



eNewsletter Edition 2  
February 2012

ICT Projects Office

The ICT Projects Office is an initiative of the University Services Division, providing project management information, training and support to JCU staff and to ICTAC approved projects.



---

Articles in Best Project eNewsletter...

- Welcome
- ICT Projects Office Website – Status: Released
- Past Event: PRINCE2 Training
- Past Event: Project Management Forum
- Project Update: HRMIS Project – Access to Leave functions will soon be available in *My HR Online*
- Project Corner: GIS Project – So where the bloody hell are you?
- Impressions of a Project
- Dimensions of Project Management
- Submit an article, comments or questions

## Welcome

Welcome to our second ICT Projects Office eNewsletter.

Depending on exactly how you date activities; the ICT Projects Office is in its second year of operations.

While there have been a number of projects starting, continuing and finishing during this time, there have also been a number of uniquely ICT Projects Office activities. These are:

1. Introduction of the JCU Project Management Methodology based largely on PRINCE2.
2. Formal PRINCE2 training for another group of 15 JCU aspiring Project Managers.
3. Start of e-Newsletters and project management forums as part of the ongoing activities of the PMO.
4. Release of the website providing information on current projects, topical information and the methodology.

The status of projects currently funded by ICTAC is as follows:

1. Messaging Services Project: The work of this project is completed, surveys have been analysed, the End Project report has been written and the budget is being reconciled ready for closing.
2. HRMIS Project: This project delivered self-service functionality during 2011, including the ability to access payment summaries online. The project continues into 2012, with new leave management processes to be delivered early in the year.
3. GIS Project: The GIS Project has reached a milestone in that the software to be used has been selected following expressions of interest and then a request for tender.
4. EDRMIS Project: This project is due to appoint a Project Manager in the next month or so. Thereafter, work will be earnestly underway as the PID is assembled and various initiation activities undertaken.

With all this work underway and more promised for the months ahead, there is an expectation that this year will be even more exciting and perhaps even more challenging than last year.

Margaret Cato-Smith  
ICT Projects Director

#### **ICT Projects Office Website – Status: Released**

Introducing the [ICT Projects Office Website!](#)

After a long wait we are pleased to announce our ICT Projects Office website is live and ready for you to explore to help you create your 'Best Project'.

Please note there is currently a problem with the displaying of images on some internal JCU sites and ITR are working on fixing this issue. It is a shame this has happened when we are releasing our website but all of the information is still there.

You will find information about project management, including information about the office, the services available, links to projects and project management documentation, including:

- The PRINCE2 methodology;
- Tools e.g. templates, examples;
- Documented processes for specific activities e.g. issue and risk management;
- General information on currently running ICT projects and their status;
- Information on events e.g. training, forums.

We would like to thank John Anderson, Mahendra Patel and Shannon Dowley for their help in getting our website up and running.

The website is now subject to ongoing continuous improvement. New information, templates and examples will be added regularly so keep your eye out for updates. We are most interested in your feedback and suggestions for our site. You can contact the ICT Projects Office by email: [ictprojects@jcu.edu.au](mailto:ictprojects@jcu.edu.au) or phone: 4781 5758.

#### **Past Event: PRINCE2 Training**

A PRINCE2 Foundation training course was held at the Townsville Campus in September. Staff involved enjoyed the challenge of learning the Project Management Methodology in a jam packed three day session and are already using their new skills in different projects around the University.

*"I found the training invaluable against the backdrop of having been involved in the original Student System implementation. In hindsight we had the right people, adequate resources and plenty of motivation in place for the project, but without the methodology of PRINCE2 providing a clear roadmap it was notoriously difficult for the project team to articulate progress and for management to gauge how we were going in achieving overall JCU goals. PRINCE2 themes (such as Business Case and Plans) with the Principles such as 'learn from experience' came together nicely as very practical / logical in the training and I feel it's provided me with a new, more consistent way to approach team projects at JCU."* Vicki Matthews, Faculty Registrar, Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Sciences

If you are interested in attending a PRINCE2 Foundation course please contact the ICT Projects Office by email: [ictprojects@jcu.edu.au](mailto:ictprojects@jcu.edu.au) or phone: 4781 5758 so we can inform you when we run another session.

### Past Event: Project Management Forum

**Topic:** *Beginning a Project*

A Project Management Forum was run by the ICT Projects Director on 30 November. The theme was 'Beginning a Project', and covered the steps for 'Starting up a Project' and 'Initiating a Project' through a series of short presentations and discussion. The presentations are available on the ICT Projects Office website: [Beginning a Project](#). More Project Management forums are scheduled for 2012.

### Project Update: HRMIS Project – Access to Leave functions will soon be available in My HR Online

Transformation  
Transformation  
Transformation  
Transformation



*By Natasha Johnston, Change and Communications Manager, HRMIS Project*

**Leave functions will move from Workflow to My HR Online on 26 March, 2012.**

In *My HR Online* you will have access to:

- *Request Leave*
- *View leave balances*
- *View leave history*
- *Reverse leave requests*

With Managers having access to:

- *Team leave balances*
- *Team leave bookings*
- *Approve leave requests*

- *View approval history*
- *Delegate approval of requests to another employee/ position*

**The Project Team are due to commence training for all employees next week. Training will be offered in both Townsville and Cairns, to register [Click Here](#).**

**In preparation for training have a “play” in the [My HR Online Training Site](#).**

***Training is not compulsory, however if you are a Manager or Administration Officer who provides staff support, training is highly recommended.***

Visit our [Project Website](#) or email the [HRMIS Project Team](#) for further information.

## **Project Corner: GIS Project – So where the bloody hell are you?**

*By David Roy, Project Manager, Planning & Development*

Five years ago, a bikini-clad Lara Bingle emerged from the ocean and proceeded to ask, “... So where the bloody hell are you?” Though the television ad may have been a miserable failure for Tourism Australia, the question posed about the viewer’s location was entirely valid. We all like to know where we are, what’s around us, and how to get where we want to go. With the rise in popularity of smart phone and mobile devices, it seems we expect answers to these questions immediately, or at least as fast as a 3g SIM card will give them to us.

### **Background**

James Cook University implemented a way-finding scheme in the first half of 2011, consisting of directional and informative signage. To further enhance the way-finding experience, the University has prioritised a need to commission a Virtual Way-Finding solution. This will allow users from anywhere in the world to become familiar with the campus environment, and be given access to information such as parking and public transport points, accessibility/route planning, amenities, food and beverage outlets, and general places of interest.

### **People, Places, and Things**

The technology used to associate things with places is called a Geographic Information System (GIS). The purpose of this project is firstly to implement and commission a GIS, and provide a vehicle for people to access the information in the GIS. Secondly, a system like this will allow data capture, organisation, analysis, and management of JCU’s physical assets and infrastructure. Typically, a GIS holds vast amounts of infrastructure and environmental data, and provides a facility for users to view, add, and edit the data by graphical and tabular interfaces. They are very powerful tools for managing facilities. With this technology, comes the opportunity to capture and manage way-finding data, and enable this valuable information to be accessible by students, staff, and the public.

### **Project Deliverables**

Recently, JCU went to tender for a GIS and virtual way-finding solution provider. The business requirements identified for the solution include the implementation and development of the GIS data model and associated applications, and the provision of a light-weight user interface to view way-finding maps for Cairns and Townsville campuses. It is a mandatory requirement that the way-finding map would be developed using Google Maps APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) as this would address key business objectives, such as:

- User familiarity with the interface

- Lower risk of compatibility issues with handsets and mobile device platforms, meaning a one-size-fits-all solution as opposed to maintaining many native applications (Android, iOS, WP7, etc)
- Takes advantage of Google's service provision, for example selecting a mode of transport, using text directions turn-by-turn on screen, and having the facility to explore additional technologies such as language translation, etc.
- The map viewed on a desktop is the same information viewed on a mobile device

The solution therefore, must incorporate a mechanism for the translation of Oracle spatial data in the GIS to the Google way-finding map.

As the GIS and Virtual Way-finding Tender Evaluation Panel are assessing the submissions, there is growing excitement at the opportunities that GIS technology enables; from back-end spatial database management, to facilities management mapping and thin-client information deployment, and ultimately the facility for a brilliant interface for way-finding and campus information discovery. All of this, and the ability to answer Lara Bingle's infamous question!

## Impressions of a Project

*By Jodie Geissmann, Business Analyst, Student Systems*

The very minute a task is labeled as a 'project' a million barriers are placed before it, eating away at schedules, budgets and scope like white ants attacking timber. The race to reach the finish line in spite of the white ants is achievable but only through good planning, a focused project team and ultimately a tenacity to get the job done.

### Planning

The PRINCE2 project methodology is serving me well during my first stint as a project manager. It provides me with the backbones for planning and managing a project. Experience however is priceless and to date, I can offer the following advice:

- The Project Initiation phase is a substantial portion of the project and requires a lot of research, discussions and meetings. It is also an ideal time to shore up support for your project from staff who may not be involved on a day to day basis, but whose input you need as the users of the product. Don't leave initial contact with users too late. The earlier users are involved in the project the better the outcome you will have.
- PRINCE2 focuses a great deal on quality. Quality takes time, not only for the person producing the work but the persons who have to review and approve work. The time required for reviews and approvals should not be underestimated.
- PRINCE2 also talks about benefits and review plans. It is important you address benefits in your business cases and ensure these are quantifiable. If you don't do this up front and plan to follow the PRINCE2 methodology, you will be chasing your tail somewhat down the track, trying to review your project's success.
- If you have staff on the project who fulfill more than one project role, ensure this is achievable. The larger the project the more difficult it is for staff to manage dual roles.

### Project Team

I have been blessed with the ASU Project in regards to having a great team. However most of the team are not only involved with the project, but also have day to day roles as well. To ensure the team members stay focused the following communication was implemented:

- Weekly project team meetings or emails if a meeting was not required
- Monthly work packages outlining what is due for completion and when
- Updates from project board meetings
- Regular advisory group meetings

### Tenacity

Tenacity is described beautifully by Franklin D. Roosevelt “When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.” There is not much more I can say except that undoubtedly you will get to the end of your rope and often. But rest assured you will reach your goals successfully and once you have, you will be glad you hung on.

## Dimensions of Project Management

Project management has many aspects. ‘Dimensions of Project Management’ is a regular feature in the ICT Projects Office eNewsletter. In these articles, we explore different dimensions and topical questions associated with the discipline.

*By Margaret Cato-Smith, ICT Projects Director, ICT Projects Office*

PRINCE2 has two stages at the beginning of a project. The first is called ‘[Starting Up a Project](#)’ and the second is called ‘[Initiating a Project](#)’. Depending on the internal processes within an organisation, the activities of these stages may manifest in different ways e.g. at JCU the activities of ‘Starting Up a Project’ are closely related to the process of submitting a proposal to ICTAC for funding. Further, there is the potential for some overlap of the activities of these two stages e.g. at the time ‘Initiating a Project’ begins, some of the earlier activities may not have been completed and it’s then important to assess the situation and decide what is critical to proceeding and what could either be omitted or completed with less detail. To address the activities of both of these two early stages and how they relate to each other, I’ve coined the term ‘Beginning a Project’ to distinguish from the formal PRINCE2 stages.

Consistent with the PRINCE2 principle “Learn from Experience”, we have over the last year begun documenting lessons learned from our projects. One of the consistent themes through all these lessons is that we are not always beginning a project particularly well. Further, most of the issues are associated with ‘Starting Up a Project’ rather than with ‘Initiating a Project’. There are two primary areas for improvement. These are associated with:

1. Preparing a case for funding.
2. Once funding is provided, getting the project up and running.

In the first instance, the detail provided around expected benefits results in difficulty with assessing the benefits of the project at a later stage. These benefits can be monetary or otherwise. However, without a clear definition, it becomes difficult and in some cases impossible to assess the success of the project as it progresses and more importantly after it has been completed. This topic is to be explored in more detail in future newsletters and forums.

The second area for improvement is associated with getting the project up and running once funding is approved. **This is perhaps the most challenging time of any project.** The work to do is significant. As with business case preparation, these activities need to be completed in addition to the ‘normal’ activities assigned to individuals i.e. no project team members have been appointed nor have any substantive positions been backfilled.



## ***What to do, when you get the green light.....***

Below is a checklist of things to do once funding is provided. Bearing in mind that no-one is as yet specifically hired to do any of the project work, these tasks fall to the sponsor or delegate until such time as team members are hired.

### **PRELIMINARY CONCURRENT ACTIVITIES:**

Note these are concurrent activities. There is interplay between them. Your answers to some of the questions asked influence other parts; not necessarily in the order provided.

1. Check your timeline. What did you originally plan? Is this timeline still viable? If not, look at a new timeline. Make a decision so that you can start to plan, in particular for hiring of people – either for the project or to backfill JCU staff allocated to work on the project.

**GETTING THE TEAM IN PLACE IS A SINGLE MAJOR CAUSE OF DELAYS TO PROJECTS GETTING OFF THE GROUND;**

**said in a different way;**

**HIRING IS ON THE CRITICAL PATH OF THIS PART OF A PROJECT!**

**BUT.....** you have to be sure you are hiring the right people and at the right time.

2. Therefore make sure to go back to your outline business case and confirm the resourcing that you said you'd need. Ask for help from knowledgeable people if need be. Where new technology is being implemented, find out what skill-sets are needed. Ask the vendor. Ask others who've done it before you.

**SKILL-SET ANALYSIS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF INITIAL PROJECT PLANNING.**

For guidelines on how to do this, go to the ICT Projects Office website. Skill-set analysis is part of designing your team. For more information go to [Design \(and appoint\) the Project \(Management\) Team](#).

3. Ask yourself: do you know how you will achieve your business objectives? In other words, do you know if you are implementing off the shelf software or not. If you need to select something, is it done? You cannot sensibly embark on the activities of 'Initiating a Project' without this information. In fact, you cannot sensibly do point 2 above without knowing this i.e. you cannot do a full skill-set analysis without knowing how you will implement your new business processes.

In PRINCE2, deciding how you will implement your new business processes is called '[Select the Project Approach](#)' and you can see it is in 'Starting Up a Project' not in 'Initiating a Project' i.e. you really need to do it up front and as quickly as possible (without compromising quality of course). Otherwise your whole timeline will be delayed.

4. Use the [Starting Up a Project](#) material to check that you have done everything you need to do. Even though some of these activities are intended to have already been completed (i.e. when you were preparing your ICTAC proposal), you may find that you have not done all of them.

Once all 'Starting Up a Project' activities are completed to the level necessary for your particular project, you will have a Project Manager in place and this person can begin to address the activities of '[Initiating a Project](#)'.

As you can see, 'Beginning a Project' requires clear and precise definition of what is to be done, how it is to be done, who is to do it and key milestone dates.

The theme of the last Project Management Forum was '[Beginning a Project](#)' which explored

how to get your project off the ground' so if this is relevant to you check out the [presentation](#) on the ICT Projects Office Website.

### **Submit an article, comments or questions**

Thank you to all of our contributors to the February edition of the ICT Projects Office eNewsletter! If you are interested in submitting an article, please send it to: [ictprojects@jcu.edu.au](mailto:ictprojects@jcu.edu.au) or call 4781 5758.