design with users of research, for example the public or industrial users.
   - **Define the research question together**

2. **Writing the Grant**
   - Articulate an authentic problem. Have a strong story, with a clear purpose so it is clear how different strands contribute to a common goal.
   - Aim to have all researchers contributing to tasks across different work packages to ensure co-working
   - Include time for face-to-face or video-conference meetings

3. **Launching and Managing a Grant**
   - Consider having both an internal and external launch, launching the project can help to recalibrate and revitalise the team
   - Create a website with a paragraph of aims
   - When working with different partners (including the public) be proactive in publicising the research and generating interest. The aim is to keep stakeholders engaged whilst managing expectations
   - Consider having a cross-disciplinary advisory group or an expert focus group
   - Consider learning and teaching within the collaboration - how much of the other disciplines do participants need to know? How will you carry out the required learning and teaching throughout the project?
   - Visit each other's institutions, meet weekly (in person or virtually), have some informal catch ups, structure in time for RAs to work together (so that opportunities for serendipity are created).

4. **Outputs and Future plans**
   - Good communication may include storytelling through a website, consider telling a human story when communicating with the public
   - Consider media training

- Consciously consider how you will publish your work to meet the needs of all collaborators.
- Anticipate reviewer perceptions/criticisms