Starting up in eResearch? How to Hit the Ground Running

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DESCRIPTION
The session is aimed at providing young research institutions who are incubating an eResearch capability with practical advice on how to get things rolling in the right direction while delivering early value to researchers. It is hoped that individuals from institutions who have already been through the startup period will attend the session to share their experiences.

OUTLINE
BoFs can take a variety of forms but often include one or more short presentations followed by open discussion. Please provide a brief outline of the BoF using the following format as a guide.

1. **Topic presentation:** eResearch at University of Western Sydney – the first 9 months.
   
   Prof Cheetham will talk about what challenges have been faced in setting up an eResearch Capability at University of Western Sydney, what has been achieved to date, benefits to researchers, what hasn’t worked and roadblocks encountered, current challenges and priorities, and future plans.
   
   **15 minutes**

2. **Facilitated question / answer session:** The convenors will pose a series of focussing questions and/or challenging statements to the audience and seek responses. A brief facilitated discussion will then proceed for each. A total of 5 minutes will be spent on any 1 question. If there is a high participation rate, the participants will be asked to form into groups.
   
   **45 minutes**

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. Quick wins: Is it better to target specific research groups who are seen to be successful rather than to run broad-brush initiatives? What are the risks?

2. What are the researcher Hot Buttons in regard to eResearch, ie: the problems they are most interested in solving? How to resolve the difference between these Hot Buttons and institutional objectives?

3. Which should come first: eResearch policy or practical procedures and guidelines?

4. How do you get the eResearch message out to Researchers and Higher Degree Research students?

5. Which is better: A separate eResearch support team or an IT support team who have been trained in eResearch? And why?

6. Why not just put everything in the Cloud?

7. Research data and tools are not vital to the institution and there is no need to include it in Disaster Recovery plans?

8. Why have a central research data store? Is it necessary? What are the alternatives?

9. What should be the makeup of the eResearch team?

10. What are the best eResearch statistics to gather by way of performance indicators?

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Professor Andrew Cheetham, PhD (Plasma Physics)

Professor Andrew Cheetham is the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Western Sydney (since 2007) leading strategic development and management of research and research training in the University, with the aim of providing a research-rich environment.

His background is in plasma and fusion physics where he has worked for 15 years in laboratories in Germany, Switzerland, Australia and ultimately, as a Principal Scientific Officer at the Euratom nuclear fusion project, the Joint European Torus (JET), UK, before returning to Australia in 1990 to start working in the higher education sector where he has spent the last 20 years.
Throughout his career Professor Cheetham has been involved in computer controlled instrumentation, data acquisition, analysis and display systems and he carries his enthusiasm in this area through into modern eResearch techniques. He is currently a member of the DIISR Infrastructure Roadmap Expert Working Group for eResearch and he is Deputy Chair of the NeCTAR Board.

Andrew Leahy B. App Sc. (Computing)
Andrew is the eResearch Technical Advisor at University of Western Sydney. Prior to his current role he provided technical research support for the university research centres. Andrew has 20 years of experience delivering information & communications technology for academic and enterprise environments.

Peter Bugeia B.Sc. (Hons)
Peter is the Intersect eResearch Analyst for the University of Western Sydney. Peter has 27 years IT experience across a wide range of industries including medicine, banking and finance, and media. He has worked in commercial, not-for-profit and public sectors and has held various roles from Senior Software Engineer and Test Manager to Project Manager, Enterprise Architect and Business Analyst.