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School of Hospitality & Tourism Management Research Strategy for Information Technology 2015-2017

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School of Hospitality & Tourism Management
Research Strategy for Information Technology
2015-2017

Introduction.

The aim of this document is to introduce a research strategy for the area of Information Technology for the School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, DIT. The proposed strategy for 2015-2017 is all about exploration and foundation for strategies to come. To date there has been no strategy in place within the School which focuses specifically on research in the area of Information Technology. Therefore, we are beginning with a blank canvas so to speak. This, in itself, is both a drawback and a huge opportunity. We have an opportunity to shape the IT research activity of the School for years to come. This in turn can only impact teaching and learning within the School in a positive manner. Research forms an essential part of the mission of the DIT. Research stimulates student curiosity, imagination and creative abilities, underpins the recruitment and retention of first class staff and optimises the contribution of the institute to economic, cultural and social development nationally and internationally.

The aim of this strategy is to identify research areas in the field of IT that the School should focus on and to put a framework in place in order to bring this research to fruition. Our development within IT has got to fit seamlessly within our development as a School. This is not just about one discipline this is about how one discipline will influence, and be influenced by, all the other activities within the School. This has got to be holistic and be put in place with a strong ethos to bring about positive change. With that in mind, the IT research strategy will have to focus on our strengths and also work within the overall School's, College's and DIT's Research framework. As already mentioned, the School has never had a research strategy that focused on the area of Information Technology but given the changes that have occurred with regards to external environment within the Hospitality and Tourism domain and our strengths within the School it is an opportunity that can no longer be overlooked.

While the DIT is currently in a state of flux what with TU4Dublin and our current relocation to Grangegorman, we find ourselves in a unique position to capitalise on the benefits of being in an environment with significant expertise and activity in the many discipline areas that contribute to the development of tourism. Yet, we understand that in order to achieve our goals the School may need to form strategic alliances both internally, within the DIT, and externally. These partnerships would be vital to put us at the forefront of research within the area of IT in the Hospitality, Tourism, Events and Leisure sectors in particular and within the wider Services sector as a whole. One of the first steps in this process would be to identify our capabilities and strengths within the School and then to identify possible partners that will help us achieve our goals in our chosen areas of research.

However, before we embark on a voyage of discovery, we must first of all ensure that the aims proposed for the IT research strategy tie in with those in the School's Research Action Plan. As outlined by the Research Plan for the School (2014-2015), the criteria for technological university designation include significant research targets around staff qualifications, PhD student numbers and research outputs. The vision of the School Research Plan is that "the School will be recognised internationally for the quality of its research output and this high quality, objective and innovative research will contribute significantly to the development of the tourism sector in Ireland" (School Research Plan, 2014-2015). Our mission would be slightly different in that the IT strategy would be hoping to achieve the following "the School would be recognised for the quality of its contribution to IT in Hospitality, Tourism, Events and Leisure research on an international level and that the research output would significantly benefit both the Industry and our present and future students".

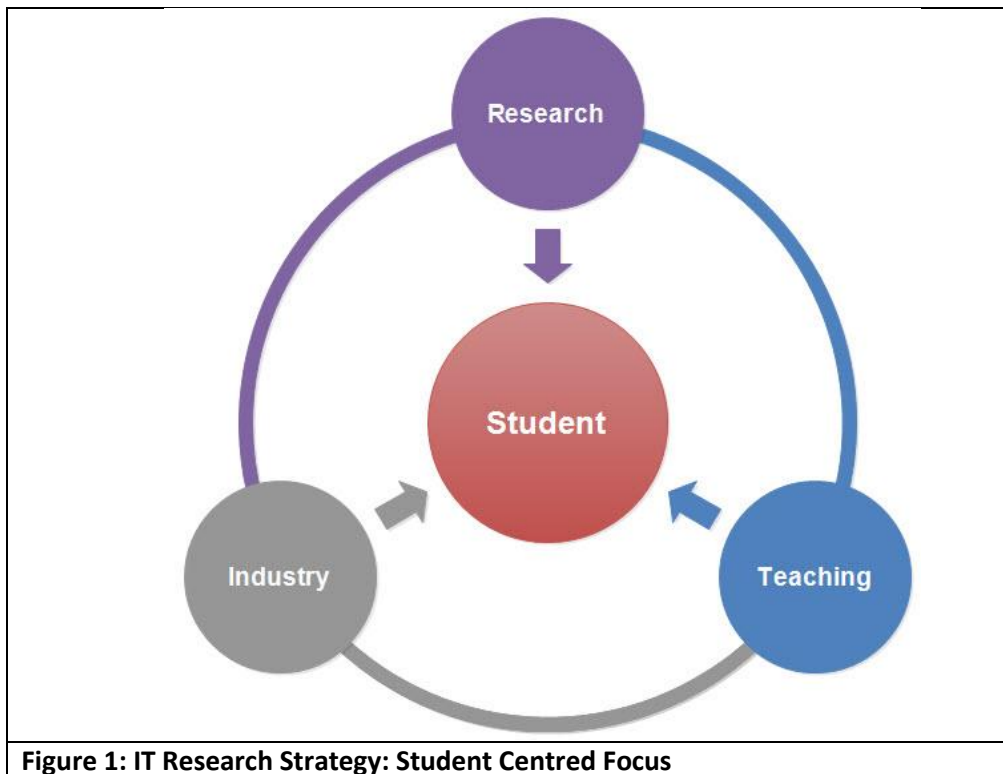


Figure 1: IT Research Strategy: Student Centred Focus

While the IT research strategy for the School will endeavour to parallel the aims laid out in the School's Action Research Plan the emphasis will most definitely focus on the development of our research output in order to contribute to the body of knowledge which will ultimately benefit both the Industry and our present and future students (Figure 1). It is very important to note that the student is positioned firmly in the middle of our School's IT research strategy. After all, research must be viewed as a core activity which integrates both Learning & Teaching and Knowledge Transfer. Furthermore, this ties in perfectly with the DIT's Research Action Plan which focuses on three overarching targets: Human Capital, Research Output and Enterprise. It is also essential to understand that these activities are not separate but inextricably linked. Research improves the quality of education for all students; helps to develop highly educated graduates and provides valuable industry and market intelligence. With this in mind, the aims of the IT research strategy for the School are to:

- Enhance the quality of output from the School in the area of IT in the Hospitality, Tourism, Events and Leisure research
- Enhance the quantity of output from the School in the area of IT in the Hospitality, Tourism, Events and Leisure research
- Develop a Self-sustaining model for research within the School
- Enhance the research student experience and their environment
- Build national and international reputation and profile of the School in the area of IT in the Hospitality, Tourism, Events and Leisure research
- Focus on engagement opportunities with industry and other institutions to ensure that research output remains both practical and useful in nature.

School's IT Research Focus.

Initially, our area of IT research will focus on, but may not be exclusive to, the topics outlined in the research paradigm (Figure 2). These will be researched along the lifecycle continuum of Feasibility, Adoption, Usage, Evaluation and Management which encompass the IT topics in the figure. This will enable the School to build a defined area of expertise while still allowing the faculty and partners to explore a wide variety of research areas within the IT in Tourism domain.

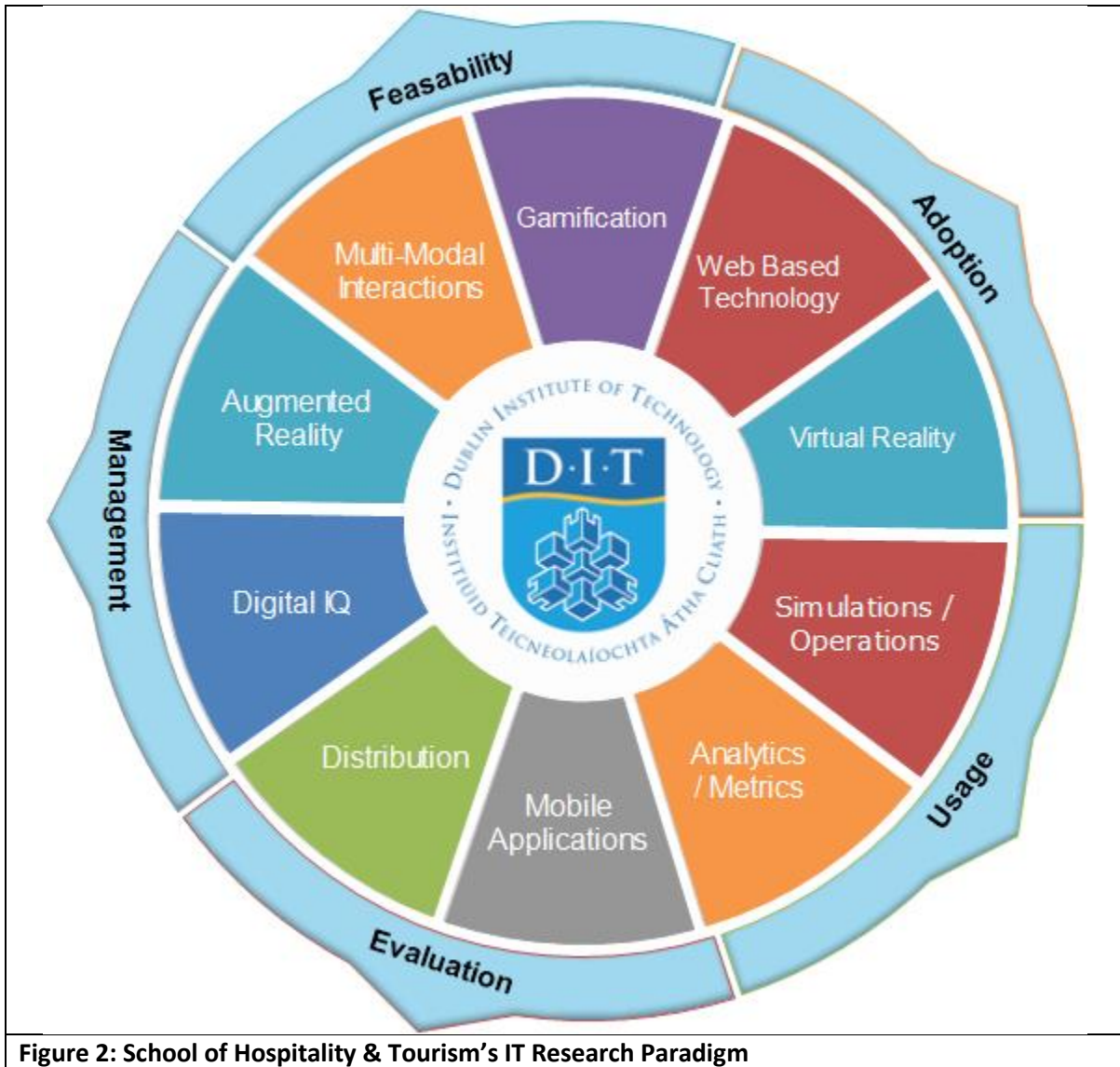


Figure 2: School of Hospitality & Tourism's IT Research Paradigm