eResearch practices, barriers and needs for support

Preliminary study findings
from seven NSW universities

The University of Sydney

INTERSECT

---

who

- Lina Markauskaite, University of Sydney
- Jim Richardson, University of Sydney
- Mary Anne Kennan, Charles Sturt University
- Leonie Hellmers, Intersect Australia Ltd

INTERSECT

why

- raise awareness of eResearch
- raise awareness of Intersect
- identify areas which could benefit from our work
- identify researchers who may benefit from our work
- consult with researchers to establish requirements
- assist Intersect in scoping, and prioritising
- research project about eResearch

INTERSECT

approach

Mode
- Online survey, 40 questions (8 open-ended)

Three main eResearch areas:
- **data** management, retention and sharing
- research **methods**, tools and services
- research **collaboration** and dissemination

Focus:
- current (eResearch) **practices** & challenges
- **needs** for eResearch support & priorities
- **attitudes**, awareness and willingness to be involved

INTERSECT

rollout & participants

May – June 2009
- University of Sydney
- University of New South Wales
- University of Newcastle
- University of New England

Sep – Nov 2009
- University of Technology, Sydney
- Southern Cross University
- Charles Sturt University

+ longitudinal...

From invitation:

"We are interested in your research practices and opinions, whatever your discipline, and whatever the extent of ICT use in your research"

INTERSECT

---

background

- investments in developing eResearch are underpinned by an expectation that eResearch infrastructures *will be taken up* by research communities
- however users and developers of eResearch infrastructures and services face challenges: not only technical, but social and cultural
- none of these are explored or well understood
- the need is urgent: initial investments are establishing systems that will remain in place for some time

INTERSECT

but why?

improving eResearch uptake requires that we understand:

- existing practices;
- what prevents researchers from adopting eResearch;
- what motivates researchers to change.

INTERSECT

---

initial findings into second round

Sample size

- To date a total 990 have participated and 826 valid responses.

Participants affiliations

- UNSW   26%   CSU   10.6%
- USyd   23%   SCU   5%
- UNE   14.5%   UTS   4.7%
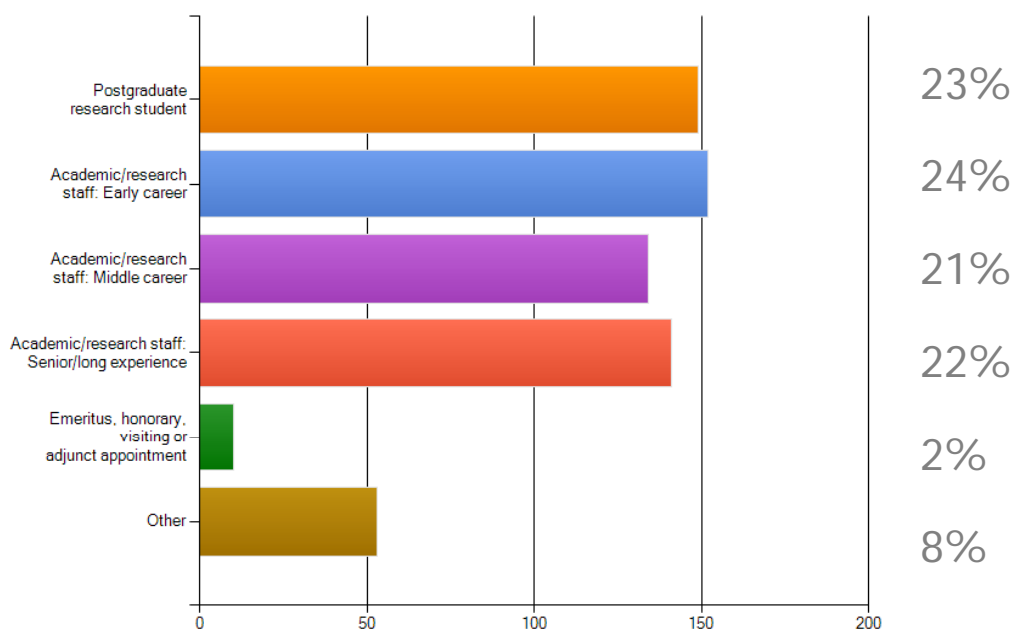- Newcastle 14%   Others 2.5%
- 752 answered this question

INTERSECT

eResearch infrastructure, practices and requirements (v 1.0)

Please select your current institution		Response Percent	Response Count
Australian Catholic University		0.0%	0
Charles Sturt University		10.6%	80
Macquarie University		0.3%	2
Southern Cross University		4.9%	37
The Australian National University		0.1%	1
The University of Newcastle		14.1%	106
The University of New England		14.5%	109
The University of New South Wales		25.8%	194
The University of Sydney		23.0%	173
University of Canberra		0.5%	4
University of Technology, Sydney		4.7%	35
University of Western Sydney		0.1%	1
University of Wollongong		0.1%	1
Other		1.2%	9
If other, please specify			15
answered question			752
skipped question			74

INTERSECT

primary role

- Postgraduate research student — 23%
- Academic/research staff: Early career — 24%
- Academic/research staff: Middle career — 21%
- Academic/research staff: Senior/long experience — 22%
- Emeritus, honorary, visiting or adjunct appointment — 2%
- Other — 8%

INTERSECT

awareness and attitudes

- 57% had not heard the term 'eResearch' before the survey.

  and

- 70%+ stated that eResearch is important or very important for future progress in their research fields!

- 30% said present ICT support minimally or not at all matches their research needs.

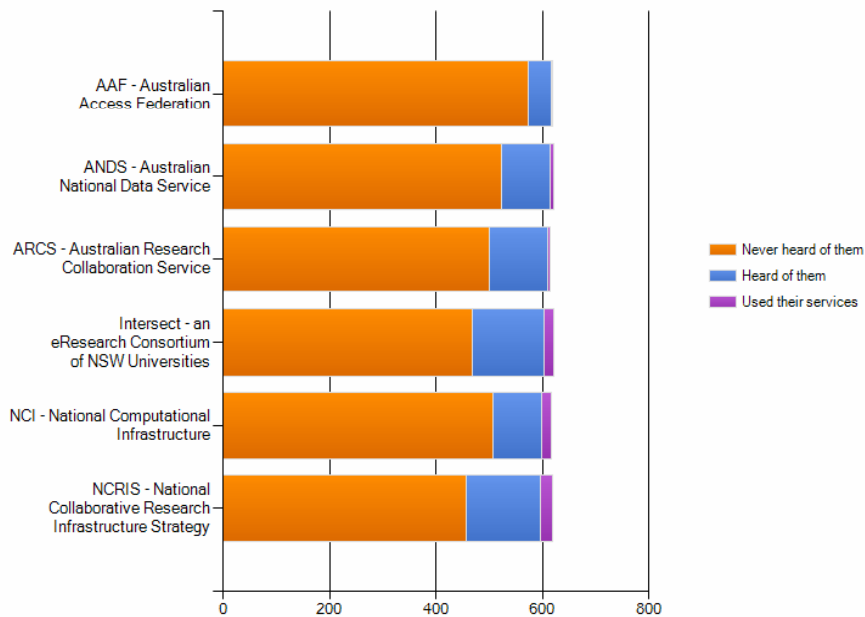INTERSECT

---

awareness of eResearch (q 6)

Prior to this survey, had you heard of the term "eResearch"?

- Yes
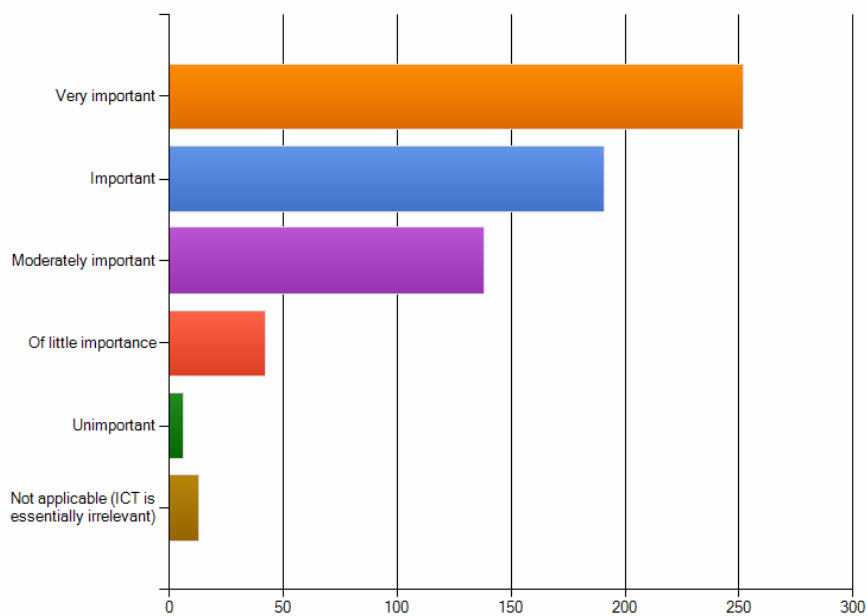- No
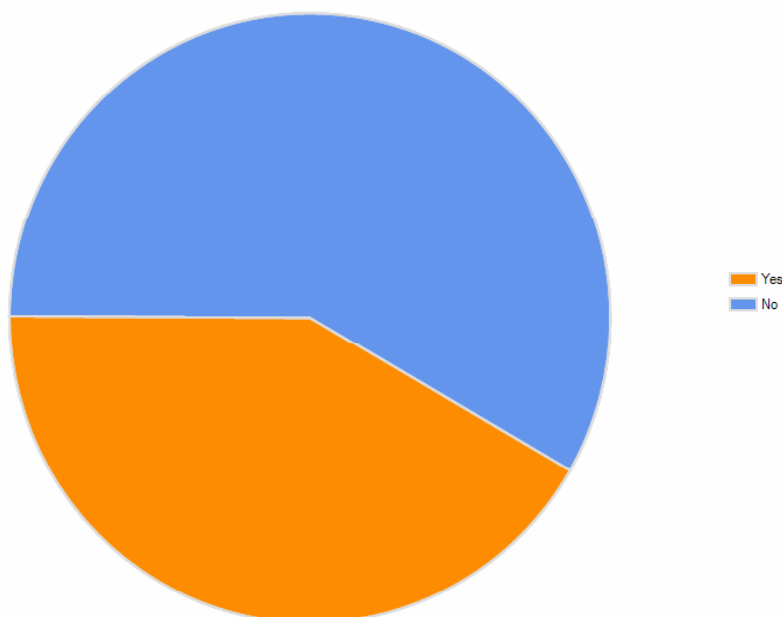
INTERSECT

awareness of eResearch orgs (q 29)

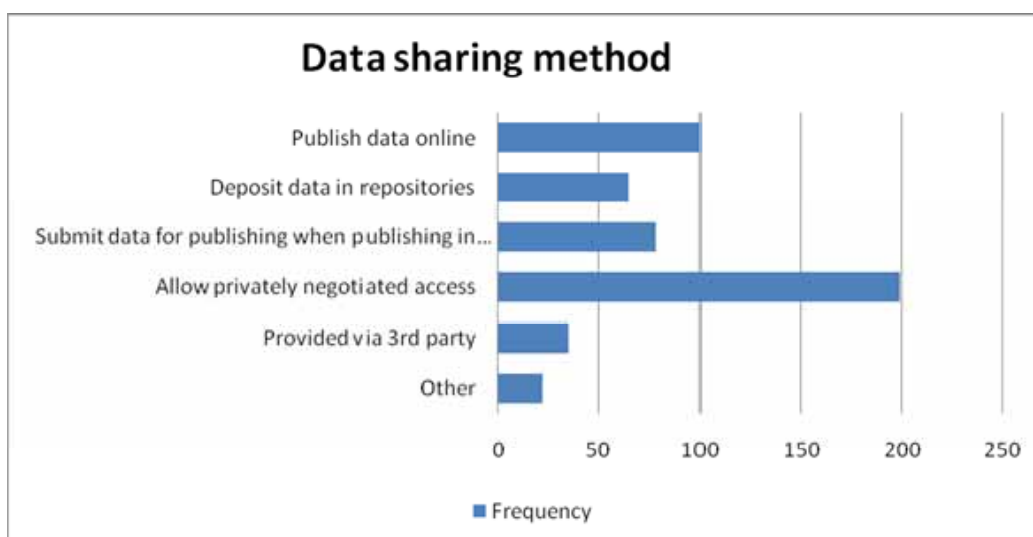**Have you heard about or used services provided by the following Australian bodies?**

attitude to eResearch (q 31)

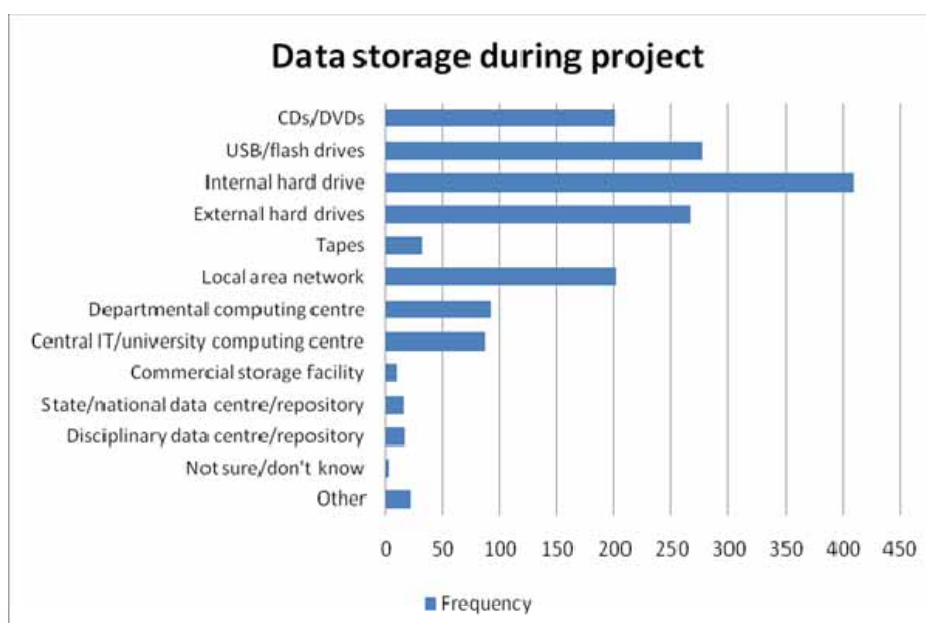**How important, do you think, is eResearch for the future progress of your research field?**
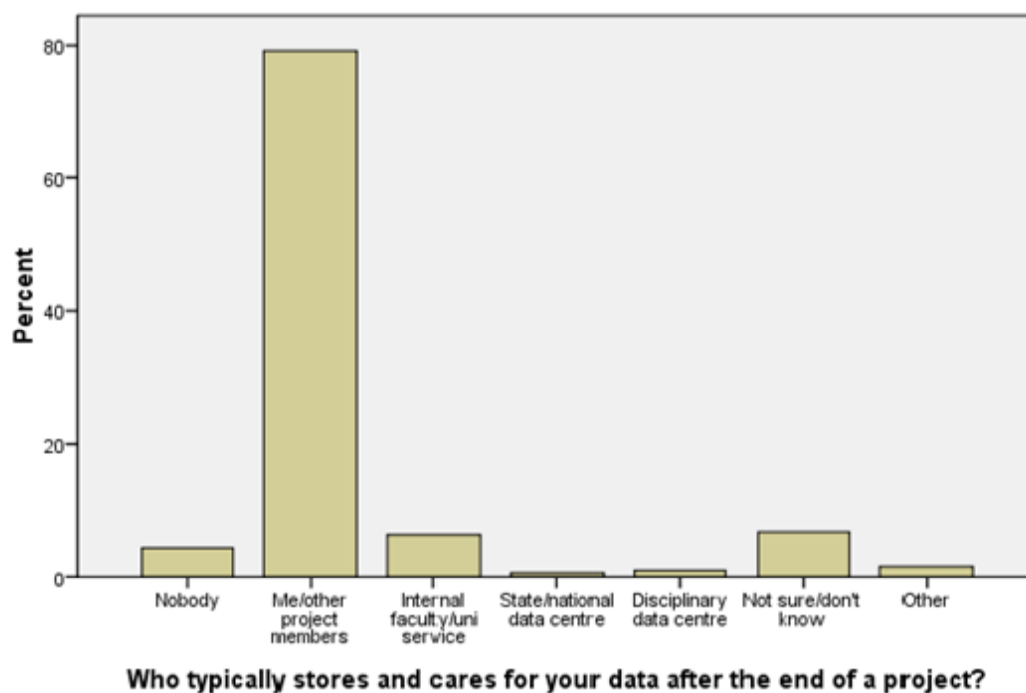
how do you provide access to your data? (q21)

Data sharing method

Method	
Publish data online	
Deposit data in repositories	
Submit data for publishing when publishing in...	
Allow privately negotiated access	
Provided via 3rd party	
Other	

0 50 100 150 200 250

■ Frequency

INTERSECT

---

data storage during a project (q25)

Data storage during project

Method	
CDs/DVDs	
USB/flash drives	
Internal hard drive	
External hard drives	
Tapes	
Local area network	
Departmental computing centre	
Central IT/university computing centre	
Commercial storage facility	
State/national data centre/repository	
Disciplinary data centre/repository	
Not sure/don't know	
Other	

0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400 450

■ Frequency

INTERSECT

who stores your data after the project? (q 26)

Who typically stores and cares for your data after the end of a project?

INTERSECT

most important future applications of ICT in your research field (q 32)

Future applications of ICT
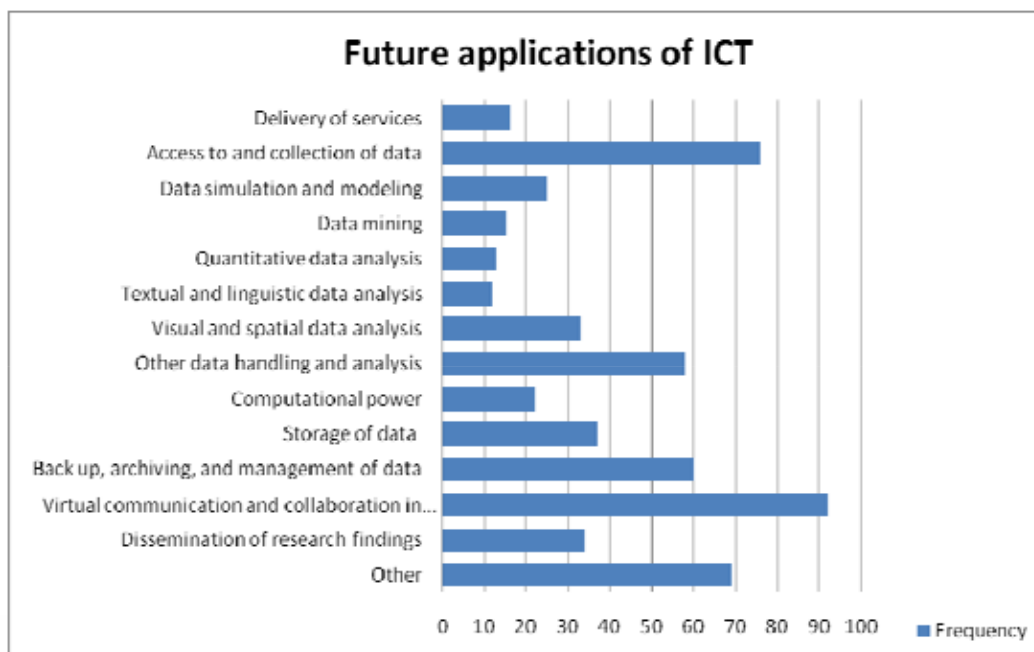
INTERSECT

most important challenges for the application of ICT in your research field (q 33)

Challenges to ICT application

---
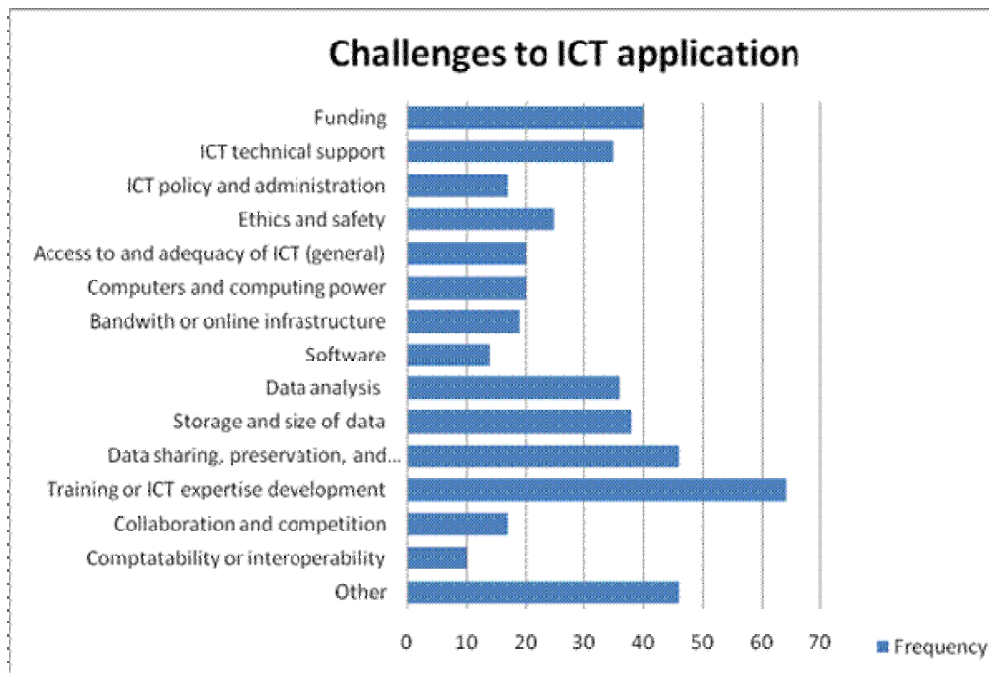
information about eResearch

- 30% would be willing to participate in follow-up focus groups aimed at developing eResearch services;

- 58% wanted to receive a brief report of the survey;

- 60% wanted to receive information about eResearch activities from their university.

INTERSECT

conclusion

- eResearch is a technical and social challenge

- there is significant interest in eResearch,

- and a lack of awareness and minimal engagement between eResearch service providers and researchers.

- survey clearly raises awareness of eResearch. As one respondent commented, "(the) survey gave me an idea of what software may be available that I hadn't even considered using or even knew of - eg. audio analysis - what is that! Would like to know more."

INTERSECT