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## Editor's rant

Welcome to the fifth edition of Innovation News. In this edition's rant, I express my thoughts, garnered over the past year and a half at AUT, about the role of research in a university.

Research is not only an obligation, but a privilege...

In my conversations with people around AUT I have heard a variety of opinions expressed about the need (or lack of need) for research to be undertaken at AUT. Here's mine...

The key role of any modern university is to advance knowledge. Merriam-Webster defines a University as an institution of higher learning providing facilities for teaching and research and authorized to grant academic degrees; specifically: one made up of an undergraduate division which confers bachelor's degrees and a graduate division which may confer master's degrees and doctorates.

As a syllogism one could say that an institution of higher learning that does not provide facilities for research is not a university.

However, just providing facilities for research is not enough. We need to "do research"! Just as the

teaching component of university life is what disseminates knowledge; it is the "doing" of research that "advances" knowledge. Research is what distinguishes a university academic from a teacher. That is not, in the least, to diminish the importance of teachers, but simply to state the fact that university academics and teachers serve different purposes. Even in the seemingly common dissemination of knowledge aspects between academics and teachers there is a difference: the teaching delivered by university academics must be research informed teaching.

University level teaching that is not grounded in research becomes stale fast! No research, no postgraduate programme! And forget about PhD students! This is what makes research an obligation to all academics.

Increased reputation from solid research means:

- More and better students (both nationally and internationally, undergraduate and postgraduate);
- Increased ability to attract highly qualified and motivated members of staff ;
- More research funding;
- More chances of mingling with the very best;
- A more stimulating environment for everybody;

Research implies dissemination of knowledge. Dissemination (publication, exhibition, peer review) is a core component of the work of a modern academic. If your peers do not know that you have done some research, then you have not done it!

To my mind, not only is doing research of benefit to the university, the students and society, but it is fun! Research is social! Let's talk about it, and let each other know what we are doing. Research is at the core of our community. This is what makes doing research not just an obligation, but an absolute privilege!

But, after all the rhetoric, the only way to do research is to do research...

We look forward to your contributions and suggestions towards this newsletter and wish you the best of success in all your creative endeavors.

Any contributions you wish to make to this newsletter can be e-mailed to [olaf.diegel@aut.ac.nz](mailto:olaf.diegel@aut.ac.nz).

## News and Events

### Masters Students join Pacific Media Centre

Two AUT University masters communication students – from Tonga and Zimbabwe – have joined New Zealand’s Pacific Media Centre.

Christine Williams, a graduate from the University of Zimbabwe and Harare Theological College, is working on a diversity research project counting towards her Masters in Communication Studies (MCS) degree. Williams has a background in teaching. She migrated to New Zealand with her family in 2004 and has taught at an Auckland high school.

Tongan Josephine Latu has taken up a part-time role as contributing editor for the regional Pacific Media Watch monitoring and database service run by the PMC. She will also be looking to boost the Tongan content on the DSpace dynamic archive and to develop a Web 2 strategy.



Josephine Latu and Christine Williams with PMC director David Robie. Photo: Alan Koon

A graduate in political science and French at the University of Hawaii and former associate editor of Impulse journal, Latu has also previously worked with Tongan Woman magazine and Tonfon Television in Nuku’alofa.

### Textile + Design Lab contributes to new Te Papa installation

Well known New Zealand artist, Lisa Reihana, was awarded a major new art commission by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa late last year. The new installation entitled ‘Mai i te aroha, ko te aroha’, meaning ‘From love, comes love’, forms part of Te Papa’s 2008 Matariki celebrations (Maori New Year) and was opened in June 2008.

Having selected her fabrics for both upholstery and decorative wall panels, she approached the Textile & Design Lab with a view to having her designs digitally printed. Lisa said, “I’ve had a long held interest in creating textiles and was able to satisfy

this craving. I worked with the Textile & Design Laboratory, which allowed me to do short production runs of the different patterns”. After a series of test prints, colours were approved and the fabrics were processed in May, in readiness for the launch of the newly designed space.



The tukutuku wall panels at Te Papa were digitally at the T+DL

### New Toys: AUT gets Laser Cutting Facility

The AUT Rapid Prototyping Lab now has a laser cutter available to all of AUT. The laser cutter is a Universal Laser X660 machine with a 60 watt Co2 laser capable of cutting and engraving a variety of material including acrylic, wood, fabric and more.

Since its acquisition, the machine has seen a continuous stream of students and staff making excellent use of it.

The machine is fast and easy to use, so feel free to come in and give it a go.

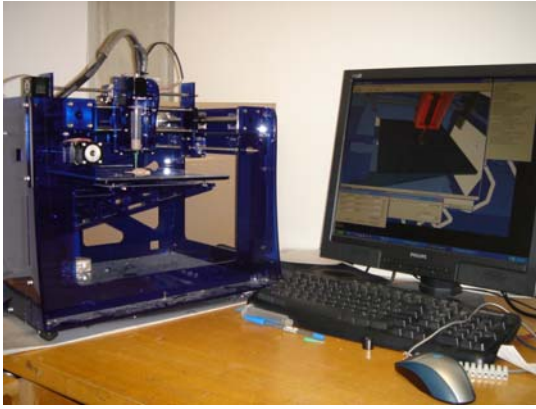
If you want information on getting started and setting up your artwork for laser cutting or engraving, some useful tips and tricks can be found at [www.ciri.org.nz/rplab/laser.html](http://www.ciri.org.nz/rplab/laser.html)



### AUT Research Centre Develops new Rapid Prototyping Technology

The AUT Centre for Rapid Product Development has produced its first Proof-of-concept parts for New Rapid Prototyping Technology.

Current 3D Printing technologies deposit material as flat layers. The result is a “stair-case” effect on non-vertical or horizontal surfaces resulting in a relatively poor surface finish, and compromised part strength because of weakness between the laminations.



Proof-of-concept system of curved-layer rapid prototyping built using a modified Fab@Home desktop prototyping machine

The Centre has developed a method through which layers of build material are deposited as curved layers following the natural shape of the part, thus removing the stair-case effect and creating parts that are evenly strong across their entire surface. Support material is first deposited as conventional flat layers, and build material is then deposited over the support structure following the curves of the part.

Though crude, the first produced parts clearly demonstrate the viability of the concept.

### **CIRI Director Wins 2008 NBR Bayer Innovators Awards**

Prof. Olaf Diegel won the Science and Health category of the National Business Review Bayer Innovators Awards for the HealthWorks software and Activa Xrystal blood pressure monitor.

The Activa Xrystal was recognised as having clear benefits and enormous potential. It uses LCD technology to minimise parts and is compatible with the HealthWorks software that tracks blood pressure, blood-sugar levels and body-weight so people can take preventative measures before they become ill.



The chances are Xrystal will become even smarter as it expands into more preventative medicine areas such as asthma and forecasting conditions that could lead to cardiovascular disease.

Other AUT finalists at the awards included Prof. Steve Henry, Prof. Ahmed Al-Jumaily, and Andrew Lowe from Pulsecore at AUT Tech-Park.

### **Two new Pacific media books launched**

Two new Pacific media books launched last month at the AUT University marae are “courageous” publications in a neglected arena, says Race Relations Commissioner Joris de Bres.

Minority groups in New Zealand have long been overlooked in publications and the news media industry overall is under reported, he says.

*Media and Development: Issues and Challenge in the Pacific Islands* and *South Pacific Islands Communication: Regional Perspectives and Local Issues* were launched at a Media Diversity Forum.

Both publications are available from South Pacific Books Ltd: [sales@southpacificbooks.co.nz](mailto:sales@southpacificbooks.co.nz)

### **Upcoming Seminars & Discussion Forums**

#### **COLAB: performing environments symposium & CoLab launch.**

A one day event developing CoLab research themes and environmentally responsive works in association with the exhibition atmos: weather as media. Followed by celebratory drinks and an opportunity to network about upcoming projects and the release of a new website. Programme and map at [www.mic.org.nz](http://www.mic.org.nz) . Lunch provided.

Saturday 18 October: Symposium 10am - 5pm, Launch 5pm - 7pm, Room WA 224 - A Block - AUT University, Wellesley St, Auckland

#### **Forthcoming Textile & Design Laboratory short courses:**

Introduction to Knitwear Design – evening course commencing 14th October 2008

### **Contributing to Innovation News**

This newsletter is yours. Any items of interest you wish to contribute, as well as comments or suggestions, can be sent to [olaf.diegel@aut.ac.nz](mailto:olaf.diegel@aut.ac.nz).

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