Impact: past, present and future

Professor Graeme Reid
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The past

1675 – Charles II founds Royal Greenwich Observatory

“to find out the so much desired longitude of places for the perfecting of the art of navigation”
...and still in the past

- 1832 British Geological Survey
- 1900 National Physical Laboratory
- 1911 National Insurance Act; creation of MRC
- 1948 National R&D Corporation
- 1970s and 80s early university spinouts & TTOs
Strathclyde University Centre for Industrial Innovation (est 1969)

“By 1974 the Centre had 'handled 200 projects' and had a list of regular customers that varied in size from large firms to very small local traders and manufacturers.”
...and more recent still

- 1986 Research Assessment Exercise – performance linked to funding; focus on publications

- 1993: Science White Paper
- 2004 Ten year framework for science and innovation
- 2006 Peter Warry: increased impact of Research Councils

- 2006-11 Introduction of REF to include assessment of demonstrable economic and social impacts
...and more recent still

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Where are we now?

- Impact embedded in UKRI strategy, industrial strategy and research funding

- Impact mainly related to projects in universities

- No sign of research excellence suffering

- UK strong in international comparisons of excellence and (some) impact
Clarity of purpose

• REF and KEF: impact and knowledge exchange

• Too many schemes inside UKRI

• Diversity of policy across the UK

• Need greater coherence with HMRC on R&D tax credits

• Regional interventions complicated
Future opportunities

• The impact of universities
• Institutes, Catapults etc
• The impact of disciplines
• Questioning the focus on SMEs
• Engaging more sectors of business
• Designing funding schemes to support impact
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