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E-Research

The term "e-Research" encapsulates research activities that use a spectrum of advanced ICT capabilities and embraces new research methodologies.

In the last few years the need for researchers to increase their collaboration on research projects has been made clear by government and various institutions, including Universities.

Using technology, e-Research aids researchers in utilising and managing data for technology transfer and collaboration, helping find the answers to difficult questions.

At La Trobe the e-Research Office can help all researchers in all disciplines with aid in file management, new digital methods of analysis, new means of collaborating with colleagues. Please call us for any advice regarding your research methods.

New DVC (Research)

Professor Tim Brown was recently appointed Deputy Vice- Chancellor (Research). Before joining La Trobe University Professor Brown was Dean of the College of Science at the Australian National University; prior to which he was Professor of Statistics and Head of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of

Melbourne.

Professor Brown is recognised as one of Australia's top statisticians and has an extensive record in consulting and applied research over a wide variety of areas of science and management with clients from private industry, government and the university sector.

His primary applied research and consulting in the last ten years has been in education, tertiary selection and the effects on society. The latter has led to major changes in the Victorian Certificate of Education, in the reporting of results in schools and in tertiary selection in Victoria and Australia.

Regional e-Research Roadshow

Throughout the month of February Dr Mark Kosten and Emma Curtis-Bramwell took the message of e-Research to the regional campuses of Bendigo, Mildura and Wodonga. A series of seminars explained, in researchers terms, how e-Research can help them with computing, data storage, information management and collaboration.

The seminars were open to all staff and feedback surveys were used to measure awareness of e-Research and determine specific requirements of attendees. It was clear that not only is the research component critical to the University presence but that e-research

techniques are even more vital for researchers that are distant from the central IT facilities and their colleagues.

We hope to repeat the road show at a future date and will run a second workshop at Bundoora later this year.

AAF Mini-Grant

The Australian Access Federation (AAF) Project, funded by DEST, seeks to deploy an operational PKI and Shibboleth Federated Identity and Access Management infrastructure for Australian Higher Education, enabling secure, inter-institutional sharing of resources and services.

The e-Research office was successful in its application for an AAF mini-grant to assist in the technical work required to join the Federation as an Identity and Service provider. The grant is for \$40,000, given in three parts during 2008, for the integration of Windows 2008 Active Directory into the AAF, the integration of AARLIN and some Library repository exemplars.

VeRSI Projects – An update

The Ecoinformatics project, an investigation of climate change in certain Victorian regions using ecoinformatics methods, is well under way. The Ecoinformatics Virtual Organisation has been created and is being used by the collaboration's researchers. VeRSI is also assisting in the development of visualisation tools for ecoinformatics data presentation, translation and analysis. In addition to the South-West of Victoria the Western Port Bay area has been added to the project.

The Remote Instrumentation project and Biotoobox projects are now also underway with initial meetings completed.

Presentation at VeRSI Coffee Network

On 1st April Dr Mark Kosten will be speaking about e-Research from the La Trobe perspective at the VeRSI Coffee Network event held at the University of Melbourne. This will provide an opportunity to network and discuss topics of interest with colleagues.

Library Presentations by Thornton Staples

In February the library hosted a series of presentations by Thornton Staples about Fedora Commons and managing various types of digital content in a Fedora based environments such as the Library's ARROW repository.

e-Research Grants update

Please watch the e-Research and RGSO web sites for further information.

Department/School e-Research Sessions

Dr Mark Kosten continues to attend Department/School staff meetings to provide information on how the e-Research Office can help with your research. So far there has been direct contact and discussion with about 100 academics across the University. More are planned but we have a long way to go before covering the entire University!

If you would like to have an opportunity to discuss e-Research at your staff meeting please contact Emma Curtis-Bramwell to arrange a suitable date/time.

Gaussian Computer

The e-Research Office and ICT have purchased a specialised application server for Gaussian

users at La Trobe.

This server has AMD 2.2 GHz four-cpu/dual core and 64 GB RAM, plus 700GB of high speed disk to enable large Gaussian jobs to run. There has been delay in deployment because of hardware problems, but hopefully it will be running soon.

High Performance Computing Cluster

The e-Research Office and ICT will install a 24 node high performance computing cluster before mid-year. The System will comprise a 24 node AMD four-core/dual cpu servers, including 1 server as a control node (resulting in 184 cores for computation) with 32 GB RAM per CPU.

The cluster will be managed by ICT and VAPC, using the same programs that VPAC currently runs along with specialised La Trobe applications.

An access policy is being created and will be on-line with the project registration process before deployment. An easy access interface will be available for users, especially for first-time users.

E-Research/ICT Projects

Key projects that would provide infrastructure for e-Research use at La Trobe were part of the recent EOI budgeting process. As all projects have been rejected this leaves research space in particular unavailable. The Research Division and ICT are still working to provide at least some of the promised advances, but it is unknown if and when this will eventuate.

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