

Final Report on TQEF project: E- copies of Masters theses December 2008

Project Team	Dr J. Dinwoodie, Dr D. Song, Dr I. Pasukeviciute, Prof M Roe, Mrs S.Tuck
School/Faculty	PBS/ SSB
Title of Project	E-archiving and dissemination of International Maritime Masters theses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theme: Knowledge Management: Archiving
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Key Staff involved	
Dr J. Dinwoodie (current HSG; formerly MSc Programme manager in 2004/5) Dr D. Song (PBS IT committee chair 2006/7), Dr I. Pasukeviciute (MSc programme tutor for 2006/7) Prof M Roe (MSc dissertation tutor in 2004/5) Dr S.Tuck (MSc dissertations tutor for 2006/7) Fiona Greig (TLIR project leader), Nicola Tricker (Subject librarian, Business Studies) Karen Bowler was employed for c.30 hours in June 2007 to reformat and transfer large files from CDs to the intranet, and index them within the library system.	

Background

Since 1978 hard copies of theses from the MSc International Shipping and related programmes have been made available in the overnight loans section of the Plymouth library, providing a unique and vital resource to inform cross disciplinary teaching. Typically, several theses annually are distilled into peer-reviewed academic journals, conference papers and other outlets, but further dissemination beyond the Plymouth campus is severely hampered. Following thefts of library hardcopies in 2003-4, students were also requested to submit e-copies of theses from 2004-5. Since then about 150 e-theses have accumulated, but these are not currently available for loan by staff or students. A typical Masters cohort comprises students from 20 nationalities. E-copies of Masters theses were required to enhance the capability and potential of the International Shipping and Logistics Group in Plymouth Business School to deliver research-led vocationally driven programmes more flexibly, for example to students off campus.

Aims and Rationale

- To provide e-access to e-copies of Maritime Masters theses to offer scope for flexible learning by e.g. part-time students, internationally, off campus
- To enable faculty, including for example, marine and sustainable transport institutes, overseas partner institutions perhaps in South East Asia, and adjunct faculty, to access this resource for teaching and research

Methodology

Following developments in the Library's Teaching and Learning Institutional Repository (TLIR), technical support to copy and store PDF versions of 51 e-M theses was requested for the 2004/5 cohort.

Number of students involved

In total, the project archived 51 theses from 2004/5 achieving a mark of 60%, the current criterion for library cataloguing. In addition 22 from 2005/6 were also archived under this project. Since then and aside from TQEF, a further 20 theses were added from 2006/7 and the 2007/8 output has been submitted for archiving.

Each academic year, approx 100 M level students and 150 undergraduate students in Plymouth are likely to access this resource. If HKU SPACE or other franchising arrangements progress from September 2009, this could add 200+ additional interested students annually who are based overseas.

Outcomes

An archive of accessible e-copies of Maritime MSc theses from the 2004/5 cohort is available through MetaLib in "D-Space" at:

<http://141.163.201.142:8080/tal/browse-title?bottom=10026.2%2F115>

Due to delays in implementing teaching off-campus, it has proved impossible to evaluate the impact on students studying off-campus. However, Appendix 1 reports on a survey conducted in November 2008. From a group of 44 students, 11 replies have been received to date. All felt the materials are relevant to their studies, but the procedures for embedding this resource into research methods modules, and explaining its value in supporting coursework needs to be improved for future cohorts. Whilst this project has empowered existing staff and students in the International Shipping and Logistics Group to benefit from this unique resource, we await its impacts on students registered on or studying for awards off campus.

Continuation / Dissemination Plans

The project far exceeded the requirements for achieving a successful outcome, as it directly funded archiving of resources from not one, but two cohorts. In due course TLIR may be able to monitor usage of the e-archive but, the citations below, by students, are indicative.

This project was conceived of as a pilot methodology. It is clear that other M programmes should be able to benefit from the practical learning gained through this implementation and that all M programmes would benefit from seeking to archive and enhance their capability to disseminate similar resources.

Appendix A: A recent survey of student reactions to the archive

On 20 November 2008 44 MSc students in Plymouth were emailed with the following: *Electronic copies of recent MSc theses are available in Metalib/ Business/ theses/ D Space. These include all theses presented in 2005, 2006, 2007 which are not confidential and scored >60%. Please could you take a look and answer the simple questions below, and email your return to me.*

Prompt / response	Yes	No
1. <i>I was already aware of this resource</i>	8	3
2. <i>This resource includes material which is relevant to my studies at Plymouth</i>	11	0
3. <i>I expect to use these resources at Plymouth to support my:</i>		
<i>Coursework</i>	5	6
<i>My dissertation</i>	10	1
4. <i>I intend to access copies of these e-theses whilst I am away from Plymouth (e.g. in the holidays)</i>	9	2
5. <i>Please use any phrases to describe how useful electronic copies of these theses are to your studies at Plymouth</i>		
<p>Essential Some of them are very helpful and inspiring Help me to get ideas; guide me how to do dissertation Highly useful Very useful They provide me with really updated data and deeply analyzed about the topics that sometimes I am looking for. Very useful These theses would help me to understand the quality of work, methodology of research and topics covered. To have a format of a thesis relevant to your topic is always useful to make sure that you don't miss any important points in your thesis! These theses are researches of individuals relevant to your subject so can really be helpful for us to read this as general knowledge.</p>		
6. <i>Do you have any other comments?</i>		
<p>Just make sure their format are correct even on some detail parts and give us good guide. As the books in library related to our subject are old and few, electronic copies are important. The electronic copies can be divided into more and clear segments , that will be better.</p>		