

# How can researchers bridge the gap between scholarship and public administration?

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Public administrators draw on a number of different sources to inform their work including the news, blogs, podcasts, etc. But why aren't they drawing on scholarly research from published academics as a key resource and what can scholars themselves do about it? More than they might think, suggests new research.

A new article published in *State and Local Government Review* outlines how to conduct and disseminate academic research that is relevant, collaborative, and accessible to local government practitioners.

The research is based on a panel conducted in the summer of 2013 with four highly-experienced local government managers from across the U.S. The managers were asked about their reading practices of academic material and what scholars could do to make their research more accessible and useful for [government officials](#).

Not surprisingly, the managers stressed that relevance is key in helping them decide what to read. The panel members listed public engagement, emotional intelligence, priority-based budgeting, leadership, decision making, motivation, and collaboration as topics that would assist them in their work.

"The managers expressed a preference for articles that identify how the findings can be applied and that are not overly focused on a methodology which may be difficult for some practitioners to follow," the authors stated

The researchers found that while collaboration with practitioners would help the scholars identify topics that are important to government managers, practitioner participation in scholarly journal articles is low. The article provides suggestions to increase collaboration between scholars and public administrators.

"In addition to the interactions addressed by the local government managers in the panel (having the practitioners serve as adjunct instructors and on advisory boards for graduate programs and intern programs), exchanges between academics and practitioners may be useful," the authors wrote. "In the latter, faculty members work in a government setting or government officials work in the academic setting for a specified time period."

The researchers also identified wider dissemination of research articles through professional organizations and evolving open access journals, the release of research findings through other types of media and through blogs, online courses, or webinars, the creation of a journal targeted to government managers, and the creation of sections within a journal that are specifically targeted to [government](#) officials as potential solutions to the problem.

The researchers concluded, "If [scholarly research](#) is to be more useful for practitioners, academics and journal editors need to reach out to practitioners, listen to what they have to say, and identify ways to be responsive to their needs and interests."

**More information:** Find out more by reading the article "Increasing the Usefulness of Academic Scholarship for Local Government Practitioners" in *State and Local Government Review* available now for a limited time here: [slg.sagepub.com/content/45/3/197.full.pdf+html](http://slg.sagepub.com/content/45/3/197.full.pdf+html)

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