How Do Expert Agencies Secure Credibility?

Findings from an ESRC Future Research Leaders project
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The Credibility Problem

WE'VE HAD ENOUGH OF EXPERTS!!

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Expert Entrepreneurship

• Expert agencies cultivate credibility by being entrepreneurial – going above and beyond formal processes to create spaces for the public to feed into their decision-making.

• The term ‘entrepreneurship’ is different to the private sector – *it involves strategies that aim at being recognised and acknowledged for a scientific or expert contribution to authoritative knowledge.*

• In this sense, entrepreneurship is a *public good* rather than a private imperative (Sullivan Mort et al., 2003; Klein et al., 2010; Wagenaar and Wood, 2018).
Expert Entrepreneurship

• Involves disseminating scientific findings and ideas through…
  1. Improving website accessibility/readability
  2. Pro-actively seeking coverage from traditional and non-traditional media outlets
  3. Face-to-face events with stakeholders
  4. Close collaboration with stakeholders through informal working groups
  5. Training exercises with professional audiences and service users
  6. Internal learning and reform exercises
Expert Entrepreneurship in European Union Agencies

EU Agency Entrepreneurial Strategies (2014)

Perceptions of a More Entrepreneurial Agency in the European Parliament
Perceptions of a Less Entrepreneurial Agency in the European Parliament
Why Expert Entrepreneurship Matters

• Entrepreneurial agencies tend to achieve normative criteria for democratic legitimacy by reaching out to stakeholders beyond their core remit.

• Entrepreneurial agencies also tend to be perceived more positively by key audiences.
Themes for discussion

• What does it mean to be entrepreneurial as a scientific body?
• Do the aspects of expert entrepreneurship resonate with you?
• How does it compare with traditional ways of looking at stakeholder engagement?
• What might research look at next?
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