An Interview with John McCarthy, Editor of *Urban, Planning and Transport Research; an Open Access Journal*

**Part One**

John, the journal has now been going for 18 months. What were your aims when you first took on the role as editor and do you feel that you have achieved them?

Well, my aims originally I think were in general terms to obviously encourage the dissemination of research in these fields but within that, I have a particular interest linked to my background in terms of practice base research which has implications for instance with policy, and areas like spatial planning which is my background, or related areas such as transport. I think clearly that has an advantage in terms of added value for the real world in the sense of enabling society, aims for society in terms of better integration of land use, better availability of transport infrastructure can be more effectively achieved, so I think that's really good and to be encouraged.

Linked to that, the other aim I had was to encourage the publication of research that's interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary and I think that's partly because again I'm very interested in that kind of emphasis in research myself, I think it's important. I also think it can be difficult to publish in traditional journals in terms of some journals, which might have a fairly narrow view of what their area of interest is, and if you're publishing between two fields sometimes you find it difficult to choose between journals which have that main stream. One of the main stream elements is that you cannot publish interdisciplinarity or interdisciplinary research in that way.

Publish practice based, interdisciplinary searching and the other thing that I think was particularly an aim was partly because of the gap, the historic gap in the availability of research in publications to encourage submissions from the global south. I think it's clear certainly in my field in spatial planning that is where really important issues globally are in terms of urbanisation and issues related to that such as infrastructure and health, and the links clearly between those fields are important and need to be considered in an integrated way. I think it was to encourage the publication of research like that because the field is not catered for in the traditional journal format outside open access in the way that it could be. Clearly the particular link into the practice relevance I think is the speed of publication which is a key advantage because clearly all research but particularly that which has links to practice does date quite quickly, or can date quite quickly, so the speed of publication can be a particular advantage.
In terms of the extent to which these aims have been achieved, well I’ll come a little bit later to some particular evidence, but certainly a vast global range of the articles is evident. We know many countries in the global south with cases and research content in the journals that have been submitted. A lot of them are also multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary in their orientation. I’m thinking for instance linkages between transport and health and spatial planning. So I think those aims have been achieved. I think a lot of the articles again linking particularly to those related in the global south are very policy focused because it’s very clear from a lot of the researchers submitting that they are keen that the implications and recommendations are carrying through into practice. Not just in their particular country or context but more generally across the global south and beyond, and I think the speed of publication certainly helped with that.

There’s been a good and steady throughput of articles, certainly well above 20 now have been published and a lot more have been submitted, it’s a win win process inevitably but a lot have been published. And I think the processes have worked quite well, certainly from my point of view, I’m very happy with the process by which editors can be selected, and I’ve been very grateful clearly for the massive effort that editors, sorry referees have put in and that has worked quite well certainly from my point of view and the referees comments in many cases, the overwhelming majority of the cases have been very helpful and clearly the success of the articles that have been submitted have added value to the original input.

So I think inevitably there’s an arc of success if you like and clearly I hope that that will continue but I certainly think the trend has been going in a very positive direction so far on all of those things.