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CHALLENGES OF SHARED DIGITAL SERVICES

Presentation by Duncan Greaves

Some observations on establishing and sustaining shared digital services among higher education institutions

A commentary based primarily on the TENET experience

Two assumptions

Shared service collaboration is driven by functional need or economic benefit, or both

Collaborators in this context are rational self-interested utility maximisers

Scope of the commentary

Primarily on solutions aimed at meeting complex or specialised functional needs.

Establishing a shared service with functionality that is at the periphery of an organisation is generally a problem in aggregating buying power through joint negotiation

A shared service that meets rich functional needs lying at the core of an organisation is challenging to establish

In spite of this, such collaborations are possible and often highly successful

Frequently sustained by highly coherent professional communities in higher education

Some solutions are possible only through collaboration

This is especially true when sharing is not only a means to an end but is an end in itself.

One such collaboration is a National Research and Education Network (“NREN”)

Not the same thing as an ISP. An NREN is optimised for service delivery to higher education and research

TENET's success has been based upon three key factors

- Strong accountability to its community, achieved primarily through its governance model
- Delivery of a service not attainable in any other way, or not offered by the market
- Solution not achievable without collaboration with the State

Two challenges for the future

Inherent challenge of State collaboration

The pursuit of a larger and wider digital services and solutions framework for higher education



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