

Industrial IT Project

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Associate Education (Tertiary Education) Minister Steve Maharey (8/8/00 <http://www.executive.govt.nz/>) states : *“Building a modern economy in New Zealand is fundamentally about the application of new technologies, new information, new competencies to what it is that we know and do well, and have been doing well for some time.*

Initial advice from the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission that the Government should adopt an inclusive definition of the disciplines which underpin a knowledge society complement this view of how the knowledge society should evolve in New Zealand.

The clear message to tertiary institutions is that their teaching and research programmes need to encompass the sciences and technology-based disciplines. However young people today also need the ability to think critically and to innovatively apply the broader world of knowledge”.

Polytechnics play an important role in forming the links between academia and industry to help develop regional and national economies. Innovation will come from the integration of new techniques in solving real problems in a timely and cost effective manner. This industry project demonstrates the project partnerships we have been building with industry.

Otago Polytechnic has an important role in applied technology. It is seen as a provider of timely solutions and expertise in many areas of endeavour. As part of this, a project is underway to promote Information Technology (IT) in local industrial development by identifying areas that would benefit from IT, focusing initially on force measurement and communication technology.

The main client for the project is the Dunedin City Council Economic Development Unit, which, along with the Otago Polytechnic, has links with the Dunedin Engineering Cluster, acting in a brokerage role with industry. A major part of the project is establishing a network of Product Partners, Advisors and Solution Component Providers. These can be seen in Figure 1.

While the project is expected to be ongoing, it is,

in part at least, being undertaken by a group of students. ROLFS Associates is a team of four Otago Polytechnic Bachelor of Information Technology students who are working on a Third Year Project to increase the links between the Otago Polytechnic and Dunedin local industry. The project will be assessed by the professionalism, innovation, vigour and competence displayed by the team at all times throughout the project.

Unfortunately polytechnics tend not to be recognised for the kind creativity and applied research potential that is exemplified in projects such as this despite the stated value to clients, our responsiveness to their needs and the remarkable cost effectiveness of what we can and do accomplish. We need to move more to having an infrastructure that would enable us to commercialise our outcomes and achievements and to better promote the work we do.

The project has three Product Partners for which solutions will be investigated. These partners are the Otago Polytechnic, Swing Thru International Container Handling Systems and the Otago Rugby Football Union.

To assist development, the project has Manufacturing Industrial Partners, including the Otago Polytechnic Schools of Engineering, Business, Fashion and Design. There are a number of Solution Component Providers which to date include Ericsson Synergy (Blue tooth), Interlink Electronics (US Force Sensor Resistors), and Shock Top Impact Protection (Dunedin).

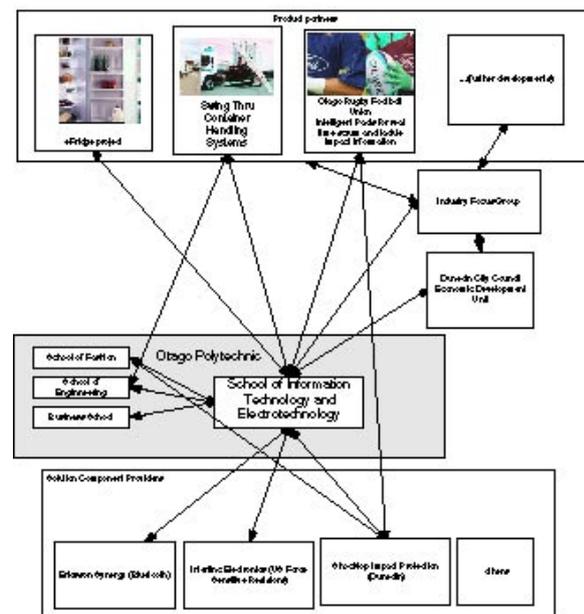


Figure 1