

# Building the eResearch Support Community - A National Initiative to Uplift eResearch Support Skills and Encourage Community-Driven Collaboration

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## OVERVIEW

What's the best way to help researchers help themselves? By providing a community-driven, diverse, collaborative and supportive community to deliver that help! Leveraging this informal collaboration opportunity is the next vital step to increasing research impact.

The increasingly complex nature of eResearch tools, services and techniques poses a challenge for organisations wanting to deliver associated support services. As a result, the traditional Help Desk service model has transformed in recent years into multiple community-driven initiatives including Hacky Hours, Digital Drop-in Session and the increasing popularity of Carpentry-style training delivery.

Researchers in traditionally separate disciplines, such as biosciences and ecosciences, may have relatively low levels of mathematical and statistical expertise, and often lack basic computing, eresearch and data skills. The current "data explosion" in these (and other) disciplines has resulted in an increasing demand for overlapping support skills in the areas of data science, data analysis and visualization skills. Although the data sets differ, researchers increasingly require a similar eResearch skillset to ingest; collate, process and manipulate their; and to output and render that data.

Over the last 5 years, community-driven eResearch support initiatives have witnessed a notable increase in the numbers of researchers requiring assistance, in addition to the overlap of skills required to provide that assistance.

In parallel, community-driven support initiatives have become more prevalent, and now provide a much-needed and welcomed vehicle for researchers wishing to increase collaboration across disciplines. Leveraging this informal collaboration opportunity is the next vital step to increasing research impact.

This presentation will reflect on the vital eResearch support role provided by the UQ Hacky Hour community – one of Australia's longest running volunteer eResearch support communities – by highlighting its increasing popularity, the increasing diversity of its researchers and support representatives, and the increasing complexity of the support challenges encountered and resolved. Most importantly, it will highlight the increasing informal collaboration opportunities identified and actioned at each session.



This presentation also delivers a future solution. Communities and individual organization often struggle to address the increasing challenges. Acknowledging that many organisations facing the same eResearch support challenges, AeRO – the industry association for eResearch in Australasia – has implemented a number of national initiatives to enhance the impact of existing community-driven support. These initiatives do not seek to replace, control or alter existing activities, rather they seek to validate and support these activities by establishing an increased national profile for existing eResearch support communities, thereby increasing their legitimacy and potential uptake across all disciplines and sectors.

Learn more about these initiatives including:

1. The National eResearch Support Registry to help researchers locate their closest eResearch support service.
2. A “one-stop shop” for accessing a series of community-driven National eResearch Support Resources.
3. Potential to request and contribute to the development of support resources.
4. Access to training and professional development opportunities.
5. The eResearch Champions and eResearch Ambassadors initiatives.
6. The AeRO Chat collaboration platform to help identify, discover and build eResearch support communities.

The future of eResearch support services is bright, thanks to new national initiatives that support community-driven activities, based on a strong history of proven eResearch support services. Helping researchers to increasingly help themselves is the next vital step to increasing research impact.

## REFERENCES

None.