

Research Adjacent episode 50 celebration_mixdown

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SPEAKERS

Alice Cann, Saneeya Qureshi, Claire Toogood, Jenny Brady, Peter Barker, Sam Andrews, Sarah McLusky, Ged Hall, Simon Culter, Orla Kelly, Lorraine Coghill

- P** Peter Barker 00:00
Congratulations on reaching 50 episodes with the podcast. I know how much work goes into doing these things, so yeah, well done.
- S** Sam Andrews 00:09
Congratulations on 50 episodes. What an absolutely massive achievement.
- S** Saneeya Qureshi 00:15
Congratulations. And here's to many more episodes and continued success.
- L** Lorraine Coghill 00:21
Thank you for creating such a wonderful resource for us all.
- S** Simon Culter 00:25
Well done for allowing everyone to see this hidden world that lies behind all of the incredible work that goes on within this sector. So keep going, looking forward very much to the next 50. Bravo.
- S** Sarah McLusky 00:42



Hello. There. I'm Sarah McLusky, and this is Research Adjacent. In each episode, I talk to amazing research adjacent professionals about what they do and why it makes a difference. Keep listening to find out why we think the research adjacent space is where the real magic happens. Hello. I'm Sarah McLusky, and welcome to a very special episode of research adjacent. I have got my metaphorical party hat on as this is the 50th episode of the podcast. Woohoo. And even though I'm currently standing alone in my office recording, I do feel like I've got a host of guests on the show with me today, because I have got lots of pre recorded comments to share with you. As you can imagine, this episode has been looming in my mind for a while now, and I knew I wanted to do something special when I started planning what I would cover. I wanted to use this opportunity to connect with the brilliant guests who have given up their time to contribute to my pet project, and I am especially grateful to the first five guests who recorded their episodes before there was any public evidence at all that I would actually follow through and get them out into the world. And I will always appreciate their faith in me. Another reason I wanted to hear from past guests is that I think they're a microcosm of the overall podcast audience, and hearing their feedback helps me to understand what you, dear listener, are getting out of the show. So about a month ago, I reached out to all my past guests, and very kindly, some of them have sent messages about what being on the podcast has meant to them. You heard a few hopefully familiar voices at the top of the show, and you'll hear some more as we go through but before we come on to my guest, hear a few thoughts from me. I know I've said this before, but when I started, I set myself the target of 10 episodes. It kind of blows my mind that we have made it to 50 episodes in just over 18 months. Partly, I am just amazed that I have stuck at it, because those of you who know me well will know that doing things week in week out is not something that comes naturally to me, but truly, I have stuck at it because I love it and because it feels important. I love talking to people. I love hearing their stories, and it feels important because these are stories that we don't hear often enough. The whole reason that research adjacent exists is because I wanted to tell the stories that the unsung heroes of the research world, the people who don't usually feature in the media stories or the academic publications, but in truth, are the glue which holds everything else together. I also wanted to raise awareness of these research adjacent jobs, which are important and skilled and satisfying, but too often seen as lesser than as you can probably tell from this, I am a woman on a mission. I have been genuinely thrilled at the way that this idea has touched people. I love hearing people proudly proclaiming themselves as research adjacent, or research enabling, or just research professional. I love all the conversations springing up about the ways that these roles contribute to research and research culture. I love feeling part of a wave of change, but this episode isn't really about me. I have previously reflected on what doing the podcast has meant to me, and check out episodes 25 and 33 for my own thoughts. But for this episode, I wanted to understand what it was like for those people who have come into my orbit. So as I said earlier, I invited previous guests to share with me what being on the podcast has meant to them, and I've grouped their comments into a number of themes that are all connected. This includes helping them to feel like part of a community, connecting with new people, boosting their confidence, and even just helping their family to understand exactly what it is that they do. If listening to this makes you want to go and catch up on any episodes you've missed, I will put the links in the show notes, and as you listen, I'd love to know whether you resonate with their experiences. If you've got anything you'd like to share, then please drop me a message via email at Hello at [researchadjacent.com](mailto:hello@researchadjacent.com) or you can find the link in the show notes to send me a voice note like some of the guests did, or come on over and find me on LinkedIn and send me a comment there. So without further ado, and in no particular order, let's get to our first theme, which is connecting with new people. I've previously spoken about how I find that podcasting is basically a really extreme form of

networking. And it turns out I'm not the only one who has met people as a result of research adjacent. First up here is Saneeya Qureshi, who is in Episode 29 which was recorded live at the Conference last year.

S Saneeya Qureshi 05:02

I'm Saneeya Qureshi, sharing my story alongside ipshita and Jennifer and hearing their inspiring journeys reinforced the value of diverse career paths in academia. The podcast also led to meaningful new connections, and as one example, after the episode was aired, I received a message from an aspiring researcher developer expressing their appreciation for the insight shared and with whom I met to help them successfully apply for a researcher developer role in another institution.

S Sarah McLusky 05:39

Ipshita Ghose was in the same episode as Saneeya, had a similar experience and emailed me this comment, I've been approached by colleagues on email and new starters to the university who have listened to the podcast and wanted to link up with me and learn more about my experiences. Thanks Ipshita, maybe the podcast is actually just a giant networking snowball. Another email comment came from Kirsty Ross, who was in episode two, who said, I met the public engagement lead at Ukri at the recent ScotPEN gathering in Aberdeen. We had a really good natter, and then he revealed that he knew about me thanks to listening to my podcast episode, thanks for helping me snag the ear of folks in the upper echelons of public engagement. I am glad to be of service Kirsty. For Orla Kelly in episode nine, I was lucky enough to be that new connection.

O Orla Kelly 06:29

Of course, I have to say that the best part of meeting you through the podcast was getting to work with you on a new funded project in partnership with converge. So towards the end of last year, we got funding from the Scottish ecosystem fund to deliver a 10 part podcast. We called it the Academic Adventures podcast, where you interviewed academic entrepreneurs from across Scotland on their successes and their failures when it came to their spin outs and startups. I think the Academic Adventures podcast is a really special project, and I am so delighted you were willing to jump into the deep end with it.

S Sarah McLusky 07:06

It was brilliant working with Orla and the team at converge on academic adventures. And if you haven't heard it yet, then do go and check it out. I'll put a link in the show notes. It hasn't just been about connecting with new people, though John Elvin, from Episode 35 found that he had new found celebrity status at work. He emailed my colleagues at the Royal Society picked up on it and said, we have a celebrity working with us now. Their logic was, celebrities do podcasts. John did a podcast, therefore John is a celebrity. John said that he found this comment very funny, and while the idea of celebrity status might have made him laugh. John also made me laugh with another comment that he sent. I shared the podcast link with my

family. This was great. Both my daughter and my in laws said that after listening to the podcast, they had a much better idea of what I actually do and have done in my jobs. And this tickled me, because I did exactly the same thing with the first interview, the first podcast that I was interviewed on, and yes, it did help my family to understand what I do, too. The next common theme was self reflection. Being interviewed for the podcast encouraged guests to think about not only how they describe what they do, but also how to make sense of their career journey. Steph Sinclair from Episode 26 emailed me with this comment. It was a great chance to reflect on my career and what I get out of being research adjacent, and how working at a charity now means that I feel closer to the research than ever before. Thanks. Steph. Claire Toogood from Episode 45 Lorraine Coghill from episode 12 and Alice Cann from Episode 21 had similar thoughts. Here they are.

C Claire Toogood 08:45

Hi, I'm Claire Toogood, and I was interviewed for episode 45 of Research Adjacent. Recording my own episode with Sarah was great. It made me pause and reflect, which is always a good thing, and something that I don't always do enough of.

L Lorraine Coghill 09:00

You challenged me to actually do something which I don't think we do a lot of in this space, and that's to take that time to reflect upon ourselves and what we do and why we do it.

A Alice Cann 09:13

This is Alice Cann I've been thinking now about the experience and how it was one a wonderful opportunity to reflect on my job and how it relates to research and and on my aspirations. I liked preparing for the questions that I know you ask in many podcasts. In particular, the magic wand question is a lovely one.

S Sarah McLusky 09:38

It also made sense to me that business relationships manager and self confessed extrovert, Simon Cutler of Episode 22 would reflect on the importance of his professional friendships.

S Simon Culter 09:48

The podcast really gave me an opportunity to reflect on, you know, a really interesting and exciting career, but more importantly, to to reflect on some of the friendships. If. Professional friendships that had been developed over that time, and I've thoroughly enjoyed listening to some of the individuals that I recommended.

S Sarah McLusky 10:10

As Simon mentioned, he's responsible for a number of other guests appearing on the podcast. He introduced me to Jonah Elvin, who've recently heard from Emma Perfect from Episode 31 and Hamish McAlpine from Episode 28 so you and I have both benefited from Simon's professional friendships too. Now we come on to embracing the term research adjacent, as well as reflecting on what they do. Guests also find themselves reflecting on how they fit into the research world. You can imagine how thrilled I was to hear that some people have taken the term research adjacent and run with it, finding that it's a better way of encapsulating what they do. First up, here's Jenny Brady from Episode 16.

J

Jenny Brady 10:51

Hello. I'm Jenny Brady, and being welcomed on the research adjacent podcast was a genuine turning point for me in many ways. Firstly, the language, and I don't mean swearing, I mean the insightful way to finally describe what I do in a unified way. I am a research adjacent specialist, and I'm part of a really important community of people who make fantastic things happen in research world.

S

Sarah McLusky 11:13

You and me both. Jenny, John Elvin commented by email that I have shamelessly taken up the phrase research adjacent as a descriptor. It's a perfect encapsulation of where a lot of valuable work goes on to enable research to happen, which is not obvious to anyone who is not doing it. You don't have to convince me, John, and here's Alice can again. I've liked seeing the similarities and differences with other research adjacent professionals. I've learned so much about the different people working in research adjacent jobs, and it's also interesting to think now about how the world has changed and how I've changed. And I think my confidence and my use of the word research adjacent, I love how it's become a regular part of my life. Alice was not alone in noticing that the podcast contributed to building confidence. A number of other guests mentioned this too via email. Ipshita Ghose, who was part of the episode 29 the live one recorded at the vitae conference, said I was quite nervous initially, as it was my first time being on a podcast, I think it was an excellent exercise in public speaking too, and your professionalism and support really helped make the experience a very positive one for me. Thanks. Ipshita, that's lovely. Freelancers, Jenny Brady and Sam Andrews from Episode 43 both found that taking the leap to talk about their work more publicly was a huge confidence boost. First, here's Jenny,

J

Jenny Brady 12:42

Since I became self employed after being part of a high profile University for 12 years, talking about the impact my work has and the joy that can bring me, made me grow another foot taller, and I'm already six foot my shoulders went back, and I was able to feel the confidence in my intentions and ambitions. The podcast helped to evidence that the work we do is recognize and celebrate it, and that's a genuinely glorious feeling.

S

Sarah McLusky 13:05

And now this is Sam.

S

Sam Andrews 13:07

Hi Sam Andrews here, so I appeared on the podcast a little bit earlier this year, and actually was the very first time that I'd spoken about a new venture of mine, which is ocean Oculus and ocean focused communications agency. And you know, I think anyone who is starting out on a new venture can attest to just how scary it can be to put yourself out there for the very first time, but you provided such a warm and welcoming space to do that, and I really left with much more confidence than when I went in.

S

Sarah McLusky 13:38

Oh my goodness, Sam, I can totally understand how scary it is to put a new idea out into the world. Honestly, I don't think I would have ever put this podcast out if I hadn't felt that responsibility to those five people I've already mentioned, who I had already recorded before I launched. But now that I am getting better known as a podcaster, a fun thing about having a podcast is getting to know other podcasters, and the connection with Jed Hall in Episode 19 and the team at the research culture uncovered podcast has been particularly special. Here's Ged

G

Ged Hall 14:09

for us, the research culture uncovered podcast, you've been a fantastic resource in helping us to actually improve our podcasting practice. So that's one thing I think has been brilliant.

S

Sarah McLusky 14:22

And that leads nicely onto the final but undoubtedly most common theme, the sense of community that the podcast has created and the way that it has highlighted the importance of research adjacent roles. Here's Ged again.

G

Ged Hall 14:35

We're really interested in the diversity of careers that you're highlighting, and that's been absolutely fascinating for us, and is a really rich resource when we're talking internally to colleagues in similar roles around the university who see no route for progression. Your podcasts have really given that myth a real busting.

S

Sarah McLusky 14:54

Orla Kelly, Lorraine Coghil and Claire Toogood also appreciated hearing about all the different kinds of roles. First up here's Orla.



O Orla Kelly 15:02

It was really great to meet you through the podcast and to be part of this really lovely, supportive community that you've been building. The thing that I've particularly enjoyed about your podcast is the human element of all all these different research adjacent roles are really shaped and delivered because of the personalities and the skills of the individual at the heart of it, and not defined by the dozen or so bullet points listed in any job description.

S Sarah McLusky 15:30

And now Lorraine.

L Lorraine Coghill 15:33

It's Lorraine Coghill here. Thank you so much for creating such a wonderful podcast. It is something that is so unique and creates that space within the research adjacent community, a place for so many of us from different roles, people, interests, all coming together, and I've learned so much about new things that I'd never heard of before, but also giving me challenges and opportunities of moving things forward and making connections in different spaces. I think that is incredibly important for us, both in the research adjacent spaces, but also within research and within our communities as well.

S Sarah McLusky 16:23

And finally, Claire,

C Claire Toogood 16:25

Through listening to Research Adjacent and being on the podcast myself recently, it's really helped me to understand the community of research adjacent people that are out there. And I think the podcast highlights the variety of what we're doing, but also that we're all working towards common goals in terms of making research outputs accessible and supporting a wide range of people to be involved in research too.

S Sarah McLusky 16:46

And Steph Sinclair sent similar thoughts through by email, saying, I think the podcast is a great reminder of the important work that everyone who works adjacently does. It can often feel like you're out in a limb, not quite inside the world of research, but not completely outside, either initiatives like this remind me that we are a wonderful, supportive community capable of incredible things. I couldn't agree more. Steph, both Jenny Brady and Saneeya Qureshi also highlighted the fact that these conversations can make a valuable contribution to making positive change out in the real world. Here's Saneeya,

S Saneeya Qureshi 17:01

S Saneeya Qureshi 17:21

One of the most significant outcomes from my contribution to the Research Adjacent podcast was the sense of being part of a larger community striving for positive change. I have recommended it to many peers and early career researchers as it serves as a reminder that we as research enabling professionals are not alone in our endeavors, and that our contributions, no matter how small, can make a substantial difference to cultivating a healthy, dynamic and inclusive research culture.

S Sarah McLusky 17:57

And here's Jenny

J Jenny Brady 17:59

Being given the magic wand and imagining a life without as many challenges for research has had me smiling for weeks. It is a tricky place to exist for everyone involved, and yet it's purposeful, impactful and vital in every sense of that word, Sarah, giving me the metaphorical magic wand to reduce the struggles helped me to continue to get up and show up every day with the intention of making that a reality. The community that Sarah's brought together is an impressive one, and the podcast is a shining beacon of dedicated hope and intention. Thanks so much Sarah for the chance to be part of something so cool.

S Sarah McLusky 18:35

Thanks, Jenny. Listening to that one genuinely made me a bit emotional, as did this last one. My final guest comment is from Sam Andrews, and I've saved it until last, because it resonates so strongly with how I feel as well. Here's Sam,

S Sam Andrews 18:49

I think also for me, it was a opportunity to give something back, because this podcast series has been so amazing that I've gained so much knowledge, so much inspiration, so much insight from all of these conversations that you've been having from different people, and just having that sense, you know, being part of a community of research, adjacent professionals, that's exactly what it is, and I think you've done that so well. And I'm very grateful to have had the opportunity to give something back to something that has given me so much.

S Sarah McLusky 19:29

Like Sam, I feel so lucky to have this opportunity to give something back. I've learned so much, and I've met so many wonderful people. Listening back to these comments made me very emotional at times. I am hugely grateful for all the good wishes and the valuable insights. It helps me to keep going when I'm sat alone here in my Garret wrestling with show notes and social media posts, and with that encouragement, I will keep going. Who knows how many episodes I'll get to, but I'll definitely keep going for now. I have some ideas for some things that

might come up in the future, and maybe just. Maybe we can make it to 100 episodes. Another thing that makes me do a little happy dance is knowing that people are listening. So I'd love to hear about which Episode theme you resonated with most. Have you met new colleagues through the podcast or embraced being research adjacent? Have you found a community of like minded peers, or found yourself reflecting on your current role or your aspirations? If so, please email me at hello@researchadjacent.com or click the link in the show notes to send me a voice note. Or even you could go to LinkedIn, share the episode, tag me and tell me what you thought. In the meantime, thanks to Alice Cann, Claire, Toogood, Kirsty Ross, Ged Hall, Jenny Brady, Lorraine Coghill, Orla Kelly, Peter Barker, Sam Andrews, Saneeya Qureshi, Simon Cutler, Ipshita Ghose, Steph Sinclair and John Elvin for taking the time to contribute to this episode. Thanks to you for listening, whether this is your first episode or your 50th. I appreciate you so much. Until next time bye for now. Thanka for listening to Research Adjacent. If you're listening in a podcast app, please check your subscribed and then use the links in the episode description to find full show notes and to follow the podcast on LinkedIn or Instagram. You can also find all the links and other episodes at www.researchadjacent.com. Research Adjacent is presented and produced by Sarah McLusky, and the theme music is by Lemon Music Studios on Pixabay. And you Yes, you get a big gold star for listening right to the end, see you next time you