



## A Web-based Infrastructure Supporting Research at Otago Polytechnic

Dr Samuel Mann  
Dr Graham MacGregor  
Otago Polytechnic  
smann@tekotago.ac.nz

### ABSTRACT

This paper introduces a web based infrastructure for the support and promotion of research. The site was developed by third year students as part of course work for third year databases.

#### 1. Research Webpages

The web pages of most academic institutions often contain a section on 'research'. They usually contain grand statements claiming that the institution "has developed a vigorous research culture driven by enthusiastic staff and students motivated to improve educational programmes and their personal skills and knowledge. This site aims to celebrate those successes". Unfortunately these grand statements are rarely matched by any content. All too often the exciting front page has hypertext links to pages with icons of workmen struggling with wheelbarrows and a "work in progress sign". If there is any content it is either out of date or written by marketers with little understanding of the research or the web.

Until recently Otago Polytechnic's research website was one of these sad examples. We are pleased to report that this is no longer the case. In 2000, students from the Bachelor of Information Technology 3rd year databases course (see <http://bit.tekotago.ac.nz/~sam>) developed a new site that we are very proud of (Figure 1). The site is entirely dynamic and is designed to act as an infrastructure to support research as well as a means for promotion of our activities and achievements. Underlying this web site is a database structure powered by Cold Fusion ([www.allaire.com](http://www.allaire.com)). This allows the web

site to be dynamic, making it user friendly and simple for people with research to submit and display their work on the internet. The site also supports news items, peer review of works in progress, management of research activity and tracking of funding allocations. Much effort has gone into search strategies, and users can query on skills and expertise, outputs, various categories of activities, outputs from particular schools and so on. Results are shown as information, with many links to related works (including full text of papers), or as APA formatted citations for formal reports.

Full papers are planned that describe the process of class involvement in this development, the database structures itself, and the uptake and development of this tool throughout the polytechnic.



The Research Website is part of the Otago Polytechnic website: <http://www.tekotago.ac.nz>

#### 2. Conclusion

The development of a dynamic website for the support of research was a) very successful, and b) carried out by students as part of third year databases.