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INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Connecting researchers in  
international entrepreneurship



A report on the 2009 activities of the ie-scholars.net project.

## A message from the Directors

We are pleased to present the first report of activities for the Strategic Knowledge Cluster on International Entrepreneurship – ie-scholars.net. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded the cluster for eight years, beginning in April 2008. This report covers our activities over the first two years of the grant.

ie-scholars traces its roots to the international network of scholars associated with the McGill Conference on International Entrepreneurship first held in 1998. Our network now boasts over one hundred members, will hold its 13<sup>th</sup> annual conference in September 2010, and has its own journal (the *Journal of International Entrepreneurship* published by Springer) and book series (published by Edward Elgar).

International entrepreneurship is still a nascent field, and researchers are scattered internationally. The primary goal of ie-scholars is to link these scholars together to provide support and legitimacy for this area of study. To accomplish this, we are building an online community, enhancing the annual conference and journal, and reaching out to new scholars and potential users of our research in entrepreneurship, economic development and trade communities.

This report tells the story of our early successes. Among these are the design and launch of our online community hosted by Igloo Software, two conferences (in Dunedin New Zealand and Vaasa Finland), a workshop in France, and a number of projects aimed at speeding development of the field through knowledge synthesis and mobilization.

Along the way, we have learned much about the emerging paradigm of ‘research mobilization’, often by trial and error. Having to find out what works and what does not has sometimes slowed our progress. We have also found that it takes time to educate various constituencies, including fellow academics and university administrators, about the practice and merits of research mobilization. It also takes time to build trusting relationships with potential partners and knowledge users, and to replace nodes in the network when individuals move on to other positions or organizations.

Professor Jim Bell, our friend and a founding partner of the network, passed away in November 2009. Jim hosted the McGill conference in 2003 at the University of Ulster. He was an advocate for ie-scholars, the ‘social glue’ that fostered much of the original network, and a dear friend to all.

Looking ahead, the annual conference returns to its home at McGill University, September 17-20, 2010. The traditional ‘practitioners’ day will be enlarged, and the conference will include a doctoral colloquium for the first time. New initiatives will address issues related to standardization of definitions and measures so that research findings are more easily compared, secondary and government data on small firm export activity, and development of cases for research and teaching.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of our steering committee (Professors Martine Spence, Barbara Orser, Eileen Fischer, Rebecca Reuber and Nicole Coviello) for their hard work, time and championship of ie-scholars’ initiatives.

Rod B. McNaughton

Hamid Etemad

Co-directors

ie-scholars

# Community Building

## Virtual community brings researchers together

Keeping a team of like-minded scholars from around the globe engaged and interacting regularly is not an easy task but one that is the fundamental element of this initiative. Conferences, though invaluable in their own way, cannot alone create the kind of community that is necessary for ie-scholars to succeed.

ie-scholars.net, the online presence of ie-scholars, was created to serve as a hub of activity for resource sharing, announcements and discussion in an interactive setting. This virtual meeting place serves to reinforce collaboration, provides a sense of belonging and facilitates knowledge sharing amongst scholars from far-reaching geographic locations that could otherwise not easily move forward initiatives within the cluster or gain timely support from highly regarded researchers in the field.

The virtual 'centre' of ie-scholars.net allows people and information to come together in a way that other media cannot. A one-stop shop for the IE research community, ie-scholars.net houses updates on and discussions related to special issues in the field, such as building consensus of definitions of terms and measures, offers planning capabilities for conferences and workshops, and provides bibliographies and links to documents such as the *Journal of International Entrepreneurship* (JIE). Its creation, as part of the ie-scholars network, illustrates the importance of the field of IE and its increasing relevance within research institutions around the world.

Over 120 researchers from around the globe are now involved in the community, with a range of expertise that includes - but is not limited to - entrepreneurship, marketing, international business, management and economics. This reach demonstrates the multidisciplinary nature of international entrepreneurship and its relevance to the broader global community. It is also clear that ie-scholars is well on the way to reaching the goal of 200 participants in the ie-scholars.net community: more than half of that goal within only two years.

ie-scholars.net has already proven itself as a dynamic, engaging and tremendously useful virtual meeting space that is fundamental to the growth and success of the ie-scholars community.



### IGLOO Software, for online community building

The current home of ie-scholars.net was created using IGLOO Software, a product designed to allow online collaboration for networks, whether locally or globally.

The ability to strengthen connections, pool resources and foster collaboration made this an ideal home for the ie-scholars.net platform.

Igloo Software is a spin-out from the Centre for International Governance Innovation, an independent Waterloo-based think tank.

## Community building in person

In April 2009, the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Academy of International Business (UK and Ireland Chapter) took place in Glasgow, Scotland. This conference, hosted by the Centre for Internationalization and Enterprise Research (CIER) at the University of Glasgow, was co-chaired by Professors Marian V Jones and Stephen Young. CIER is one of the founding partners of ie-scholars and, at this 2009 conference, aptly titled *Resources, Efficiency and Globalization*, ie-scholars had a major presence as a sponsor, in addition to members attending and presenting. This included Rod McNaughton's involvement in the plenary with his presentation on the importance of small and new ventures in economic renewal entitled *Small is beautiful – again*.

The conference itself hosted 175 delegates from all over the globe, including many countries in Europe, Canada, the US, Australia and the Middle East. Following the conference, twenty-two members of ie-scholars met and were able to advance a number of issues around ie-scholars. For example, Prof. Antonella Zuchella, of the Università di Pavia, Italy, agreed to represent ie-scholars in Italy, creating the affiliation with the Centre for International Business and International Economy (CIBIE). This is but one example of using an existing conference or event to encourage interaction between ie-scholars members, building stronger relationships and engaging more in the online community.



At the AIB Conference in Glasgow, April 2009. Left to right: Conference coordinator Prof. Marian Jones; keynote speakers Prof. Rod McNaughton; The Rt Hon. John McFall MP, Chairman of the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee; Mr. Robin Gordon, Strategy Manager, IBM Greenock Campus, Greenock, Scotland; and conference coordinator Prof. Stephen Young.



### Jim Bell (1954-2009)

In November 2009, the International Entrepreneurship community and ie-scholars lost an accomplished and incomparable member, Jim Bell.

In addition to his vibrant and immeasurable career in international business, Jim was a founding member and driving force behind ie-scholars. His ability to successfully manage both people and research at the intersection of business and academia made him a well-respected and influential friend and colleague to many around the world.

One small piece of his broad legacy will live on through the work and success of ie-scholars.

# Knowledge Mobilization

ie-scholars recognizes knowledge mobilization as a key objective of the project, allowing members to share a wide range of research topics with other experts in the field, explore models of IE education, curriculum development, and, ultimately, help transfer knowledge to policy-makers and entrepreneurs.

## Encouraging research through conferences and publications

Conferences have been tremendous opportunities for individual researchers to assemble and engage in discussions, both formal and informal, that simply cannot take place in any other medium. ie-scholars has sponsored and participated in four conferences in the past two years, which have substantially increased network awareness and helped to grow membership.

The McGill International Entrepreneurship (MIE) Conference was launched in Montreal in 1998 and has since become one of the leading conferences worldwide in the area of International Entrepreneurship. The goals of the conferences include facilitating new research initiatives by engaging scholars in discussions through workshop and plenary sessions; and, to collate the unpublished works presented at the conference into collections for possible publication. Both of these goals assist knowledge mobilization in the field of International Entrepreneurship.

The MIE conferences have a tradition of being intimate, with a relatively small group of researchers coming together to discuss pressing issues in IE. The seeds of the ie-scholars project were planted during MIE conferences and the initial group of 30 – 40 participants emerged almost entirely from those events.

The last two conferences (Dunedin 2008 and Vaasa 2009) have been immensely beneficial for ie-scholars participants and the broader IE community. Through these conferences in particular – the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in the MIE series – a fairly tight network of scholars central to IE have been established, and a broader network that is actively developing their work at the interface of the International Business and Entrepreneurship disciplines.



The McGill International Entrepreneurship conference brings together researchers from around the world, helping to initiate collaboration, and fostering lasting research partnerships.

## Dunedin, New Zealand 2008

Hosted by Professor Brendan Gray of the Centre for Entrepreneurship at the University of Otago, which was a founding partner of ie-scholars, the 2008 annual McGill MIE Conference in Dunedin, New Zealand was a great success.

In addition to strong keynote speakers and engaging workshops, a practitioners' day was included. Eight highly successful entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds, geographic locations and varied stages of business development participated, speaking about their individual experiences 'going global'. This was an invaluable opportunity for researchers to hear examples of current best practices of internationalizing small and medium enterprises (SMEs), facilitating the sharing of practical knowledge within the ie-scholars community.

The conference brought together nearly sixty IE researchers and others in related fields, with representation from New Zealand, South America, Europe, Eastern Asia and North America, including thirteen students. It was the first time MIE was held in the southern hemisphere, bringing the network to the attention of an entirely new group of people, many of whom have since become members of ie-scholars.

There was also the opportunity to submit papers for consideration in three publications associated with the conference: the *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, *International Review of Entrepreneurship* (formerly known as the *International Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*), and the Edward Elgar book of research papers.



*The inaugural ie-scholars Fellow was awarded to Hamid Etemad – one of the founders of the MIE conferences - at the 2008 Conference in Dunedin, in recognition of initiating and promoting the McGill International Entrepreneurship Conferences as a forum for scholarly interactions.*



### Doll-making goes global

Jan McLean was a nurse whose life changed when she turned a hobby into an international business.

In 1991, she started her business making dolls and now exports collectable porcelain dolls to a range of countries and licences her award-winning designs around the world.

Jan spoke at the practitioners' day, sharing her challenges, problems and experiences with rapid internationalization.

## Vaasa, Finland 2009

The 2009 MIE Conference was hosted by Hanken School of Economics in Vaasa, Finland. A special focus of this conference was the internationalization process of SMEs that have been affected by the globalization of business, and how cooperation and competition are forces boosting or hindering SMEs in internationalizing.

As is most often the case with the MIE conferences, the intimate nature of the event was engaging for all in attendance, as well as empowering. The varied representation at this conference in particular offered even more productive discussion. Core IE researchers were in attendance, but also scholars new to the field, offering fresh perspectives. Senior scholars, well-established in the field, interacted with junior scholars and PhD students, resulting in a great deal of informal mentoring and one-to-one feedback. One attendee noted that it was one of the best 'small-sized' conferences they had ever attended.

This conference featured an even greater presence of ie-scholars, with presentations by Hamid Etemad and Nicole Coviello, both members of the ie-scholars steering committee. It once again provided an ideal opportunity for representatives to meet with others from the field of IE and generate more interest in ie-scholars membership. Professor Jan Johanson, the principal author of the Uppsala Model of Internationalization, reviewed some thirty years of theoretical developments with the scholars and practitioners in attendance, while owners of several successful 'born global' firms shared their best practice experiences.

### Gearing up for the next conference

Plans are well underway for the 13<sup>th</sup> annual MIE Conference, to be held in September 2010 in Montreal, Canada. This is the first time the conference has returned to its intellectual home since 2006. The first ie-scholars doctoral colloquium and expanded practitioners' day are some of the innovations enabled by the SSHRC funding.



### ie-scholars newest team member hits the ground running

The newest member of the ie-scholars steering committee is Nicole Coviello of Wilfred Laurier University.

Nicole was working as a Professor of Marketing and International Entrepreneurship at the University of Auckland in New Zealand when ie-scholars initially came together but since moving back to Canada to work in the School of Business and Economics at WLU, she agreed to join the ie-scholars team and has made a tremendous impact already.

She was a presenter at the Glasgow conference and a plenary speaker at Vaasa, sharing her perspective on *The Parameters of IE*.

# Knowledge Synthesis

Concurrent with the dissemination of research and information, ie-scholars also facilitates the collection and integration of existing and new data. All of the various ways in which researchers interact – conference, workshop, online – are valuable ways to bring together information.

## A history and analysis of globalization and entrepreneurship, in five volumes

Since the field of International Entrepreneurship is an emerging one, it has not historically had substantial materials to use for research purposes. Many scholars cite Ben Oviatt and Patricia McDougall's 1994 article as the beginning of this field of study.

A compendium, in five volumes, was created entitled *Globalization and Entrepreneurship*. This collection of research articles was developed to bring the history of the field of international entrepreneurship together in one place, one resource.

*Volume One: Small Business Exporting: Adoption of Innovation*, takes a look at the areas of relevant study pre-1994, when the field was not yet identified or fully developed as its own area of study.

*Volume Two: From Exporting to Internationalization*, looks at the next steps in the development of the field, offering a new, more encompassing view of exporting as it shifts to internationalization.

*Volume Three: Rapid Internationalization and International New Ventures*, takes a look at smaller firms ('born globals') that internationalize almost from inception.

In *Volume Four: International Entrepreneurship*, explores the intersection of areas of entrepreneurship and exporting or internationalization of SMEs, which becomes the field of IE.

*Volume Five: Future Directions*, takes a look at what lies ahead for international entrepreneurship, globalization and public policy.

The books, published by SAGE, are edited by Rod B. McNaughton and Jim Bell.

## Meeting in Nice

In September 2008, a meeting was arranged to coincide with the EuroMot technological conference in Nice, France. European partners of the newly created Knowledge Cluster on International Entrepreneurship (ie-scholars) were invited to attend the meeting, including representatives from Scotland, Finland, Ireland and Canada.

Goals of the meeting were threefold: discuss recruitment for membership and expansion in the network, offer input on the newly developed online community (ie-scholars.net), and establish a research agenda around the need to collect standardized data about international small and/or young firms.

It was here that discussion took place around a lack of measures established in the field. Next steps included the collection and collation of international data where measures were used and, in addition, the development of a questionnaire.

Students have been involved with some of the follow-up after the Nice meeting. For example, a graduate student was employed to prepare a list of academic publications on IE and then identified the measures used in each paper. This list was made available for all members to download on the ie-scholars site.

## Journal of International Entrepreneurship

The *Journal of International Entrepreneurship (JIE)*, the main journal in the field of IE, nearly disappeared from publication but was given new life through ie-scholars. ie-scholars helps generate submissions through MIE conferences and advertising.

This valuable journal looks at internationalization within the context of entrepreneurship and features a range of articles addressing the opportunities and challenges of the field of IE. The editorial board, several of whom are members of ie-scholars, are experts in entrepreneurship and international business, providing a balanced perspective on the field.

While the primary audience for JIE is researchers, it also includes business people and policy makers.



### **ie-scholars provides student with data used in his research**

Michael Sheppard, a Management Sciences PhD student working with Rod McNaughton at University of Waterloo partnered with Finnish colleagues at Lappeenranta University of Technology to adapt one of the questionnaires about measures for international new ventures that came out of the Nice meeting.

Michael was then able to administer this questionnaire in Canada and used his results for his research and dissertation, *Antecedents of High-growth and Gazelle Enterprises*, which he defended successfully in March 2010.

This is one of a number of examples where students have been involved with and benefitted from the ie-scholars collaboration.

# The ie-scholars Team

## **Co-Directors**

Rod McNaughton, University of Waterloo

Hamid Etemad, McGill University

## **Steering Committee**

Martine Spence, University of Ottawa

Barbara Orser, University of Ottawa

Rebecca Reuber, University of Toronto

Eileen Fischer, York University

Nicole Coviello, Wilfrid Laurier University

## **Founding Partners**

Centre for Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology, University of Waterloo

Desautels School, of Business, McGill University

Centre for International Enterprise Research, University of Glasgow

School of International Business, University of Ulster

Technology Business Research Centre, Lappeenranta University of Technology

Centre for International Business Education and Research, UCLA

Centre for Entrepreneurship, University of Otago