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Dear SCIN,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in your inquiry. The writer is informed by the Minister's past two inquiries touching on Innovation. The first is Australia's Future Using Education Technology. The second is about Lifelong Learning.

This is not an academic document. It is an attempt to realise the Minister's efforts in encouraging Innovation between Australia's institutions. To be clear, Innovation, as described in this document simply means *to adapt*. I.e To encourage our institutions, including those of our many parliaments, through their committees, working groups or clusters, to share their learning, as it happens.

Their methods of learning, even though (Internet Protocol – IP ) Information and Communication Technologies have reached the point where this inquiry could be assisted in 'staging their story', and could provide a resource for ongoing learning outside the silo of [aph.gov.au](http://aph.gov.au), haven't changed yet. But hopefully it will be seen that with an emphasis on *sharing a learning* rather than working towards issuing a report, this inquiry holds one key to establishing a new environment, a new institution of learning, which can be applied to every Australian institution.

Technically, the new model for ICT can be described as a natural evolution from the old one of Institution-centric 'client/server' to one that is being described as grid/virtual server. This new way of looking at “Networking a Nation” has been effected by the use of IP technologies and the growth of bandwidth, to the point where, now that institutional and communal servers are largely (virtually) connected, the inhabitants of all National and Global institutions are reconsidering how they share their content, and care for its memory. <http://www.e-irg.org/about/>

Today, every thinking citizen recognises that they are overloaded with information, often in the form of policies and curricula. At the same time, due to the uni-directional nature of media, and the short termism and sectorization of our institution's educational methods, viewers and students of all ages are separated from participating in a modern education. This is particularly noticeable in Australia, where education is reduced to a service, which must be delivered, on time, and in a form, that is tailored to some subject-specific committee's narrow term of reference, and afterwards, buried (somewhere) inside their institution's archive.

Linkages between our 'service' institutions, it is often considered, are now so 'weak and underdeveloped' that our cultural institutions appear pretentious, and our political ones, remote and unapproachable. Their ability to adapt, to innovate, to one another's changing needs and demands is, in turn, reduced, if not made impossible. (Note Figure 2.18. P.47 DCITA's Creative Industries Cluster Study. Vol 3.)

The inhabitants of every (western) parliamentary committee intuit this situation. In [aph.gov.au](http://aph.gov.au)'s case, one only has to peruse past attempts to include remote communities in a broader learning by revisiting the 'outcomes' of the Procedures committee. In this institution, *Procedures* is as close as it gets to a committee for Innovation.

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/proc/reports/cominv/report.htm>

The UK parliament introduced a committee for Modernisation not long ago whose first report will be of some interest to this parliament.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmmodern/368/36802.htm>

I have said this is not an academic document, and to go into more detail would disprove it. Learning, in my experience, is best done by 'just doing' it. Australia's Future Using Educational Technology depends on how this committee may wish to use the technology available today, and act as pathfinders for the broader community. So I will make one suggestion. Two years ago, NOIE came to [aph.gov.au](http://aph.gov.au) and ran a roadshow for parliamentarians. They attempted to teach its inhabitants what had been done with over a billion dollars in Networking the Nation, and missed a wonderful opportunity in discovering which parts of the tools were most relevant to our representatives.

There are so many educational tools available now. Almost all of them are coalescing around the new ICT (media) model. Australia also has many of the best technicians in the world. If this inquiry would issue a challenge to them, to demonstrate their tools, and then select those most useful to the inhabitants of the Houses' learning groups, we might discover that the resulting research architecture is applicable to every other institution as well.

We might also discover a method of education that could support a lifelong learning, and at the same time, help to drag our stagnant institutions into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Simon Fenton- Jones  
14/05/05