

ITHI Working Paper Series

#9 HELIPEDIA: SEE WHAT YOU THINK?

Henry Etzkowitz and Marina Ranga

The bi-yearly, now yearly, Triple Helix Conference provides a venue for presentation of Triple Helix research projects and policy analyses. Helipedia proposes to build upon this base by creating a global distributed research project to advance the state-of-the-art of Triple Helix knowledge and practice. It adapts the wiki model of collating existing knowledge to the generation of new knowledge.

Helipedia draws upon a variety of collaborative projects for inspiration. The 1958 International Geophysical Year (IGY) provided a focus for researchers worldwide to advance knowledge on this topic. The IGY built upon a long tradition of scientific collaborations, placing observers at different points around the globe to simultaneously collect data on eclipses and other astronomical events ¹. The Human Relations Area Files provided a model for collating and comparing existing anthropological data, by specific criteria, across multiple cultures ². The project was based at Yale University, but duplicates of the files were available for consultation in the libraries of other leading universities.

The Mass Observation Movement (MO), started in 1937, provided a format for volunteers to contribute information about everyday life in the UK ³. Volunteers kept diaries, took photographs, and documented widely experienced events like the 1940 “blitz.” Wikipedia, a free Encyclopedia, provides a curated venue for volunteers to contribute their knowledge freely, following a bottom -up model of the organization of knowledge that is continuously subject to revision ⁴. Nevertheless, the Bottom-up model that allows new contributors to overwrite documents previously uploaded has come under criticism for not respecting authorship, on the one hand, and for being insufficiently expert-based, on the other.

Helipedia builds upon these previous intellectual ventures, suggesting a specific focus, like the IGY, a classification system like the HRAF, common themes for contribution like MO and an objective, like Wikipedia, of systematic, if not encyclopedic coverage of its topic. Possible areas of investigation include the Triple Helix spheres, spaces and systems, regional growth models that are briefly described below. Other Triple Helix aspects may be the subject of collaborative investigations, organised by Triple Helix researchers and practitioners in different parts of the world. Each investigation would involve a senior Triple Helix researcher to mentor the project. New funding sources might be identified locally and internationally and/or the project may be carried out with existing resources. Opportunities for interchange, collaboration, publication, and policy

¹ www.massobs.org.uk/original_massobservation_project.htm

² www.wikipedia.org/

³ <http://celebrating200years.noaa.gov/magazine/igy/welcome.html#long>

⁴ www.yale.edu/hraf/about.htm

development, would be sought as part of the project.

Triple Helix Spheres

In contrast to biological evolution, which arises from mutations and natural selection, social evolution occurs through ‘institution formation’ and conscious intervention. Both advanced industrial and developing countries experiment with finding better mixes of functions and institutions in a Triple Helix of university-industry- government relations. For example, academia plays a role as a source of firm-formation and regional development, in addition to its traditional role as a provider of trained persons and basic knowledge. Government helps to support the new developments through changes in the regulatory environment tax incentives and provision of public venture capital. Industry takes the role of the university in developing training and research, often at the same high level as universities.

In this President’ s Corner I would like to suggest a project idea for your consideration and input: Helipedia, a variation of the “wiki” model of web-based knowledge production, organization, and distribution.

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The Mass Observation Movement (MO), started in 1937, provided a format for volunteers to contribute information about everyday life in the UK⁵. Volunteers kept diaries, took photographs, and documented widely experienced events like the 1940 “blitz.” Wikipedia, a free Encyclopedia, provides a curated venue for volunteers to contribute their knowledge freely, following a bottom -up model of the organization of knowledge that is continuously subject to revision⁶. Nevertheless, the Bottom-up model that the positioning of the institutional spheres with respect to each other and their potential for movement and reorientation exemplifies the dynamics of the model, with one serving as a gravitational centre around which the others rotate, thus generating several Triple Helix configurations. For instance, in a statist regime (Triple Helix I), government plays the lead role,

⁵ Etzkowitz, Henry. *The Triple Helix: University-Industry-Government Innovation In Action* London: Routledge 2008.

⁶ www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/ceci/documents/⁷

driving academia and industry. In a laissez-faire regime (Triple Helix II), industry is the driving force, with the other two spheres as ancillary support structures. In a knowledge society, university and other knowledge institutions play an increasing role, acting in partnership with industry and government, and even taking the leadership in joint initiatives, in a balanced model (Triple Helix III).

Triple Helix Spaces

The Triple Helix model is increasingly relevant as a conceptual framework for regional development. Its capacity to describe the process as the result of the joint workings of the University, Industry and Government institutional spheres is expanded by introducing the novel concept of “Triple Helix Spaces” : Knowledge, Innovation and Consensus Spaces, which show the process and mechanisms by which the institutional spheres interact and co-evolve over time. The specific activities and formats of the Spaces provide guidelines for integrating endogenous and exogenous strategies. The objective is to guide policy and practice at various stages in the creation and consolidation of knowledge- based regions.

Regional Renewal

The analysis of Triple Helix relations at the regional level can be developed starting from a four-stage model of regional growth and renewal, outlined elsewhere as follows:

- (i) Genesis: creating the idea for a new regional development model;
- (ii) Implementation: starting new activities and developing infrastructure;
- (iii) Consolidation and adjustment: integration of activities to improve the efficiency of the infrastructure;
- (iv) Self-sustaining growth and renewal of the system by identifying new areas of growth ⁷.

Originating in the analysis of regional innovation in Linköping, Sweden and extended in the investigation of the renewal of Norrköping ⁸. A series of collaborative investigations is underway with colleagues in Sweden and Brazil that may be further extended to a broader range of regional conditions.

Advancement of Triple Helix Innovation

Splintered into disciplines from the mid-19th century, the re- unification of the social sciences is taking place as elements of sociology, economics, and politics, coalesce into the Triple Helix. The construction of Helipedia can provide a prospective framework for developing new Triple Helix knowledge, building upon the retrospective framework provided by the Triple Helix conference series that collates Triple Helix research and practice. The results could be displayed on a new section

⁷ Etzkowitz, Henry and Magnus Klofsten, *The Innovating Region: Towards a theory of knowledge based regional development* *Research Management* 35 (3): 243-255. 2005.

⁸ Svensson, Peter, Magnus Klofsten and Henry Etzkowitz *A Knowledge-Based Strategy for Renewing a Declining Industrial City: The Norrköping Way* *European Planning Studies*, 2011.

of the Triple Helix Association website. A commentary facility would allow display of additional insights, critique, and suggestions for further development, but the responsibility to revise would rest with the original investigators. Thus, Helipedia would differ from a conventional wiki by respecting authorship.

It is envisioned that such a project, integrating research with practice, may assist the return of the social sciences to their original purpose of societal advance.

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