



...making excellence a habit.™

Building BSI's knowledge of collaborative content development methods

BSI Student Research Programme Case Study



BSI's Student Research Programme works collaboratively with Master's Degree students to help them produce a research dissertation.

Mina Stoyanova, a Master's student at the University of Strathclyde, produced an MSc dissertation on emerging methods of collaborative content development.¹

"I knew that my project was going to be valuable to them, giving them insights for their Agile Programme, which I found really motivating."

Mina Stoyanova

What is the BSI Student Research Programme?

BSI's Student Research Programme exists to bring Master's students into a mutually beneficial relationship with BSI. These students are required to produce research dissertations. Meanwhile BSI often needs original research in areas that are identified as having potential for future standards or standardization work. The SRP brings the two together.

Through this collaboration BSI gains valuable insights into an area of interest which might ultimately enrich our standards. Meanwhile students benefit from business mentorship; a potential real-world application for their dissertation; access to standards, subject experts and networking opportunities; and a close association with BSI which may ultimately increase future employability.

Interested to learn more?

Email us at education@bsigroup.com

¹ Stoyanova, M (2018.) Emerging methods of collaborative content development between stakeholders interested in developing business standards, submitted for the MSc in Business Analysis & Consulting at the University of Strathclyde



Mina Stoyanova

Introduction

Strathclyde Business School (SBS), a part of Strathclyde University, is the top business school in Scotland² and one of the most innovative and largest of its kind in Europe. Mina Stoyanova was studying there for a one-year MSc in Business Analysis and Consulting when she became aware of BSI's Student Research Programme.

Her course required Mina to do a three-month dissertation project – preferably for an external organization and one which involved a real world business challenge. BSI had built a relationship with the SBS and consequently submitted a couple of dissertation project proposals for MSc students to consider.

Out of around 60 project outlines, Mina chose a BSI project called "Emerging methods of collaborative content development for business standards". This project appealed because she felt it offered a different and more interesting qualitative, rather than quantitative research

perspective. She was also curious to see how BSI standards – and how they're developed – interface with the way small companies make technological advancements and innovate.

Mina also wanted to work with a large company to see how it operates and how she could be a part of that. Finally, she was aware that the research was being done as part of BSI's Agile Development Programme – a project looking at how BSI should be evolving its standards development practices – and felt that contributing to that would be worthwhile.

Scoping the project

BSI shaped the project. As the UK's National Standards Body we rely on the input of around 12,000 committee members who volunteer their time to help write standards. However, we realize that the established way of developing standards – largely through face-to-face meetings – has not changed in many years. We want to research the impact of developing standards in ways that make more use of digital technologies.

Consequently Roz Hitchcock, Solutions Development Manager at BSI, drafted the project parameters. "We wanted to know," she says, "how we can best move to a more virtual collaborative environment, but retain a process that is still open, transparent and accessible." BSI specifically wanted to research methods of content collaboration in other sectors and industries and ways of reaching consensus using different models. Mina's research task was therefore fourfold:

- To identify the disrupters to current methods of collaborative content development used by standards organizations in the UK, Europe and internationally
- To examine emerging methods of content collaboration being used by other businesses, industries and professions
- To explore what these emerging methods entail, how robust they are, and how they could be applied to consensus content development within standards development
- To propose recommendations for BSI to consider in changing its approach to standards development

The results of the research project would inform BSI's wider Agile Development Programme.

Writing the dissertation

To get Mina started, BSI brought her down to London for a one and a half-day orientation at its Chiswick headquarters. This included spending time observing a BSI standards' drafting committee in session. Subsequently she had to submit a project plan to BSI to make sure she had a clear understanding of the requirements and had a research methodology that would work.

Thereafter Mina maintained what she characterises as "really good communications with the whole BSI team" as she wrote her dissertation. In particular Roz Hitchcock provided support and mentoring: she responded to queries, gave access to resources and acted as a sounding board. BSI Marketing also helped Mina set up a brand-compliant online survey of its committee members as a component of her research project.

Outcomes of the partnership

Mina found working with BSI was rewarding. "I knew that my project was going to be valuable to them, giving them insights for their Agile Programme, which I found really motivating." She also felt that she gained in confidence from working with BSI personnel in a professional setting, despite it being a distance-based one. "I maintained regular contact with the client which provided good networking opportunities and I got to see how I could work with different stakeholders in the BSI team," Mina says. "If it had been possible it would also have been interesting to see how the project's development would have been impacted if I'd had the opportunity to be part of BSI's working environment in Chiswick," she adds.

For their part BSI gained a really good research report from this collaboration. It provided a

fresh, new perspective in an area where BSI needs to build a business case for making changes. As such, says Roz Hitchcock, "Mina's work is making a hugely valuable contribution."

As well, the interaction with Strathclyde University is important to BSI. Understanding how future business leaders think and how BSI can engage with them is very important.

In conclusion Mina says that overall, she was very pleased with the project and how the research developed, and how BSI dealt with queries and gave her all the support she required. When asked if she'd recommend that other students collaborate with BSI in future, she says that as long as the research is on a topic that they want to explore, her answer is definitely "Yes."



"As a leading Business School, Strathclyde strives to provide opportunities to really stretch our students. By taking part in BSI's Programme, Mina was challenged to consider the practical applications for her insights and recommendations."

Dr Viktor Dörfler,
Senior Lecturer in Information & Knowledge Management,
University of Strathclyde Business School



What students gain from BSI's Student Research Programme:

- ✓ Additional support and impetus in defining and producing their Master's dissertation
- ✓ Kudos of association with BSI
- ✓ Networking opportunities
- ✓ Commercial perspective to the dissertation
- ✓ Exposure to future potential employers
- ✓ Access to BSI resources (including standards and committee experts)

About BSI Standards Development

A standard is an agreed way to do or make something. Standards gain their authority from the fact that they're written through a process of wide consultation which leads to an expert consensus. BSI Standards Development develops new ideas to provide the standards that industry needs to innovate, expand and excel.

About BSI Education

Universities make a significant contribution to standardization by teaching about standards, participating in their development on committees, and contributing academic research. BSI Education builds relationships and creates programmes that raise awareness of the role of standards and encourage and increase the participation of young professionals in standards-making.

For more information about BSI's Student Research Programme and how to get involved, go to bsigroup.com/education or contact education@bsigroup.com.

bsi.

BSI Group
389 Chiswick High Road
London, W4 4AL
United Kingdom

T: +44 345 080 9001
E: cservices@bsigroup.com
bsigroup.com

