

# Weaving the fabric of future IT degrees

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There are 23 institutions throughout NZ affiliated to NACCQ, most teach degrees in Information Technology (IT). Over the years each has developed their own focus as they implement their degree curriculum in light of the strength of their staff and pressure from industry, politics, and students. Academics have an important role in interpreting, delivering and influencing the direction of these degrees. In this context, it is worthwhile to investigate the perception of these academics of the shape of the shape of our degree offerings.

Art is a medium often used to expose and explore emotional energy and human perception. Artefacts have been used throughout human history as a means of conveying such information. In our modern flat screen, flat paper, data driven world, information such as the level of emotional commitment to personal perception is often lost or overlooked completely yet it is one of the most powerful of forces that shapes the focus of human endeavour. The social sciences constantly struggle with this issue when trying to collect data and derive useful information. Within the IT industry considerable work has been done on the collection and visualisation of hard data however there are few examples of the use of art as a means to achieving collection and feedback. Layne and Backman explored the use of hard data driven by seismic events to create a woven cloth via an automated loom. The objective of the work was "to addresses notions of collecting and how the meaning of objects is changed through transfer from one culture to another". Feilden and Young (2003)

combination of questioner and graphical representation of three overlapping computing disciplines, software engineering, computer science and information science to gather data on where participants perceived their position within the disciplines. Kirsten Ellis<sup>3</sup> and Dr Kathy Blashki "examined the experiential knowledge gained in creating an artefact as an element of a research project".

This poster combines these threads with the use of a weaving frame. Participants are asked to complete a line representing what direction they feel their degree should take in the future. Six colours are offered representing fields of endeavour with an option to add tags for areas additional to those specified. Variance in the level of texture is used to convey the depth of feeling the participant has toward each field. A questioner is used to supplement the artefact.

Layne, B (2003) [http://collections.ic.gc.ca/waic/balayn/balayn\\_e.htm](http://collections.ic.gc.ca/waic/balayn/balayn_e.htm)

Fielden, K. (2002) SECS and IS: Exploring the common ground, NACCQ2002 p 468

Ellis, K. , Blashki, K. (2001) Producing an Artefact as research: Multimedia for young children, NACCQ2001 p259-263

