

applied soundscapes *symposium*

17 September 2009, University of Salford,

Innovation Forum, <http://www.innovation-forum.co.uk/index.asp>



The Positive Soundscape Project is hosting a Symposium on Applied Soundscapes at the University of Salford on 17 September 2009. The day is a broad celebration of what's been achieved by three EPSRC-funded initiatives that came out of a sand pit workshop three years ago: the Noise Futures network, Positive Soundscapes and ISRIE (Instrument for Soundscape Recognition, Identification and Evaluation).

The day will feature:

- ◀ An audience of practitioners (planners, consultants, policy makers, etc.) as well as researchers.
- ◀ Invited presentations from the Network, Positive Soundscapes and ISRIE teams as well as from related research project teams
- ◀ A discussion panel of senior practitioners and academics who will be invited to comment on the presentations and draw out themes
- ◀ An opportunity for the best presentations to be converted into journal papers for inclusion in a special issue of *Applied Acoustics*
- ◀ The seminar will be free to attend, but places are limited so early booking is recommended

If you would like to attend please contact the Positive Soundscapes project manager, Joanne Leach, on 07785 792 187 or joanne@joanneleach.co.uk.

NoiseFuturesNetwork

The Noise Futures Network arose from the participation of the proposed members in the EPSRC Ideas Factory "A Noisy Future? Making the World Sound Better", 9th to 13th January 2006. This brought together participants from a wide range of academic backgrounds and experiences alongside contributions from policy makers and consultants. The primary purpose of the network is to facilitate interdisciplinary (multi-interest) research on future soundscapes.

<http://noisefutures.org/>

PositiveSoundscapes

In the acoustics community, sound in the environment, especially that made by other people, has overwhelmingly been considered in negative terms, as both intrusive and undesirable. The strong focus of traditional engineering acoustics on reducing noise level ignores the many possibilities for characterising positive aspects of the soundscapes around us. Desirable aspects of the soundscape have been investigated in the past, mainly by artists and social scientists. This work has had little impact on quantitative engineering acoustics, however, perhaps because of barriers to communication across different disciplines.

The team behind this project comes from a very wide range of disciplines – social science, physiological acoustics, sound art, acoustic ecology, psychoacoustics, product perception and room acoustics. They have applied their breadth of experience to investigate soundscapes from many aspects and produce a more nuanced and complete picture of listener response than has so far been achieved.

<http://www.positivesoundscapes.org>.

ISRIE

The predominate metric for soundscape measurement is the A-weighted sound pressure level measured at a point. This metric has been used since the earliest sound level meters. As a consequence, most legislative noise controls are now defined using A-weighted sound, averaged over long time periods. However, the existing system has limitations. Noise is a subjective issue, with people preferring some sounds over others. The current A-weighted metric is completely unable to distinguish between different sources, and so cannot weight them according to whether they are deemed 'good' or 'bad'. Another failure of the time averaged A-weighted metric is its insensitivity to short duration loud events, such as low flying aircraft, which may cause great annoyance but barely affect averaged noise levels. The ISRIE project has worked to develop an instrument capable of separating out sound components from within a soundfield and automatically classifying them.

http://www.elec.york.ac.uk/research/projects/Instrument_for_Soundscape_Recognition_Identification_and_Evaluation.html