

THE CARRICK EXCHANGE

The Carrick Institute and the RIN

The Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Ltd was established with the purpose of raising the standard of teaching in higher education. Lots more information at <http://www.carrickinstitute.edu.au>

The Resource Identification and Network portfolio is a program of the Institute which was originally conceived as a repository of learning resources. Its goal was set out as being “to develop effective mechanisms for the identification, dissemination and embedding of good individual and institutional practice in learning and teaching in Australian higher education.” A forum was held on 29 August 2005 and a Think Tank was held in Melbourne on 1 September 2006. I reported on that to the September 2006 CAUL meeting. Now RIN has transformed, butterfly-like, into the Carrick Exchange.

There have been many efforts to establish distributed repositories of shareable education materials, and the main lesson from these experiences is that people are less willing to share than one might hope. Widening the scope to include other kinds of communication and interaction makes sense, as does the use of contemporary web technologies to facilitate this. So the concept has widened out considerably, and the whole thing has been renamed the Carrick Exchange.

About the Carrick Exchange

The Carrick Exchange is a new online service to support those who teach, manage and lead learning and teaching in Australian higher education. It will provide:

- Access to quality resources that support teaching and learning by searching and browsing;
- Access to learning materials available for sharing and repurposing;
- Information about new technologies that impact on teaching practice and student learning experiences;
- Ideas about learning and practice;
- Opportunities to network with other academics with similar interests in group spaces and/or through creating networks of colleagues;
- The ability to save resources and search results;
- The ability to comment on and exchange ideas on the relevance and usefulness of particular teaching resources and to view the comments of others;
- The ability to participate in discussions, debates and dialogue about teaching in higher education.

Although the CE began as a repository, it is now wider in scope, and is conducting research into why standalone repositories have been unsuccessful. A goal is to engage potential users and meet their needs. They want to do this by

- Making it really easy to use

- Enhancing the value of resources through quality control, good metadata, “semi-formal commentary” on resources and formal peer review
- Providing a facility to personalize a MyExchange facility
- Introducing Web 2.0 software tools such as the ability to tag and comment on resources, contact other people, contribute resources, form communities, set up a personal profile, and locate colleagues with similar interests – all of them tools such as those available in Facebook or MySpace
- Systematically archive content

The resources available through the CE will be for teachers in higher education, and will include learning, teaching and curriculum resources, resources generated through group methods (social resources), technology resources, and others.

Recent Developments

We have attended several meetings of parts of the Carrick Exchange – those below were attended by either Derek Whitehead or Teula Morgan from Swinburne.

Blue Sky Thinking Day (15 May) – attendees were mainly from Education.au, the Carrick Institute, and ASCILITE. There were six others, including Teula Morgan. The purpose was to speculate and imagine – new technologies, recent software projects, recent experiences. The focus was on issues such as the e-framework, re-use of e-learning content, technical standards, repositories experience to date, identity and access management, Web 2.0 software, the edna experience, and more.

A core question was “What is out there that we should consider for the future of the Carrick Exchange – something that will help us reach our goals and go beyond?”

Metadata Schema – the Carrick Exchange has developed a complex metadata scheme covering not only learning object or resource metadata, but also metadata relating to persons, to groups (e.g. a project team), organisations, (e.g. a university), events (e.g. a conference), collections, administrative information, and Web 2.0 technologies (e.g. tags). This work has been substantially completed in September 2007.

The DC metadata standard is the basis for most of this work, and this distinguishes it from other approaches which have used the LOM standard, or aimed to bridge the two. Adopting this approach has made it possible to provide a higher level of integration and interoperability between the different kinds of metadata.

The Carrick Exchange Metadata Reference Group includes people representing ARROW, APSR, the National Library, RUBRIC, ACOC, education.au, and others. There have been several meetings/teleconferences; Derek Whitehead has attended for CAUL.

Digital Rights Management – the initial meeting of the Rights Management Reference Group on 20 August 2007 highlighted some of the issues for the Carrick Exchange which have not been adequately addressed. In particular

- Need to clarify whether the CE will be open access, or closed, or some combination.
- Need to clarify what licences will be used – open licences, commercial licences, others, or a combination.

- The lessons of preceding learning object repositories need to be clearly absorbed and the ways the CE is different need to be clarified.
- Some rights issues need further work – third party copyright issues, dealing with infringements, ownership of material produced in universities.

The material prepared for the meeting included a number of useful scenarios – a good way to deal with rights issues.

Teula Morgan attended the meeting.

Why the Carrick Exchange is important for CAUL

- 1 It has very considerable resources being put into it from DEST funds.
- 2 The main drivers in the Carrick Exchange, other than the Carrick Institute, are ACODE, ASCILITE, and education.au, and they are anxious to ensure library involvement as well; they partner with us in a number of areas.
- 3 There is a clear overlap between creating a collaborative knowledge and networking environment for the education sector which is being created in the Carrick Exchange, and what a library does.
- 4 The CE is self-consciously innovative, and so should we be.
- 5 The issues being dealt with in thinking about the CE are issues libraries deal with too – e.g. metadata, resource sharing, archiving, Web 2.0 technologies, digital rights management.

A number of people working in libraries have been involved in development of the Carrick Exchange. For example, Kathryn Greenhill from Murdoch University has a nice [blog posting](#) about the CE; it is worth reading Kathryn's informative and enthusiastic post.

More Information

The Carrick Exchange has a website at <http://www.carrickinstitute.edu.au/carrick/go/home/rin/cache/offonce/pid/381;jsessionid=C23464FC67224A76BEA75BB3D4EFACDF> and this includes some background information and a FAQ. In July 2007 Education.au began to publish a newsletter, the Technology Bulletin, which is mainly about technical developments in the Carrick Exchange. See http://www.educationau.edu.au/jahia/Jahia/home/tech_bulletin

Derek Whitehead
10 September, 2007

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3.45

Discussion and Synthesis

(a) Learning perspectives (b) Technology perspectives

To sum up the day let us revisit the key question; are we embracing the future or are we in danger of just tweaking the edges? This is an important question for looking at sustainability issues.

Three key external attendees (David Cummings, Teula Morgan and James Dalzeil) provided synthesis on the issues from the day - thinking about tomorrow to help us move into the future.

David Cummings:

1. Keep in mind that the exchange is a network but it is also part of a network. It is part of something a lot bigger and has to link to larger things.
2. Don't expect the Carrick Exchange to be able to do anything more or greater than what you would expect in real life.
3. When you work at the bleeding edge, you are going to get cut. Expect to be cut but don't be put off by the cuts and bruises. It's exciting, dynamic and could be world class, so be brave.

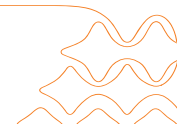
Teula Morgan:

1. As someone without a background in this project, I was interested in ideas around boundaries between me as an individual and me and as a representative of the institution.
 - o What are the differences?
 - o Who owns rights?
 - o What about third party material?
 - o My institution might have an opinion on who can use my material.
 - o People are used to acting as individuals but what does this mean when we bring this into an institutional context (i.e. social networking)?
2. Our understanding of the audience.
 - o What people expect from learning and teaching repositories.
3. The university as a publisher.
 - o Dealing with material that hasn't been published.
 - o Learning material and multi-media objects.
 - We are not just becoming publishers we are becoming film producers.
 - o What skills are we giving people to deal with intellectual property in a new environment?

James Dalzeil:

Three Cautions:

1. Carrick exchange is not the centre of the universe.
 - o It is one node within a federation of research repositories.
 - o It needs to be built in a way that it will play well with others.
 - o Same issue comes up on community side (i.e. how do I benefit from the Carrick Exchange?)
2. There is the challenge of managing innovation with new and cool stuff and what the community wants, along with the traditional things that will be expected.
 - o The Carrick Exchange is running too far ahead of the community.
 - If most of what is done is visionary, then you run the risk of creating a gap with core constituents.



CARRICK EXCHANGE PROJECT

3. What is going to motivate people to use this?
 - o No really compelling reasons.
 - o There needs to be a larger and more obviously compelling list about why using the Carrick Exchange is going to help me as a user.

The following points were made during group discussion:

- Spaces (personal and community)
 - o People who do and don't want the Carrick Exchange space as their home.
 - Might be appealing to those that do not have a space yet.
 - Be aware that innovators will already have a 'life' somewhere else in another space. The chance that they are going to move from their "home" is not good.
 - o Need to work on models used to link online spaces with each other.
 - Look for a mechanism to accommodate people's different requirements.
 - Look at the Carrick Exchange becoming a set of services separate from the Carrick Exchange website (i.e. not just available through the site itself).
 - o Need to work on building that community.
 - Work hard on populating it.
 - Once it has critical mass, it will take off.
 - Need to engage leaders/champions.
 - Value could come from people commenting on resources.
- Be wary of stereotyping academics.
 - o Academics talk about teaching.
 - There is an impulse that can be tapped into about being good teachers.
 - Comes as much from teachers as it does from research.
 - o Need to be reasonable and realistic, and be seen as such with the colleagues you are trying to entice (e.g. language can disenfranchise).
- The Carrick Exchange was always an idea of networking and other methods of promoting.
 - o This is just one component. It's a much bigger than just this.
- A lot of work is happening around discipline networks. Both are about forming networks.
 - o Some is through existing structures, i.e. teachers forming teaching networks.
 - o Online makes things accessible.
 - o How do we use this to get the sector to adopt technologies?
- The Carrick Exchange is all about people.
 - o The Carrick exchange is merely a component of a bigger Carrick Institute mandate which is about dissemination, sharing etc.
 - o Part of the reason the word 'exchange' was chosen was because it's a good metaphor.
 - It's about the 'exchange' of ideas and communication between people.

