

AUSTRALIAN e-RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL (AeRIC)

AeRIC MEETING – 17 NOVEMBER 2008

AGENDA ITEM 8: Communications Strategy

Purpose

To seek AeRIC's comments on key messages and target audiences.

Introduction

A initial draft of an overarching Communications Strategy for the Platforms for Collaboration (PfC) was provided to the AeRIC August meeting.

Discussion focussed on the role of communication for PfC in relation to the role and communication objectives of the components of PfC.

Background

NCRIS is a funding programme that was announced by the Australian Government in 2004 as part of Backing Australia's Ability – Building our Future through Science and Innovation.

Through NCRIS, the Government is providing \$542 million over 2005-2011 to provide researchers with major research facilities, supporting infrastructure and networks necessary for world-class research. It follows the major programme of investments provided under the Systemic Infrastructure Initiative and the Major National Research Facilities Programme of the former Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

The NCRIS program is funding research capability areas that were identified in the 2006 NCRIS Roadmap following extensive consultation with the research community.

NCRIS funds will not be used to fund research programs, projects or activities but will be used for the:

- operation and development of existing facilities;
 - enhancement of existing facilities;
 - establishment, operation and development of new facilities; and
 - gaining access to offshore facilities.

NCRIS has noted that the PfC capability will require a managed approach to its communication as it is intended to support e-research infrastructure in universities and other research institutions, including through the continued support of high quality information and communications technology.

PfC is intended to have application across the whole of the NCRIS program, as well as to the wider research community.

Environment

The PfC investments are operating in an environment where their critical importance is recognised and it is clear that further and higher levels of investment will be required.

It will therefore be necessary to communicate PfC specific as well as more general eResearch Infrastructure related messages across many research communities and organisations as well as to service providers and technical specialists.

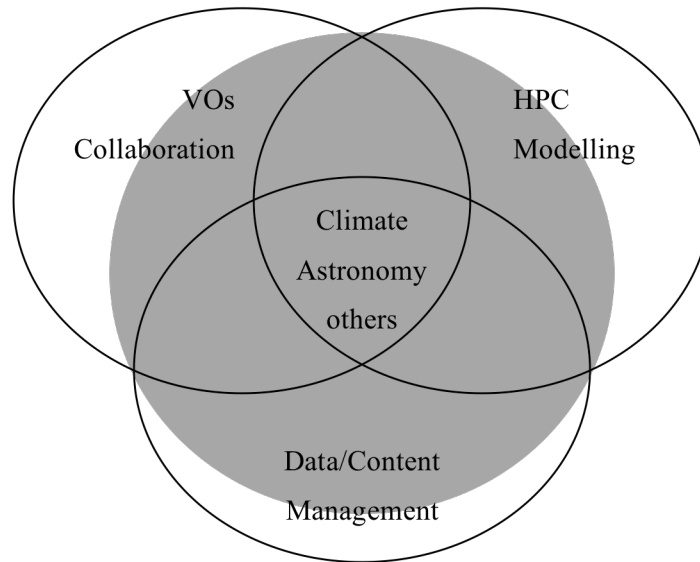
It will also be important to consider a range of initiatives now managed by the Commonwealth Innovation and Education portfolios. These include pre-existing SII investments, the Australian Research Council's Linkage Infrastructure and Equipment Fund (LIEF), NCRIS, the Higher Education Endowment Fund, a further NCRIS or NCRIS like initiative and the Education Investment Fund.

Communications Strategy (for discussion)

Aims

Fundamentally, the PfC structure of three areas – HPC/modelling, VOs/collaboration and data/content management – supported by ubiquitous high performance networks and common access mechanisms is mirrored in other national eResearch and cyber infrastructure plans.

Further, while eResearch infrastructure aims to support research activities such as climate research that need all aspects of this ICT support, it also aims to provide national ICT infrastructure for research activities that need only some of the aggregate PfC capabilities.



Thus a more interesting statement of the overall objective for eResearch infrastructure deployment could be phrased as follows:

- To support a broadening use of ICT by a range of research activities, and to bring the benefits of combinations of the base ICT capabilities to more research activities.

Communication activities at the PfC level should therefore focus towards a broad agenda in eResearch infrastructure deployment, encouraging commitment and positive interest by key stakeholders, and building confidence that support systems are in place that can assist new as well as existing use cases.

Communication at the component level of PfC should mirror this language and intention, and reinforce mutual understanding and cooperation across PfC and with other infrastructure providers. Component level communication should also promote the achievements and articulate the evolving needs of the specific component, while assisting its user base to appreciate the benefits of a broader set of ICT capabilities.

Specific PfC communication aims could be:

Upwards	Engender a positive, cooperative environment for the continuing development and investment in eResearch Infrastructure through the strategic exchange of information with, and between, key committees, external agencies and major stakeholders and through the communication to internal DIISR stakeholders of the importance and the impact of PfC.
Outwards	Increase the impact and benefit of the PfC investments by raising awareness amongst the research community and other research infrastructure providers of the PfC facilities and the opportunities they create separately and in combination.
Inwards	Enhance the user experience and improve service delivery in each component by encouraging interaction with other PfC components, and other NCRIS activities.

Communications Strategy Objectives

1. To ensure consistent messages are delivered to the research community by all stakeholders involved in the PfC investments;
2. To develop and maintain positive relationships between the clients and operators of the PfC capability and Research Infrastructure Branch;
3. To inform, in a timely manner, key stakeholders and other interested parties of significant developments within PfC;
4. To facilitate a flow of information, experience and best practice between the PfC components and the ICT activities of all NCRIS capabilities;
5. To support the integration of PfC capabilities into the day to day research support activities of NCRIS capabilities;
6. To promote Australian eResearch activities and outcomes in international fora and in turn, to encourage our adoption of best practice where sourced; and
7. To assist NCRIS to promote a sustained cultural shift in attitudes to research infrastructure investment that is increasingly national, strategic and collaborative.

Target Audiences

Funders of the investment

- NCRIS, DIISR, Minister Carr, the Australian Government more broadly where possible.

Beneficiaries of PfC

- Australian researchers, recipients of ARC and NH&MRC grants
- Federation fellows and similarly ranked researchers and research teams
- Cooperative Research Centres, Research Centres of Excellence and other multi-institution research oriented joint ventures (eg ACCESS)
- NCRIS capabilities and associated communities

Stakeholders in Research achievement

- DVCs, CIOs, and other senior officers of universities and major research institutions
- Funding providers including NCRIS, ARC, NHMRC, DIISR, DEEWR, state governments
- The learned academies

Stakeholders in eResearch Infrastructure

- IT Directors of research intensive organisations (CAUDIT)
- Data and information managers (OSDM, CAUL...)
- State Government Agencies

Participants and collaborators in eResearch service delivery

- National eResearch service providers (AAF, AARNet, ANDS, ARCS, NCI)
- Regional eResearch service providers (MARCS, VeRSI, ...)
- Relevant research groups investments MELCOE, OAK-Law...
- Institutional eResearch service/resource managers

Key Messages

The following key messages are proposed, depending on the specific audience and purpose of the communication.

- The use of advanced ICT is now essential and pervasive across and between disciplines so that eResearch Infrastructure is a critical enabling capability. The changes being wrought in the research sector through ICT capabilities are inevitable and need to be accelerated and embraced rather than deferred or ignored.
- National leadership is vital to establish a policy and core capability framework to ensure a backbone eResearch capability is present, and to also ensure that multiple regional (and the inevitable multiplicity of organisational) ICT investments lead to an emergent, coherent Australian eResearch capability based on that backbone.
- PfC is open for business as a vehicle for that leadership:
 - ARCS for collaboration needs, ANDS for data sharing challenges, NCI for advanced modelling, AARNet for connectivity and the AAF to support coherent access control.
- Continuing and further significant national level investment is needed in enabling PfC infrastructure, including Advanced Networking, Capability HPC, retention of National Data Assets and provision of common Access Controls to ensure the existence and continuation of foundation building blocks.
- Research into grand challenges already depends on effective global collaborations that connect people, tools and data, so that new research paradigms become possible, and so that otherwise intractable problems can be addressed. However, the benefits also apply to research at more modest scales so that collaboration is recognised as a crucial performance factor in overall research effectiveness. Supporting these collaboration requirements is the mission of ARCS (for systems) and ANDS (for content), both of which need further and significant national investment.
- These investments are most valuable when integrated into the practice of research communities. The PfC National eResearch Architecture Taskforce is assisting research communities build their skills and specific services that will further enable world class research outcomes.

	Government funders	Researchers	Research stakeholders	Infrastructure stakeholders	Service providers
ICT is changing research	√	√	√		
National eResearch essential	√		√	√	√
PfC open for business	√	√		√	√
Where to get what		√		√	√
More base capability needed	√		√		
Collaboration spaces vital	√		√	√	
New tools through NeAT	√	√		√	√