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# When Failing Is Passing: Turning A Failed Project Into Success

**Rob Oliver**

Christchurch Polytechnic Institute  
of Technology.  
Christchurch.  
New Zealand  
oliverr@cpit.ac.nz

**Abstract**

At Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology the Bachelor of Information and Communication Technology (BICT) degree has a 400 hour Capstone project that every student must complete. This is an industry based project that draws on the theory that the student has learnt over the three years of the degree. Typically our students successfully complete these projects (with a range of grades from A<sup>+</sup> to C). However there are occasions when for any number of reasons a student does not deliver the project requirements. In many cases good project supervision identifies these problems before the project end date. Can and should the student be given the opportunity to salvage a failing project and how should this opportunity be delivered.

**Keywords**

Capstone Project, Failed, Project Requirements

**Introduction**

This project is an actual example of one that was identified by academic staff as destined to fail as it was approaching the 60% stage of the project life. The type of corrective action taken to give the student the chance to recover the damage and hence pass the project is typical of how this problem has been handled

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for the small number of times this has occurred in past projects. In these cases the students has been given the task treating the project as a pilot study, writing a reflective essay targeting problems that had been encountered and suggesting corrective actions.

### **Methodology**

Once the original project was identified as failing and the lack of quality of the output had been determined the client was advised that the original outcomes were not going to be achieved. The project was identified as failing when the student indicated that he had to generate special program code to allow different web browsers to run his web based application. Examination of the code showed major design and concept flaws. The student was then directed to cease all work on the original project and guided through the requirements and scope of producing a Reflective Report.

Formal Project Management and Risk Management plans were implemented. Rapid Application Development (RAD) and Rational Unified Process (RUP) were two methodologies used in this project.

### **Results**

The project in question finally scored a grade in the B range. This was due to the quality of the Methodology Essay and the Reflective Report. Both these reports identified and examined the major factors that had influence over the project outcome. The student also detailed these could have been controlled from the project commencement

### **Conclusion**

Capstone projects which have initially addressed the project problem and requirements but for a number of reasons are not able to be completed as originally envisaged can under many circumstances quite legitimately be converted into pilot studies, prototypes and research projects provided the required reflective studies are completed, the deficiencies of the original project scope recognized and a suggested way forward is provided