

Online workspace launched

A site for partner collaboration

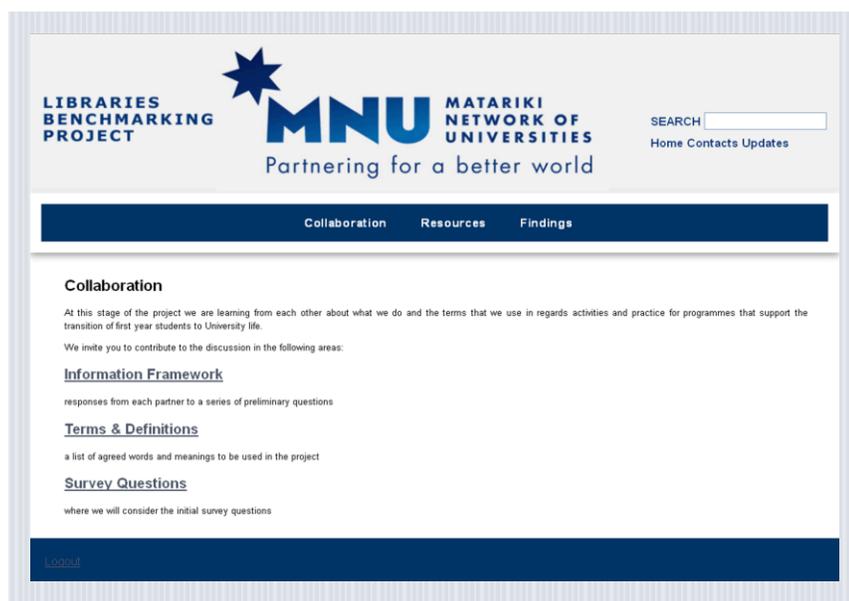
On December 9 2011 an online collaborative workspace was launched to the Matariki Network of University libraries. This workspace provides a secure online platform for the partners to collectively consider information, discuss ideas, seek clarification and share resources.

With three main work areas; **Collaboration**, **Resources**, and **Findings**, the initial activity will focus on the

Collaboration area. Here partners have been invited to contribute to three areas; the Information Framework, Terms and Definitions, and the Survey Questions.

Each of these areas provides a forum for topics to be posted and comments added by all of the partners

These forums will allow the partners to share in discussion, keep a record of progress, and develop a common language



Opportunities extended

Since the benchmarking project's conception in early 2011 Otago University Librarian Howard Amos visited four of the Universities in the Matariki Network.

He attended the 32nd IATUL conference at the Warsaw University of Technology in Poland at the end of May 2011. Following this he took the opportunity to visit both Uppsala University, Sweden and the University of Tübingen, Germany.

In November Mr. Amos attended the Pacific Rim Digital Libraries Alliance meeting in Los Angeles and extended his travels to visit both Dartmouth College, USA and Queen's University, Canada. In this issue Library staff from Queen's University provide an overview of his visit.

that can be used across the project.

Working behind the scenes the Otago web development

team has used an agile project approach to the setup of the workspace. This means that over time it can be improved

to meet the needs of the project as it evolves.

Survey questions passed to partners

Open for discussion and development

The first set of proposed questions for use in the inaugural survey of the Libraries benchmarking project have been posted on the new online collaborative workspace where they are available to the Matariki Network Libraries partners to consider and comment upon for the next two months.

Through reviewing and commenting on the questions partners will be able to share in revising the wording. This will help to ensure that the questions all mean the same thing to each of the partners.

In reflecting on the variations in the use of language across the Matariki Network of Libraries academic consultant

an online survey on the 20th February 2012 for each of the partner Libraries to respond to. Each Library will have until the 30th March 2012 to provide their responses.

This survey differs in its approach from many recent surveys by seeking to capture from Library staff what it is the Library does to support students rather than surveying the student for their views or experiences of the Library's services and resources.

In commenting on this approach Professor Smith predicted that as the partners share what works and what doesn't then they will be really helping one another out; as they learn about each other they will in turn learn more about themselves.

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To date each of the partners has been individually corresponding with the project team. However, the availability of the online workspace provides a platform for the partners to contribute to discussion directly, to suit their own timeframes and workflows.

Professor Jeff Smith said "it is a tough nut to crack... however, if you all share in developing the questions then it will really help to make it work, to look for measures that mean the same thing to one another."

Following the shared development of the questions they will then be deployed as



During his visit to Dartmouth College Library Howard Amos captured this photo of Library staff collaborating at thanksgiving time in the turning of the page of James Audubon's masterwork *The Birds of America*. This original Double Elephant Folio Edition contains 435 life-sized hand-coloured engravings bound into five volumes and was published from 1827-1838. This copy is housed in the Rauner Special Collections Library and was part of the library and papers of Sen. Daniel Webster, twice Secretary of State and a Dartmouth Alumni.

Project Director visits Queen's University Information and experiences shared

On Thursday, November 17, 2011, Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, was delighted to welcome to our campus Howard Amos, Matariki Libraries Benchmarking Project director and University Librarian at the University of Otago.

Howard was greeted by Vice-Provost (International) John

Dixon and Queen's University Librarian, Martha Whitehead. Over lunch they shared information about Queen's and Otago, the Matariki Network and the library benchmarking project that Otago is leading.

In the afternoon, Howard was provided with an overview of [Queen's University Library](#)

and an opportunity to delve into particular areas of interest. A wide-ranging discussion took place in which the two libraries compared organizational structures, institutional priorities, assessment, academic programmes and campuses. Joining Howard and Martha for this meeting

were Barbara Teatero, Associate University Librarian; Sharon Murphy, Head, Academic Services Division; and Laurie Scott, Library Assessment Specialist. It was exciting and quite heartening to discover how much our institutions and libraries have in common. Sharon provided an overview of strategic connections between the Library and the Queen's community in supporting students across the learning and research continuum.

During the meeting, the group was joined by Arig Girgrah, Assistant Dean (Student Affairs), and by Chris Conway, Director, Institutional Research and Planning. Arig provided information about the first year experience programmes at Queen's. There was discussion about the challenges of ensuring a successful transition to university life for first-year students who do not live in

residence. This is a challenge for both Queen's and Otago. Chris was very interested to learn more about the Matariki libraries' benchmarking project. Howard gave a

presentation to the group and updated us on the status of the project, which considers library support for learning and teaching and specifically activities and practice for programmes that support the transition of first year students to university life

He explained that the scope of this first benchmarking project was kept deliberately small, and that it was hoped that more such projects will take place in the future.

Following the meeting, Howard was given a tour of Stauffer Library, home to the [Queen's Learning Commons](#).

In addition to touring the physical space it was a chance to discuss the services offered by the Learning Commons partners. The student peer mentors, tutors, and QLC

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student assistants are a highlight for all partners and a hallmark of the QLC approach.

Howard's visit to Queen's was a wonderful opportunity for the two universities to share information and experience. As the libraries in the Matariki Network collaborate on areas of common interest, particularly thought the benchmarking project, there will be many similar opportunities for members to meet (in person or virtually) and learn from one another in the future. Martha Whitehead, Sharon Murphy & Laurie Scott.

This newsletter was compiled by the Matariki Network of Universities Library Benchmarking project team, with a special contribution from Martha Whitehead, Sharon Murphy & Laurie Scott of Queen's University ask.library@otago.ac.nz