NATA Partner Project Progress Report

Engaging Network Members: A NATA Case Study of a Contemporary Tertiary Sector Issue.

Lead Association: ACODE

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Project Team:
Ric Canale (Project leader, La Trobe University) and Alan Arnold (University of Canberra). A project review panel will comprise of Helen Carter (ACODE), James Sankar (AARNet), Philip Uys (ascilite) and Susan Stoney (CADAD).

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Project overview (max 2 pages)

Project aims

The overarching aim of this project is to develop recommendations and guidelines for higher education digital media management encompassing specific institutional strategic interests and sector-wide interests in tandem. The project will be judged a success if ACODE member institutions are able to leverage benefit from the work of the project.

The project is essentially collaborative in nature and operates within multiple overlapping circles or networks. Consequently, needs and interests are viewed from multiple perspectives. The project seeks to engage with:

- specific institutional interests,
- the common interests represented by higher education (national and regional dimensions),
- the perspectives of particular professional groupings exemplified by the CAUL, CAUDIT and ACODE organisations, and
- the vendor/ service provider perspective.

With support from NATA (Network of Australasian Tertiary Associations) the project is able to expand its aims and include documentation of the process for effective and efficient engagement of members and stakeholders. The project will therefore document the process.

Project background

It was recently identified by ACODE that there is a need to investigate and scope a sector-wide approach to media management. This partner project will use Media Management as a case study for how to go about the process of engaging members and subsequently developing a guide to a contemporary issue. Using this issue, the project will draw out the key elements for engaging network members, the factors required to jointly investigate and finally for collectively writing a briefing document for an issue of current concern in a timely fashion.

Stated deliverables

The intended project outcomes comprise:

- Guidelines for media management in higher education
- Description of the process to engage networks in a contemporary issue
- Document a process and framework for scoping an issue of general concern
- Develop a brief information document modelled on the *7 Things You Should Know About*... series.

Progress against specified deliverables (max 1 page)

Overall progress in the project is indicated by (X).

0%	25%	X 50%	75%	100%

The project is complex and while delivery of some final outputs is expected in February, other parts of the project will continue to develop throughout the year.

- Guidelines for media management in higher education.
  The Guidelines are in the form of a wiki and continue to be expanded and updated by ACODE members.
- Description of the process to engage networks in a contemporary issue.
  The writing of this document has not yet begun.
- Document a process and framework for scoping an issue of general concern.
  The writing of this document has not yet begun.
- Develop a brief information document modelled on the *7 Things You Should Know About…* series.
  This is near completion.

Key project challenges (max ½ page)

The key challenges:

1. The voluntary nature of networking across associations means that higher priorities often take precedence and cause significant delays to individuals' contributions. The status and legitimacy of the NATA Project mitigated against this challenge to some extent but dependency on volunteers remains the most significant challenge to progress.
   There has been a long delay in appointing a Research Assistant due to unexpected changes in availability of a suitable appointee. This has recently resolved and La Trobe University is now proceeding with engaging an experienced researcher for the project.
2. Networking across associations is of itself an activity requiring time and effort and entails additional complexity compared to networking within an association. A Media Management project conducted solely as an ACODE project, for example, is a simpler proposition than networking across multiple associations. Although the potential benefits are greater for a networking project running across multiple associations, the benefits are simultaneously less easily achieved.
3. Determining the best form of Web presence to serve both the NATA networking project and the Media Management project remains an open question. The current wiki environment (hosted by wikispaces) is likely to be sufficiently open but needs to be further developed with content and to attract a critical mass of

contributors. The project wiki continues to be a longer-term development proposition.

Key project achievements (max ½ page)

Key achievements of the project:

Raised awareness of the issue.

ACODE members have greater awareness of the issues surrounding media management and of the potential significance it has for their institutions. This is an important achievement because of the rapidly increasing use of video in higher education across a wide range of applications and functions.

As a direct result of this project, AARNet has developed an interest in the sector-wide needs for media management, with a view to develop services to meet those needs. Discussions with Chris Hancock CEO and Jamie Sunderland, Director of Products and Services, are continuing.

Sensitivity to a range of professional perspectives.

The project has a focus on teaching and learning and recognises that the same technology has significant implications in other areas of university life such as marketing, communications and alumni relations. By recognising the legitimate interests of others, the project has created opportunity for dialogue with other perspectives.

Sensitivity to a range of institutional perspectives.

The project has begun to bring together in one place, descriptions of different institutional responses to a common need for media management. Access to this information through ACODE will provide institutions with knowledge of a range of approaches and strategies being adopted by fellow institutions that will inform their own decision-making.

Continuing focal point for dialogue and information sharing.

The establishment of the project wiki enables continued development and convenient access to information that is helpful and contextualised. Participants in the wiki will maintain currency of the information held on it so that visitors will continue to have access to updated information as sophistication in media management in the sector develops.

Evaluation (max ½ page)

Evaluators have been appointed but this phase of the project has not commenced.

Lessons learnt (max ½ page)

List any key lessons learnt throughout the process so far.

This is covered under 'Key Project Challenges"

Preliminary findings or outcomes (to date)

- The wiki at http://acode-nata-project.wikispaces.com/
- ACODE survey on Digital Media Management and results, reported on the project wiki.
- Table of active projects and investigators in A-NZ universities (not yet cleared for publication)
- Established discussions with AARNet to investigate opportunities for sector-wide approaches and solutions.

Networking

At this stage of the project the focus has been on collaboration with AARNet. Once there is a good understanding of the sector-level Teaching and Learning requirements, the project will seek to extend collaboration to other groups such as ASCILITE, CADAD, CAUL and CAUDIT.

Concluding comments

The NATA networking dimension of the project will undoubtedly be a key part of the success of the project. The project is moving more slowly than anticipated, in part because of the challenges of working within and across volunteer associations, delays in availability of a suitable Research Assistant, and also because of the nature of the problem space itself. Media management systems are relatively new and specialised. Their implementation requires commitment of significant institutional resources and so development of knowledge, planning and progress in the area is slow. Nonetheless the original project concept is sound and will continue to evolve, driven by common interest among institutions and supporting associations.

The team thanks NATA for the opportunity to expand the scope of the project and further explore this significant contemporary issue.