

## **Shared library system collaborative first for group of NZ university libraries** (24 July 2003)

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A group of New Zealand University Libraries have joined together to purchase a single Information and Resource Access Management System (IRAMS) for the first time in a move that could pave the way to a single, virtual New Zealand-wide tertiary and research collection.

CONZULSys is a library consortium currently consisting of the Auckland University of Technology, University of Otago, University of Waikato, and Victoria University of Wellington.

The project began in the latter half of 2001, when several of the university libraries were considering the purchase of a replacement to their library management system. Members of the consortium agreed to purchase the same IRAMS and run their systems as separate databases on a shared server environment, jointly purchased by the consortium and hosted by an external provider.

Endeavor Information Systems Inc and Datacom Systems Ltd were chosen as the software and hosting vendors.

University of Otago Deputy University Librarian and Chair of the CONZULSys Shared Systems Project Steering Committee Rosemary Hudson said the opportunity arose for the libraries to work together for their mutual benefit.

The possible inclusion of all or most of the university libraries at a later stage and a subsequent extension of the consortium to other tertiary and research libraries has been a key element of the thinking throughout the project.

Other university and polytechnic libraries had already begun approaching CONZULSys with a view to joining the consortium, she said.

CONZULSys members believe the move represents a response to government policy which encourages collaborations in a sector that is often characterised by strong competition between institutions.

We believe that the project is in line with the Government's tertiary education strategy of encouraging collaboration among institutions in the sector and, indeed, that it is an excellent example of that strategy in practice, she said.

Consortium members would benefit through shared costs with installation charges spread across CONZULSys sites, rather than being directly linked to one site. The new system would also provide a common interface with familiar functionality for the benefit of library patrons and the New Zealand research community in the participating libraries, she said.

In terms of IT infrastructure the libraries would benefit through shared management of system upgrades, backups, system and data security within a standards based infrastructure. The vendors had ensured a high availability system, which was contractually specified to be available 99.5% of the time on a 24 hour, 7 day a week basis, with dynamic load balancing.

The New Zealand system is more integrated than similar models in the UK and Australia with students and staff now able to directly connect to other CONZULSys

libraries from their home library screen and search them using the same search strategy. They may then request items from the other library through inter-library loan or request that their library purchases the items.

The new system will mean there is a better chance of students finding what they need for their study and getting hold of it when they need it

Three of the four libraries went live in the first two weeks of July with Victoria University of Wellington going on-line in December.

The launch of the CONZULSys IRAMS will be at the Auckland University of Technology on Thursday, 24th July in the Atrium of the AUT Learning Centre, Level 4 WA Block, Cnr of Mayoral Drive and Wellesley Sts 5:30 - 6:30 PM. All media are welcome to attend.