



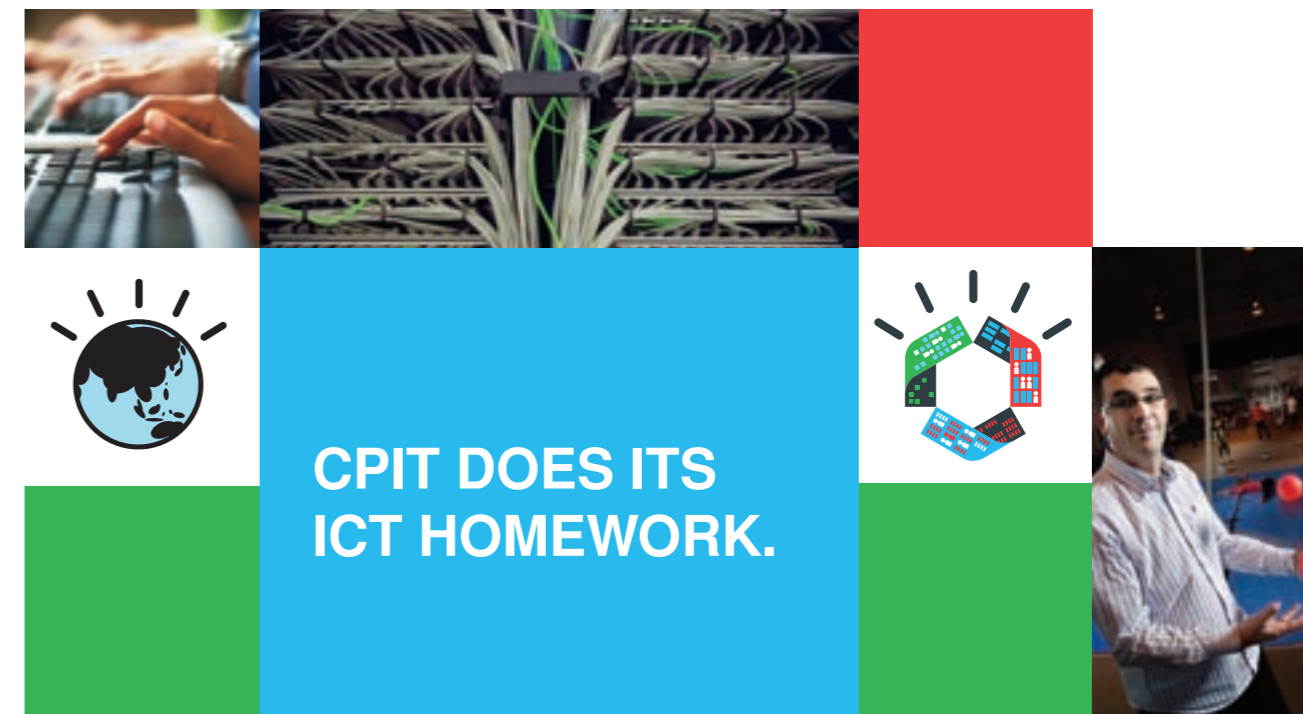
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This customer story is based on information provided by Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology and illustrates how one organisation uses IBM products. Many factors have contributed to the results and benefits described; IBM does not guarantee comparable results elsewhere.



CPIT DOES ITS ICT HOMEWORK.

Reader Value

- Before embarking on an information systems project, organisations need a clear picture of the end goal.
- Armed with an information strategy based on organisation-wide input, appropriate systems can be implemented.
- Implementing a data warehouse system can lead to better decision making, and a deeper understanding of the business costs and benefits.

Key Benefits

- IBM's InfoSphere DataStage data warehouse will provide CPIT staff with easy access to information from disparate systems.
- Integrating data from multiple sources allows information to be combined quickly in powerful ways.
- WebSphere Process Server promises the ability to automate CPIT workflows thereby improving the quality of service delivery.

Key innovation

A data warehouse and service oriented architecture platform promise to put rich information at the fingertips of Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) executives while allowing them to streamline course delivery.

Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology

- CPIT origins go back more than 100 years
- Institution has more than 5000 full-time equivalent students
- More than 600 academic staff
- Largest South Island technical institute and the country's fourth largest
- ICT staff head count of 32



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Hundred-year-old Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology is entering a new era of easy access to corporate information and automation of business activities. It follows a year-long process of coming up with a business-driven information strategy, which is now beginning to be put into effect.

Mark Marshall, Director of CPIT's ICT Division, says the strategy was a response to the Chief Executive's demand for better information access.

"Over a period of time there was a growing recognition that the way in which information was available to manage the business was not supporting the business particularly well," Marshall says.

IS Manager Dean Patfield was put in charge of developing the information strategy, a non-technical document based on business needs identified through consultation across the organisation.

"It was very much a business-level strategy around what information we needed to make available to the organisation, and how, when and under what circumstances. It took nearly a year to write that, revise it and have it signed-off at executive level," Marshall says.

The result was a strategy document that told them the tools the business was lacking. Top of the shopping list were a data warehouse, and a platform for integrating CPIT's various business applications.

IBM® ended up satisfying both requirements: CPIT is deploying IBM's InfoSphere DataStage data warehouse; and WebSphere Process Server will fulfil the application integration role.

"These two knit closely together for us," Marshall says.

DataStage extracts information from a number of polytechnic systems – initially the financial, HR and student management systems, and eventually the timetabling and asset management systems – and merges it.

datamart, which will allow drilling down from the organisational level to individual departments, businesses, cost centres and, finally, transactions. Once combined with student management and HR data, that will enable costs to be quickly calculated for a particular course of study," Marshall says.

"You can start to really drill down and understand where the costs and benefits in the organisation are, which is all done manually – and onerously – at present."

"This isn't in any way about ICT leading the business into ICT solutions. This is about understanding and getting people to think about what the business needs and us enabling it."

Mark Marshall, Director, ICT Division, CPIT

The goal, Patfield says, is to provide "a single source of the truth". That's in contrast to the "various flavours of the truth" that results from the manual massaging of information staff perform at present when creating a report, in hundreds of spreadsheets and databases.

"The first phase of deploying DataStage is to build a financial

But what Patfield calls the backbone of the business – "and, as such, we made a conscious decision that we wanted something with good solid support" – is WebSphere Process Server. It will do for CPIT's workflow what DataStage is doing for information.

As a service oriented architecture (SOA) platform, WebSphere opens

the way to look at CPIT's systems as parts of a business process, rather than as discrete applications.

Marshall describes it as a "translation engine" between applications. And according to Patfield, he thinks there are few limits to the applications that it can tie together.

"From what we've seen the capability to integrate with other business systems is unrestricted," Patfield says.

WebSphere is being put to use initially to create a repository of financial, student and HR information around particular programmes of study, in the first instance to go on the web for student use.

"But because it's enriched with information around financial and human resource requirements, we can start feeding back into professional development of our staff, feeding back into programmes or courses that are under-utilised, and start flagging to the organisation programmes or courses that are potentially being overcommitted, so action can be taken," Patfield says.

At the moment all those actions are major paper-shuffling exercises, or may not happen at all, because there are no visible links between the different processes. And once automated, process efficiency can also be readily measured.

Reducing the labour component of routine processes should also free staff to deal more effectively with

students who have difficulties of one sort or another.

WebSphere Process Server delivers "workflow on steroids", Marshall says. He can envisage it being used to integrate systems as diverse as those for control of building security, lighting and air conditioning, with course enrolment and room scheduling systems.

Armed with its information strategy and newly deployed technical architecture, Marshall says CPIT is equipped to take the business in whatever direction it needs to.

"One thing I keep saying is that this isn't in any way about ICT leading the business into ICT solutions, this is about understanding and getting people to think about what the business needs and us enabling it."

Key Business Insights

■ If the question is how to make access to information easier and how to streamline workflows, ICT is probably the answer. But the cart shouldn't be put before the horse – systems should only be deployed based on the particular needs of the organisation.

■ Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, therefore, developed an information strategy before concluding that data warehouse and process server software were appropriate.

- "IBM's InfoSphere DataStage data warehouse equips CPIT staff with an efficient reporting tool that means those in academic roles can get on with teaching," says Director, ICT Division Mark Marshall.
- WebSphere Process Server, meantime, once fully deployed, will lift the quality of service to students by, for example, automating workflows associated with enrolment, class and resource allocation and the running of the institution's physical infrastructure.

Additional Resources

- For a technical overview of WebSphere Process Server, look here: redbooks.ibm.com/abstracts/redp4041.html
- A technical description and implementation examples of InfoSphere DataStage can be found here: redbooks.ibm.com/abstracts/sg247576.html

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