

The UK Acoustics Network Newsletter

December 2020

Dear UKAN Members

It has been a challenging year for all of us, but this has not stopped the UK Acoustics Network from growing to a 1163-member strong Network. Despite the Covid-19 situation UKAN has continued to stay active. The last year has also brought good news to UKAN in the form of the £1.4M EPSRC UKAN+ grant which will take our community to the next stage, connect us more widely and contribute through coordinated research to the solution of Grand Challenges during these unprecedented times. We want to continue to fully engage UKAN non-academic members and ask them to write to us at info@acoustics.ac.uk with their views on how the Network can support them. Do make the subject in your email read *UKAN+ for NON-ACADEMIA* to make it easier to spot.

Events

It is a good time to plan for 2021. The UKAN grant will finish on the 31st of March 2021. The new UKAN+ grant will start in March 2021. There will be a 2-3 weeks overlap between the two grants which enables us to ensure a smooth transition and continuing financial and admin support of the Network operations. Two first webinars planned for January 2021 are: (i) [On the Response of Two-phase Composites](#) (5th of January); and (ii) [Numerical Methods for Predicting Noise and Vibration in Complex Systems](#) 14/15th of January).

The Computational Acoustics SIG, in conjunction with the Software Sustainability Institute, will be running an online Software Carpentry workshop between the 1st and 5th of March 2021. This is following a need we identified within the community during our activities last year. The workshop will run at 09:00-13:00 for 5 days, covering Shell (1 morning), Python (3 mornings) and Git (1 morning) and hopefully incorporating acoustics examples where possible. Places will be strictly limited, so we would like to make our members aware of the dates and ask you to put this slot in your calendar now if you are interested in attending this workshop. The full sign-up details will be sent to our members through a separate email in January 2021.

We would also like to ask our members to volunteer to present their work or to suggest/request suitable webinar topics by writing to info@acoustics.ac.uk.

Institute of Acoustics membership survey

In our November 2020 newsletter we explained that UKAN were in discussion with the Institute of Acoustics (IOA) about the future of the UKAN after the end of the EPSRC UKAN+ grant in March 2024. There is a plan to set up within the next 1-2 years the National Centre for Coordination of Acoustics Related Research which will be a key resource for UKAN and research active IOA members. One question from this

discussion is about the proportion of UKAN members who are also IOA members. Another question is what would make it attractive for a UKAN member to become an IOA member as well? In order to answer these questions we would like UKAN members to complete a simple online questionnaire [here](#). This will not take more than a minute of your time and will provide us with highly valuable information.

Frontiers for Young Minds

In our October 2020 newsletter we wrote that UKAN is working to make cutting-edge acoustic science available to younger audiences. The [Acoustics Collection](#) “A World of Sound” has a dedicated webpage, soon to be featuring 20 articles/stories highlighting acoustics in [Frontiers for Young Minds](#). Volunteer authors are submitting their abstracts by the deadline on the 8th January 2021. We would like our members to volunteer to support this process in the following three ways:

1. Volunteer as a [Science Mentor](#) to work with a pair of young people to provide feedback and explain to authors how to improve their articles (writing in a language/style that is accessible for young readers) before publication.
2. Pass on this information to your STEM connections through your University/workplace, invite science teachers to act as [mentors](#) and work with classes to review articles.
3. Encourage your children/relatives to volunteer as young reviewers, giving feedback on a couple of articles.

To find out more or to volunteer for these roles please contact: charlotte.swain@acoustics.ac.uk.

DOCUMENTA ACUSTICA information system

[DOCUMENTA ACUSTICA](#) is a new online resource developed by the European Acoustical Association (EAA). It is a collection of materials regarding acoustics, sound and noise, based on a dynamic browsing system and on subject search criteria among the database. You may find here references, books, conference proceedings, PhD theses and research projects reports. It helps to share information and materials among experts in theoretical and applied acoustics, working at universities, laboratories and companies. If you want to share any information using this online resource, contact Sergio Luzzi (sergio.luzzi@vienrose.it), the Product Manager at EAA DOCUMENTA ACUSTICA.

Scotland welcomes sensible guidance on low level background music in hospitality venues



On the 12th December 2020 background music was reintroduced to the hospitality sector in Scotland

thanks to some fleet footed acoustics research. The Scottish Parliament having banned music in August 2020 to prevent the spread of COVID without any evidence of the policy's effectiveness. In October 2020 UKAN supported KSG Acoustics to quickly design and develop a new subjective methodology statement to establish safe amplified indoor audio levels, "Background amplified audio levels and verbal communication in hospitality settings in the context of Scottish Government Covid-19 restrictions". In November 2020 this methodology was objectively assessed as effective based on multiple field studies. The research was put in-front of ministers in December 2020 where it was agreed to be suitable for implementation by both License Standards Officers and Environment Health Officers. Key public health concerns that needed addressing were: Ensure customers can communicate whilst physical distancing requirements are comfortably sustained; and secondly, to ensure that customers are not significantly raising their voices to be heard or understood.

New grants related to acoustics

UKAN would like to congratulate Dr. Paul Mitchell (University of York), Jeff Neasham (University of Newcastle) and Dr. Wei Liu (University of Sheffield) and their colleagues on winning a new grant from the EPSRC entitled [Cooperative Underwater Surveillance Networks \(COUSIN\)](#). In this project new underwater acoustic monitoring and surveillance methods will be

developed to support applications related to port/harbour security, pollution monitoring, maintaining integrity and detecting attacks on underwater infrastructure. The award is over £1.2M starting in 2021. Another new grant from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council ([BBSRC](#)) went to the University of Manchester [to improve face-worn PPE designs for use by public and professionals to reduce audio-visual communication difficulties](#). Collaborators on this project include Trevor Cox, Professor of Acoustic Engineering at the University of Salford, and industry partners in the local cotton industry.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Make the most of your well-deserved break.

Kirill Horoshenkov and Richard Craster

