



# Edge Commission on Future Professionalism

## Speakers' Notes: Session 4 – Future Value

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014

### **Graham Watts, Chief Executive, The Construction Industry Council**

*'How can institutes share and co-operate to improve the quality, standing and value of professionals?'*

Professional Institutions across the built environment already share and cooperate through the CIC

Formed in 1988 as the Building Industry Council with five founder members:

- CIBSE, CIOB, IStructE, RIBA and RICS

In 1991, became the Construction Industry Council with several new members, including:

- ICE, LI and RTPI

In 2013, celebrated its 25th Anniversary now with 31 Full members and 15 Associate bodies

- Representing all of the professional institutions across the built environment, and the professional services sector plus a range of associated "professional" groupings

Today, CIC:

- Represents construction professionals across government including at the Construction Leadership Council, the Strategic Forum for Construction, ConstructionSkills etc
- Owns, runs and manages many generic cross-industry initiatives (Considerate Constructors Scheme, Approved Inspectors, Adjudication, Design Quality Indicators)

Today, the professional bodies that existed in 1988 are largely still the same – some that were not chartered have become chartered (CIAT, CABE, CICES, CIPHE etc) – a few (a very few) have merged (IET) – some have moved away from palatial HQs (CIOB, IStructE) BUT by and large they are still the same

Incidentally, almost all of the major construction trade associations that were around in 1988 have disappeared (or substantially changed) – BEC, FCEC, BMP, MCG, Construction Confederation etc.

However, there is no doubt that the PIs collaborate and cooperate more (perhaps because of CIC) in 2014 than they did in 1988

CIC is a creature of its time. In 1988 the only way that the organisation could exist was to have the lightest touch possible with members

Therefore very much a servant to its members

Not a federation – no federated services

Difficult to specifically fund joint activity or cede activity to one member on behalf of others

No direct contact with individual members (CIR, company membership)

Is CIC still fit for purpose? Is it time for a refit? A v2 which has more emphasis on joined-up activity and federated services?

At the turn of the Millennium and inspired by the then ICE President, CIC set up a Futures Group to look at how the institutions might co-operate more – at the bottom end was the status quo (membership of CIC) and at the top end was a single Institute of the Built Environment (the first step in which was merger of the ICE with other engineering institutions)

The output of the FG was a set of 18 recommendations for further areas of joint working, few of which were pursued.

The mergers of engineering institutions did not occur

The institutions of 1988 are still largely unchanged in 2014 – HOWEVER in the main they are successful and they are growing

- International growth is significant
- Commercial growth is significant
- Both play against more collaborative activity

Changes in the way professional bodies collaborate will only occur organically, from the bottom up – they will not be imposed – and attempt at imposition has always ended in failure.

The institutions of today will still exist in 2050

Enhancing the role of the umbrella bodies as vehicles for sharing and collaborating is the clearest way to achieve progress.

### **Daisy Froud, AOC**

**I am not a professional.** However, I did set up an architecture practice with 3 architects. My early background was in local community regeneration. 10 years in, I guess I've been pretty socialized. But I occupy a hinterland, and work hard to stay in that hinterland.

**I've been interested in the debates so far on the focus on 'public interest'.** And the majority opinion that it's more important for institutes to promote that than the interests of their members. As a relative outsider, this surprised me. Given that,

- a) as sociologists and historians tell us the focus on 'public interest' is relatively new to professional associations, primarily a C19 invention, as part of a benevolent cultural shift influenced by Bentham's utilitarianism
- b) apart from in specific cases i.e. where we are preventing death or physical harm, I 'm not sure how anyone can be clear what the 'public interest' is. Although all kinds of problematic assumptions appear to be made about it.

Maybe it felt a lot clearer in the C19, when those defining it – largely privileged white men – knew what was 'good' for people. But I'm not sure it's a helpful focus now.

**I would in contrast suggest a return to the 'public interest' idea of earlier professional associations, seen as inseparable from a focus on members interests:** making clear and promoting the nature of service provided and ensuring that it is done well, thus helping generate work for, and define the status of, its members. This relatively modest focus is still very much the theme of the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct.

**Although the origin of the idea of the professional is debated by academics, it seems clear that if there is any 'timeless' quality of a professional body, it is that idea of the 'associative group' – bringing people of similar skills and interests together for the benefits that generates.** That's quite liberating, to think that we are not bound to a C19 model, and we can reinvent and improve this any way we like.

**One form of association that is seen as very valuable in today's world, now commonly understood as diverse, systemic, networked, mutable etc is that of collaboration across specialisms, including between professionals and non-professionals.** As per the theme of today's debate

My suggestions are:

1. **That institutes should be working together to promote their members' interests.** Not in the sense of 'giss-a-job', but to ensure that people are aware of the benefit to them, in specific contexts and cases, of specialized knowledge. Of professionalism. As a non-professional, who nonetheless greatly respects – and makes good use of – her professional colleagues, I worry about professional distrust we have inherited from the C20, despite understanding where it came from. Scepticism is healthy. Distrust is not. In tone, this promotion should be less 'This Is What A Professional Can Do For You', and more 'How You Can Make Use of These Things Called Professionals.'
2. **That interdisciplinary collaboration between professionals should be nurtured by their institutes for the many benefits this may bring to both their interests and that of the public i.e. in doing a job well.** They should aim to promote a culture where individual professions, rather than expanding their own territory, move easily within those ease of others. Architects for example, should focus on doing, and promoting, the specific and unique skills they offer, and on using those in partnership with others. Coming from a community background, I was terrified by some of RIBA discussions around neighbourhood planning. While I felt it was important that architects were considering the implications and possibilities of neighbourhood planning, I did not agree with assumptions that it might be in the public interest for architects to facilitate neighbourhood plans. Most architects I know simply don't have the skills to do that, and it just perpetuates the idea of a know-it-all, I know best professional. But that they might play a valuable and specific role in partnership with others.

So I would welcome more formalized interdisciplinary collaboration. Returning to that basic principle of association: once it may have made sense – given their socially homogenous nature – for architecture professionals to congregate together. But these days, a small young practice like my own probably has more in common in values, experience and approach with similar practitioners of other disciplines than we do with corporate behemoths within our own profession, although its useful and interesting to associate with them too.

3. **3. One area where institutes can share and cooperate to add value – and to be 'of interest to the public' - is in asking the right questions, even if the 'right' answer is more elusive.** I've been lucky to be involved in the RIBA's Building Futures thinktank. A valuable model, it brings together experts from different disciplines as a 'community of practice' who give their time for free to undertake futures thinking and research. As a non-professional, I was aware of their work before my assimilation into architecture. In contrast to institutional policy papers, which appeal to a narrow audience and can appear reactive and opportunistic, thinktanks like Building Futures produce independent publications and events to provoke broader discussions about spatial politics and production. This sort of application of expertise is does not aim to educate the public ABOUT architecture, in a benevolent way, but treats them/ us as equals and draws out conversations about possible futures and the role of professionals and non-professionals in these. I would like to see more of that kind of thing.

## **Bill Bordass, Policy adviser, Usable Buildings Trust**

How can institutes share and cooperate to improve the quality, standing and value of professionals?

*"... climate change is a collective problem demanding collective action ... Yet it entered mainstream consciousness in the midst of an ideological war being waged on the very idea of the collective sphere ... "* NAOMI KLEIN

### **The situation**

Now sustainability has changed all the rules, we are at last realising that many new buildings do not perform as anticipated; and that the knowledge base for improving the existing built environment leaves a lot to be desired.

Case studies have been exposing such discrepancies for years, so why has it been so difficult to embed feedback from how buildings actually perform in use into everyday practice? I see a number of principal causes:

- Good building performance is in the public interest, but government has preferred to leave it to markets.
- In a diffuse market with many principal-agent problems, government also failed to provide the leadership and public domain infrastructure that could focus all the players involved on better building performance.
- As government abandoned the area and lost its institutional memory, professional institutions did not rise to the occasion as learned societies and protectors of the public interest, to fill the gaps that opened up.
- The educational system has not provided individual building professionals with a shared vision and ethic.
- Academic criteria have also made it difficult to do multi-disciplinary research of direct relevance to practice.
- Denial, a propensity for organisations to want to bury bad news, for a multitude of reasons.

Speakers in earlier debates advocated building professionals taking better custody of building performance in use and more account of the feedback provided, some mentioning the RIBA Plan of Work 2013. However, in 1963 the original RIBA Plan of Work included Stage M, Feedback. To have taken half a century for the penny to drop (assuming, of course, that it now has) signals a massive societal and institutional failure.

### **What else came up in the earlier sessions?**

- Analogies between the challenges we face today and those of the industrial revolution, which triggered the emergence of the building professions. Now there is global demand for the traditional professional qualities of competence, vision, imagination, fairness and concern for the wider interest, we seem to have lost our way - particularly in larger firms, where management objectives increasingly dominate professional ones.
- The need for more discussion of ethics, to help individual professionals to set their moral compasses.
- Institutions that are no longer fit for purpose, needing to work together to agree a direction of travel, pursue their learned society role, skill-up their members, and make follow-through and feedback routine. If their members do not appreciate the consequences of their own actions, then they are not acting professionally.
- Looming skills shortages, and the need to enthuse young people about the diversity of prospects.
- A need for Institutions to stand up and say (after deep reflection) what they think is right, in debates about the big issues, e.g. housing policy, tall buildings, nuclear power, and whether to expand airport capacity.
- Somewhere for the government to go for good advice.

These echoed findings from Edge debates in 2011 and 2013, as summarised in the Appendix overleaf.

### **Recommendations**

I don't think the necessary change will come from the construction industry and related professions alone, or they would have done it by now. We have had CIC for 25 years, the Plan of Work for 50, and improving in-use performance is about much more than construction. There is what Levin et al call a "super-wicked problem<sup>1</sup>", with weak central authority and those who seek to provide solutions also being a cause of the problem.

To break such deadlocks, Levin et al advocate sticky interventions, which over time can entrench support and widen the population they reach. My interpretation is to identify particular themes and how they can be reinforced in the short, medium and longer term. My three recommended themes are:

#### **THEME 1** *A shared vision for practice, education and ethics*

- ASAP, to encourage people to adopt the Edge list in the Appendix - or perhaps something tougher, as Paul Morrell suggested in the first session. Edge members and their organisations may want to take the lead.
- Within a year, to get the institutions together to develop a common view and publish their conclusions.
- In the longer term, to embed this strategy in institutional systems, practice, education and leadership.

#### **THEME 2** *Reinforce the knowledge domain of building performance in use*

- ASAP, to encourage professional practices to include and share performance in use as part of their CPD programmes, with analyses of some of their recently-completed projects including independent evaluators.
- Within a year, for the institutions to develop policies to strengthen the obligation on their members to engage properly with the outcomes of their work, and to develop appropriate institutional support.
- For the longer term, an independent, interdisciplinary, technically literate body to help build the knowledge base and connect research, practice, government and the public: an Institute of Building Performance.

#### **THEME 3** *Develop wider understanding and engagement*

- ASAP. Initiate serious debates on important emerging issues, to help develop considered professional views.
- In the medium term, to widen the public debate on the built environment, its contribution to the public good and the role of professionals, for example with the assistance of the RSA.
- For the longer term, to enhance the capabilities of professionals, clients, government, and the general public to work together to improve the built environment in the public interest.

<sup>1</sup> K Levin, B Cashore, S Bernstein and G Auld, Overcoming the tragedy of super-wicked problems, Policy Science 45, 123-152 (2012).

# The USABLE BUILDINGS TRUST

**APPENDIX** – first produced on 14 May 2013 for an Edge meeting with CIC

## **NEW PROFESSIONALISM: TEN PRINCIPLES ALL BUILDING PROFESSIONALS COULD ADOPT TOMORROW**

by Bill Bordass, Adrian Leaman and Richard Lorch, the Usable Buildings Trust (UBT) and members of the Edge

### **Background**

In September 2011, Edge Debate 46 discussed the role of the building professional in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Speakers identified a number of gaps: between professions; between practice and academe; and between design assumptions and how buildings work in use, owing to a failure to develop a shared knowledge base.

Solutions were seen to lie in ethics, integration, practice based on evidence, and an action-learning culture. Some thought the UK had all the necessary knowledge and skills, but lacked the resolve to bring them together.

*Building Research & Information* then issued a call for papers on New Professionalism, leading to a Special Issue on the subject: Volume 41, Number 1 (January 2013). This was discussed at Edge Debate 54 on 20 February 2013, where four authors of papers in the Issue presented their views. Points raised by the audience were then debated with a panel of representatives of RIBA, RICS, CIBSE, CIOB and Keith Clarke, former chair of CIC. Details can be downloaded from [www.edgedebate.com/?p=1842](http://www.edgedebate.com/?p=1842).

The challenges of sustainability are revealing inadequacies of regulations and markets, creating a vacuum that building professionals and their institutions could help us to fill. The global situation invites us to be “*more moral than we could ever have imagined*”, said Stephen Hill at the debate, quoting the words of Malcolm Bull.

But will building professionals and their institutions be able to rise to the occasion; is their voice loud enough for anyone to be listening if they do; and do they have a sound enough knowledge base to be trusted by society in this role?

Critical needs were identified for:

- A shared vision and identity for practice and education, with more on the ethical aspects and perhaps with something a bit similar to the Hippocratic Oath.
- Better procurement processes, with a proper focus on outcomes.
- Building performance in use to become a properly-recognised and represented knowledge domain.

As the Special Issue was being prepared, the Edge discussed whether there might be some shared principles that any built environment professional could adopt - today.

The ten points that emerged were included in the Editorial of the Special Issue and shown below. They offer a vision and guidance to individuals, including reflection, sharing of knowledge and development of skills.

### **ELEMENTS OF A NEW PROFESSIONALISM – TEN POINTS DEVELOPED WITH THE EDGE**

from *Building Research & Information*, 44 (1), 1-128 (Jan-Feb 2013), Table 1, page 6, with headings added.

#### **ETHICS AND BEHAVIOUR:**

1. Be a steward of the community, its resources, and the planet. Take a broad view.
2. Do the right thing, beyond your obligation to whoever pays your fee.
3. Develop trusting relationships, with open and honest collaboration.

#### **ENGAGEMENT WITH OUTCOMES:**

4. Bridge between design, project implementation, and use. Concentrate on the outcomes.
5. Don't walk away. Provide follow-through and aftercare.
6. Evaluate and reflect upon the performance in use of your work. Feed back the findings.
7. Learn from your actions and admit your mistakes. Share your understanding openly.

#### **THE WIDER CONTEXT:**

8. Bring together practice, industry, education, research and policymaking.
9. Challenge assumptions and standards. Be honest about what you don't know.
10. Understand contexts and constraints. Create lasting value. Keep options open for the future.

[www.usablebuildings.co.uk](http://www.usablebuildings.co.uk)

Registered Charity 1091630

Registered Address 74 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1AD

Please reply to Bill Bordass 020-7722 2630 [bilbordass@aol.com](mailto:bilbordass@aol.com)

## Sunand Prasad, Penoyre & Prasad LLP

### 1. A problem at the heart

How significant it is that groups of people engaged in production of the built environment formed into professions modeled on Clergy, Law, and Medicine – none of whom make anything. The reasons were a Complex mix of self image / and self interest. (Self image as ethical and independent beings) There is a particular parallel between entry to professions and the priesthood – and the rules that make expulsion unlikely. May not be easy to get in; but it's a damn sight harder to get you out.

In short as far as the Built Environment professions are concerned, there is an internal contradiction intrinsic to the idea of the profession and the ideal of professional behavior as understood for the last 200 years. We need to understand the way this is playing out.

### 2. In the future everyone will be a professional

The trend is for more and more occupations to become professions. See data. The professional category increased by 50% between 2001 and 2011. There are multiple definitions of what a profession is – (leaving aside Lord Benson's 9 points stated in Parliament in 1992) sociologists and others generally agree three points: 1. a body of knowledge, 2. a claim to ethical behavior that is higher than the law and 3. a membership institution keeping the gate. Shows how focusing on the ethical dimension is problematic. The ethical issue ultimately comes down to the dilemma of choosing between public and client interest when there is a conflict between the two. But that applies to everyone, because ultimately we are all ethical agents. The idea that professionals are uniquely ethical is a remnant of class superiority, on which the formation of the professions was based in the first place.

### 3. Knowledge and ethics

What our clients and customers want is our knowledge and the judgments it enables. Society also wants that and where I think Institutes are falling short is in being floppy about the knowledge and judgment of their members, not so much about their ethical behavior.

Institutes are not regarded as guardians of quality and the failure of buildings to perform shows this justified at least to some extent. So how do they do this difficult thing of 'criticizing' the members who pay their subs? A possible answer lies in becoming the agents for disclosure – perhaps with a Tripadvisor type public feedback system for individual performance.

A focus on building performance

Carbon / energy

### 4. Collaboration and lobbying

This is one area where real change should not be too difficult. And if it proves to be, the built environment professions will be shown to be dinosaurs.

All built environment institutes must lobby thru the CIC only excepting situations where that is clearly not appropriate. They need to collaborate on relationships with central government, local government and key public institutions. The advantages are huge and obvious.

They don't need to merge and they don't need to abandon their tribal differences, which are essential to solidarity and energy.

CIC will need to get lighter on feet and overcome a glamour problem – which is basically an age and sex problem.

A profession is defined 18 by:

- (1) a body of knowledge,
- (2) ethical guidelines, and
- (3) a professional organization with a growing set of published papers and best practices"

(Cox, 2010, p. 7).

A profession arises when any trade or occupation transforms itself through the development of formal qualification based upon education, apprenticeship, and examinations, the emergence of regulatory bodies with powers to admit and discipline members, and some degree of monopoly rights" (Bullock and Trombley, 1999).

### **Lord Benson's criteria for the professions**

5. The profession must be controlled by a governing body, which in professional matters directs the behaviour of its members. For their part the members have a responsibility to subordinate their selfish private interests in favour of support for the governing body.
6. The governing body must set adequate standards of education as a condition of entry and thereafter ensure that students obtain an acceptable standard of professional competence. Training and education do not stop at qualification. They must continue throughout the member's professional life.
7. The governing body must set the ethical rules and professional standards that are to be observed by the members. They should be higher than those established by the general law.
8. The rules and standards enforced by the governing body should be designed for the benefit of the public and not for the private advantage of the members.
9. The governing body must take disciplinary action, if necessary expulsion from membership, should the rules and standards it lays down not be observed, or should a member be guilty of bad professional work.
10. Work is often reserved to a profession by statute – not because it was for the advantage of the member, but because of the protection of the public, it should be carried out only by persons with the requisite training, standards and disciplines.
11. The governing body must satisfy itself that there is fair and open competition in the practice of the profession so that the public are not at risk of being exploited. It follows that members in practice must give information to the public about their experience, competence, capacity to do the work and the fees payable.
12. The members of the profession, whether in practice or in employment, must be independent in thought and outlook. They must not allow themselves to be put under the control or dominance of any persons or organization that could impair that independence.
13. In its specific field of learning, a profession must give leadership to the public it serves.

Source: Benson, Lord. 1992. "Criteria for a group to be considered a profession" as recorded in Hansard (Lords) 8 July, 1206-1207.



## **Lee Frank - Arup**

To many young professionals, becoming a member of one of the Institutions is a means to an end, a hurdle to pass to be able to put some letters behind one's name and a door opener to a level of higher seniority within the firm. Some having gone through the painful process of rigorously recording knowledge gained, late nights of studying and hour long exams might actually admit that the whole process has reinforced their understanding of technical fundamentals and highlighted gaps which had to be filled. Having gone through this process recently, I can confirm that I can now be trusted to design, in my case, a safe structure, but saying that I have gained the required skills which will allow me to tackle some of the most pressing challenges of today and the future, is a completely different question.

The future challenges will be dominated by an increase in population, globalisation, resource scarcity and climate change. As a global practitioner I will need to embrace different cultures, languages and business practices. I will not only need to be aware, but define society's problems and be able to solve them. I will need to be able to deal with increasing complexity and make use of appropriate technology, think laterally and work together in collaborative, multi-disciplinary teams. I will need to use imagination and show leadership and entrepreneurship to come up with new solutions to tackle resource scarcity.

It is the role and responsibility of the institutions to prepare the future generation of built environment professionals to acquire the necessary skills to take up these future challenges, but also opportunities. They will need to work closely with academia to review curricula of academic courses as well as their own professional development requirements to align them with the required skills sets of the future. They will need to address the post-chartership vacuum and give new meaning and value not only to becoming, but staying a member of the institutions. This does not mean introducing a series of additional exams to enforce continuous professional development, but offering stimulating, relevant, multi-disciplinary learning opportunities and networking events, which can be organised in flexible and dynamic ways, ensuring the transfer of existing knowledge to the younger generation whilst at the same time allowing the older generation to keep up to date with recent developments. But not only do they need to invest in post-chartership learning programs, they also need to reinstate and value the art of mentoring as a means of experiential learning both technically, but also at an inspirational level. A culture of vocally sharing the value, satisfaction and excitement of a career in the built environment needs to be encouraged and nurtured both by the institutions and the design and construction companies, not only to attract new blood into the profession, but also not to lose the most talented young professionals to better paying industries.

As we have heard in the last debate, in 2030 there will be more people above the age of 50 within our industry than below and this skills shortage puts at risk future economic development as well as tackling future challenges. Higher tuition fees, job uncertainty and low pay are certainly to blame, but so is the general lack of visibility of what our professions are actually doing or maybe even worse, an image of a conservatism, physical labour and machoism. Improving the perception of our industry in the eyes of the public as well as securing a future generation of talented and diverse workforce should be the highest priority of institutions to which they allocate the necessary amounts of funds and resources without primarily relying on the volunteering work of their members. They will need to lead by example by creating a vibrant, innovative, inclusive and diverse environment, come up with creative and compelling ideas to communicate the opportunities the built environment has to offer, and be vocal about the urgent role that professionals need to play in devising solutions to current and future challenges

But no industry can hope to excel if it consistently fails to attract and retain members of one half of the population. Women account for only 11% of the construction workforce and the gender pay gap in construction is still wider than in other industries. Women are often faced with the option of either changing to a better paying career to care for their family, to rely on the salary of their husband or to give up on their career to save on child care. Society still assumes women to be the primary carer and there is still a stigma attached to men taking up flexible working hours or part-time employment. Women with young children are often pushed into low profile jobs with no promotion or salary rise. This behaviour does neither make long-term business sense, nor can it be considered as fair, and must stop. Institutions need to much stronger promote a no tolerance culture towards sexist behaviour in the workplace, raise awareness of the importance of diverse workforce to the future prosperity of the industry and lobby effectively for a better welfare system which allows a more gender-egalitarian society.

This is our future and we need to take charge of it – we will still be in practice in 2050 when it will be seen if all of our combined efforts now have been successful enough or not. We can't expect the current leaders of our institutions to solve all these problems for us, but we need them to make sure now that we are equipped with the right skills to set us off on that journey, treat us as equal partners in discussions and give us exposure, confidence and responsibility to take the future into our hands. Setting minimum standards for ethical behaviour in codes of conducts is not good enough – we want to be challenged, inspired and guided to do things in a better, more responsible way. Our sustainability thinking should not be shaped through a box-ticking approach, but by an in-depth understanding of (often complex and competing issues) social, economical and environmental factors delivered by inspiring industry role models or obtained through short, snappy, well-designed information pieces shared by modern media.

To continue doing the same things and expect a different outcome is just insanity. The Institutions need to change, but not only them, we all need to change by taking a more collaborative, vocal and responsible role within society. We should build on the energy, enthusiasm and optimism of the young to take our professions to even greater heights and to contribute to society in a more profound way.

### **Ciaran Malik – Ramboll UK**

I'm not sure if I'm really qualified to give the opinion of a young professional as I'm unchartered and therefore not technically a professional, but hopefully I can fulfil the young criteria. And I'm aware that I'm an engineer, but when preparing for this evening, I spoke to professionals from as wide a net as I could so I could try and offer a more general opinion. That actually taught me a lot about how small my net is and how hard I had to try to expand it. Lastly, I consider myself to be new but informed, but I don't assume to know everything about our industry and if I suggest something that is already in practice, then in some ways that may indicate that it's not working as effectively as it could be.

So I'd like to start with the good news; most of us love our work; we work with interesting people on a variety challenges and we enjoy it. We all know how important it is to become accredited, chartered or professionally qualified and most of us are working towards it.

The sad news is that young professionals in the built environment feel their role and even their whole sector isn't rated highly enough. They feel underpaid for the work they do and people who are in the first two years of their careers feel that there may come a point where they will have to consider changing profession to start a family.

There was also an overwhelming consensus that the process to be professionally qualified, is unnecessarily confusing, unclear and largely dependent on the company that you're working for. As our sector evolves and requires specialists in new fields, young professionals are finding that they are falling between institutions and join smaller organisations to fit their niche role. I don't find it surprising that with these varying introductions young professionals don't feel connected to their institutions let alone other institutions.

The real turning point in one my discussions was when someone said; "I don't really know much about the other institutions and I don't really care about the other sectors. But I probably should". Most of the excuses were that it didn't matter to them or that they were already too busy working towards becoming qualified and didn't think it would be useful. What a caring bunch we are.

But they weren't happy about it and felt understanding and working with the other institutions should be a cornerstone of our industries culture, just as it is with our day to day work.

Unqualified professionals don't feel they can really have any impact and feel the institutes are best placed to identify common objectives and work together to change them. That all institutes should cooperate and communicate more and this was particularly true in regional areas where the numbers of single institution might be quite low. I'm not talking becoming a single organisation, yet, but simpler things like supporting, encouraging and advertising events, work and campaigns from other disciplines.

Institutes play an important role in shaping professionals and should be creating ways for young professionals to collaborate and reward them for it. Engineers really benefit from the need to have design experience and site experience, but could there be more swaps between other roles?

And as technology develops and the lines between our roles blur, pushing what we can design and build to the limit, we should be encouraged to understand the work of our colleagues so we can deliver even better solutions.

We're a group who has had our tuition fees raised, graduated in a recession and have had difficulty finding work; I'm not surprised most of us want to keep our heads down and ignore issue on the horizon. This is exactly why the institutes need to lead by example, work together to help us feel proud about what we do and ready to face whole new challenges.