

# THETA

The Higher Education Technology Agenda

## Implementing an Electronic Research Notebook (ERN) system: A QUT Library project

The Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Library is committed to supporting, and providing Higher Degree Research (HDR) students and staff with relevant and useful resources to undertake high-impact research. In line with the university's Blueprint 4 (2014), the Library is developing initiatives to ensure our institutional support keeps pace with rapidly evolving changes in science and research infrastructure and processes. This includes supporting new ways of managing research data and related requirements.

Electronic research (or laboratory) notebooks (ERNs) are a relatively new software development in universities and research institutes that provide a digital solution for recording ideas, inventions, hypotheses, experimentation records, procedures, observations, conclusions and attaching images and data files when conducting laboratory, fieldwork, and other research activities. They can be used in addition to or in place of paper notebooks. There are two types of ERNs: multidisciplinary/generic – suitable for use by researchers in most faculties – and discipline specific – customised features tailored to the needs of researchers in the, predominantly, scientific disciplines. ERNs can enable researchers to meet increasingly complex research data and intellectual property management requirements, and help researchers collaborate in increasingly global and networked research activities. Few Australian universities are actually using an ERN, but in the instances that they are, the library has little to no involvement in the implementation or administration; systems are usually administered in faculties or discipline areas by researchers in a super-user role. In 2013/2014, QUT Library built a business case for the University to implement one or more ERNs and worked towards developing experience in 2014/2015.

The ERN Implementation Project is a centrally-funded Library project that seeks to implement one or more ERN systems at QUT in 2014/2015. The project is sponsored by qutbluebox and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Technology, Information and Learning Support)

and has involvement from two QUT research institutes – the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI) and the Institute for Future Environments (IFE). QUT hopes that the outcomes of the ERN Implementation Project will lead to increased research capacity via more efficient research practices and knowledge sharing within and amongst research teams.

As part of the Project, one discipline specific product for chemistry and biology was trialed by select research teams from IHBI and IFE. A Request for Offer (RFO) was released on September 1st. Vendors were invited to submit offers for the provision of an electronic research notebook system for use by QUT students and staff. The RFO closed on September 29th and, at time of submission, a Selection Panel was shortlisting vendors.

Philippa Broadley, ERN Implementation Project Manager will be hosting a 'Chat in the Lounge' session during THETA 2015. Join Philippa in the Lounge if you would like to learn more about electronic research notebooks, engagement with stakeholders, the development of a Request for Offer, various aspects of project management from a project manager's perspective, and much, much more.

Philippa Broadley  
Queensland University of Technology

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