

eResearch at VUW: The eScience Consultant's Tale

Kevin M. Buckley¹

School of Engineering and Computer Science
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Kevin.Buckley@ecs.vuw.ac.nz

1 Abstract

In 2008, Victoria University of Wellington, NZ, finally filled the post of eScience Consultant, although back then the post had been drawn up with the title of eResearch Programmer, not that either title really gives much insight into the range of facilitation that the role has provided.

In a talk [4] given at eResearch Australasia 2009, the theme of which was, regular attendees may recall, "No boundaries", the then eResearch Programmer's final slide posed the following question:

"And finally ... who is supposed to do this "no-boundary" science ?"

before finally, playfully, suggesting that there:

"Might still be a few jobs for people who can straddle the boundaries"

This eScience Consultant's Tale will look at eResearch activity at New Zealand's "capital city university", classified as the top university in New Zealand for research in that country's last PBRF report [1] [3], from the viewpoint of its eScience Consultant, in light of the experience of straddling those boundaries over the last six years.

Tales to be told will include:

- Cycle-stealing Grids vs Power-saving Initiatives
- The effects of MATLAB on researcher programming skills
- How VUW's Science Faculty got its HPC facility [2] - and what it's been used for since it did.
- Distributed computing - why don't computer science students get it?
- SKA/MWA activity at VUW - and how it helped network researchers at the University of Auckland
- The Death of the Institution ?

2 About The Author

Kevin Buckley is currently employed as the eScience Consultant at the Victoria University of Wellington, NZ, based in the School of Engineering and Computer Science, a role which he entered after following the England cricket team's tour of New Zealand in 2008.

His biography for eResearch Australasia 2009 stated that he was:

"attempting, within frameworks provided by NZ's MoRST-funded BeSTGRID organisation and BeST-GRID's federation into the trans-Tasman ARCS community, to evangelise and enable e-Research across a institution which is just taking its first steps towards facilitating academic research IT needs above and beyond an existing, windows-desktop-computing-focused, support provision. Kevin finds the role an interesting, if sometimes frustrating, challenge."

Although NZ's BeSTGRID and MoRST, and Australia's ARCS have both long since been superseded and/or replaced, Kevin's institution still has an existing windows-desktop-computing-focused, support provision.

Kevin thus still finds, as he did in 2009, the role an interesting, if sometimes - make that constantly - frustrating, challenge.

References

- [1] School of Engineering and NZ Computer Science, Victoria University of Wellington. Science faculty hpc facility. [online], March 2014. <http://ecs.victoria.ac.nz/EResearch/ScienceFacultyHPCFacility>.
- [2] Victoria University of Wellington. website page summarising the tec report. [online], October 2013. <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/research/research-intensity>.
- [3] NZ Tertiary Education Commission. Evaluating research excellence the 2012 assessment. [online], October 2013. [http://www.tec.govt.nz/Documents/Reports/\\$%20and\\$%20other\\$%20documents/PBRF-Quality-Evaluation-2012-Final-Report.pdf](http://www.tec.govt.nz/Documents/Reports/$%20and$%20other$%20documents/PBRF-Quality-Evaluation-2012-Final-Report.pdf).
- [4] John Townend, Yannik Behr, Kevin Buckley, Martha Savage, and John Hine. A grid-based facility for large-scale cross-correlation of continuous seismic data. [online], October 2009. <http://www.eresearch.edu.au/buckley2009>.