

CCA-EDUCAUSE Australasia Presentation Abstracts

The Only Constant is Change – Innovation in Scholarly Communication

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BACKGROUND

The University of Melbourne has embarked upon a bold strategy to ensure its place as one of the finest universities in the world, a strategy founded upon excellence in research, learning and teaching, and engagement. Supporting this vision and released in July 2008, *Melbourne's Scholarly Information Future* is a ten-year strategy to guide the development of the University's scholarly information services, collections, systems, technologies and infrastructure. This strategy sits alongside research, e-learning, engagement and other domain-specific plans supporting the Growing Esteem agenda.

While considerable change has occurred in the global environment and the Higher Education sector, *Melbourne's Scholarly Information Future: a ten-year strategy* still summarises our guiding principles. This is due to the aspirational nature of the document and the high level approach it took. The strategy outlines principles that underpin the choices made in the development of our scholarly information and technologies – in particular it clearly articulates that ongoing research and reflection about scholarly information practices will be essential to inform the effective and efficient development of our scholarly information environment.

To continue to engage the University in the possibilities of our scholarly information future and achievement of this aspiration the University Library has proactively sought partnerships with the broader community to imagine the possibilities through the establishment of the Scholarly Information Innovation Grants in 2009.

INNOVATION = DISSEMINATION OF SCHOLARSHIP WIDELY

In 2009 with seed funding provided by the University (which was significantly supplemented by the Library) the Library Scholarly Information Innovation Grants were inaugurated. This grant scheme funded scholarly innovation initiatives that support interdisciplinary research, student innovation, research and knowledge transfer experiences in the curriculum, and engagement with external scholarly communities and the public in developing collections. Grant projects were encouraged that reflected the scope and ambition of the Scholarly Information Strategy. A key feature of the scheme was the flexibility it encouraged in approach and in the interpretation of scholarly information. As a guide, it recognized four broad categories each including both physical and digital objects. Scholarly information includes:

1. Collections

- Acquired by Melbourne, or owned by others and accessed by our scholars
- Library, museum, archive and cultural collections

2. Learning and teaching materials

3. Information produced in the course of conducting research

- Correspondence, laboratory notes, transcripts, recordings, digital data, surveys and responses etc.

4. Research outputs

- Articles, papers, presentations, conference sessions, performances, objets d'art, theses, reviews etc

Thirty Seven applications were received from academics, professional staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students. And a selection panel awarded funds to eleven projects, totalling \$228,500

The grants supported collaborative projects that represent or explore innovation in the field of scholarly communication. In this context 'scholarly communication' is defined as the processes by which we create, find, share, store, publish and exchange scholarly information. These processes may involve face-to-face communication, online environments, physical objects or digital artefacts.

The 11 projects selected by a panel of experts demonstrate:

- support for interdisciplinary research
- student innovation
- creativity in learning and teaching
- embedding of research and knowledge transfer experiences in the curriculum
- engagements with external scholarly community and the public in developing collections.

This presentation will outline the diverse nature of the projects and highlight some of the achievements to date as exemplars of future changes in scholarly communication in a research intensive university.

WHERE TO FROM HERE

Ongoing funding of this scheme in a financially challenging environment will challenge the importance of innovation in achieving our long-term aspirations. The Library must now consider in partnership with other key stakeholders how to continue to facilitate this engagement and innovation in the future and indeed how to progress some of the valuable output from these demonstrator projects - what role does the library have in this from here? Is this a worthy scheme to continue? Is the right sort of innovation happening? Is this indicative of the changing nature of scholarly communication?

Guiding our choices and decision making are many influential pieces of research and in particular the Horizon Report which describes the continuing work of the New Media Consortium's Horizon Project (a qualitative research project established in 2002 that identifies and describes emerging technologies likely to have a large impact on teaching, learning or creative enquiry on college and university campuses within the next five years).

We examine the technologies used in these projects and compare them with those that are identified as emerging and expected to enter mainstream adoption within a three year trajectory in the 2010 Horizon report. Is there alignment or mismatch? Are we following key trends or moving in a different direction with these projects? How do we move from innovation to operation and what does this mean for the Library and University?

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