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Jay Mitra & John Edmondson, *Entrepreneurship and Knowledge Exchange*, Routledge, 2015, 528 pp. \$103 Hardcover

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Book Review

Jay Mitra is Professor of Business Enterprise and Innovation and Director of the International Centre for Entrepreneurship Research at Essex Business School and John Edmondson is Director of IP Publishing Ltd. They have combined forces and connections here to produce a collection of wide ranging papers on this important subject. It has been encouraging in recent years to see the growing connection between higher education – in all subject areas, not just business studies, and entrepreneurship and innovation. Governments have become increasingly engaged and interested, and so it should be. Entrepreneurship, Innovation and new business start ups represent a significant part of the engine which will drive economic growth and social development in the coming decades. The internet has made so much more possible in terms of communication, education, knowledge sharing and connectivity. In all fields we see the world changing dramatically – “Big Data” and the application of online practices has become almost revolutionary. One exciting example is Alternative Finance – lending and borrowing and fund raising online. But there is much more.

In an age when so much new knowledge is being generated and a growing population is hungrier than ever for progress (in many ways) the transfer of knowledge, the sharing of knowledge and the curricularisation of new knowledge by educational institutions is so very important if new and better ways of practice and behaviour are to become put to best possible use.

This book may serve academics including teachers and researchers especially well, but as a practitioner I also found its rich panorama of topics, and the questions raised, very stimulating and thought provoking. There is something here for those “doing the business” for sure.

Contributions come from far and wide and the structure of the book is to take a deep dive into History, Context and Challenge of its subject, before exploring from a number of angles the creation of entrepreneurial cultures and ecosystems that support and nurture the entrepreneur and bring a realistic approach to aspects of teaching and learning. Part three of the book concerns itself with the application of entrepreneurial approaches to collaboration for support of regional growth – and a subsequent section focuses more closely on national issues.

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It is hard to single out highlights, because there is so much here based on the experiences and practices of very capable people from every continent. A number of the papers report on international and cross border collaborations. The introduction by the authors sets the scene and context very well and provides a very helpful roadmap for the reader and reference student of how the subsequent materials have been assembled to bring sufficient order and coherence to the whole. Inevitably, this will be a reference work which academics, students and business people will visit from time to time with specific interests, having absorbed the overall focus and structure. It is a weighty volume to tackle in one long read. But I have no doubt it will become widely used and referred to internationally. The final chapter – by the authors titled “From Past to Future – Where Next” might be a good place for some who are considering acquiring the book to start. It covers strategic issues and raises key questions for those looking ahead to “what next” in terms of what may be most useful to nations, mankind and society. Where should research on these subjects of knowledge transfer and sharing be concentrated? The varying roles and interests of industry and academia are discussed and debated in some depth in this chapter. The authors are not entirely hopeful that more effective ways can be found of collaborations and appropriate balanced approaches involving academia and industry – but the issues are well aired here, which was the purpose of the chapter. And there are encouraging examples of how combined efforts are achieving success. In the very final paragraphs the positions of businesses and universities are compared and discussed as the authors seek to explore how knowledge can effectively be put to more effective use. In closing – referring to businesses and universities, the following words of Jay Mitraa and John Edmondson should be considered by all of us as something of a wake up call to find better ways forward together. The final sentence is one for all to reflect upon.... *“As the status quo of these institutions is being challenged in the public domain and in a world of Twitter technology, there is an ever greater need to reinvent the machinery of knowledge production and its exchange amongst all who sup at its table” – I say “Amen”.*



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