MINUTES

MEETING eResearch Reference Group

MEET No. 1, 2013

PRESENT Alistair Rendell (Chair), Lindsay Botten, Andy Hogg, Sigi Goode, Roxanne Missingham, David Akers, Peter Nikoletatos, Dan Andrews, Dale Holland (Secretary).

ATTENDING

APOLOGIES Katherine Bode

DATE/TIME Thursday 24 January 2013, 9am

VENUE CHELT Meeting Room

Summary of Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair to discuss group membership with the DVC Research.</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Prior to next meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary to create Alliance website for the group.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>1 week after meeting</td>
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<td>Secretary to circulate more recent articles by Linda O’Brien.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group members to send any comments on the Terms of Reference to <a href="mailto:eo.dvcr@anu.edu.au">eo.dvcr@anu.edu.au</a></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>1 week after meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper to be written for next eResearch Reference Group meeting:</td>
<td>Coordinator: Secretary Contributors: Chair, Peter Nikoletatos, Roxanne Missingham, Lindsay Botten</td>
<td>Prior to next meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What eResearch means for ANU</td>
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<td>- Detailing the involvement of ITS, the Library and NCI in this landscape</td>
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Part 1. Formal items

ITEM 1. Announcements and Apologies

Apologies recorded as above, noted by the Group.

The Chair welcomed members to the Group.

ITEM 2. Introductions

The Chair outlined some of the context behind creation of the group:

- Attempting to coordinate disparate activities and minimise duplication
The University Research Committee may seek advice from the group
As a link to Colleges to propagate information to researchers

The Chair invited comments as to whether there were any deficiencies in the membership of the group. The general consensus was that it was important to have a whole-of-University perspective. Suggestions were to add:

- A HDR student (nominee of PARSA)
- A representative from the College of Law, particularly relating to the AustLII project.

The Chair noted that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) would determine whether new members were invited.

**ACTION**
Chair to discuss group membership with the DVC Research.

### Part 2. Reports and discussions

**ITEM 3. What is eResearch?**


Comment was made that much of the agenda has now moved on. The document precedes NCRIS and EIF Super Science. Linda O’Brien has had two major articles since 2005 (these have been uploaded to Alliance).

PARADISEC, which is referenced in the article, is hosted by the University of Sydney, and ANU is a content provider. The general point was made that members of the University need to know what services are available and how to access them.

It was noted that the main recommendation of the 2005 O’Brien paper, to create an eResearch Centre at the University of Melbourne, had occurred. A comparison was made to the highly centralised model of support at Monash University, led from the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research.

Professor Botten spoke to the historical failure of ARCS, which did not have the required institutional investment, and failed to integrate the collaboration services being created around the country on an as-needs basis.

**ACTIONS**
Secretary to create Alliance website for the group.
Secretary to circulate more recent articles by Linda O’Brien.

**ITEM 4. eResearch services landscape at ANU**

**ITEM 4.1. Chief Information Officer**

The Chief Information Officer is the head of IT Services, which has approximately 140 staff.

Mr Nikoletatos is on the RDSI board, which is the determinant of nodes. ANU is a primary RDSI node through NCI. Other states are largely organised through state-based high-performance computing facilities. There are storage and hardware components. The ReDS programme is about bringing together important collections. The DaSh programme will support sharing and re-use of research data.

ANU is involved in NeCTAR as part of the research cloud solution, and we have also been engaged with virtual laboratories.

There is a watching brief on AeRO, the purpose of which appears to be to come up with an eResearch service catalogue for Australia.
Building eResearch capability into ANU IT Services is a focus for the future. There is infrastructure shared with NCI, and IT Services will be engaged with network, communications and data centre operation support.

Mr Nikoletatos is the Vice President of CAUDIT. This has provided access to DIISRTE, who is the main funder in this space. Mr Nikoletatos is also on the AARNet board, looking after the base infrastructure the University uses every day.

IT Services does not directly manage any research data collections. The comment was made that previous solutions for an ANU integrated eResearch environment did not understand the requirements, and did not engage the human element.

**ITEM 4.2. University Librarian**

The Library is involved with an ANDS project, Seeding the Data Commons. Funding for this project has finished, although ANDS has recently received one-off funding until the end of 2014. For these projects to be successful, we need to interact with Colleges, and be better at understanding researcher requirements, for example human ethics approval issues.

The ANU has a large number of different repositories set up over time for different purposes. These all run different software that does not talk to one another.

The difference between data and publication is blurring. We must avoid creating different systems based on outdated distinctions.

**ITEM 4.3. Director, NCI**

NCI has petabyte volume, with a small number of very-high-volume holdings. It is driven by research objectives and focuses on ambitious, high-performance computation. Supporting collaboration activities is not core business.

NCI was galvanised by EIF Super Science funding; funding was available only for infrastructure. Recurrent and operations and development staff costs come from co-contributions from partners across Australia, particularly CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology and Geoscience Australia – these co-contributions total $11 million p.a. NCI provides ANU with strong service, but is a national infrastructure – no one institution could afford to run NCI themselves.

There is a confluence of infrastructure at NCI created by leveraging the supercomputer into other investments, e.g. hosting an RDSI node, and involvement with a NeCTAR research cloud program integral to delivering data-intensive work. High performance computation faces difficult technological challenges, which require expertise. Australia-wide, more expertise is required in order to materialise the vision of eResearch.

**ITEM 5. ANU eResearch analysis**

The Chair spoke to the table presented in the Agenda. The priority for this Group is now to look at requirement analysis of staff need, and clarifying existing services (top left). We then need to educate researchers as to those available opportunities (bottom left). Once these are known, we may find gaps that can be met by new or modified infrastructure/services, for a particular application domain (top right). This has resourcing implications.

The Group discussed what the priorities were. We must understand the needs of researchers. But before even that, we do not know what’s out there currently.

- Suggestion that there should be a landing page aggregating the available infrastructure/services within ANU – for HDR, ECR and new staff education;
- Comment made that all staff could benefit – technology has in many cases moved so far that we don’t know how to take advantage of it.
Comment that different types of research have different implications. Data subject to human ethics may be on an encrypted hard drive in a locked cabinet, and not able to be shared; however, in that case we may still look at recording the metadata.

ITEM 6. Review Terms of Reference
The Chair asked Group members were asked to send comments on the Terms of Reference to the Secretary offline.

ACTION
Group members to send any comments on the Terms of Reference to eo.dvcr@anu.edu.au

ITEM 7. Discussion of Proposed Activities
The Group briefly discussed what the next steps should be, and what should be prepared for the next meeting. General consensus was to draft a ~5 page paper on what eResearch means for ANU, and for the main contribution to come from the three main areas, IT Services, the Library and NCI. This document would form the basis of discussions with researchers and Colleges. Trying to uncover what research data is held at the College and local level is difficult, and will take time. Drafting of the paper will be coordinated by the Secretary.

ACTION
Paper to be written for next eResearch Reference Group meeting:
- What eResearch means for ANU
- Detailing the involvement of ITS, the Library and NCI in this landscape

Part 3. Other business

ITEM 8. Other Business and Question Time
- The document Supercomputer Time Allocation Committee was circulated for comment. Brief feedback from relevant members was that there are no issues.
- Due to the meeting overrunning time, no further items of other business or questions were sought.

ITEM 9. 2013 Meeting Dates
This item was not covered due to the meeting overrunning time.