

# THETA

The Higher Education Technology Agenda

## **Integrating user support for eResearch services within institutions. Lessons learned from AeRO Stage 2 User Support Project**

The Australian research community has seen a significant investment in eResearch infrastructure since 2009 through federally funded initiatives such as the Education Investment Fund (EIF) and the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS).

This initiatives have produced programs such as the National eResearch Collaboration Tools and Resources (NeCTAR) and Research Data Storage Infrastructure to significantly increase the ability of Australian researchers to access computing and storage infrastructure to conduct novel research and accelerate research outcomes. This investment has also heralded new ways for researchers to access, integrate and connect data across subject disciplines and locations.

This increase in eResearch capability and capacity has lead to provisioning of new eResearch services that are distributed across multiple organisations, research disciplines, locations and countries. Consequently, operational challenges associated with providing high quality and available eResearch services along with a good user experience have increased. Meeting these challenges helps ensure uptake and utilisation of eResearch services in this exciting era of Australian eResearch capability.

To meet some of these challenges the Australian eResearch Organisations (AeRO) sponsored the AeRO IT User Support Project, which aimed to increase user support for national eResearch services and applications through developing a joined -up user support resource. The project focused on three sector personas including eResearch applications and services, infrastructure operators and research institutions.

In particular the project explored solutions to the following issues:

- Identifying the best way to provide ICT support to 10,000's of researchers using 100's of eResearch services across more than 40 Australian universities;
- Preventing services being developed and implemented then subsequently "orphaned" with no support;
- Streamlining the process for 100's of service development projects attempting to establish individual service agreements with individual universities;
- Exposing products/application services to a wider audience and provide improved support.

A key outcome of the project was the AeRO Tick framework and user support maturity model. The framework provided eResearch applications and services and clear and consistent method of lifting user support maturity and integrating into a national user support framework. Applications and services that meet a level of maturity were included in a service catalogue that could be utilised by institutions to provide user support for national eResearch tools. Categorisation and methods of best practice to integrate the service catalogue to research institutions was guided by the University IT Research Expert group which consisted of IT, user support, library and research specialists across Australian universities. The group has led the concept of 'AeRO Aware' in which institutions are able to obtain user support information from the service catalogue and choose to provide increased local support if deemed necessary.

This presentation will give an overview of the AeRO IT User Support Maturity model, the AeRO Tick and AeRO Aware. It will provide an overview of the major findings of the project and highlight methods of increase user support for eResearch applications and services that are being utilised in institutions.

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ONE THOUGHT ON "INTEGRATING USER SUPPORT FOR ERESEARCH SERVICES WITHIN INSTITUTIONS. LESSONS LEARNED FROM AERO STAGE 2 USER SUPPORT PROJECT"

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