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Sub# 51

**New Zealand Digital Strategy: Comments on the Draft Document May 2008.**

**Submission to:** [submission@digitalstrategy.govt.nz](mailto:submission@digitalstrategy.govt.nz)

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**Date:** 21 May 2008

**Introduction**

The Council of New Zealand University Librarians (CONZUL) is pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission on the Draft Digital Strategy 2.0.

CONZUL represents the eight New Zealand university libraries and is a Standing Committee of the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee. CONZUL's strategic plan states: "CONZUL will be the active and visible leader to promote the role of New Zealand university libraries as a strategic resource within the nation's research infrastructure".

University libraries have been leaders of change within their institutions, especially with regard to the effective adoption of new technologies and greater support for researchers in a digital world. Initiatives include:

- (a) Provision of digital repositories to store, promote and preserve the digital assets and outputs of universities;
- (b) Management and, increasingly, creation of research resources such as digital collections and datasets;
- (c) Publication, especially digital publication, of material based on research;
- (d) Support for innovation in scholarly communication in a digital world;
- (e) Provision of advice on e-Research data management, including metadata, standards and persistent digital identifiers; and
- (f) Transformation of services and physical facilities to support the development of students' lifelong learning skills, especially skills required in a digital environment.

## Comments relating to the Draft Digital Strategy 2.0

### 1. Comments relating to Confidence section

CONZUL is concerned with the focus on ICT professionals in the document rather than a focus on ensuring that discipline skill sets are enhanced with ICT skills to enable, for instance in an academic environment, all scholars to participate and add value in the emerging digital environment for teaching, learning and research. CONZUL recommends a broader approach to ICT skills in the next edition of the Strategy.

### 2. Comments relating to Content section, and factual correction re repositories and Kiwi Research Information Service action

5.2 in the Draft Digital Strategy document "Digital Culture Priority and Challenges – "improving the creation, discovery and use of New Zealand grown content" - states "governments, academic and commercial interests around the world are going to significant lengths to digitise and distribute vast amounts of cultural and heritage content".

It needs to be noted in the updated Strategy that in New Zealand (in contrast with OECD countries) there has been little government investment in the costly process of digitisation. Funding for the Digital Content Strategy was inadequate and not targeted at institutions that hold the bulk of New Zealand's cultural and heritage content. The vast majority of cultural and heritage resources are analogue and require significant investment to be migrated to the digital space. If resources were available for digitisation there would be a significant opportunity to provide improved discovery and use of New Zealand cultural and heritage content while also providing new opportunities for creating added-value from that content.

CONZUL is concerned that the action point listed under 5.3 "Digital Culture Actions" on page 30 of the draft Strategy is not correct. We recommend that this action point is rewritten to accurately reflect the current situation. We have consulted the Chief Executive of the National Library and she is in agreement with these comments.

The action point currently reads – "Developing the Kiwi Research Information Service – a nationwide network of research repositories to ensure New Zealand's publicly funded research results are available online."

The Strategy states that National Library has baseline funding to achieve this outcome and this is also not correct.

The Kiwi Research Information Service (KRIS) is a harvester service and search engine, not a network of research repositories. National Library does have baseline funding to deliver a harvesting service and search engine but it does not have baseline funding for establishing and maintaining repositories at external institutions.

Each of the universities and some of the polytechnics have established institutional repositories. Institutions are responsible for managing the content in their own repositories, including establishing policies and procedures to ensure that the authors have agreed to their research papers being made accessible on the web, that copyright laws and contractual licences are being complied with, that issues relating to commercially sensitive research are dealt with appropriately, eg decisions relating to whether or not the metadata is available for harvesting, etc.

The NZ research website <http://nzresearch.org.nz/>, through which the Kiwi Research Information Service (KRIS) is accessible, displays the results of the *harvesting* service that regularly collects metadata about research outputs, from various repositories, providing a single point of access for users.

The [www.nzresearch.org](http://www.nzresearch.org) website states:

"This website is a gateway to the open-access research documents produced at universities, polytechnics, and other research institutions throughout New Zealand. We have harvested research document metadata from around New Zealand and collected it in one place. You can use this website to search for research, look up specific subjects or authors, browse the research in various ways, and keep abreast of emerging research activity." (<http://nzresearch.org.nz/>)

A number of the university repositories are also being harvested by other international harvesters such as Google Scholar, OAlster, etc. Through the institutional repositories a selection of New Zealand research is available online to students and scholars both domestically and internationally.

**Recommended replacement wording:**

**The Kiwi Research Information Service (KRIS) – a national harvesting and search service to provide access to New Zealand’s research.**

### 3. Overall Collaboration comments including specific comments re eResearch

CONZUL is pleased to see the inclusion of the fourth element of Collaboration in the draft Digital Strategy 2.0. However this section of the Strategy is the least cohesive of the four sections of Connection, Confidence, Content and Collaboration. All previous sections refer to three overall groups – Communities, Business and Government. In the Collaboration section there are additional groups of Maori and researchers. This is confusing for the reader as it is not clear why these two additional groups have been singled out.

In their submissions to the first Digital Strategy CONZUL and a number of other university groups recommended the extension of the three groups to four groups, with the additional group being Education. The reason this was recommended was because Education falls into all three overall groups – Communities, Business and Government - and it is then necessary to repeat specific Education-related strategies under each of the group headings. Education is also a significant contributor and leader within many aspects of the emerging digital world and it appears to us that it would be helpful for all concerned if there was a new fourth group of Education. CONZUL recommends that there either be four groups throughout the whole document or alternatively that the actions relating to Maori and researchers are encompassed within the three agreed groups in the Collaboration section of the Draft Digital Strategy 2.0.

CONZUL institutions are all participants in the KAREN network as described under the heading "e-Research in New Zealand" on page 18 of the document under the Connection heading. The universities are also participants in the BeSTGRID collaborative project which is making a detailed submission with input from some CONZUL members. e-Research enables researchers to share information, scientific equipment, computers and expertise but it requires significant investment in digital technologies and skills in order to facilitate collaboration. CONZUL supports the BeSTGRID submission recommendation that e-Research initiatives be listed in the Collaboration section of the Strategy rather than the Connection-section in the next edition of the Strategy.

CONZUL further recommends that there is increased acknowledgement in the next version of the Strategy of the critical need to further enhance the opportunities for e-Research collaborations in order to enable realisation of the economic development opportunities that now exist in the digital environment. As outlined in the BeSTGRID submission eResearch offers the opportunity to transform the research sector in a similar way to how e-commerce has enabled new ways of doing business and how e-learning has changed education, that is by enabling access to new audiences and markets, and facilitating new partnerships and economic opportunities.

While the development of the KAREN network has been important, provision of bandwidth alone will not foster e-research. Ongoing funding is required to develop advanced digital infrastructure and technologies to support research if New Zealand is to remain competitive in an increasingly connected, globalised, distributed high-tech research environment. Section 6.5 talks about supporting the creative use and re-use of research information, and states that "new digital tools and middleware will support access to knowledge and enable economic transformation". The Strategy document needs to indicate how the creation of digital tools and middleware will be funded and fostered. As outlined in the BeSTGRID submission a wide range of other digital tools are required to complement and built on the existing connectivity including, but not limited to, room-based and desktop videoconferencing, specialised shared workspaces, scientific workflows and services, cross-institutional data storage, data archiving and data analysis tools, and remote access to scientific equipment and supercomputing resources.

#### **4. Overarching Sector Forum**

CONZUL welcomes the establishment of an overarching sector forum to provide leadership for implementation of the Digital Strategy. We would recommend the inclusion of a librarian with extensive digital experience in this forum.

#### **5. Concluding comments**

CONZUL appreciates the opportunity to make this submission but is concerned that the document does not strongly reflect the overarching digital issues and challenges that NZ needs to confront over the next few years; rather it appears to be a sampling of initiatives currently underway in government.

CONZUL also recommends that digital identity management be included in the Strategy's next edition as identity management is crucial to the development of an all-embracing digital environment, particularly in terms of dealing with intellectual property issues, privacy issues, etc.