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# ***Information Commons@Auchmuty***

**An Education Services' initiative to develop state-of-the-art  
teaching, learning and research support and facilities  
at the  
University of Newcastle.**

## **DRAFT PROJECT PLAN**

**January 2003**

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## ***Background to the Information Commons Project***

In August 2002 a proposal to implement a 24 x 7 information commons in the Huxley Library, with all print collections relocated to Auchmuty, received in-principle support of the Senior Executive Group (SEG). This initial proposal did not proceed, although the concept of the information commons received enthusiastic support.

A consultative Group was formed with representatives of Faculty, staff and student groups. The input and feedback of this group resulted in a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor that the original plan be modified, to provide the Information Commons at Auchmuty Library, and maintaining print collections at Huxley.

This option was promoted widely, directly via the Faculties and students associations, via a website, and with email and other contact details, to enable feedback and further consultation. At the end of the consultation period, there had been no feedback, either positive or negative, on either the concept of the Information Commons, nor its proposed location. In view of this, in January 2003 the Vice-Chancellor ratified the decision to proceed with the Information Commons proposal.

### **1. PLANNING AND SCOPING**

#### **1.1 Project Description**

The Information Commons brings together electronic learning resources, computer hardware and software, and media production facilities, in informal, collaborative layouts, to suit contemporary learning styles. The concept avoids the look of a computer barn or laboratory, and is intended to encourage collaboration amongst students, and ease of interactivity between students and resources.

Other modifications to service points in both the Auchmuty and Huxley Libraries are needed, to achieve the desired outcomes. The following points summarise the elements of the project.

#### ***At Auchmuty Library***

- Install information commons on Level 2 (L266). Level 2 is the most readily accessible area of the library, so availability is maximised, with adjacent parking spaces for disabled patrons. The development of a Library entrance on this level also enables independent access to the whole Library for clients with mobility problems, who currently rely on staff to admit them. Toilet facilities, including for disabled patrons, are also available in this area.

This area is readily secured from the rest of the Library, so can be locked down for discrete 24 x 7 access.

- Reference Collection and Information desk located within the information commons.
- A combined Law/Medical Reserve service point, located on Level 3 between the entire Law and Biomedical Collections.
- The Adaptive Technology Unit remains on Level 3.
- Centralised loan enquiries, disputes and registrations.
- Centralised phone enquiries.
- All other services and collections currently provided.
- User-friendly direct access to Archives from ground level.
- General lab access.

***At Huxley Library***

- All current physical collections
- Self-check units for all print loans and Short Loans.
- One integrated service point, through the merger of three current points, with staff to support all information / IT enquiries, and CRMC loans which cannot be borrowed via Self Check units.
- Roving support staff for labs and collections.
- Transfer of CT Building IT/ Help Desk service to Huxley at weekends.
- General lab access.

**1.2 Project Drivers**

**Drivers for the Information Commons Project include :**

- Increased demand for access to electronic information resources
- Demonstrated student need through survey feedback (via CSQ and Library Survey 2002) for more computing and IT facilities, services and equipment
- Increased dependence on a technologically sophisticated environment
- The strategic impetus to be the "University of First Choice"

- University Strategic Plan requirement for streamlining and non-duplication of processes and services
- Growing importance of non-print media and non-text information in the research process at the undergraduate level
- Identified need for embedded and more sophisticated information literacy training
- Growing number and complexity of searching and retrieval tools

### **1.3 Outcomes and benefits**

#### **At the end of the project we will have**

- Improved access to scholarly electronic information resources and other online University services supporting teaching, learning and research
- A collaborative learning environment which is available on a 24x7 basis
- Greater client convenience due to the integration of several diverse service points into "one-stop-shops"
- Increased flexibility to redeploy and retrain staff to provide value added online services

### **1.4 Project life cycle**

The consultative phase occurred during November 2002 – January 2003. The staged implementation phase will commence in February 2003, with the integrated service point at Huxley operating from start of 1<sup>st</sup> semester. The Law / Medicine merged service point, and the information commons at Auchmuty are scheduled after the commencement of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2003.

Closure of the project and evaluation is anticipated for September 2003.

## 2. KEY ELEMENTS

The key elements addressed here are Governance ; Stakeholder/ Client Management ; Risk Management ; Issues Management ; Resource Management ; Quality Management ; Status Reporting ; and Closure.

### 2.1 Governance

#### 2.1.1 Steering Committee : US-ET

#### 2.1.2 Implementation Committee :

*Lynne Benton*, Executive Director, ES, and University Librarian  
*Greg Anderson*, Director, Library and Information Services  
*Charmian Eckersley*, Senior Manager, Teaching and Learning Services  
*Grant Collin*, Senior Manager, Technology Services  
*Marion Wilson*, Manager, Planning and Development  
*Alison Rigby*, Manager, Client Services  
*Katie Smith*, Project Officer

#### 2.1.3 Project Leaders

*Marion Wilson* (Project Manager)  
*Greg Anderson* (Space Planning)  
*Neroli Masters / Vicki Picasso* (IT Infrastructure / Elibrary Services)  
*Anne Robinson / Ann Stokes* (Auchmuty Service Points)  
*Cathy Meany / Alison Rigby* (Huxley Service Points)

### 2.2 Stakeholder/ Client Management

Communication and advice on the project will continue on a regular basis throughout the life of the project. There is a hierarchy of formal reporting for stakeholder groups within the University as shown :

**Senior Executive Group (SEG)** – as major sponsor, SEG will receive regular updates via the Vice-President, University Services.

**University Services-Executive Team (US-ET)** – as the Steering Committee for the Project, US-ET will receive reports via the Executive Director, Education Services, in her capacity as Chair of the Information Commons Implementation Committee.

**Implementation Committee** – will receive regular status reports from the individual project teams, and the Coordination and Communication team.

**Library Consultative Committee** – this group of faculty and student representatives met in 2002, and recommended the current proposal. It will continue to receive updates, and hopefully provide further input.

Promotion of new services, and communication to all university clientele will occur through the regular updating of the website ; through a regular column in LETS ; via What's On emails ; and via student publications. Displays for Huxley and Auchmuty Libraries will show Information Commons@Auchmuty January 2003

artists' rendering of anticipated facilities for the Information Commons, as they become available. Katie Smith will be the Communications Officer who will coordinate and facilitate these and related activities.

Email facilities continue to be available for comment and feedback, and all clients who so wish will receive responses to feedback, although anonymity is offered. A report analysing trends derived from client comments and feedback will be collated to inform future directions, and to provide data for quality assessment.

## 2.3 Risk Management

*Risk is...any threat or opportunity which could prevent us from achieving our objectives. Our approach should ensure that potential pitfalls are identified early and managed appropriately and timely.* Professor Roger Holmes, 7 June 2002

The Risk Management Plan should protect the objectives of the Information Commons Project by

- identifying risk factors which may obstruct the projected outcome
- developing and implementing strategies to minimise or manage a potential risk
- identify contingency plans if a potential risk becomes actual

In identifying and managing factors which may impact upon the successful outcomes of the project, we need to ensure that objectives and process are linked with other plans, such as strategic plans, budgets and quality management plans.

### 2.3.1 Risk Management Plan

The Risk Management Plan ensures that due consideration has been given to elements and issues which could have an adverse impact on the achievement of the project objectives.

**Project Objective 1** : Improved access to scholarly electronic resources and other University services supporting teaching, learning and research

#### **Control filter**

1. The objective supports the University's strategic focus on
  - *Teaching & Learning*
  - *Research & Research Training*
  - *Our Students*
  - *Our Staff*
2. The objective is reflected in Education Services Goal of being

- *The University's prime support of online teaching and learning services, and scholarly information environments*

<b>Identified Risk</b>	<b>Risk Management Strategies</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Contingency Plan</b>
Lack of appropriate levels of funding for IT infrastructure, equipment and scholarly resources	Link project deliverables to strategic and other funding	Identify, acquire and commit budgeted resources	Implement base-level plan, with staged improvements as funds are available

**Project objective 2 :** A collaborative elearning environment which is available on a 24 x 7 basis

**Control filter**

1. The objective supports the University's strategic focus on
  - *Teaching & Learning*
  - *Research & Research Training*
2. The objective is reflected in Education Services Goal of being
  - *Leaders in the provision and support of physical and online teaching and learning environments*

<b>Identified Risk</b>	<b>Risk Management Strategies</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Contingency Plan</b>
Client misperception of what the new environment offers	Ensure clear, consistent communication, consultation & promotion	Team Leaders ensure needs are coordinated through the Communications Officer	Regular updates in LETS, What's On, webpage.
Inappropriate design and space elements	Active involvement of FM from planning through to completion	Provide FM with clear concise brief of required elements, to inform design and implementation	
Inability to ensure security needs and smart card facilities	Active involvement of FM from planning through to completion	Provide FM with clear concise brief of required elements to inform security and access provision	

**Project objective 3 :** Improved library organisational capability due to the merging of duplicated service points

**Control filter**

1. The objective supports the University's strategic focus on

- *Quality Assurance*
- *Support & Facilitation*

2. The objective reflects University Services Division’s goal of
- *Streamlining and reengineering policies and processes to enhance our ability to focus on strategic University goals*

<b>Identified Risk</b>	<b>Risk Management Strategies</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Contingency Plan</b>
Client misperceptions of reduced services / facilities	Clear, consistent and continuous communication & promotion	Provide public forums ; website information and feedback options ; display promotion	Provide trial period, and review processes for merged service points

## **2.4 Issues Management**

Issues management is related to risk management. Where concerns or issues arise throughout the life of the project, which may affect the outcomes, they should be raised initially with the relevant Project Team for analysis and / or resolution ; or with the Implementation Group, if further action or investigation is needed.

An Issues Register will be maintained, and reviewed regularly. Unresolved issues which could have an impact on outcomes will need to be identified and reported via the Risk Management Plan, with accompanying strategies for management.

## **2.5 Resource Management**

The original SIF grant of \$467,000 , plus minor works funding of \$100,000 (already secured) would enable the installation of the information commons, incorporating hardware, infrastructure, software, furniture, and staff relocations. This would provide (for example)

- 50 new workstations, in collaborative layouts
- networked print and colour print facilities, and scanning facilities
- wireless/ laptop capability
- Relocation of collections to accommodate the information commons
- Integration of Rooms Auchmuty L259/ L267 to accommodate Information Services staff within the information commons.
- Construction and fit-out of two extra group studies/ breakout rooms next to L325, to support the Videoconferencing Centre.
- Reconfiguration of Room L417 to two staff offices.
- Reconfiguration of L321/321A for staff relocations.

Other elements with resource implications include security, and provision of 24 x 7 access.

A cost centre has been established to enable the movement of funds and the tracking of expenditure. The Coordination and Communication team will monitor budgetary expenditure, and coordinate other resources as required. Transaction reports for expenditure will be available throughout the life of the project.

## **2.6 Quality Management**

The Steering Committee will advise the level of quality assurance that is required for the project. A base level of Quality Assurance for all sub-Project team planning documentation and activity is that the key elements provided in this overall plan are addressed and implemented.

Quality assurance will be coordinated across the whole project by the Coordination and Communication team, and will include

- Ensuring valid methodology is used
- Ensuring issues are resolved or managed as they arise
- Monitoring the project's progress
- Ensuring formal, contractual or other agreed procedures are implemented

Project performance and control measures will include

- Number and percentage of project initiatives and tasks that deliver agreed outputs.
- Number and percentage of major milestones signed off by Steering Committee.
- Project costs and resources are within allocated budget

Project performance will be assessed towards the end of the project, as a Project Performance Review. At the end of the life of the project, a Project Outcomes Review will be conducted, to identify areas for future improvement and effectiveness in project management. These reviews will feed into future Quality Management needs.

## **2.7 Status Reporting**

Sub-Project Team Leaders are responsible for providing regular status updates to the Coordination and Communication team, who will coordinate and disseminate all reports to all Project teams on a weekly basis and / or as milestones are reached.

Status Reports should include

- Status of the Project
  - Description
  - Milestones (significant points in the project) achieved for the last reporting period
  - Milestones expected for the next reporting period
  - Impact of achievement/ non-achievement of milestones
- Budget or resources report
- Issues Report
- General information and recommendations.

Status Reports will be reviewed by the Implementation Group, and disseminated to the Steering Committee at US-ET meetings, or as required.

## **2. 8 Closure Of The Project**

Closure will include

- Handover of the project deliverables to client/ stakeholder groups. Handover date(s) should be identified as early as possible in the implementation phase of the project.
- Review of the project outputs and outcomes against the objectives of the project.
- Debriefing the Project Team and formalising the wind-down.
- Formal closure by the Steering Committee.
- Project completion celebration/ launch of the Information Commons.

## 3. PROJECT TEAMS

### 3.1 Coordination and Communication

Marion Wilson (Project Manager),  
Katie Smith (Project Officer)

**Brief :** Coordinate all Project Teams' activities ; develop and disseminate a shared understanding of all Project Teams' work ; provide reports, matrices and timelines for projects ; coordinate communication and promotion of the project within the University, and to client and stakeholder groups.

### 3.2 Space Planning

**Leader :** Greg Anderson

**Team :** Brian Tame, Tina Atheron, Sandra Jones, Geoff Whitnall, Alison Rigby, Celia Munro, Marion Wilson, Ann Stokes, Anne Robinson

#### **Draft Terms of Reference**

1. To determine the allocation of space and accommodation required to achieve the objectives of the Information Commons project.
2. To ensure that the integration of service points and associated collections achieve the objectives of the proposal to rationalise service points within the Auchmuty and Huxley Libraries.
3. To reassess the overall space requirements of the Education Services Portfolio to determine if needs can be addressed in the context of the Information Commons project.
4. To ensure that adequate reading and computing facilities are available in the Auchmuty Library.
5. To determine a collection management strategy associated with the withdrawal, relegation and reorganization of the physical collections to provide for at least 10 years growth.
6. To ensure that staff requirements including access to tea rooms, amenities, office space etc are identified and incorporated into the overall space management plan.
7. To identify security needs and after hours access requirements to the Information Commons, for advice to FM.

### 3.3 IT Infrastructure / E-Library services

**Leader :** Neroli Masters / Vicki Picasso

**Team :** Brian Tame, Phillip Archer, Infrastructure rep (TBA), Grant Collin, Debbie Booth, Michael Carr, Alison Rigby, Carla Pilarski, Katie Smith.

**Brief :** Identify and implement networking and cabling needs ;  
identify 24 x7 and security needs for advice to Space Planning Group ;  
identify types of services, costs and design needs for Elibrary services and facilities

#### **Draft Terms of Reference**

1. Identify, evaluate and cost effective new electronic services.

2. Identify and report on all necessary amendments to processes associated with delivery of appropriate above current services which are identified to continue in the electronic library.
3. Identify design and environmental needs in relation to proposed services for advice to Space Planning Group and FM.
4. Ensure effective communication and consultation with other project teams on matters that may impact on other teams
5. Consult with stakeholders and other discrete groups to gather recommendations, ideas and suggestions on potential Electronic Library services

### **3.4 Auchmuty Service Points**

**Leader** : Ann Stokes/ Anne Robinson

**Team** : Ruth Talbot-Stokes, Alison Rigby, Celia Munro, Fatu Kigbo, Marion Wilson.

**Brief** : Address cost-effective integrated service points' staffing and resourcing needs at Auchmuty Library.

### **3.5 Huxley Service Points**

**Leader** : Cathy Meany / Alison Rigby

**Team** : Greg Anderson, Stephanie Robertson, Carla Pilarski, Sharon Howells, Kim Jenkins, Katie Smith.

**Brief** : Address cost-effective integrated service points' staffing and resourcing needs at Huxley Library.

Address anticipated client concerns for after-business-hours information needs.