Publishing research-based news articles: Opportunities and challenges for creating effective knowledge translation

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Most universities and research institutions promote the need for researchers to engage in knowledge translation to create impact. Many include this in their organisational narratives, such as strategic plans and research statements, however, the time involved is often not calculated in academic workloads. One impactful way to disseminate research is through research-based news articles to ensure research is read widely in the media, (especially by stakeholders) and promote progress in research fields. Such dissemination improves research publicity, which means scholarly journal articles are more likely to be read by new audiences via hyperlinks provided in news articles. These improvements in readership and engagement can be measured through altmetrics, which is considered useful for funding and promotion applications. Despite the rewards, there is a dearth of research papers written about how researchers can adapt their work and utilise news sites to improve their research dissemination and individual professional and career trajectory. This paper highlights the skills required to write for various news media outlets, which is quite different to academic publishing. Thus, targeting specific research-based news publications requires allocated workload, planning and the acquisition of new skills. This discussion paper shares insights, showcasing an exemplar from an academic researcher, and discusses how institutions might better support academics' efforts. Researchers, communication and media officers, research managers and workload coordinators will be interested in gaining insights into research impact. Finally, practical tips, tricks and trade-offs are discussed.

Introduction

The Australian Research Council defined research impact as the 'contribution that research makes to the economy, society, environment or culture, beyond the contribution to academic research' (Australian Research Council, 2023c, para. 7). Indeed, in its *Research Impact Pathway* table, it listed 'media' as a form of research output (Australian Research Council, 2023c, para. 15). Thus, the ARC recognises the need to translate knowledge and disseminate research to a wider audience than fellow researchers via peer reviewed publications that are often out of the public's reach, because they sit behind firewalls. Even if they have access to these journal articles, some of the public might struggle to engage with the journal's style, readability, and academic and technical language.

To bridge this gap, there are many ways to create impact through knowledge translation via engaging research outputs and keeping stakeholders up to date with research as it is occurring. These can include feedback on policy, submissions to Royal Commissions and government inquiries, reports to government agencies and departments, free research-based resources (e.g. teaching materials), social media, blog posts and research-based news articles (RBNAs). RBNAs are often disseminated through social media, making them a powerful way to connect researchers with a wide variety and large number of stakeholders (Rogers, Johnson et al., 2022). As one of the stakeholders, funders benefit from RBNAs

as another source of information about the funded project's progress, rather than waiting for annual reports (Rogers, Baker, Harrington et al., 2022).

The purpose of this paper is threefold. Firstly, it provides a discussion about the importance and benefits of knowledge translation in the context of research institutions, and how RBNAs are an impactful and neglected area of academic discussion. Secondly, using a novel framework for discussion, the paper provides practical tips, tricks and trade-offs to support academics to create effective and engaging RBNAs. This section is illustrated using exemplars from one education academic's RBNAs using news values and elements (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). Finally, the paper draws together these ideas and how they relate to the current literature on knowledge translation in a discussion, a call for further research, and a conclusion.

Research context

Knowledge translation and research institutions

According to Granek and Nakash (2016), knowledge translation or research translation can be defined as 'translating research into practice', however there are many different variations about the definition of translation and practice (p. 415). Granek and Nakash (2016) found there is ambiguity in the way knowledge translation is defined, finding up to 29 different ways it is described in one field, including words such as "capacity building"; "diffusion"; "dissemination"; "impact"; "knowledge communication"; and "translation," (p. 415). Additionally, there are also terms such as research *extension* that can be seen in fields such as agricultural extension and health extension, where research is applied to practice. Despite the ambiguity of terms, knowledge translation or research translation is increasingly being used as a way to measure researchers' capacity to create impact.

The Australian Research Council rates how well Australian research is bridging the gap between research and knowledge, and how this is impacting practice translation. In this vein, it is measuring how universities are 'translating their research into economic, environmental, social and other benefits' (Australian Research Council, 2023a, para. 4). The ARC wants to incentivise better collaboration between end users, industry and universities.

How large is the gap between research and practice change? In education, research translation has been debated for a long time, and much effort has been put into debating how 'practitioners can make sense of and utilize findings' (Morris & Paris, 2022, p. 101). However, there is a lag in uptake, often due to a lack of access and educators' workloads. But education is not alone in this gap, as highlighted by Glasgow and Emmons (2007):

> The gap between research and practice in many areas of health care and public health is large, well-documented, and troubling... Discrepancies between evidence-based, efficacious interventions and what actually occurs in practice are frequently so large as to be labeled a "chasm" by the Institute of Medicine (p. 414).

Within the discipline of psychology, Granek and Nakash (2016) described the importance of committing to knowledge translation to address the gap. They stated:

> As academic researchers, we bear a responsibility to the public we are intended to serve with our qualitative research. We argue that researchers need to take KT [knowledge translation] seriously and think deeply about not only what we research but also the ways in which we translate that knowledge to make the maximum possible positive impact on the communities we study and serve.

The ARC is also examining university systems that promote such activities (Australian Research Council, 2023a), however, there is a lag in how this translates into academics' workloads and reward systems. For example, outputs in anything but peer-reviewed scholarly journals and books are less recognised for academic promotions and awards. Often, academics spend inordinate amounts of time writing justifications and rationales to validate why their other research outputs are impactful or should be categorised as quality research. There was a small window of time when *Non-Traditional Research Outputs* (NTROs) included a broad range of research outputs, but this has more recently narrowed to only include creative works in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, almost exclusively the domain of the Creative Arts (Australian Research Council, 2023b). Arguably, this has left many researchers in a worse position as there is no formal way to have their research outputs included in university systems despite their creativity, impact, rigour and the amount of time involved in such endeavours.

The tragedy of the gap between research and practice is emphasised by Searles et al. (2016), who stated 'It is an unfortunate reality that a substantial amount of effective research does not translate, is not implemented and does not create impact' (p. 2). There are a variety of ways to address this chasm between research and practice, and this paper explores one way to do this through the strategic use of RBNAs.

Benefits of RBNAs

While there are challenges associated with RBNAs that will be discussed in a later section, there are many benefits to publishing these types of articles. RBNAs are generally freely available, mostly online publications that blend news story journalism with research-based content. The authors are generally researchers, and they often work with the editors, who are trained in journalism. These sites have grown in popularity because they are an easy way for the public to access the findings of research, written in everyday easy-to-understand language. The articles remove or explain the jargon, remove or drastically reduce the less interesting parts of the research for the general public (e.g. methodology), and extract and highlight the interesting, practical parts of the research.

Opportunities for researchers
Publishing research-based news stories connects researchers with new and larger audiences. For example, one of the biggest multidisciplinary sites, *The Conversation* (n.d.) (Australia and New Zealand edition), boasts four million unique users and 13.8 million page views including republication each month (*The Conversation*, 2023). Many academics

with specialty research fields struggle to get a tiny fraction of those readers engaging with their peer reviewed journal articles.

By highlighting research findings, such sites get more people to engage with research. Using the previous example, *The Conversation* achieves a wide readership, with 83% from non-academic readers. This brings new audiences and creates novel impacts for researchers' work. Additionally, 10% of readers are in government or policy areas (Bettio & Symons, 2020). Thus, publishing in research-based news sites can enable researchers to create a greater impact in their field and connect researchers with policy makers and the general public. The articles allow researchers to use hyperlinks to link their peer reviewed journal articles to increase readership. This engagement can be tracked through altmetrics (see Barnes, 2015), then quoted in promotion, funding, award and job applications.

RBNAs can make a difference to professional practice in fields such as education and health, with 15% of readers of *The Conversation* being employed in teaching and education, and 12% in health and medical fields (*The Conversation*, 2023). Additionally, specialist research-based news sites focus on particular sectors. In education, for example, *The Sector* and *The Spoke* focus on early childhood education and care, *Education-HQ* targets early childhood and schools, and *Edu-Research Matters* focuses on education more broadly. Publishing articles on such sites ensures researchers' work is read by educators, policy makers, educational researchers and other stakeholders.

These publications promote the work of researchers and their research projects. They allow higher levels of stakeholder and community engagement with projects. This can facilitate contact with lived experience community members to foster co-design and co-creation to increase the usability of research-based outputs (Rogers, Johnson et al., 2022).

RBNAs can promote the work of the relevant university and stakeholders, such as education services and institutions, practitioners, community groups, charities and volunteers. It assists universities to engage with their communities, locally, regionally and nationally as they promote the articles via social media. As academics are time poor, especially during teaching trimesters, RBNAs can support academics to achieve small outputs, as their length is generally about 600-1200 words. During less busy times, academics can potentially use a few of these outputs as the foundation to create a longer peer reviewed publication. These outputs can also create new data sources provided by stakeholders. For example, when the articles are published or promoted on sites where readers can comment, these posts can become new sources of publicly available data for researchers to use, provided they are adhering to the ethical guidelines of the Association of Internet Researchers (2023).

Benefits for organisations and projects
Within universities and research institutes, publishing in research-based news sites for impact aligns with organisational aims and plans. For example, at the University of New England, the strategic plan, called *Future Fit* (UNE's strategic plan 2021-2030) states that the organisation should be 'creating and sharing knowledge to make a difference locally, regionally and globally' (University of New England, 2021, para. 3). Promoting research

can also provide external validation for the research project and institution, according to Taylor and Francis (2023).

Engagement with stakeholders can be facilitated and measured through RBNAs. This engagement can improve the impact and use of the project deliverables, as well as provide evidence of engagement for funding reports. RBNAs can report project progress, such as the announcement of funding, development of the stakeholder partnerships, co-design and co-creation, gathering participants, disseminating results and evaluation of the project (Rogers, Johnson et al., 2022). These articles can link project teams with policy makers, experts in the field, and potential funders who might be influenced by a researcher's media profile (Taylor and Francis, 2023). When applying for future funding, research teams can provide evidence of these articles to demonstrate a track record of stakeholder engagement (Rogers, Baker, Harrington et al., 2022).

Practical guide

RBNA framework

In order to further explore RBNA, I have created a framework using a fishing analogy as depicted in Figure 1.
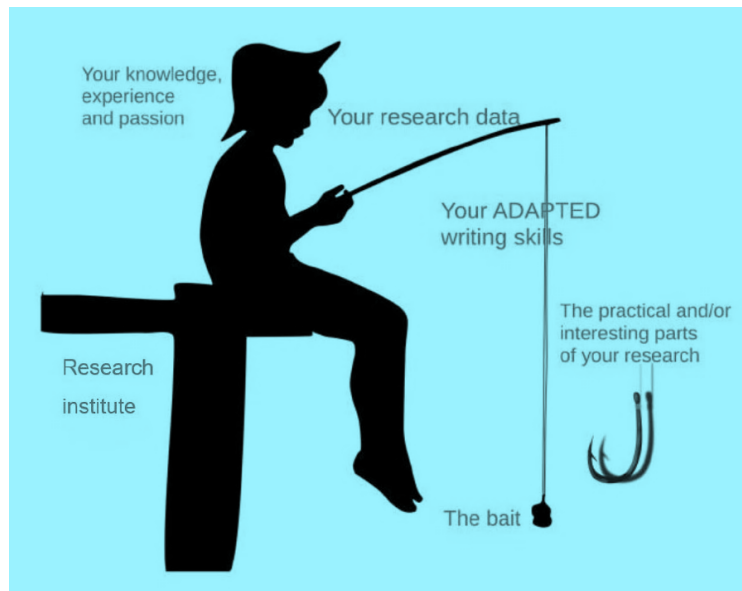

Figure 1: Framework to explore RBNAs (adapted from an Unsplash royalty-free image)

In this diagram of an individual fishing, the platform represents the research institute or university. This provides a foundation for conducting research, that is, the reinforcement of the quality and validity of the research through its systems of governance and ethics. This cannot be understated as RBNAs differ from opinion pieces in a local newspaper.

For a publication such as *The Conversation*, only academics associated with a university or research institute can write articles. This can include PhD candidates, but only if their supervisor is a co-author. The researcher provides their individual and collective knowledge of the research field. They show this through their expertise in content matter, providing hyperlinks to the research. The fishing rod is like the data that the researcher has gathered from their vantage point on the platform, with ethics approval and support from the research institute.

The fishing line is the extension of the researcher's writing skills that are adapted and stretched to suit the fishing conditions, that is, the audience of the news site. The fishing hook represents the interesting or practical parts of the research findings. Finding the hook can be quite challenging for some researchers, who might find all parts of their research interesting. However, theories, methodology and analysis might be less appealing to the fish, that is the general public or targeted stakeholders. The final and most crucial part is the bait, the way to lure the fish, that is, the readers. The bait is created by researchers when they link their research findings to a news value or element, as explored in the subsequent sections.

The next part of this paper uses an exemplar of how one educational researcher has used this form of knowledge translation and research dissemination with positive results.

Tips for writing and disseminating RBNAs

Discovering available publications
Firstly, it is useful to make a list of potential RBNA sites relevant to your field of research. Using the fishing analogy, this is similar to finding a good fishing location; preparation is key to success.. For my area of research exploring educator wellbeing and work (for example Rogers, Boyd & Sim, 2023; Rogers, Dolidze et al., 2024), and child and family wellbeing and support, especially defence, veteran, first responder and regional, rural and remote families (see Rogers, Johnson & Coffey, 2023), this list includes general news sites such as *The Conversation* and general education news media sites, such as *EduResearch Matters* and *Education-HQ*. As an early childhood researcher, I also target *The Sector*, *Women's Agenda* and *The Spoke*. For articles about families, I submit to *Partyline, Women's Agenda* and various parenting news sites, such as *Childmags.com.au*. The choice of the news site depends on the topic.

Secondly, write a potential title of your article. Feed that into an Internet search to discover where similar articles are being published. This might change what you write to avoid duplication and assist you to add to your list of potential sites. Thirdly, take note of articles you get sent on social and mainstream media. Add to your knowledge by liaising with your institution's media and communication officer and your colleagues. Consider subscribing to research news sites for their newsletter alerts so you can get a sense of what they are interested in. Fourthly, include notes on your list about which allow publishing. This will be important for the dissemination of your article, which will be discussed in a later section.

Creatively linking research to the news

When you have an idea for an article, note a few dot points, then work out how to creatively link it to news values, which have remained fairly consistent over time, according to Parks (2019). News values include impact (does it impact the intended audience of the publication), proximity (how close this is to the audience's experience or reality), timeliness (events, anniversaries, special days), prominence (how much media attention the issue is receiving), conflict (interpersonal to global), human interest (stories that are touching), and novelty or oddity (stories about the bizarre). Harcup and O'Neill (2017) expanded these to include the elements that are generally present in news stories, which form the headings in Table 1. For each of these examples, I have included an explanation in parentheses, followed by an exemplar of an RBNA I have authored. Next to each example, the publication name is listed with a link to the article. It should be noted that most examples could fit under multiple news elements.

Table 1: Examples of linking research to news values or elements

News value or element (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017)	Exemplar and link to the RBNA	Publication and context
1. The power elite (institutions, organisations, individuals)	 The government must fix the childcare desert now https://blog.aare.edu.au/the-government-must-fix-the-childcare-desert-now/	*EduResearch Matters* This was published after a Federal Budget announcement.
2. Celebrity (already famous individuals)	Smile and wave ladies: The attempt to silence Grace Tame mirrors the plight of early childhood educators https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/smile-and-wave-ladies-the-attempts-to-silence-grace-tame-mirrors-the-plight-of-early-childhood-educators/	*Women's Agenda* This was published after the 2021 Australia Day lunch when the former Australian of the Year, Grace Tame, gave the Prime Minister a frosty reception.

3. Entertain-ment ('sex, showbusi-ness, human int-erest, animals, an unfolding drama, or offering opp-ortunities for humorous treat-ment, entertain-ing photographs or witty head-lines') (Harcup & O'Neill, (2017)	THE CONVERSATION Academic rigour, journalistic flair Arts Books + Ideas Business + Economy Education Environment + Energy Health Politics Science + Tech **Why telling stories could be a more powerful way of convincing some people to take a COVID vaccine than just the facts** Published: February 16, 2021 5.51am AEDT https://theconversation.com/why-telling-stories-could-be-a-more-powerful-way-of-convincing-some-people-to-take-a-covid-vaccine-than-just-the-facts-155050	*The Conversation* This was published during the unfolding drama when the Australians were not getting their first COVID-19 vaccination as quickly as the Government had hoped.
4. Surprise (element of contrast or surprise)	 **Share This Article** [f Share 0] [Tweet] [in Share] [Email] [Print] Time, money, exhaustion: why early childhood educators will join the Great Resignation	*EduResearch Matters* This was published two years into the pandemic when unprecedented educator resignations impacted those educators remaining in the sector and the families they supported. This article was listed in the top 10 publications for this site in 2022. This was republished in *Women's Agenda*. https://blog.aare.edu.au/time-money-exhaustion-why-early-childhood-educators-will-join-the-great-resignation/
5. Bad news (e.g. conflict or tragedy)	THE CONVERSATION Academic rigour, journalistic flair Arts Books + Ideas Business + Economy Education Environment + Energy Health Politics Science + Tech **Birthdays, holidays, Christmas without mum or dad: how to support kids with a parent away fighting fires** Published: September 28, 2020 12.48pm AEST https://theconversation.com/birthdays-holidays-christmas-without-mum-or-dad-how-to-support-kids-with-a-parent-away-fighting-fires-146317	*The Conversation* Published at the start of the bushfire season when the media were focussed on recent fires. Republished in the *Emergency Services Magazine*.

6. Good news (e.g. positive announcements, rescues, cures)	 https://blog.une.edu.au/hasse/2021/08/16/the-royal-commission-announcement-is-great-now-its-time-to-talk-about-the-children/	*University of New England Blog* This was published after the long-awaited announcement of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.
7. Magnitude (potential impact or numbers involved)	 https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/soapbox/robodebt-when-mateship-and-a-fair-go-went-on-holiday/	*Women's Agenda* This was published after the findings of the Royal Commission into Robodebt.
8. Relevance (issues relevant to the readers about individuals, groups or countries)	 https://www.ruralhealth.org.au/partyline/article/free-preschool-must-not-leave-rural-and-regional-women-behind	*Partyline* This was published after an announcement from the NSW and Victorian governments to start free preschool programs. The news site focuses on rural, regional and remote mental health.

9. Follow-up (articles about stories already in the news)	 We build submarines and the defence force. Now we must support the families who work in them By Marg Rogers and Amy Johnson https://blog.aare.edu.au/we-build-submarines-and-the-defence-force-now-we-must-support-the-families-who-work-in-them/	*Edu-Research Matters* This article was published after the announcement of a multi-billion-dollar submarine procurement.
10. Publication agenda (fits with the agenda of the publication)	**Bound for burnout: Early childhood educators are swimming against a gendered, micromanaged tide** https://thesector.com.au/2021/10/25/bound-for-burnout-early-childhood-educators-are-swimming-against-a-gendered-micromanaged-tide/	*The Sector* This was published at a time when educators were burning out during the second year of the pandemic. The site was already publishing about this issue. The artilce was in the top 10 most read articles of 2021 for this site.

Another news value is timeliness, which can be key in getting RBNAs published. Table 2 provides examples of links to special days and months.

Table 2: Examples of linking research to timeliness

Timeliness	Exemplar and link to the RBNA	Publication
Domestic Violence Awareness Month	Why paid domestic violence leave is a game changer for children Photo by *Kelly Sikkema* on *Unsplash* https://thespoke.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/why-paid-domestic-violence-leave-is-a-game-changer-for-children/	*The Spoke* This was published during Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
Remembrance Day	Teaching young children about 'remembering' on Remembrance Day https://thesector.com.au/2023/11/06/remembranceday/	*The Sector* This article was published in the week before Remembrance Day.
Government announcement	Here's how we stem the exodus of Australian early childhood educators During a mass exodus of early childhood educators in Australia, what could we learn from our Canadian friends who are nurturing and keeping their educators? https://educationhq.com/news/heres-how-we-stem-the-exodus-of-australian-early-childhood-educators-137563/#	*Education-HQ* This was published after an announcement about government recruitment scholarships for educators.

| Government agency annual report | NEWS & VIEWS

'Cried real tears that day': How Centrelink's poor service unfairly impact women

https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/cried-real-tears-that-day-how-centrelinks-poor-service-unfairly-impact-women/ | *Women's Agenda*

This article was published after a media story reported the inadequacies of the Australian welfare system. |

Managing relationships

It is important to be a delight to work with when you are engaging with your institution's media officer, and the journalists who act as editors in these publications. Recognise that while you are the content and research expert, they have a very different and extremely valuable set of skills. Their advice is normally excellent in regard to what readers will want to know, what they will understand, and what ideas will need explaining. Essentially, and the most challenging to hear, is that they understand what the target audience will not be interested in. Those trained in media are experts in clickbait, catchy headings, engaging lead images, the style needed for the target audience, and how to adapt your research to a news story. It is important to remember the end goal is knowledge translation and research impact, rather than being a purist and publishing without compromise.

Starting close to home

One of the easiest ways to get started and gain confidence writing RBNAs is by writing in your institutional newsletter or new site. The first RBNA I wrote was for my institution's School of Education Research Newsletter (https://bit.ly/SoEresearchnews) which is distributed to schools and early childhood services across Australia and New Zealand. The RBNA was based on my PhD, and explored the practical ways educators could replicate the methods I had used to support children. The article gave them step-by-step examples of how I utilised arts-based methods to voice their experiences during times of household challenges, such as a parent working away. I included plenty of images of children's drawings and wrote the article using general English, rather than an academic style (see Rogers, 2017).

Once you draft a RBNA for a similar institutional publication, seek support from a media officer, or the editor of the publication. Take heed of their well-intentioned advice and edit your work accordingly. If your discipline does not have a similar publication, consider publishing at an institutional level in your staff newsletter. You can then work with the media officer to republish the article elsewhere and disseminate it.

Mimic pelicans

Returning to our fishing analogy in Figure 1, it is important to remember that there will be rejections and failures, similar to any publishing (and fishing). This might be because the publication has too many articles, your article is not likely to be of interest to their audience, or they need a different style for their publication. Similarly, if your article is rejected, take on board what editors say, and adapt the article if needed. Successful fishing takes time, patience, multiple attempts, and different approaches. If there are no bites, try another fishing site or bait. Ask for advice from your media officer about the best place to submit, then send the article elsewhere. After all, the article is not creating impact sitting in your files.

Relevance and readability

To write an effective RBNA, use general English, avoiding jargon and acronyms. Aim to write for someone who has a 16-year-old reading age, or less, depending on the readership of the publication you are targeting. While your audience might be capable of reading denser text, the news sites are designed for a quick, engaging read, rather than an academic journal. The audience might be reading the articles in a place that is full of distractions, so keep it simple, engaging and informal. Use diagrams and images to explain and illustrate challenging concepts. Always use short words, sentences and paragraphs, plenty of subheadings to guide the reader, and avoid nominalising verbs.

It is essential to reflect on your intended reader. What would they want to gain from the news site? For example, for a parenting article I co-authored for *The Conversation*, we used practical examples and included relevant tips parents could easily implement at home (see Rogers, Dittman & Krishnamoorthy, 2023). If you have quotes from participants, use them to effect. Quotes and stories engage readers so ensure they are placed early in the article, and make them obvious (e.g. indented and italicised), rather than embedded in the text. Crucially, avoid writing a detective story, with all the exciting information at the end. Instead, frontload your article with what is new to engage your readers, as most audience members do not finish reading articles. You can then backtrack and provide definitions and information about how you got these results later in the article. Starting with a definition makes sense in journal articles, but on NBRAs, readers can end up arguing about definitions in the forums instead of reading the rest of the article.

As researchers, we often think everything we do is interesting. While this is positive for our productivity, it does not necessarily mean readers will share our fascination with theories, methodology and analysis. Each field has their own jargon, but those who are reading these types of news articles may not be familiar or confident with this terminology. For example, while education academics like to use the word 'pedagogy', your reader might not have formally studied education for decades, so they might need to have the word explained again. To give you some examples, Table 3 lists some terms and alternatives that suit NBRAs.

Table 3: Potential alternative words, phrases and terminology

Word or terminology	Alternative
Communicated	Said
Revealed	Showed
Pedagogy	The way educators teach
Teacher efficacy	How effective a teacher is
Learners' needs	The needs of learners
Utilised	Used
Provide	Give

Dissemination of NBRAs

Dissemination of NBRAs is important because publishers will be more likely to republish your work if your articles attract high numbers of downloads and social media shares. With this in mind, work with your institution's media officer to best effect. There are a number of ways to disseminate your work, including republication, social media, newsletters and academic channels as outlined in Table 4. If the article is behind a subscription firewall, ask the editors to remove it so you can further disseminate their work, thereby promoting their site.

Table 4: Potential avenues for dissemination

Method	Notes
Republishing	If the site allows republishing, ask your media officer to send it to other relevant sites for republication.
Academic sites (e.g. *Researchgate* or *Academia*)	In a Word document, create a link to the article and an explanation that it is an RBNA. Upload it to sites that disseminate academic work. It is not good practice to cut and paste the article into a PDF or Word document. Providing a link ensures the site receives more downloads which will improve the metrics for both the site, and your altmetrics scores.
Personal social media	Post it on professional social media sites (e.g. *LinkedIn*) and other social media sites you use for your research and projects. Include relevant tags that you see other stakeholders use or that your media officer recommends. If you have co-written the article with others, tag them to increase your reach. Ask them to create separate posts or reshare your post with their own comments. Tag your institution, research partners, funders, those with lived experience, project team members and advisors, and stakeholder organisations. If your RBNA focuses on policy change, you can also tag relevant politicians or government departments.
Institution news	Ask your media officer to include the RBNA in staff newsletters.
Institution social media	Media officers can disseminate the article through their institution and faculty social media sites.
Teaching resources	Add it to relevant teaching units if it is pertinent to particular academic study units and will benefit your students.
Other channels	Add RBNAs to your staff website under the heading of 'media engagement', 'stakeholder engagement' or 'knowledge translation'. Add them to your ORCID and Google Scholar sites.

Writing for The Conversation
Writing for *The Conversation* is a little different from other research news sites. Rather than submitting your whole article for consideration, researchers are asked to pitch their ideas. It is worth the effort to read their instructions on how to do this and then watch the publication's videos for potential authors on their website. They have a high readership and a high level of rejection for potential authors. Occasionally, they offer workshops and meetings with one of their editors at universities. These are very effective, as a ten-minute meeting can provide you with excellent advice on how to adapt your research or pitch to get noticed.

If you get an opportunity to author an article for *The Conversation*, it is a good practice to first draft your article in a Word document. During this process, occasionally cut and paste the draft into their platform to gauge how you are tracking with their readability scale. This measure will be based on the length of your words, sentences and paragraphs and the complexity of your language.

Ask a subject matter peer and your media officer to check your draft in Word. Once you are happy with the article, cut and paste it, then add your hyperlinks last. Generally, the editor will choose an image, but you can make suggestions, remembering the lead image needs to be in landscape format.

The Conversation has a wide coverage, so you should factor in time to engage with stakeholder responses to your work. This could include forum posts and invitations for media interviews. The editing process might result in several changes to the heading and sections of the article. It is essential to trust their judgement and remember their experience and expertise in journalism. Importantly, save your drafts and recycle unused material in other publications.

Tricks with images
It is useful to supply images from your project or source royalty-free images (e.g. *Unsplash, Pixabay* or *Pexels*). Ensure you label these images and provide a link so they know they are royalty-free. Some publishers will republish and use their own images. Remember, the lead image will be the most important because it is what will appear on social media posts about the article. Invest time to pick a captivating image that would appeal to your audience. Use multiple images throughout the article, or use figures, graphs, word clouds and tables to keep the reader interested. If you have published in this site before, politely request another image if needed.

Trade-offs
Like any publication, RBNA publishing has trade-offs and compromises. Researchers might experience last minute edits they didn't approve, including changes in the titles of the articles. Some publications will strip hyperlinks to the research as they transfer the research across platforms. These hyperlinks take the author significant time to provide an evidence base, adding to the frustration. Other publications could unintentionally use images that do not fit with the content of the article. The author might not see these images until after the RBNS is published. Terminology might also prove challenging,

especially in the article's title, where word count is key. For example, in early childhood education, there is a push to professionalise the sector (Sims et al., 2023), and a bid to replace terminology such as 'staff' with 'educators', and 'childcare' with 'early childhood education and care'. Explaining this to the editors is vital to ensure they understand why you are hesitant to accept their edits. In the past, I have often capitulated to 'childcare' in the heading only but insisted on 'educator'. Sometimes, I have managed to compromise by using the term 'early learning'. Authors need to tread a careful path between being pedantic and being a delight to work with. The latter will more likely lead to further publication opportunities and ensure your research is disseminated widely and translated into usable knowledge to create impact.

In the following sections, I discuss how RBNAs link to what is known about research impact and knowledge translation, provide ideas for further research, then bring the overarching concepts together in the conclusion.

Discussion

By engaging with these practical tips, tricks and trade-offs, researchers can hone their skills to create and disseminate RBNAs as part of their tool kit for knowledge translation. Investing time to engage with knowledge translation is vital if research is to change practice and create a meaningful impact in our society. Additionally, knowledge translation is important for the general public, who often fund academics' research through the tax system. Searles et al. (2016) explained why these issues matter:

> Despite extensive investments in research and development, relevant research findings are not being fully implemented by healthcare systems and are not being appropriately used by others in the chain of scientific research (p. 2).

> The implication from sub-optimal levels of research translation is that the return on research investments is also lower than it could potentially be (p. 2).

> Despite awareness of this problem, the misalignment between the generation of research outcomes and the use, or application, of those outcomes is not being adequately addressed (p. 2).

RBNAs are one of many effective forms of research translation for academics to utilise. Despite their effectiveness, writing, pitching, editing and disseminating these articles requires a significant investment of time. If institutions want academics to be involved in knowledge translation and dissemination, workloads need to be adjusted to recognise the efforts involved. Adequately staffing institutions with media officers who can support academics in this area is vital. Additionally, recognising the work of knowledge translation in research output systems, promotions and awards is essential to ensure all academics are motivated to allocate time to engage in these activities. Academics work in a very time-pressured environment, making knowledge translation efforts difficult. Despite organisational narratives that promote research translation, the gap between institutional narratives and the lived experience of academics is often breathtaking (Rogers, Sims et al., 2020). Additionally, research administration systems are increasingly burdening

researchers' time. Granek and Nakash (2016) expanded upon this by discussing the challenges for early career researchers to engage in knowledge translation, stating:

> As junior academics in vulnerable (i.e., pre-tenure) positions, we are well aware of the fact that it is easier to answer the question of why do [knowledge translation] KT than how to do KT given the very real academic constraints … the reality of a neoliberal academic climate that rewards publications and grants at the expense of the time and energy spent on the other kinds of KT initiatives … cannot be ignored. We work in a particular sociopolitical context that values some kinds of knowledge over others (p. 429-430).

Perhaps our systems would be more likely to change if there was more research on the impact of knowledge translation.

Need for further research

As an emerging area of research, there are many questions to address about our knowledge about RBNAs as one way to bridge the gap between research and practice, and between researchers and stakeholders. While we have some insight into the reach of one particular publication, *The Conversation*, more needs to be done to collate these results with other publications to give insight into the readership, level of public engagement and its impact. Additionally, the subsequent engagements with media and stakeholders as a result of the publication of RBNAs should be explored, because this creates further reach and impact. Additional research is needed about other forms of knowledge translation to compare their effectiveness and the differences in usage between and within fields of research.

Conclusion

The Australian Universities Accord Final Report (Australian Government Department of Education, 2023) highlighted the pressing need for research translation. It stated:

> Most urgently, action must focus on taking full advantage of the nation's research potential by increasing government and industry use of university research capacity and capability and expanding government support for research translation (p. 190).

Despite this call to action, there is no 'right answer' to bridging the gap or chasm between research and practice. It is something that is contextual and challenging within academic environments and particular research fields. Recognising this, Searles et al. (2016) explained:

> Despite awareness of this problem, the misalignment between the generation of research outcomes and the use, or application, of those outcomes is not being adequately addressed (p. 2).

This has enormous implications for external stakeholders, including the education sector. The Australian Research Education Organisation (AERO, n.d.) is trying to bridge this

gap, using funding from Australian, state and territory governments to produce research-based teaching outputs for educators. Despite this example, most universities and research institutions still have much to do to ensure they support researchers' efforts in knowledge translation.

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