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Response to the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy 2008 Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure Exposure Draft

CAUL endorses the overall directions outlined in the Exposure Draft.

In particular, CAUL supports the intention to add a humanities, arts and social sciences research capability and the intention to treat information and communications technology (ICT) as enabling infrastructure rather than a specific capability.

CAUL wishes to make the following specific comments:

Open access models (p.17)

CAUL notes the endorsement of access models that encourage collaboration between researchers and points out that an open access model also benefits the wider community, thus providing a greater return on public investment in research.

Enabling infrastructure (p.18)

Similarly, the availability of appropriate ICT yields the additional benefit of greater public good.

Expertise building (p. 25)

While the Exposure Draft recognises the need to build expertise, this critical issue is not elaborated on. CAUL notes that Building Capability is one of the streams in the proposed Australian National Data Service. While this is welcome, the need to build both researcher and ICT personnel skills is a critical prerequisite for Australian eResearch advancing in ways that meet the Government's aspirations. CAUL would like to see greater emphasis given to training and expertise building, and appropriate resources allocated for this purpose.

Data storage (p.27)

CAUL is particularly pleased to see the emphasis given to data storage and management, which is fundamental to the successful advancement of eResearch. CAUL suggests that the recommendations that "each institute publishes and adopts a data management plan; and each institute ensures its researchers use and abide by the data management plan" require some elaboration. As each individual research project requires its own data management plan, it may be clearer to recommend that institutions publish and ensure compliance with a data management policy, a significant component of which would be the need for each research project to have and abide by a data management plan.

Transforming Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Research (p.42-46)

As already indicated, CAUL is very supportive of the establishment of a humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) research capability under the NCRIS umbrella and notes the active involvement of a number of its members in current HASS eResearch projects. All of which include some form of digitisation.

Further to this, CAUL advises that the existing achievements on p. 44 should be expanded to include reference to the many digitisation projects that have been, and are being, conducted in universities, and that existing resource discovery mechanisms be acknowledged.

CAUL strongly recommends that the data management, advisory and governance mechanisms outlined in the Exposure Draft take into account ICT and infrastructure elements as well as researcher activity. Given the importance of digitisation, as well as the links to institutional repositories, CAUL requests involvement in any committees established to oversee and advance HASS eResearch. CAUL also recommends that effective links be established between the Australian National data Service and HASS eResearch activity to ensure coordinated infrastructure development.

This response was prepared on behalf of CAUL (Council of Australian University Librarians) by the CAUL Executive.

Contact Details:
Mr Andrew Wells
University Librarian
The University of New South Wales
(02) 9385 2662
email: a.wells@unsw.edu.au

18 July 2008