

U21 Information Services Group Newsletter

April 2004

Compiler: Marian Farley

OUR WEBSITE: <http://www.universitas21.com/staff/InfoServices.htm>

U21 INFORMATION SERVICES GROUP NEWS

U21 MEETING

Janine Schmidt (University of Queensland) reports on April 29th, that the U21 meeting has just been held in Brisbane. It was hosted by Professor John Hay, Vice-Chancellor and President at UQ, and now the Chair of U21. During deliberations the use of Library resources by U21 Global students was discussed. Janine says that the results of their deliberations will be available shortly.

CORRECTION

In the February 2004 issue, Tony provided a comparison of the reported statistics of the major academic US, UK, and Australian library groups. Tony has since found some errors and will correct them within the next few weeks.

UNIVERSITY NEWS

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

JANET COPSEY'S VISIT TO EIGHT U21 INSTITUTIONS

Janet Copey, University Librarian at the University of Auckland, sends special thanks to all those who hosted her during her trip last year. She says that the trip was a wonderful opportunity to gain an insight into eight of the U21 institutions in Europe, UK and North America. Not unsurprisingly, considering the similarities in size and focus of the institutions, there was considerable commonality, although there were different forces at work in each of the institutions - some driven by the particular strategies of individual directors and/ or their institutions, and some driven by specific national / wider political grouping (eg EU) agendas and the associated funding opportunities. All libraries however had a common focus on constant service improvement for clients despite the local constraints, which seemed to differ as to where they impacted most - funding for staff, funding for computers and other equipment, funding for collections, funding for building improvements, etc.

The reporting structures, and partnerships with other campus units, also differed across the institutions visited with the four UK institutions (as well as University of Melbourne) all having merged Library / IT structures - however there was considerable difference in the nature of the merged service structures with some more integrated than others. All libraries visited had good working relationships with institutional IT partners regardless of whether they were part of the same overall structure; however the nature of the relationship differed depending on the level of integration of library systems with enterprise systems, or indeed whether enterprise systems were in place or not. Janet was interested to find that the focus on the purchase of off-the-shelf, usually US-sourced, software products was not the norm across all institutions, with European universities more likely to have locally-developed or open-source software environments. There was also a clear move at all institutions towards open-source software for the development of institutional repositories as a result of the development of the OAI (Open Archives Initiative) standards and the associated OAIster search engine.

The majority of the libraries visited had good working relationships with e-learning / flexible learning partners as well although there was far less commonality across the institutions in how these areas were set-up and managed; some of the units reported to those responsible for university libraries and some did not. It was clear from the trip that it was still very early days in terms of the developing relationships between library systems and e-learning systems and none of the institutions visited appeared to have resolved all the issues relating to the development of one common repository of course materials, eg created within the library system but seamlessly linked into the e-learning system via the appropriate course link.

Copies of Janet's trip report are being sent to all U21 members that she met on the trip, as well as to her colleagues in the Australasian U21 group.

OPENING OF GRAFTON INFORMATION COMMONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND MEDICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES CAMPUS

Janet reports that the University of Auckland Library has just opened a satellite Information Commons at their Grafton Medical and Health Sciences Campus. This new facility builds on the enormous success of the Kate Edger Information Commons on the main City Campus at the University of Auckland - www.information-commons.auckland.ac.nz The Grafton Information Commons has 145 seats with a mix of 90 student workstations, group work and casual seats as well as a training room with 18 computers compared to the 500+ student workstations and an additional 700+ study spaces in the Kate Edger Information Commons.

The Grafton Information Commons environment and service is being run as an extension of the Kate Edger Information Commons. The University Library is providing the desktop hardware with the IT Directorate provided the support for the hardware and software environment. The University Library is responsible for providing the IT and information skills support, via the IC Help Desk service and the associated student "rover" service within both facilities. A wide range of information skills training courses are also available within both locations.

The Grafton Information Commons provides an integrated learning environment where all Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences students have access to information and productivity software, allowing them to integrate information in to course work. The main purpose is to provide access to electronic learning and information resources. The principle is to meet the general software needs of students, as well as provide specialist software with a broad application base. The standard student desktop environment is the same as that available in the Kate Edger Information Commons, with the exception of some additional specialist software for the Medical and Health Science students.

Students are able to retrieve information from the library databases, e-journals and e-books, access course work through Cecil, the University's e-learning system, send email and browse the Internet, use MS Office and other specialist programs - all on the same computer. The development of computer and information literacy skills is a key focus of the Information Commons and opportunities for training are integrated into all aspects of service. The service aims to provide integrated learning support in partnership with the Philson Medical and Health Sciences Library, Student Learning Centre and the English Language Self Access Centre (ELSAC).

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

E-SCIENCE

Information Services is a partner in the Midlands e-Science Centre (MeSC), one of seven newly established centres of excellence to augment the existing national and regional e-Science Centres. The brief of the e-Science Centres is developing Grid technology and functionality on behalf of UK on a national and regional level. The purpose of the centre is to; add regional coverage to the existing UK e-Science Grid; add experience and resources to the existing UK e-Science Grid; add and co-ordinate expertise in technologies and applications important to e-Science and to host Access Grid nodes for multi-site remote conferencing.

The MeSC is a virtual centre focusing on modelling and analysis of large complex systems. Its uniquely distinguishing aspect is the focus on long term research in developing effective algorithms and software technology for the Grid and their application to complex problems leading to scientific advancement or industrial benefit. To facilitate this research, a 102-processor Grid cluster and 1 Terabyte of storage has recently been ordered from Hewlett-Packard, strengthening the link between the company and the University. Joint research projects are now planned. The cluster, which requires a 75 amp power supply and hence generates 18 Kwatts of heat, will be housed in the Information Services machine room and managed by staff from ICSD.

In conjunction with the MeSC Information Services are in the process of procuring and installing a second Access Grid node for the MeSC, in addition to the one that Information Services has installed in the HP Visual and Spatial Technology Centre. Unlike traditional one to one video conferencing, the Access Grid nodes enable simultaneous conferences with many other sites in the world. It is about the start debating the role of library staff in the e-science initiative. This was a "hot" topic at the last CURL (Consortium of University Research Libraries) MeSC meeting.

For more information on the Centre visit www.mesc.bham.ac.uk/.

SHERPA

Securing a Hybrid environment for Research Preservation and Access

Information Services has been successful in its tender bid to be an associate partner in the SHERPA project.

SHERPA is a joint project funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL) which started in November 2002. The project is looking into the issues surrounding the installation and population of institutional eprint repositories. The work of SHERPA to date has included setting up repositories in partner institutions; adding test papers; negotiating with publishers; investigating preservation issues; working on IPR and deposit licences; mounting advocacy campaigns; and sharing experiences and identifying future strategies.

IS is pleased to be part of the project as it will not only provide funding for technical hardware but also enable the University to benefit from the advantages of working with other major research institutions.

WEBCT VISTA

Information Services has signed a contract for WebCT Vista with a view to implementing this for the 2005/06 session. In the meantime use of WebCT campus edition is growing.

UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Last year the University of Hong Kong's libraries initiated an annual "Leadership Institute" designed to provide library directors and senior librarians and other information professionals from Asia with an opportunity to develop new management and leadership skills.

This year's institute, (May 16 - 20, 2004) which is fully booked, is being cosponsored by the Hong Kong JULAC consortium and the University City Library now being constructed just across the border in Shenzhen.

This residential Institute will provide library directors and senior librarians from the East Asia region with the unique opportunity to develop new skills in the volatile area of management and leadership in the information sector. The program will provide a cost effective means of accessing the excellent management training services provided by experts in the field from the United States, Hong Kong and mainland China.

- The primary objectives of the Institute are:
 - To develop and enhance management and leadership qualities in academic and research librarians in the East Asia region

- To enhance collaboration and foster relations among academic and research libraries in the region.

Over the course of the 4 days, participants will engage in learner-driven activities designed to build skills and awareness required of leaders in today's library environment.

Topics to be covered include:

- Effective leadership
- Managing technological change
- Budgetary implications
- Problem solving
- Working in groups and teams
- Changing technical services
- Managing large and small projects.

Further details can be found by going to <http://lib.hku.hk/leadership/2004.html> .

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

UNSW LIBRARY VISITOR

Rhonda Langford, the UNSW Physical Sciences Librarian, a recipient of a competitive UNSW U21 Fellowship Award, begins her long awaited overseas study program at the end of April. Rhonda will be visiting a range of U21 libraries with a particular brief to look for effective and forward thinking ways of delivering information services - specifically reference, information literacy and research support, across disciplines. UNSW Library currently operates, for these services, under a structure defined more than 30 years ago when the University Library grew, in a few years, from a very small Library for a new institution to a very large Library catering for a comprehensive, research based institution.

Over the years the technical and support activities of the so-called Special Libraries have gradually been examined and centralised (serials work, ILL, shelving administration, copying services, etc) and now it is time to closely reexamine core information service provision for UNSW Library in the 21st century environment.

UNSW Library is very appreciative of the work of all the contacts and the planning associated with assisting Rhonda to conduct her investigation. Rhonda will be working her way westwards around the globe from Hong Kong to the UK to the US and Canada, arriving back down under mid-June. She will be at University of Hong Kong, the four UK libraries, University of Virginia and UBC for brief periods. Rhonda may also include some supplementary visits and possibly a professional meeting.

She will be in touch virtually throughout her trip, so there may be the chance of an update in later Newsletters. We look forward to benefitting in the future from the fresh perspective this extensive (and exhausting) opportunity will provide.

UNIVERSITAS 21 GLOBAL

UNIVERSITAS 21 GLOBAL NOW IN CHINA

SHANGHAI, April 13, 2004 – Universitas 21 Global, announced that its online MBA programme will be available to Chinese students for the first time. The online MBA will be available through Universitas 21 Global's China-based channel partners China Education Group and Leadership for Life Academy.

Commenting at the event Dr. Mukesh Aghi, CEO of Universitas 21 Global said, "China's entry into WTO and competitive pressures from being a more active member of the world economy directly translates into a need for world-class business leaders. By the year 2020, China alone will witness 20 million students seeking higher education. e-Learning will emerge as a major conduit for access to education and

Universitas 21 Global is proud to bring millions of Chinese students the knowledge they need to get ahead as well as to help cultivate the talent needed to sustain China's fast-paced momentum

"China represents an important market for us with huge opportunities to present students with the resources of 16 world-leading universities while enjoying the conveniences of working in an online environment," said Mr. Ronald Schlosser, president and CEO, Thomson Learning.

With China's fast-developing economy, large numbers of qualified senior administrators with advanced management skills, international vision and a full knowledge of the local market are needed. However, it is still difficult for the bulk of Chinese students interested in MBA courses to simultaneously obtain international vision and local experience. Those who go abroad to study risk losing touch with an adaptive Chinese market. Those taking courses in China face a problem of limited international case studies and interaction with global peers.

"Chinese students will now have access to leading-edge practices, case studies and instruction as they gain entrance to the global knowledge economy," said Professor Sir Colin Campbell, president and vice chancellor, University of Nottingham. "I'm excited that Chinese students can now compete on equal terms with their peers around the world – while also able to maintain their competitiveness at home in China."

"We're excited about the fact that Universitas 21 Global will allow us to extend our current excellent resources even further," said Charles Huang, Chairman & CEO, China Education Group a partner with Universitas 21 Global. "The program's flexible course arrangement and opportunity for interaction will help us to provide valuable international experience and peer networks to students."

UNIVERSITAS 21 GLOBAL RECOGNISED AT THE "2004 COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM" CEREMONY

SINGAPORE, 5 April 2004 – Established in 1988, the "Computerworld Honors Program" is an initiative between the leaders of the information technology industry and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Each year, the Chairmen or Chief Executive Officers of the world's foremost information technology companies nominate innovators and honours these men and women, organisations and institutions, for their leading role in the information technology revolution.

This year, Universitas 21 Global was nominated by Craig Conway, President and Chief Executive Officer of PeopleSoft for a place in the On-Line Archive of the "Computerworld Honors Program" and the permanent research collections of its affiliated Academic Council. As a Computerworld Honors Laureate, Universitas 21 Global will vie for the award in the "Program's 21st-Century Achievement Award in the Education & Academia category". The Award is a symbol of the extraordinary quality of their work, its impact on society, and its contribution to the history of the information technology revolution.

A formal Medal Presentation ceremony to mark the contribution of the 2004 Collection case studies to the Global Archives and Academic Council members was held at the San Francisco City Hall yesterday morning. Dr. Mukesh Aghi, CEO of Universitas 21 Global personally received the Commemorative Medal in recognition of service to society. Universitas 21 Global's case study will now join nearly 5,000 others from visionaries around the world who are also leveraging information technology to promote positive social change.

A jubilant Dr. Mukesh Aghi, CEO, Universitas Global 21, said at the Ceremony, "As the first company from Singapore to receive this nomination from Craig Conway and Medal from Computerworld, it is indeed a great honour for all of us at Universitas 21 Global. The gap caused by an inadequate supply of brick-and-mortar universities to meet the increasing demand for higher education, especially apparent in Asia and developing countries, is a critical one. We recognize this rapidly evolving phenomenon and the Universitas 21 Global business model has been built to fill this vacuum."

He added, "To overcome the impediments for the successful delivery of online education which is both international in scope and content, technology is a key tool - the Internet is a powerful communication and

information distribution channel. Together with a team of dedicated academic faculty and supportive technology partners, we believe Universitas 21 Global has both the right software and infrastructure to address and arrest this shortfall in the provision of graduate-level education.”

UNIVERSITAS 21 GLOBAL OPENS A REGIONAL OFFICE IN KNOWLEDGE VILLAGE

Dubai, 14 March 2004 - Universitas 21 Global, has further expanded its international network with the opening of a regional office in Knowledge Village, Dubai. The new office will operate as a pan-Arab education and counseling centre for the university in the Arab region. This will enable them to assist students who are considering enrolling in the existing MBA programme or other post-graduate courses currently being developed

Commenting on the opening Dr. Mukesh Aghi, CEO of Universitas 21 Global said, ”Opening a regional office in what is regarded as the Middle East learning hub, is a natural extension of Universitas 21 Global’s online offering. All the advantages of learning online still apply, but now we are able to provide on the ground expertise and support from our own representatives, as and when required.”

Universitas 21 Global was introduced to the Middle East last year, and is the first Business School offering an online MBA programme. This unique and innovative approach has been well received in the Arab world and since our launch in August 2003, we have had over 800 applications for the programme and these students come from all around the world including Asia, Europe, the USA, Latin America and even Africa.

“We are very happy to welcome Universitas 21 Global into the rich learning community of Knowledge Village,” the Director of Knowledge Village, Dr Abdulla Al Karam, said today. “Since its inception, Knowledge Village has strongly advocated the benefits of e-learning. We are confident that having one of the top online business schools as a key partner in Knowledge Village and the UAE will attract even more interest in what online learning has to offer.”

“We believe that the opening of a regional office in Knowledge Village, Universitas 21 Global will enhance its global e-learning services. As their exclusive agent in the UAE, we will therefore be better equipped to provide student counseling and recruitment services,” says Aman Merchant, CEO of Leading Concepts, a leading provider of executive education, performance consulting and e-learning solutions in the UAE.

DEADLINE NEXT NEWSLETTER: JUNE 15th