Development of the Electronic Research Administration (eRA) System for the University of Ibadan (DeRA-UI): Lessons Learnt

Speaker 1  Olumuyiwa M. Desmennu, M.Sc, M.Ed, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
Speaker 2  Adeola F. Oladeji, MSW, M.Ed., University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
Problem Statement

• Difficulty in reporting by Research Management Office
• Grants and Finance department reporting is not centralized
• Funding opportunity dissemination is difficult
• Researchers unable to monitor their grants remotely
Placement Experience: Complex comprehensive interconnected system and processes that works!

- Highly specialized roles
- Weekly staff Meetings (The power of Feedback)
- Operations in UKY and UNO are fully Automated and digitized
- Institutional Commitment in funding is higher in UKY and UNO
- UKY and UNO are highly driven by Metrics
UI Research: A system in pursuit of global benchmark!

We carry out same operations but MANUALLY with fewer Staff
Transferability

If others can, Then UI can!
Bite size actions that create loops for integration in the future!
Proposed Reform

Researchers:
manage grant related protocols

RMO: monitor and report effectively on funded research activities

Administration: integrates tasks in preparing and submitting Research proposals

Organization: tracking compliance with regulations
Conceptual Model of the DeRA-UI process

INPUT

Funds Release
Bureaucracy in getting information/data
Salient interests in leadership
HR Regulations

OUTPUT

Figure 1: Conceptual model of the eRA process.
Stakeholders Mapping and Meetings

• Research Management Office and Research Administrators: The Client (Approval, monitoring, reporting, specification provider and general management roles)

• Academic Staff (personal project monitoring, management and reporting roles)

• Grants and College Finance office (funds management, funds reporting and compliance roles)
Stakeholders Mapping and Meetings (contd.)

- Information Technology and Information Technology Unit (Technical design support, system analysis, requirements, and installation roles)
- HR& D Unit (HR issues & responsibility approval issues)
- Academic Planning Unit (Data source)
- Staff Unions (staff related issues)
Resources

• Approval (Executive Buy-in and Support)
• Funding
• Software and Hardware
• Specialists (Developers, programmers and Analysts)
What Happens beyond this?

- Increased awareness of the eRA
- Training of Administrators and End users
- Database is Deployed and in use
- Integration into the University ITeMS System
eRA UI sign-up page
Lessons learnt during the DeRA_UI implementation

- Awesome capacity enhancement opportunities
- Lobbying skills
- Speaking with and to power requires that you first understand power and find the link to the power.
- Does centralization indicate/mean control and vice versa
- True sustainability: a usual question throughout the implementation
Lessons learnt during the DeRA_UI implementation

- Resistance to invasion of locus of control and exploiting it. Our strategy was to identify and propose incentives that a successful era portends to such domains.
- Untapped potentials of our graduate students.
- Exploiting resources for the institutional advantage; we have learnt that innovation sometimes may not only and always be something new, rather, scavenging opportunities from perceived waste/redundant may be the innovation and the key.
Conclusion

The associated dearth of data and lacking automatic reporting from processes and activities will also be cured by a deployment of some types of eRA system. The capacity enhancement that the process of development of homegrown systems holds is unknown until explored.
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Suggestions, comments, questions

Olumuyiwa Moses Desmennu-Author
Junior Research Fellow (Education, Research and Evaluation) and Research Manager
Institute of Education
University of Ibadan
Email: desmosol@hotmail.com
om.desmennu@mail.ui.edu.ng
Phone: +2348024208836/+2348091490829

Adeola Funmilayo Oladeji-Co-author
Senior Executive Officer (Research Administration)
Research Manager
Research Management Office
University of Ibadan
Email: funmioladeji2000@yahoo.com
af.oladeji@ui.edu.ng
Phone: +2348034710119/+2348098032772