Professional development in the age of the new realism: an inclusive approach to an eclectic future

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Abstract:

There have been some very significant shifts in the strategic direction of transport in recent years, which have broadened the range of questions:

- from "transport and land use" to areas such as "competition policy", "demand management" and "user behaviour"; and
- from "externalities" to "cross-sectoral benefits".

These changes have been accompanied by a broadening of the range of disciplines from which "transport planners" are drawn, to the extent that the existing professional institutions no longer provide an obviously-relevant "home" for many transport professionals.

In the United Kingdom, this has led to the establishment of the Transport Planning Society, with the support of existing professional institutions The aims and objectives of the TPS are: "to facilitate, develop and promote best practice in transport planning and provide a focus for dialogue between all those engaged in it, from a full range of relevant backgrounds and other professional affiliations".

A straw poll at the 1997 ATRF in Adelaide indicated that a significant proportion of attendees belonged to more than one of the existing institutions, but around one-third did not belong to any This paper presents the results of a pilot survey of transport professionals in Transport WA, with a view to identifying how well professional development needs are met (by professional institutions, employing organisations, academic institutions, etc.), whether there is need for improvement and how that improvement might be achieved The results of a national survey of transport professionals will be presented at the ATRF itself.

Some recent developments in Australia and overseas are presented to stimulate discussion at the ATRF, being the principal transport policy and planning forum, as a springboard for making desirable improvements happen

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Introduction

There have been some very significant shifts in the strategic direction of transport in recent years, which have broadened the range of questions to which transport professionals are expected to provide answers, initially articulated in *Transport: The New Realism* (Goodwin, et al, 1991).

These changes have been accompanied by a broadening of the range of disciplines from which 'transport planners' are drawn, to the extent that the existing professional institutions no longer provide an obviously-relevant 'home' for many transport professionals. A straw poll at the 1997 ATRF in Adelaide indicated that a significant proportion of attendees belonged to more than one of the existing institutions, but around one-third did not belong to any.

A parallel 'new realism', resulting from the prevailing 'economic rationalist' ideology, needs to be recognised by the transport profession, not only for its impacts on transport systems but also for those for the transport profession and its practitioners.

This paper presents a discussion of professional development in transport, including the results of a pilot survey carried out in the Department of Transport, Western Australia. The results of a national survey will be presented at the ATRF itself. It aims to identify how well professional development needs are met, whether there is a need for improvement and how that improvement might be achieved.

Who is a Transport Professional?

The 'Transport Profession' is defined broadly to include policy, planning and operations. In terms of this exercise, a transport professional is one who is concerned with the content and substance of policy, planning, service development and provision, marketing and related areas in the context of transport, rather than providing transport services directly. However, such a definition should not be rigidly adhered to; in keeping with the premise of this paper, that boundaries are often a hindrance rather than a help, it is appropriate to adopt an inclusive rather than exclusive approach.

Most transport professionals work in the area of transport planning, which has been broadly defined as: "those activities involving the analysis and evaluation of past, present and prospective problems associated with the demand for the movement of people, goods and information at a local, national or international level and the identification of solutions in the context of current and future economic, social, environmental, land use and technical developments and in the light of the aspirations and concerns of the society which it serves. It includes the planning, design, management and operation of those policies, facilities, services and processes that are, or can be, used to secure sustainable accessibility, and balancing the private and social costs and benefits of transportation and its wider impacts." (Transport Planning Society, 1998).

There have been some very significant shifts in the strategic direction of transport planning in recent years, which have broadened the range of questions it is asked to address, for example:

➢ from 'transport and land use' and 'infrastructure management' to areas such as 'competition policy', 'demand management' and 'user behaviour'; and

➢ from 'externalities' to 'cross-sectoral impacts'

These changes have been accompanied by a broadening of the range of disciplines from which 'transport planners' are drawn. In the past, transport planners and policy people have often come from the engineering profession and have had their professional 'home' with institutions such as the Institution of Engineers and the Institute of Transportation Engineers. This could reflect, or even be a cause of, a concentration on *supply* of transport infrastructure and services.

There have, however, always been significant minorities of economists, planners, behavioural scientists and others in what is a genuinely multi-disciplinary area of activity. Other facets of the profession have recognised their own need for identity, not provide by existing forums. For example, a group of women transport professionals in Sydney have formed an informal group called 'Women in Transport', modelled on a similar group in the US and motivated by the fact that existing associations did not serve the needs of women transport professionals well.

Increasingly, the key questions being asked of transport planners and policy people are related to demand, to travel behaviour and to the external influences on and impacts of transport. Such questions require non-engineering responses; consequently, transport policy and planning has become home to a large number of non-engineers. Whilst engineering is still the largest single discipline, it accounts for less than one-third of first degrees of transport planners in the United Kingdom (Table 1).

Table 1. First Degrees of United Kingdom Transport Planners
(Source: Transport Planning Society survey of members, reported in Local Transport Today (1998))

First Degree	Number	Per Cent	First Degree	Number	Per Cent
Economics/Business	25	10%	Science	15	6%
Geography	46	18%	Social Science	8	3%
Architecture	3	1%	Planning and Urban (Studies)	16	6%
Civil Engineering	**55**	**21%**	Physics	6	2%
Other Engineering	**24**	**9%**	Transport and Urban Planning	35	14%
History	5	2%	Combined Studies	2	1%
Languages	2	1%	Law	2	1%
Maths & Statistics	13	5%			

Van den Dool (1997) identifies strategic 'gaps' in tertiary education for transport engineers, despite the prominence of specialist transport schools at a number of Australian universities.

Although the engineering institutions have made some significant moves towards embracing transport on a wider basis (for example, the Institution of Engineers (IEAust) Transport Panel in Western Australia, the IEAust National Committee on Transport, the Institute of Transportation Engineers and, in the UK, the change to Institute of Highways *and Transportation*), their coverage is still incomplete, partly because of requirements for members to have a first degree in engineering

They have accepted, to varying degrees, non-engineers working in areas related to engineering as members and opened up many of their activities to non-members, but this does not mean that they are reaching all transport professionals - nor, it should be said, is it necessarily appropriate that they do so.

Other organisations, including the Chartered Institute of Transport (CIT) and the Australian Institute of Traffic Planning and Management (AITPM), have different constituencies, tending more to the operational than to policy and planning.

A related issue arises from the difficulty experienced in recruiting people with transport knowledge and skills, and the consequent need for employers and employees to undertake or facilitate professional development. In an age of 'downsizing', 'contracting out' and 'core business', this might not be getting the attention it deserves. "Cutbacks in graduate recruitment and training during the recession, a wave of early retirements and a squeeze on ... spending" have exacerbated the problems (Local Transport Today, 1998).

The Future of Transport Planning

The "predict and provide" approach which has characterised transport planning until recently is now being rapidly overtaken by a "demand management" approach. This is more than a simple technical advancement and prompts the need for a re-appraisal of the role of transport in society and the means by which it is planned.

The ways of meeting the pattern of demand to be provided for will be a matter of choice, and not merely one of meeting forecasts resulting from observation of past trends. The consequences of this include:

♦ justification in terms of explicit policy objectives - a more "value-driven" approach.

♦ seeking out policies and projects which are practical, affordable and acceptable will require much greater understanding of the factors influencing demand and its various impacts on society, the economy and the environment

♦ there will need to be an integrated approach to transport and a fuller understanding of what "integrated" means, including tying land use and transport planning together in pursuit of common objectives.

♦ a need for new types of training such as: traffic engineers to be trained in traffic calming and provision for cyclists and pedestrians; transport planner to have skills in urban design and environmental appraisal; town planners to understand the travel consequences of location decisions.

♦ need to understand, respond to and influence developments affecting transport, including: policy-oriented taxation, private sector involvement, contracting out, franchising, partnerships, market regulation and deregulation

♦ wider awareness of transport "impact" will mean more multi-sectoral involvement, for example: transport and health; education system accessibility; centralisation of health, education and other public facilities.

♦ the burgeoning impacts of developments in information technology

Transport Planning - The Professional Framework (1995)

Non-Traditional Alliances: Acting Outside the Transport 'Box'

Allied to, and reinforcing, the changing transport agenda is the increasing tendency for transport issues to be dealt with not only outside the conventional transport agenda but by alliances of organisations which do not have transport as one of their obvious primary interests. If transport professionals are to influence and respond to the broader transport agenda effectively, they must:

➤ understand the range of non-transport issues and objectives these organisations have; and

➤ be able to network effectively with them as an integral part of transport planning.

London First/London Pride

London First aims to promote London as a world class city and to make the Capital a better place to visit and in which to live, work and invest Its overriding aim is to ensure that the resources, infrastructure and leadership are in place to achieve its vision of London as a world class capital

http://www.london-first.co.uk

London First involves the private sector in London's decision-making processes calling upon the energy, expertise and enthusiasm of business leaders to overcome institutional inertia and get things done.

Compounding the 'unlikely alliance' syndrome, *London First* has worked with 'green' transport groups to address specific transport issues, for example:

➤ with The Ashden Trust (1997) on Company Cars

➤ with Transport 2000 (1997) on Changing Journeys to Work: An employers' guide to green commuter plans

➤ London Cycling Campaign (1997) on the LCC Employers' Scheme
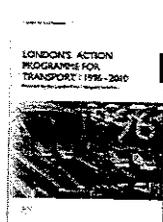
In June, 1996, it published *London's Action Programme for Transport: 1996-2010* (London First, 1996), an action plan dealing with traffic congestion and air pollution and improving conditions for bus services, cycling and walking. It includes coverage of infrastructure, funding, co-ordination, managing road space, the environment and looking ahead in a way more conventionally associated with government transport planning organisations.

Local Government and Sustainable Cities

More than 300 European cities, towns and counties have signed the Aalborg Charter on sustainability, which makes specific reference to transport

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The Aalborg Charter

We, cities & towns, shall strive to improve accessibility and sustain social welfare and urban lifestyles with less transport. We know that it is imperative for a sustainable city to reduce enforced mobility and stop promoting and supporting the unnecessary use of motorised vehicles. We shall give priority to ecologically sound means of transport (in particular walking, cycling, public transport) and make a combination of these means the centre of our planning efforts. Motorised individual means of urban transport ought to have the subsidiary function of facilitating access to local services and maintaining the economic activity of the city.

Extract from *Charter of European Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability* (The Aalborg Charter, 1994)

An even larger number of local governments, including a substantial number in Australia, has established sustainability initiatives under *Agenda 21* (http://www.igc.org/habitat/agenda21) which includes 'promoting sustainable energy and transport systems in human settlements' as an integral part of Chapter 7, Promoting Sustainable Human Settlement Development.

In addition, *Agenda 21* (Chapter 21) states that: "Critical to the effective implementation of the objectives, policies and mechanisms agreed to by Governments in all programme areas... will be the commitment and genuine involvement of all social groups".

Agenda 21, Chapter 7: Promoting Sustainable Human Settlement Development

7.52 Promoting efficient and environmentally sound urban transport systems in all countries should be a comprehensive approach to urban-transport planning and management. To this end, all countries should:

(a) Integrate land-use and transportation planning to encourage development patterns that reduce transport demand;

(b) Adopt urban-transport programmes favouring high-occupancy public transport in countries, as appropriate;

(c) Encourage non-motorized modes of transport by providing safe cycleways and footways in urban and suburban centres in countries, as appropriate;

(d) Devote particular attention to effective traffic management, efficient operation of public transport and maintenance of transport infrastructure.

Don't Choke Britain

Supported by the Local Government Association, *Don't Choke Britain* has the active and financial support of most of the Passenger Transport Executive bodies, along with support from health organisations, other businesses, and trade unions.

Local Government Association
http://www.lga.gov.uk/choke1.htm

The central theme in 1996 and 1997 was cutting unnecessary car use, or more simply, 'Give your car a holiday!' The campaign also reflected and built on the innovation and energy that people in many places throughout the UK are putting into solving local transport problems.

A number of national organisations new to the campaign were discussing how best to work with Don't Choke Britain in 1997. The British Chambers of Commerce, nationally, had already decided to come on board.

Sustainable London Trust

Describing itself as "A Lifeline to the Future", the Sustainable London Trust is a small charity which has developed a Manifesto for a Sustainable London and with the support of a range of community organisations.

http://www.greenchannel.com/slt/index.htm

Creating a Sustainable London: Manifesto of the Sustainable London Trust

♦ *Sustainability and cities.* Emerging concepts and initiatives for getting London to work as a sustainable city
♦ *London reinventing itself.* London invented big city growth. Now it can pioneer sustainable urban development
♦ *Reducing London's ecological footprint.* A vast land area supplies London's needs. We can and must reduce London's impact
♦ *A sustainable economy.* Making London's economy sustainable benefits people, businesses and the environment
♦ *Our city - planning and transport.* London needs strategic transport planning and the active promotion of local life-styles.
♦ *People: health, housing and education.* Individual well-being contributes crucially to improving collective well-being
♦ *Local initiatives.* In implementing sustainable development, local initiatives must be supported
♦ *Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda.* International agreements stress the essential role of cities in the quest for global sustainability
♦ *Regenerating London's democracy.* To make London work sustainably, we need an active multi-layered democracy.
♦ *London Citizens Forum.* The manifesto proposes a London Citizens Forum as a catalyst for change

Source: http://www.greenchannel.com/slt/index.htm#manif

Professional Development in Transport

The changing transport agenda and the creation of new, and often unlikely, alliances in pursuit of transport objectives, mean that professional development has to be more than simply keeping up to date in one's original specialisation. The scope and speed of change also means it often needs to be more than adding another.

Despite the broadening of scope that most professional institutions have undertaken, according to Colin Chick, Head of Engineering and Highway Services at the newly-created unitary authority of Thurrock (UK), the engineering institutions are not embracing the new transport agenda (Local Transport Today, 1998). Such a generalisation is always fraught with dangers, as there are many examples (for example, the IEAust with its National Committee on Transport) of such institutions taking an active interest in transport matters. However, whether the institutions are 'embracing the transport agenda' or not is not really the key issue; given the preponderance of non-engineers in the profession, engineering institutions are not likely to be the natural professional home of the majority.

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The question the transport profession needs to answer is along the following lines: "How do we develop the professional capabilities of transport people to best serve the needs of the (present and future) community and to enhance the job satisfaction of those people?"

The answers to this question require more than simply replicating an existing institutional structure. The situation now is vastly different from that reflected by most existing institutions, in respect of the organisations transport professionals work for, the availability of information and how people choose to access it So are the opportunities.

A Pilot Survey in the Western Australian Department of Transport

A pilot survey of transport professionals in the WA Department of Transport elicited 32 responses. This survey can be no more than indicative of the broader picture (see National Survey, below), but does have some interesting features

Transport policy and planning people in the WA Department of Transport come from a similar diversity of disciplines (Figure 1) as their UK counterparts, although the surveys are not directly comparable, since the WA Transport survey relates to all tertiary

Figure 1 Disciplines in Transport Policy

qualifications. In addition, engineering will be under-represented as Transport does not have road planning functions, which are the responsibility of Main Roads WA
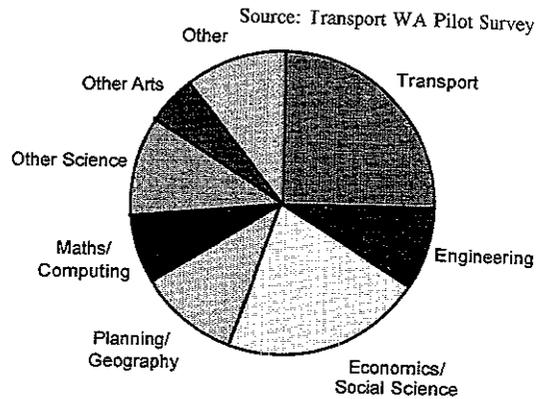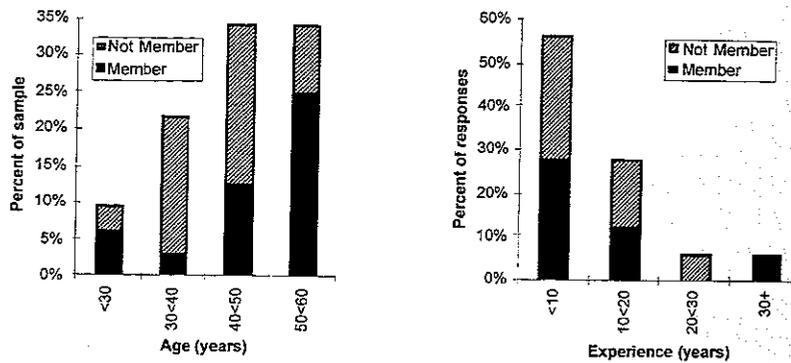
Figure 2. Membership of Professional Institutions (Source: Transport WA Pilot Survey)

The responses to the question "How do you gain information about transport and related matters that you need to do your job?" (Figure 3) clearly showed the importance of 'on-the-job experience' and 'networking with peers'.

There were remarkably few differences between respondents who were members of professional institutions and those who were not, although members, not unnaturally, regard the institutions as being more important than non-members. Non-members also appeared to place greater importance on the internet, although no statistical significance can be attached to this given the nature of the survey.
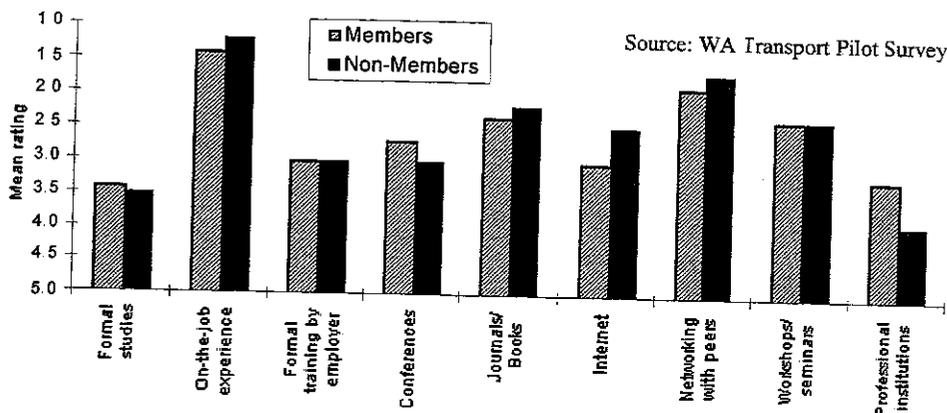

Figure 3. Information Sources for Transport Professionals (1=very important; 5=never important)

In general, informal sources (on-the-job, journals/books, internet, networking, workshops/seminars) were seen as being more important than formal studies or training by employer or the formal professional institutions. Interestingly, even members of professional institutions did not rate the institutions very highly for professional development.

A National Survey

A national survey using the same survey instrument will be carried out in June/July 1998, primarily using the ATRF mailing list (of 600 people in Australia who have previously attended or expressed interest in the Forum), but also asking that those who receive the questionnaire pass on a copy to colleagues who fit the parameters of a transport professional. The results will be reported to the Australasian Transport Research Forum in Sydney.

It is not intended that the results of this survey should be statistically significant. The principal aim is to establish whether changes in the emerging transport profession require a new approach to professional development and, if so, what that approach might entail.

Some Recent Developments

The Transport Planning Society (United Kingdom)

During the past three years, there has been intense debate in the United Kingdom about how best to address emerging issues for transport professionals. This led to the establishment, in 1997, of the *Transport Planning Society* (TPS), with aims and objectives as set out below. Formally established in June 1997, the Society now has over 300 members.

The TPS, whilst adopting a formal structure not unlike existing institutions, does not seek to have the same 'credentials' (eg in conferring 'chartered' status on its members) they do and works with those institutions to share information and to facilitate collaboration

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Transport Planning
Society

Aims and Objectives

The Society aims to facilitate, develop and promote best practice in transport planning and provide a focus for dialogue between all those engaged in it, from a full range of relevant backgrounds and other professional affiliations.

The society will pursue its aims and objectives by the following means
- ◆ development of good practice
- ◆ collection and dissemination of relevant information
- ◆ encouragement of discussion and debate
- ◆ provision and facilitation of communication between members
- ◆ promotion of transport research
- ◆ giving of advice on training needs and professional standards to those responsible
- ◆ collaboration with professional bodies and other learned societies with common interests including those outside the UK
- ◆ making of representations to governmental and other agencies on transport planning policy and practice

(Transport Planning Society, 1998)

The TPS is supported by the principal existing institutions [Chartered Institute of Transport, Institution of Civil Engineers, Institution of Highways and Transportation, and Royal Town Planning Institute], which are also represented on the 'transitional' committee. TPS also has links with *Local Transport Today* which sponsors information dissemination about events of interest to transport planning professionals.

Association for European Transport

The Association for European Transport (AET) was created in February 1998 to take over ownership and management of the annual Conferences from the European Transport Forum. Registered in the Netherlands and managed from London, the purpose of the Association is to promote international understanding, co-operation, discussion, research and development related to all aspects of transport.

The AEI is a fairly conventional model of a professional organisation applied to transport interests. It has some similarities to the Australasian Transport Research Forum, particularly in terms of the organisation of an annual conference, but it has a more substantial entity which includes a permanent structure, financial contributions by members and contracting out of secretariat services, membership administration, and organisation of the European Transport Conference on its behalf.

Objectives of The Association for European Transport

The Association's prime focus will be to continue the 25 year-old tradition of annual meetings, formerly known as the PTRC Summer Annual Meeting and the European Transport Forum. International programme committees, comprising about 100 volunteer professionals, are already busy preparing the 1998 European Transport Conference, to be held at the University of Loughborough, England in September 1998

Association Membership is open to both individuals and organisations. Members will elect a Council to supervise the affairs of the Association, and the Council will elect a Board to deal with day-to-day matters.

Ambrosius Baanders of the Netherlands Ministry of Transport, the Association's first Chair, said "I hope that the Association will attract a large number of transport professionals and organisations from all over Europe and from other continents, and that it will succeed in continuing the 25 year-old series of European Transport Conferences for a long time." Philip Cornwell of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is the Association's first Secretary and Treasurer. He added "I am delighted that the Association will offer a focus for transport professionals in the European Union, Central and Eastern Europe, and beyond. People can participate and access information in the knowledge that they are supporting an organisation that is owned by it's members.."

The Association will:

♦ organise an annual European conference and such other general and specialised meetings and conferences as required from time to time;
♦ collect, collate, publish and otherwise distribute information relating to transport; and
♦ collaborate with international organisations in the field of transport

The Association is owned by its members and their democratic participation is encouraged. Activities will focus initially on the annual Conferences, but the Association intends to develop a menu of services, including Special Interest Groups and a newsletter reporting on European transport affairs.

The Evaluation Society

There are 'Evaluation Societies' in a number of places, including Australasia, Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Germany and Italy. Such societies are relatively new, and provide a *cross-functional* reference for a multi-disciplinary profession ('evaluation').

Members come from a variety of work settings and backgrounds including all levels of government, service organisations, academic institutions and private firms. Members represent disciplines ranging from psychology, sociology, social work, education, economics, health sciences, administration, political science and policy sciences to accounting, engineering, urban and regional planning.

The aim of the Australasian Evaluation Society is to improve the theory, practice and use of evaluation through:

➤ establishing and promotion ethics and standards in evaluation practice
➤ providing forums for the discussion of ideas including society publications, seminars and conferences
➤ linking members who have similar evaluation interests
➤ providing education and training in matters related to evaluation
➤ recognising outstanding contributions to the theory and/or practice of evaluation
➤ acting as an advocate for evaluation; and
➤ other activities consistent with this aim.

The Virtual Organisation and Self-Development

The pilot survey of WA Transport showed that transport professional regarded informal sources of information as more important to their ability to do their job effectively than the more formal traditional sources. Informal sources are inherently those with which the individual has the greatest ability to determine his/her own level of interaction and its content.

The internet is a relatively new tool for information exchange. Even so, respondents to the Transport WA survey, particularly those who were not members of existing professional institutions, rated the internet as almost as important as books and journals as a source of information. Add its value as a networking tool (ranked 2 in the survey) and the internet is clearly a highly important tool and destined to become more so.

And yet search on the worldwide web under 'transport' and you get 1 095 025 listings; add 'professional development' and you get 46! The relativity with education is even worse (Table 2). Clearly, those concerned with professional development in transport are either not using the internet or are not using it in a way which is readily accessible

Table 2. Professional Development, Education and Transport on the Internet (Infoseek, May 1998)

Searchwords	Total 'pages'	with 'transport'
Transport	1 095 025	1 095 025
Professional_development	68 628	46
Education	5 528 702	108

The transport world has not yet established strong links with the virtual world of electronic communications, with few of the 'virtual community'-type sites referencing transport (Table 3). These sites essentially use the technology to create/provide opportunities rather than provide solutions - on-line discussion groups.

Table 3. The virtual world according to Infoseek (May 1998)

Searchwords	Total 'pages'	with 'transport'
Virtual_community(ies) virtual_organis(z)ation(s) virtual_corporation(s)	17 528	26
Virtual_community(ies)	13 871	20
Virtual_organis(z)ation(s)	1 677	3
Virtual–corporation(s)	2 305	5

The difference between Table 2 and Table 3 is often in the way the medium is used. Table 2 sites tend to be uni-directional - giving out information to the user; Table 3 sites tend to be interactive - providing opportunities for the user to specify what information he/she needs, and to interact with other users to obtain or develop it or provide feedback to others.

The former is reminiscent of some of the major failures of computerisation, where people or businesses simply computerised the existing way of doing things (Peters, 1992) - successes come from reinventing the way we do things. The virtual organisation provides new opportunities for sharing information <u>and</u> redefining the questions in complementary ways, using the skills and knowledge of transport professionals, and fostering their professional development at the same time

There have been few structured initiatives of this type, and their success is not known For example: Virtual Communities for Environmental Education is "an appeal to all who truly see the value in the internet (specifically the web) as a tool and medium for bridging communications between communities, cultures, and individual experiences" (**http://coehp.idbsu.edu/globe-id/virtual-community.html**)

The project outlines a strategy for developing "virtual communities" for education and environmental stewardship skills development. This project embraces technology as a tool for learning and relies on Geographic Information Systems (GIS), community mapping activities and the internet for sharing findings and expressing views (web pages).

An on-line (electronic) journal solely devoted to virtual organisations has recently been launched by the International Association of Virtual Organisations (IAVO, 1998). The IAVO includes members from a wide range of organisations (Figure 4). At least one other journal has devoted an entire issue to virtual communities (The Information Society, 1998).
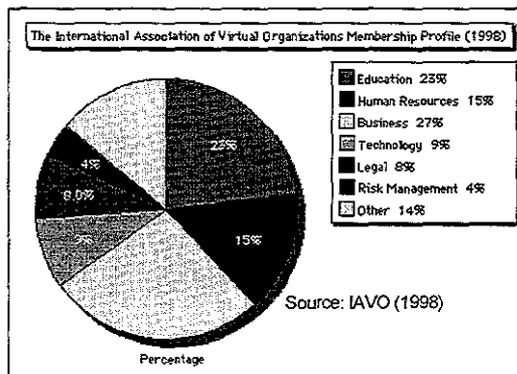
Figure 4. International Association of Virtual Organisations: Membership

According to a survey of 290 Human Resource Development executives and managers, who are members of the American Society for Training and Development (cited in Phusitasai, 1998), 'greater need to work across internal and external organisational boundaries' was rated the fourth most probable trend in human resource development and the most likely in terms of management trends. This is precisely what the *virtual organisation* most effectively facilitates.

The sixth most likely management trend was 'increased interest in facilitating learning via existing or new informal networks ("communities of practice")'. This is what is currently lacking in the transport profession.

Professional Development and Economic Rationalism: The 'New Reality'

The prevailing ideology in government today is one of minimising the direct role of government agencies through privatising functions or by contracting out to the private sector while retaining overall management and control of the function. This has important ramifications for the transport profession:

➢ Reduction in the skills and knowledge base of the public sector, as transport professionals are replaced by contract managers, accompanied by a progressive devaluation of the skills of the transport professional.

➢ A focus on projects to the detriment of strategies, accompanied by a narrowing and foreshortening of vision.

At the same time, the knowledge and skills base is under threat from the legacy of the rapid expansion of the transport planning profession in the 1960s and 1970s, with early retirements and 'voluntary redundancies' depleting the senior levels of the profession.

In these circumstances, it is additionally important that effective means are established for the sharing of those skills and knowledge before they are lost and for facilitating the acquisition of them and of new capabilities by those who come into the profession from an ever-widening range of backgrounds.

TranScan: A First Step?

In 1996, Main Roads WA established a quarterly 'scan of emerging trends in road network management', known as RoadScan. The hard copy publication was complemented by a website (**http://roadscan.mrwa.wa.gov.au/roadscan/**), which was a digested version with live links to referenced websites.

RoadScan is now *TransScan*, 'a scan of emerging trends in mobility and the built environment', a joint initiative of Transport WA, Main Roads WA and the Ministry for Planning. The first issue was in July 1998. The broader focus on transport and on land use substantially reflects the new transport realism.

In addition to hard copy, *TransScan* will have a website which includes:

➢ a full downloadable pdf (portable document format) copy of TransScan (plus a link to the Acrobat website for those who do not already have the (free) Adobe Acrobat Reader software), which includes the ability to cut and paste both text and graphics into other applications;

➢ live links to the three agencies' web home pages;

➢ on-line access to archived copies of both TransScan and RoadScan;

➢ a directory of weblinks associated with mobility and the built environment, which have been mention in TransScan;

➢ access to the full text of selected papers or special features (for example, papers delivered as part of the MRWA *Facing the Future* lecture series;

➢ an e-mail response facility direct to TransScan, for feedback on form and content.

The *TransScan* domain will be registered with the major web search engines, so that it shows up in searches using appropriate descriptors.

TransScan is a substantial step forward in sharing information in the transport profession. As well as the 'outward' focus of giving people access to information, both in TransScan itself and though links to other 'places', the direct e-mail facility allows them to contribute to the debate. There are obvious benefits to the three participating agencies in being the focus of this feedback; there are also benefits to other readers of TransScan when the journal reflects that feedback and information.

Ultimately, the website could establish multi-lateral rather than just bi-lateral communication.

Conclusion

Changes in the scope and direction of the transport agenda, and the broader economic agenda, have led to changes in the transport profession which require new ways of addressing professional development. Existing institutional structures, including the Australasian Transport Research Forum itself, do not address the changing professional development needs of transport planners and policy people, in an era of rapid change but diminishing conventional opportunities

The model for the 21st century is one which provides opportunities for self-development across a broad range of skill and knowledge areas, rather than focussing on a single area of specialisation. At the same time, existing specialisations remain important to the achievement of outcomes in and through transport.

Computer and communications technology has developed to the point where it provides an accessible medium for exchange of information, at all levels, in ways that the individual can

tailor to his/her needs and preferences. The joint WA Transport, Main Roads, Ministry for Planning *TransScan* initiative is a first step in this direction.

If this path is to be followed successfully, it will be necessary for all parts of the transport profession to work together to establish a new model for professional development and sharing of information, building on, not necessarily displacing, existing institutional structures.

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