

From Strategy To Action: The Information Management Initiative At Monash University

Helen Palmer
Monash University

Abstract:

An Information Management Strategy was developed for Monash University and publicly released in 2005. The 2005 University Planning Conference made implementing the strategy a key priority for 2006. A programme of technological and practice improvements was proposed, resulting in over 20 initiatives organised in four key themes. One theme, 'Working with information effectively and efficiently (WIEE)', was refined into a project that focused on practice improvements. (The other three themes dealt with delivering information and services using web technologies, providing high-quality management information, and supporting effective collaboration.) The WIEE project was undertaken in 2006 with the key deliverables of documenting and developing information management best practice, and attempting to make this practice common by means of an induction and ongoing training programme.

The Monash strategy models information management as needing to be instantiated in 4 different contexts: Individual, Workgroup, Corporate and Societal. These contexts determine the appropriate standards, techniques and tools to be applied in each. The WIEE project took both a top-down and a bottom-up approach. On the demand side it focused on the lower two information contexts, i.e., the 'individual', and 'workgroup' for practice improvement.

Of the 2006 programme of funded initiatives, the WIEE project stood somewhat apart because it did not have a system or technological implementation component. Elements of a knowledge management approach were utilised to develop and disseminate information management best practice, including group needs analysis and the creation of communities of practice.

While the strategy address all the members of the Monash university community, the WIEE project focused on Monash staff in the first instance. This decision was in keeping with the IM vision, 'Managing information to better create and share knowledge', as it was agreed that the staff experience held the greatest opportunity for significant improvement and benefits to students would flow from this.