Research Report 2008  School of Business Information Technology

Head of School:  Professor Brian Corbitt/Acting HOS  Professor Ross Smith
Director of Research: Professor Mohini Singh

Introduction

This is a research report for 2008 for the School of BIT. It is a summary of major research activities in the School.

Research Concentrations

The School of BIT has four research concentrations:

**Digital Business**

The Digital Business research group concentrates on understanding and evaluating Internet-enabled businesses and services, and related competencies and connections. Current funded projects in this discipline are on e-government, B2C and B2B e-business, mobile technologies and e-learning. An ARC grant on e-learning was received this year for 2009 to 2011.

**Systems, Models and Strategies**

The SMS cluster seeks to develop and disseminate theoretically-grounded and practice-oriented understanding of information and ICTs for business improvement. It focuses particularly on enterprise issues concerned with enterprise information systems, information systems development and use, business models and strategic IT management and governance. Current projects in this cluster are focussed on Green IT Issues.

**Information and Knowledge management**

This research group focuses on access to information, information retrieval, and dissemination of information from an information management perspective. A number of ARC funded projects are managed by this cluster of researchers.

**Business Ecologies in Education**

This research cluster is focussed on the use of information and communication in teaching and learning. This group is working on projects funded by Carrick and RMIT Learning and Teaching Investment Project.

Research Grants

The School of BIT has successfully obtained funding from competitive schemes, and other and these are listed in the section below.

**Australian Research Council**

ARC Linkage Project, "An Intelligent Software-AGENT: Innovates Adaptive Workplace eTraining Needs"
Chief Investigators: Dr Elspeth McKay, Adjunct Professor J. Izard and Partner Organisations: Government Skills Australia (Prue Madsen) and Neteffective Media Group (James Boldiston) $125,000.

ARC Discovery Project, ‘Australian doctoral graduates' publication, professional and community outcomes’, Professor Terry Evans (Deakin) & Dr Peter Macauley (SBIT, RMIT), $225,000.
ARC Discovery Project, ‘Research capacity-building: the development of Australian PhD programs in national and emerging global contexts’, Professor Terry Evans (Deakin), Ms Margot Pearson (ANU) & Dr Peter Macauley (SBIT, RMIT) $225,000.

DEST Grant (now sponsored by the ARC), ‘Classifying Australian PhD theses by Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines (RFCD) codes’, Dr Peter Macauley (SBIT, RMIT), Professor Terry Evans (Deakin) Ms Margot Pearson (ANU) $63,000.

Public Sector Research

RIRDC Project, ‘The Impact of ICT-Based programs in E-Government and E-learning on Rural and Regional Communities’, Professor Mohini Singh, $118,000.

Victoria Police Project, ‘An Evaluation of Mobile Technologies used by Victoria Police’, Professor Mohini Singh, Dr Pradip Sarkar and Dr Leslie Young, $14,000’.

State Government of Victoria - Department of Human Services Project, ‘Towards an eLearning Exemplar Package: Pilot Knowledge Navigational System’ Dr Elspeth MacKay, $55,000

Carrick Awards

Carrick project, ‘eSIMS’, Brian Corbitt, Ross Smith, Martin Dick, Hossein Zadeh and Ian Searle.

Learning and Teaching Incentive Funds


Early Career Researcher Grant

ECR Project, 'The System Workflow And Use Of Technology In The Emergency Department Of A Victorian Hospital', Dr Say Yen Teoh and Chris Cheong, $18,500.

ECR Project, ‘Green IT Issues’, Dr Pradip Sarkar and Dr Leslie Young, $18,000.


Authors of Leading Books


Membership of Editorial Boards/External Board or Committee Memberships

A large number of BIT staff serve as members on editorial boards of highly regarded journals, and continuously review papers submitted for publication in these journals. The School is also well represented on major conference organising committees as associate editors, track chairs and track co-chairs.

Conference Attendances

In the year 2008, a large number of the School of BIT staff and PhD students attended major conferences on Information Systems to present papers, and promoted research undertaken at the School to the international Information Systems Community. Five people presented papers at the European Conference on Information Systems held in Galway, Ireland in June this year, three people presented papers at the BLED eConference in Slovenia in June, one at the America’s Conference on Information Systems in Toronto, ten people will be presenting papers at the Australasian Conference on Information Systems in Christchurch, New Zealand this December. One will present a paper at the Hawaii International Conference on Systems Science during the first week of January, 2009, and two people presented papers at the IADIS Conferences in Amsterdam.

Information Management staff were very active participants at conferences throughout 2008. Three staff attended the VALA conference in Melbourne in January with two presenting. Also in January, a paper was presented at the ALISE Conference in Philadelphia, USA. In April a staff member was part of a major symposium presentation, based on an ARC research project, at the Quality in Postgraduate Research Conference in Adelaide. It was very pleasing that one of our PhD candidates received accolades for his paper at the Thinking Critically Conference in Milwaukee, USA in May. Three staff attended the ALIA Biennial Conference in Alice Springs in September and an invited paper was presented at the Bridging Worlds Conference in Singapore in October. A paper was also presented in October at the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Conference in Sydney. In December, papers will be presented at the International Conference on Postgraduate Education in Malaysia and the Australian and New Zealand Law History in Adelaide; another staff member will be attending the NLS4 Conference in Melbourne.

Journal Publications

Journal publications also increased this year for the School with papers published in A and A* journals as well.

Researcher Profile Dr Peter Macauley

Dr Peter Macauley joined the School of BIT in January 2007 as a Senior Lecturer, after many years as a library manager. His research track record since receiving his PhD includes one Tier A* and five Tier A journal publications. In total, he has published or presented more than sixty papers. Dr Macauley is currently a Chief Investigator on two ARC Discovery Grants: Australian doctoral graduates’ publication, professional and community outcomes (with Professor Terry Evans from Deakin University) and Research capacity-building: the development of Australian PhD programs in national and emerging global contexts (with Professor Evans and Ms Margot Pearson from the Australian National University). He is also leading a DEST Research Grant project (now sponsored by the ARC) Classifying Australian PhD Theses by Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines (RFCD) Codes (with Evans and Pearson). Along with Evans and Pearson, Dr Macauley has recently completed an ARC Linkage Grant project entitled: Working students: reconceptualising the doctoral experience. His most significant contribution to the field has been the creation of the most comprehensive bibliographic database of Australian PhDs dating back to 1948 when Australia’s first PhDs were awarded. The database contains approximately 75,000 records and is being coded by RFCD (Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines) and ASCED (Australian Standard Classification of Education). The coding enables the database to be analysed using bibliometric techniques. The database is significant as it can be used to track knowledge
production in Australian over a sixty year period. Peter is a senior supervising to a number of PhD students in the School.

**Researcher Profile  Dr Elspeth McKay**

Dr McKay’s primary research aims are to facilitate industry engagement with academe through her multi-disciplinary research, which links *electro-communications engineering* and *computer science*, *human-computer interaction (HCI)*, *instructional science*, *cognitive psychology*, and *corporate training/education*. Over the last decade Dr McKay has published extensively in the research fields of HCI and educational technology. In recognition of her contribution to the professional practice of information systems research, she was elected as a Fellow of the Australian Computer Society (ACS). Her research interests involve investigations of how individuals interpret text and graphics within Web-mediated learning environments, identifying that not all individuals cope effectively with graphical learning. Elspeth's work involves the *human-dimensions of HCI*, designing and developing specialist e-Learning tools implemented through rich internet applications and measuring their effectiveness through cognitive performance analysis. She has successfully obtained funding from competitive and industry schemes for research on developing an intelligent software-AGENT that innovates adaptive workplace eTraining tools (an ARC Linkage Project), GEMS–a global eMuseum System, (internal) ARPS–an advanced repurposing pilot system for industry training (funded by GSA and DHS in 2007), EASY–Educational/academic (skills) screening for the young, offering enhanced accessibility through touch screen technologies (Telematics Trust Fund Grant, 2003), eWRAP–Electronic work readiness awareness programme (RMIT Virtual Research Institutes Small Grants Scheme, 2003) and COGNWARE–a multi-modal e-Learning framework (2001). Elspeth is a senior supervisor to a number of PhD students in the School, and recently completed two monographs:

**Researcher Profile  Dr Ravishankar Mayasandra**

Dr M.N. Ravishankar joined the School as a Senior Lecturer in November 2008. He received a B.Eng (Electronics and Communication Engineering) from Bangalore University, India, and a Ph.D. (Information Systems) from the National University of Singapore, Singapore. Broadly, Ravi’s research focuses on the dynamic tensions between the strategic dimensions of IT use in organizations and the social implications of organizational IT. His specific interests include IT offshoring, Knowledge Management, Careers in IT organizations and Ethnographic research. He is recognised for his publications in A level journals and skills in interpretive research. Prior to joining us, Ravi worked for the University of Loughborough in the U. K.

**Research Students**

The School of BIT prides in its strong research training scheme with as many as 70 students undertaking research on topics that address current and emerging issues in the areas of Information Systems and Information Management.

**Student Completions**

In the 2008 12 students successfully completed their higher degrees and will graduate. They are listed in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Dr Sally Skinner</td>
<td>PHD (Business Information Systems)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Dr K.D. Dushantha Nimal DISSANAYAKE</td>
<td>PHD (Bus Info Systems)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Dr Siddhi Pittayachawan</td>
<td>PHD (Bus Info Systems)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Dr Xibao Zhang</td>
<td>PHD (Bus Info Systems)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Dr Hui-Chung Liang</td>
<td>PHD (Bus Info Systems)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Dr Ahmad Abareshi</td>
<td>PHD (Bus Info Systems)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Dr Naruemon Choochinprakarn</td>
<td>PHD (Bus Info Systems)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Dr Maryam Sarrafzadeh</td>
<td>PHD (Bus Info Systems)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Dr Xue Mei Tian</td>
<td>PHD (Bus Info Systems)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Dr Afsaneh Hazeri Baghdad Abad</td>
<td>PHD (Bus Info Systems)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Mr Santoso Wibowo</td>
<td>M Bus (Bus Computing)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Information Technology</td>
<td>Ms Feeba Babu Mootheril</td>
<td>M Bus (Bus Computing)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outstanding Research Scholars**

**ARC APAI - Developments in Publishing: The Potential of Digital Publishing**

Dr MS Xuemei (Suzanne) Tian  Supervisors: Professor Bill Martin and Associate Professor Hepu Deng

This research is an in-depth analysis of the shifting relationships and alliances between key stakeholders in digital publishing, in a context of complexity, rapid technological change and Australian involvement in high value electronic information services markets. Using a multi-staged approach, the thesis aims to identify the fundamental requirements and expectations of key stakeholders in digital publishing. The outcomes will include an ecological analysis of the digital publishing space and a redefinition of value propositions and business models with practical significance for Australia’s participation in the information economy in general, and for the development of the digital publishing industry in particular.

**Impact of Logistics Service Performance on Tourist Satisfaction and Loyalty**

Dr Liang Hui-chung  Supervisors: Professor Brian Corbitt and Dr Konrad Peszynski

Dr Liang demonstrated that a positive logistics service performance and better supply chain efficiency had a direct effect on the satisfaction of tourists and their propensity to return to tourism product. The study involved a survey and multivariate analysis of over 500 respondents of arriving tourists in Taiwan. Evaluation of the modelling of the data produced a set of conclusions about the relationships between logistics performance and tourist satisfaction which were tested again with 50 face to face interviews.
**International Conference on E-Government 2008**

The School hosted the International Conference on E-Government this year at the RMIT University Storey Hall. The conference chair was Professor Brian Corbitt, and the program chair was Professor Mohini Singh. The conference was attended by people from 20 countries, including Europe, Asia, New Zealand and North America. Our Australian colleagues from other Universities in Australia also participated. The Vice Chancellor Professor Margaret Gardener, AO welcomed the delegates and introduced the Hon Evan Thomley, Parliamentary Secretary in the Premier’s Office, who delivered the keynote address and declared the conference open. The second keynote address was delivered by Professor Miriam Lips, Professor of E-Government from the University of Victoria, New Zealand.

**International Visitors to the School 2008**

The School proudly welcomed a number of high profile academics from international universities to the School this year. They were:

*Professor Louise Limberg*, from the Linnaeus Centre for Research on Learning, Interaction and Mediated Communication in Contemporary Society (LinCS), Swedish School of Library and Information Science, University College of Borås and Göteborg University, presented a seminar on ‘Critical features of information practices for learning purposes’.

*Professor Ray Hackney*, Chair in Business Systems, Brunel University Business School, UK presented a seminar titled ‘Beyond Knowledge Management’ to the School.

*Dr Ulf Melin* and *Associate Professor Stefan Croholm* from Linkoping University, Sweden, presented seminars on ‘Qualitative Research’ and ‘e-Government Research’.

*Professor Miriam Lips* from Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, delivered a keynote address at the International Conference on E-Government, hosted by the School.

**Media Comments**

Some of our colleagues are recognised as experts in certain areas and were asked to make comments on certain issues in the media. Dr Joan Richardson’s project success on Trigger was widely published in all the main newspapers: 


The Age, 25 March 2008, ‘RMIT students avoid the queues at admin desk in speedy SMS trial’, Joan Richardson.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 March 2008, ‘RMIT students avoid the queues at admin desk in speedy SMS trial’

Texting Exam Results utimes ([www.utimes.com.au](http://www.utimes.com.au)) is a free tertiary student magazine distributed across all the universities in the Melbourne metro area (as well as other locales), Joan Richardson.

SPAM Issues – ABC Radio, Stas Lukaitis.

I thank and acknowledge the contributions from all of you for our research success in 2008.

Professor Mohini Singh