Online Collaboration in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Applied Science

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DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCAR: Creative Community Action Research project

CON: Collaborative Online Networks

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

ISO: Industry Service Organisations: both the PGAV and VAPAC are referred to as Industry Service Organisations in the research, however the organisation prefer to refer to themselves as membership organisations. The distinction between membership organisations and Industry Service Organisations is made within the research.

IT: Information Technology

MAV: Municipal Association of Victoria

PGAV: Public Galleries Association of Victoria

TPAMS: Telecommunication Purchasing and Management Strategy

VAPAC: Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres

VRGN: Victorian Regional Gallery Network
SUMMARY

The research seeks to identify the opportunities online collaboration may deliver to the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN). The research further seeks to identify the Commonwealth and Victorian State Government policy context that contributes to realising these opportunities and the type of eBusiness models that could be applied to the online environment of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network.

The problem statement of the research argues that in order for the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN) to remain sustainable in the long term, it must develop collaborations within and external to the gallery sector to deliver value adding solutions for income generation and to cultural product, while seeking new business opportunities offered by the use of Information Technology and the Internet. The range of products offered by the galleries and their geographical distribution encourages collaborations to be undertaken, and in doing so, serves the customers of the VRGN who are increasingly becoming users of the Internet and who are expecting content online. Failing to consider the changing factors that online technologies present for conducting business and communicating common issues across the sector as a whole, puts the VRGN at risk of becoming redundant to its consumers (audience/customers), and a liability to its stakeholders.

The major research question is as follows:

*How can the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN), as a provider in the cultural and entertainment sector, deliver cultural product to its audiences (customers) through the use and application of collaborative online networks and their related e-business technologies?*

The research seeks to address this question by investigating the 14 regional galleries that comprise the Victorian Regional Gallery Network, by reviewing their operations and relationships with their stakeholders, and by suggesting a variety of electronic business models that may assist in engaging in collaborative online networks.
The scope of the research has three broad objectives:

1. the analysis of the role, function and activity of the Victorian Government in supporting collaborative online networks
2. the identification of an appropriate collaboration model that uses eBusiness and that can be applied to the VRGN
3. the analysis of the typical operating environment of the VRGN and the minimum requirements that will enable the implementation of a collaborative online network

At the heart of the research therefore is an understanding of the factors that contribute to a collaborative online network, so that the galleries and the VRGN can efficiently and competitively conduct business and communicate common issues amongst its members.

The case study design was selected, as the researcher systematically gathered in-depth information on a single entity, i.e., the VRGN. The methodology deployed in the research needed to effectively gather and collect relevant information from a variety of sources within the VRGN and hence two main approaches were utilised. The first was a questionnaire using the Likert and Dichotomous scale to collect data regarding the operations of the gallery, and the second included a series of interviews which were developed to address specific questions to the key staff within the main target groups of the research.

The conclusions that can be drawn out of the combined research include:

i. The use of internet technology by the VRGN does not appear to be limited by technical issues. This provides a technological foundation on which to develop possible I.T. and collaborative online solutions for the VRGN

ii. The technology required to develop collaboration in the first instance is not a barrier to implementation as it is common technology

iii. Knowledge of the characteristics of collaboration including understanding the dynamics of trust, communication, equality, strategic alliances, knowledge distribution, negotiations and incentives are essential if it is to effectively and productively occur in the gallery network. The findings of the research indicate that collaboration currently occurs in the galleries, but it is also hampered by a culture that can sometimes work against the sector as a whole. The creation of strategic alliances amongst the galleries has also been found to be successful, but the advantages of these alliances are yet to be realised or tested across the VRGN
iv. A Collaborative Online Network model has been proposed which may enable the gallery sector to share information, encourage communication, coordinate training and professional development opportunities and develop sector-wide research and development projects. The development of the collaborative online network would also assist in addressing the core issue of the research question concerning the provision of cultural product to state audiences through an online environment, and providing incentives to reduce cost and share resources.

v. The eBusiness model that will assist the VRGN in remaining competitive and active could use the Online Sales model, and will have the opportunity to exploit vertical aggregation of the Victorian arts industry to develop a portal or ‘vortal’ where the VRGN and its products and services can be marketed on a singular basis to the internet audience. The Online Sales Model also assists in developing a revenue stream for the galleries which may assist in its long term sustainability.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research

The flow of the chapter can be represented as follows:

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Background to the Research → Research Problem → Justification for the Research → Methodology
                        ↓                            ↓                        ↓
  Limitations & Key Assumptions → Outline of Thesis → Definitions → Summary
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“It is evident that while an engagement with digital media requires technology and funding, the success of the engagement is primarily about vision, organisational and creative management, allocation of resources, design, knowledge and training: i.e. digital imagination” (Lamshed 1998).

Information Technology (I.T.) and the Internet have changed the way in which information is presented and understood, and the above observation, although made more than five years ago, is as relevant today as it was when it was made. The observation is a starting point for this research, which seeks to identify the opportunities collaborative online networks may deliver to the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN). The research further seeks to identify the Government policy context that contributes to realising these opportunities and the type of eBusiness models that could be applied to the online environment of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network.

Recent statistics into the Victorian cultural sector indicate that in 2003, $92.7m was earned across the sector, with $69.6m coming from box office, admission charges and user fees (Arts Victoria 2004a). Earned income accounted for 48% of budget on average, with the performing arts sector demonstrating highest earning power (Arts Victoria 2004a). The arts make an important contribution to the Victorian economy, with figures from 2001-02 period showing the total value of goods and services supplied by the Victorian art and cultural industries estimated to be $7.8 billion (Arts Victoria 2003a). As a consequence, the operation of galleries in regional Victoria is now located within business units of Local Council, and contributes to the economic development strategies of State and Local Government alike.
This now makes galleries increasingly accountable to stakeholders and influences outside of their traditional museological environments. The galleries are no longer a collection of organisations charged only with caring for and presenting their collections. They now have to face business and commercial decisions, both within and external to local council management structures, the outcomes of which will determine their ability to present cultural and recreational products to their audience. They compete alongside other leisure experiences, and are increasingly answerable to local communities who subsidise their existence through the payment of rates. For galleries to continue to play a role in this area, new ways of operating, and generating revenue need to be investigated. Collaborative environments with the benefits of eBusiness and other online technologies provide a new horizon for the operating structures of the galleries that make up the VRGN.

There is an existing body of work outlining the various policy directions, frameworks and statements from the Victorian Government regarding the Information and Communication Technology (I.C.T.) industry (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development 2002a, 2002b, Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001, Department of State and Regional Development 1999, 2002a, 2002b, Multimedia Victoria 2002). These documents provide a reference point for the research in that they locate the Government’s perspective and themes for the use of I.T., highlighting broad government support for developing innovative uses of technology, and connecting government services and resources (which includes galleries and their products) to business and customer/audiences needs.

Both Commonwealth and State Government have a role in emphasising the importance of telecommunications to national and business infrastructure by building national backbones and helping to provide gateways to other nations (Chidambaram & Zigours 2001). They have also been working to develop and engender trust and certainty in eBusiness transactions by the broader community (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2000).

The VRGN may be in a position to draw benefit from policy frameworks designed by the Victorian Government to explore ways for business and industry to use a combination of technology and innovation to produce flow through benefits to Victorian consumers or citizens (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development 2002, Department of State and Regional Development 1999, O’Brien 2000). The Government has also supported
the trial of new technologies and developed pilot projects to challenge emerging ideas (Department of State and Regional Development 1999).

In addition to these frameworks, the development of new industry models for sustainability including incubators, networked organisations, and co-operatives which are being considered by the Victorian Government (Arts Victoria 2002), may provide a policy context in which the VRGN can be involved in the transition to a knowledge-based economy. These new models formed part of the development of an arts policy that helped Victorian artists and arts companies to project an image of innovation in the global marketplace (Arts Victoria 2002).

This research will review the different types of electronic business models that can be applied to the arts industry including the Online Sales, Market Maker, Content, Infomediary, Affiliate and eBusiness Revenue Model (Graeme 2001). In undertaking this review, the research will be able to identify opportunities for the VRGN, and begin to clarify issues that are central to the development of electronic business practices. It also contributes to a growing body of knowledge of how collaboration can occur within the VRGN, whilst identifying the ingredients that will make up a model of a collaborative online network.

By exploiting the capabilities of the online technologies, the Internet can begin to be seen as an enabler for the arts sector (Chidambaram & Zigours 2001, May 2000, Porter 2001), in achieving business objectives and creating new operational paradigms through collaboration practices. These collaborations can include the formation of effective relationships (Fingar & Aronica 2001) with commercial incentives, encouraging businesses to invest in the act of collaboration due to the delivery of tangibles benefits, i.e., income or revenue (McFadzean & McKenzie 2001, Vangen & Huxhman 2003).

Collaborative online technologies have been successfully applied in the education and science areas to provide participants with a means to research and share information (Centre for Networking Technologies for the Information Economy 2004, Education Network of Australia 2004, The Learning Federation 2004). These experiences suggest that any model to be designed for the VRGN to enable it to successfully collaborate will need to contain, at the minimum, the ability to share documents and information (Palmer 2003).

There are also examples of collaborative environments that have been developed as communication services. These services link members to discuss common interests and
practices (Education Network of Australia 2004, Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres 2004), or to share information and technical features (Burton 2001, Centre for Networking Technologies for the Information Economy 2004, The Learning Federation 2004). These examples will also contribute to the drafting of the components of a collaborative environment suitable for the VRGN.

Collaboration within the arts sector is closely linked with the key characteristics of the strategic alliances (Yoshino & Rangan 1995) where participating organisations pursue a set of agreed upon goals, share the benefits of the alliances and contribute on an ongoing basis in one or more key strategic areas. Given this, notions of trust, knowledge sharing and collaboration become central elements for the arts sector to create interorganisational relationships (Black et al. 2002, Vangen & Huxhman 2003), examples of which can be seen on a local level with the development of a cluster approach to collaboration.

The clusters are alliances between galleries that have identified a partnership or relationship that can exist between each other (Arts Victoria 2003a, Cauley de la Sierra 1995, Yoshino & Robinson 1995). This relationship may be one-off or ongoing depending on the nature of the collaboration or activity. Clusters have been used to develop audiences within the VRGN and are determined by the capacity of the galleries to share product between each other (Dir. Int.). This includes having similar collection profiles that enable objects to be shared or loaned across the partners, similar exhibition programs that enable joint or co-production between venues, and similar or complementary style of venues that allow for joint marketing of the public programs.

The cluster approach is considered an important development for the creative industries in Australia (Geiselhart & Huta 2003) as this approach can be shown to develop and maintain economic, commercial and social development as well as maximising marketing penetration across a region (Creative Gippsland 2003). This approach will be reviewed later in the research in order to gain a better understanding of its objectives and outcomes.

Given this background into the research, the following sections of this chapter will outline the central research problem and question to be addressed and subsequent structure of the research.
1.2 Research Problem

In order for the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN) to remain sustainable in the long term, it must develop collaborations within and external to the gallery sector to deliver value adding solutions for income generation and cultural product, while seeking new business opportunities offered by the use of Information Technology and the Internet. The range of products offered by the galleries and their geographical distribution encourages collaborations to be undertaken, and in doing so, serves the customers of the VRGN who are increasingly becoming users of the Internet and who are expecting content online.

The individual galleries, on which the Victorian Regional Gallery Network is built, are no longer venues preserved by government for the enjoyment of the public, but are now managed within the municipal council structures that require them to be accountable to a number of stakeholders and operate as discrete business units. Failing to consider the changing factors that online technologies present for conducting business and communicating common issues across the sector, puts the VRGN at risk of becoming redundant to its consumers (audience/customers), and a liability to its stakeholders.

The major research question has been formalised from the above research problem, and is as follows:

*How can the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN), as a provider in the cultural and entertainment sector, deliver cultural product to its audiences (customers) through the use and application of collaborative online networks and their related e-business technologies?*

The research seeks to address this question by investigating the 14 regional galleries that comprise the VRGN, by reviewing their operations and relationships with their stakeholders, and by suggesting a variety of electronic business models that may assist in engaging in collaborative online networks. As such the topic of the thesis limits the research to the Victorian Regional Gallery Network and is focussed on:
From the major research question, the following subsidiary research questions were developed:

**Question One:** What are the types of collaboration that occur in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network?

**Question Two:** What are the business objectives of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network and what are the most suitable eBusiness models?

**Question Three:** What is required to support the operation of collaborative online networks within the Victorian Regional Gallery Network?

### 1.3 Justification for the Research

Victoria is enlivened by a strong, dynamic and innovative arts industry, which plays an important role in the cultural life of Victorians as well as contributing to the social and economic life of the State (Arts Victoria 2002c). Recent figures of attendance show that over three quarters of the Victorian population aged over 15 years attended a cultural venue at least once, with roughly 2.8 million visits to the galleries alone (Arts Victoria 2002c). In the years 1996/97, 6,700 people worked in cultural industries as their main job in regional Victoria (Arts Victoria 2002c).

The State and Commonwealth Governments have sought to encourage the take-up of telecommunication services, broadband services and subsequent digital media by the business and the domestic consumer (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2002, Department of State and Regional Development 1999 and 2002, National Office for the Information Economy 2003a) in an effort to enhance economic performance and to deliver social benefits more widely and effectively (Geiselhart & Huta 2003). This provides an opportunity for the
cultural sector to deliver sophisticated online content (National Office for the Information Economy 2003b) but it must first have the digital imagination (Lamshed 1998) to understand the opportunities available. The cultural sector therefore requires new business models, strategic alliances and new ways of working to engage in this space, for these are as important as new skills and infrastructure (Davenport 1997, Geiselhart & Huta 2003).

The use of the Internet in general, and the adoption of eBusiness technology specifically, provide a significant resource to organisations and companies. As technology becomes more pervasive and less expensive (Department of State and Regional Development 2002a), cultural organisations have a greater opportunity to reinvent and redesign their services to exploit the technologies. It also provides impetus to cultural organisations to realign business practices to ensure that loss of market share does not occur due to a slow uptake of technology compared with competitors within the culture and recreational area (Smith 2002).

This research is focussed on proposing a model of a collaborative online network that supports and encourages collaboration between the galleries of the VRGN using the digital commerce arena (Fingar & Aronica 2001). A variety of eBusiness models are investigated as part of the research in order to identify those models which may be best suited to the VRGN. This approach is consistent with the findings contained within the study into the small to medium arts sector which recommended, amongst other things, building the appropriate technology infrastructure that increases participation and collaboration in the arts sector (Arts Victoria 2001).

By reviewing the characteristics of collaborative practices existing within the VRGN, and by searching for new business models that can be exploited over the Internet, the research seeks to gather a picture of the options available to the VRGN to deliver cultural and business services to its peers and audiences. In doing this, the research strives to identify strategies for the galleries and the VRGN that enable it to continue to play an important role in the presentation of cultural experiences to Victorian audiences.
1.3.1 Collaborative networks within galleries and museums

There are few online business models being deployed in the Australian cultural sector (National Office for the Information Economy 2003b), with the majority using websites predominantly for self-promotion. The Victorian arts and cultural industry does not have a model that adequately demonstrates a working example of a collaborative online environment within the gallery and museum environment (Arts Victoria 2001). However within the performing arts sector, the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC) was specifically constituted to promote and foster a co-operative network of performing arts centres across Victoria (Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres 2003). It provides a web-based presence for its member organisations, and for this reason the VAPAC model will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

There is a growing argument to support a cluster approach within the creative industries (Geiselhart & Huta 2003) in order to develop and maintain economic, commercial and social development as well as maximising marketing penetration across a region (Creative Gippsland 2003). Some also argue there are opportunities to develop a paradigm shift in the way people or resources interrelate (National Office for the Information Economy 2003a). These strategies will be addressed through the research sub-questions, when the characteristics of collaboration are detailed and components of the collaborative online network analysed.

Given these changes and initiatives it is surprising that there are few active examples of online collaboration within the Victorian cultural sector. Cooperative activity is normally funnelled through membership organisations and industry organisations, examples of which include Australian Museums and Galleries Online (AMOL), Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV), Regional Arts Victoria (RAV), Museums Australia – Victoria and the previously mentioned VAPAC; however only VAPAC could be described as a collaborative organisation that uses online technologies to deliver services. For collaborative strategies to occur, partners need be able and willing to both distribute knowledge to other members and integrate knowledge made available to them (Halme 2001).

Collaboration that exploits both I.T. and online technology can be distinguished by the capacity of the user to access information when required, and to tap into technology’s flexible
tools (Microsoft Australia Small Business Centre 2004). The variety of online collaboration tools suitable for use by the Victorian small to medium arts sector include shared calendar systems, shared contact databases, centralised document storage, announcement boards and virtual conferencing (Project Coordinator 2004).

The Victorian Regional Gallery Network shares many of the characteristics of other small to medium companies (Shepard & Singh 2004) including requirements for training, access to I.T. expertise, poor awareness of the possibilities in using I.T./online to achieve business objectives, and a lack of resources. This highlights a gap in current practice in the administration of the cultural sector.

It is intended that this research will review these issues and identify the components of a collaborative online network that could support the activities of the Victorian regional galleries.

1.3.2 Policy for the arts and cultural sector in Victoria

The research is informed by and references many policy statements from within the Government of Victoria (excluding the obvious references to the arts polices). The Growing Victoria Together policy statement (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001) lists eleven key priority actions, including Growing and linking all of Victoria and Building cohesive communities and reducing inequalities (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001). The former action item provides an undertaking to connect more Victorians to the Internet and other new technologies, whilst the latter, supports community building initiatives and developing partnerships with local government around local communities’ needs and enhancing community participation and engagement in cultural activities (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001).

Since the Ministerial Statement made in 1999, ‘Connecting Victoria’ (Department of State and Regional Development 1999), the Victorian Government has been keen to address the relationship between infrastructure, audiences and content when looking at the drivers of the I.C.T. industry. The Government has devised a variety of approaches to encourage the broader community to use new technologies, and the research fits comfortably within these approaches – from identifying ways for a reliable and affordable I.C.T. network in regional
areas (Department of State and Regional Development 1999); to direct intervention of purchasing telecommunications requirements (Multimedia Victoria 2003b) and investigating and experimenting in the use of these new telecommunications networks (Department of State and Regional Development 2002a).

The research therefore provides an arts sector-specific project to investigate a meaningful example of exploiting digital media to achieve business outcomes, whilst testing, recognising and exploiting the new connections made possible by technology (Department of State and Regional Development 2002a).

The arts industry is in the early stages of using technology. It has some level of adoption of digital media but uses it mainly for information and email. However it does not necessarily use digital media to deliver business objectives, use its websites to drive audience to their operations, or use digital media to support innovation (Arts Victoria 2001).

Digital media, in particular the Internet, has changed the way organisations in most industries operate (Arts Victoria 2001). New challenges are facing the arts industry and these challenges need to be managed to ensure that the appropriate adoption of technology is matched by a business requirement. As more people make use of the Internet and become competent web-users, there is increased potential for the arts industry to expand audiences through higher levels of web presence (Smith 2002).

The Victorian arts sector has begun to understand the potential of new technologies to enable opportunities to reach new audiences (Arts Victoria 2001), yet significant barriers still hamper the take-up of these technologies and new business paradigms. These barriers include the availability of fast, reliable communication infrastructure (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001); the lack of access to knowledge and skills in I.C.T. that would enable arts companies to exploit current and future trends; effective resource levels of staff who have an understanding of digital media and its applications; I.T. planning and training at an organisational level to ensure a coordinated and managed approach is carried out; an understanding of stakeholder’s needs and expectations; and funds to not just create projects, but to develop a strategic approach to I.T. management within the organisation (Arts Victoria 2001).
The research explores these issues and reviews the collaborative online models that could provide the industry with improved business outcomes.

The research is firmly situated within the policy context of Arts Victoria, the division of the Department of Premier Cabinet charged with advising on and implementing arts policy, developing the arts and cultural industries across the State and ensuring access to the arts for all Victorians (Arts Victoria 2003a). In the period 2003/04, $1.27m was given to 17 outer metropolitan and regional galleries to support their operations, management and programs, with an emphasis on programs that increased community access and participation (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2004).

In the recently released policy, *Creative Capacity + Arts for all Victorians* (Arts Victoria 2003a) the scene is set to position the cultural sector closer to the economic, social and educational drivers of the state. The policy document expresses a need to encourage the use of resources more effectively, and recognise the need for creative approaches to income generation and the challenges and potential of new technology (Arts Victoria 2003a). It also prioritises the facilitation of physical and virtual clusters of arts organisations, whilst providing assistance to arts companies to deliver broad and diverse community access to their collections, and develop and present digital media projects (Arts Victoria 2003a).

In summary therefore, the research can be shown to have relevance on economic, technological and cultural grounds. The ‘economic’ because the arts in Victoria contribute $7.8 billion to the Victorian economy (Arts Victoria 2002b), the ‘technological’ as the arts sector is well placed to deliver their services using new technologies, and ‘cultural’ grounds, because the take-up of technology through collaborative online activities, will enable increased opportunities to raise revenue, maximise marketing opportunities and increase audiences to their product. This in turn will strengthen the galleries’ operating base, and contribute to creating a sustainable and competitive cultural environment. These approaches are supported by whole-of-government policies regarding information communication technology, the rights of citizens, and the role that the arts plays in government, including investment in the arts sector.
1.4 Methodology

The scope has three broad objectives that will guide the research. The objectives are the:

1. analysis of the role, function and activity of the Victorian Government in supporting collaborative online networks
2. identification of an appropriate collaboration model that uses eBusiness and that can be applied to the VRGN
3. analysis of the typical operating environment of the VRGN and the requirements to implement a collaborative online network

At the heart of the research therefore is an understanding of the factors that contribute to the collaborative online network, so that the galleries and the VRGN can efficiently and competitively conduct business and communicate common issues amongst its members.

The research targets a single sector of the Victorian arts industry in order to allow for achievable and meaningful outcomes to be determined. The methodology deployed in the research needed to be able to effectively gather and collect relevant information from a variety of sources including gallery staff (Directors and Curators) and council staff (Information Technology Managers) - the information being sought was a combination of qualitative and quantitative information. As such, two main approaches were utilised: a questionnaire using the Likert and Dichotomous scale was designed to collect data regarding the operations of the gallery, and a series of interviews were developed to address specific questions to the key staff within the main target groups of the research.

The interview methodology will be used to gain a clearer understanding of the environment in which the VRGN operates, whilst investigating the factors that would contribute to these organisations making use of online technologies. The suite of interviews therefore needed to address not only the galleries and the VRGN, but the Industry Service Organisations (ISO)
associated with it. The ISO to be included in the study are the Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV) and the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC) as these organisations would collectively cover most of the cultural activity occurring throughout the State. The issues impacting on the research design and methodology will be discussed in detail in Chapters Three and Four.

1.5 Limitations and Key Assumptions

The operation of the Victorian arts industry is diverse and dependent upon the specific business requirements of the segment groups and their stakeholders (Arts Victoria 2001). These segments are grouped as follows:

- Cultural Development
- Industry Services
- Festival and Events
- Producers
- Presenters

Each segment is characterised by similar business purposes and their respective stakeholder groups, and all share in one or more of the following business outcomes characterised by the development of relationships, including:

- audiences
- arts practitioners
- communities
- content
- supplier relationships and/or partnerships
- clients and/or customers
- staff
- operational effectiveness and financial sustainability (Arts Victoria 2001, pp. 8-9)
The gallery sector can belong to both Producer and Presenter segments, in that it can both create exhibitions (in the role of a ‘producer’ of content) as well as display the work generated/curated outside of the gallery (in a ‘presentation’ role only). This therefore allows galleries to share business outcomes and stakeholder groups in that they may be working on one or more sides of the exhibition process. Furthermore, this research proposes that as these galleries can share categories of business outcomes (as described above) then there is opportunity to investigate collaborative activity.

Both a limitation and an assumption of the research was that the VRGN was supportive and provided assistance to the researcher in the data gathering component. The VRGN was not considered a proactive force when reviewing the application of I.T., or collaborative practices, and the researcher was required to manage this tension with delicacy.

The research does not provide an overview of purchasing telecommunications for the VRGN and it does not provide in-depth consideration of the technical requirements to implement, build, project manage and maintain any type of collaborative online network. Rather the research poses a model of collaboration that uses the online environment and the associated communication paradigms as the central distributive mechanism. Similarly, the research does not speculate on the pace of I.C.T. developments and infrastructure improvements that are ongoing.

The research and the findings are related to regional galleries in Victoria but the findings may have implications to similar type organisations in other states. The research does not conclude, nor should it be assumed that the findings could be directly applied to other industries at either local, state or commonwealth levels without further specific research being undertaken.
1.6 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, with references and appendices.

Chapter One is an introductory chapter summarising the key points of the thesis. Included in this chapter is some background to the research, the research problem and hypothesis, justification for the research, methodology, outline definitions and limitations and key assumptions made by the writer.

Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of published research in the topic area through the provision of a Literature Review. This review includes information relating to Commonwealth and State Government policy context, a discussion of business models and characteristics of collaborative networks. It ends with a summary of the key points of the search, and their relevance to the research to be conducted, and the problem statement being investigated.

Chapter Three details and makes comment on a preliminary checklist audit undertaken on the VRGN websites, and develops a series of issues that form part of the data gathering stage of the research that subsequently informs the methodology. This chapter includes a case study into the VAPAC and outlines the research sub-questions. The chapter ends with a summary of the approach and notes the implications for the methodology and analysis to be carried out in the following chapters.

Chapter Four is specifically concerned with the design and methodology of the research. This chapter details the use of a questionnaire and informal interviews as a device to gather data and information from the galleries. It also details the ethical considerations of the research, and ends with a summary of the main points of the chapter.
Chapter Five presents the analysis of the data and details the findings of the questionnaires and the interviews. It describes common themes and analysis drawn from the data gathering stage and ends with a summary of the main points of the discussion.

Chapter Six draws on the outcomes of the previous chapter and develops new thinking from the analysis and the reading material reviewed in Chapter Two. This chapter specifically addresses the research questions and attempts to take the reader through the bulk of the analysis of the research. A summary of the key findings will end this chapter.

The final and seventh chapter develops an overarching conclusion that draws together the key points of the research and reading bringing to an end the work that constitutes the thesis and the research topic.

The Appendices contain the supporting documentation used in the research and these include the interview questions, questionnaire, and the ethics form.

1.7 Definitions

This section briefly sets out a number of terms or acronyms that are used within the body of the thesis.

ADSL: Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) is a technology for transmitting digital information at a high bandwidth on existing phone lines to homes and businesses. Unlike regular dialup phone service, ADSL provides continuously-available, "always on" connection (TechTarget 2004).

Arts Victoria: Arts Victoria delivers services and programs to enhance the contribution of the creative industries within the Victorian community. A Division of the Department of Premier
and Cabinet, Arts Victoria provides high quality advice and leadership in the implementation of the Government's arts policy.

Connecting Victoria: Connecting Victoria is the Victorian Government's blueprint for growing the State's information and communications technology (I.C.T.) sector. It has six key planks with the overarching aim of bringing the benefits of technology to all Victorians.

eBusiness (electronic business), derived from such terms as "e-mail" and "e-commerce," is the conduct of business on the Internet, not only buying and selling but also servicing customers and collaborating with business partners (TechTarget 2004).

eCommerce (electronic commerce) is the buying and selling of goods and services on the Internet, especially the World Wide Web (TechTarget 2004).

Museological: the science that deals with the preparation and arrangement of specimens and collections in museums (Russell, Bean & Vaughan 1947). This term has also come to include the associated administrative component of the operations of museums and art galleries.

Portal: A portal is a term, generally synonymous with a gateway to information (Kontzer & Turek 2003), for a website that is or proposes to be a major starting site for users when they get online or that users tend to visit as an anchor site (TechTarget 2004).

Subsidised sector: A small proportion of the Victorian public arts and cultural sector receives funding from a variety of government and non-government sources to remain financially viable and to deliver a suite of programs and activities that meet the policy and business requirements of the specific government agency or department. As such these areas are considered subsidised areas, in that they could not deliver these services without direct (and often ongoing) financial and in-kind support from Local, State or Federal Government departments. Arts Victoria, a division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, directly supports approximately 100 Victorian organisations on a recurrent program of organisational funding.

TPAMS: Telecommunications Purchasing and Management Strategy – a project managed through the eGovernment Networks branch of Multimedia Victoria, the objective of which is to aggregate the demand of Office Telephony and Data Carriage across Victorian Government
agencies, divisions and branches, in order to provide a more effective and coordinated purchasing model for the Victorian Government. ‘The Telecommunications Purchasing and Management Strategy (TPAMS) has been established to provide a strategic framework for the procurement and management of tele-communications services across the whole of the Victorian Government’ (Multimedia Victoria 2003b).

1.8 Summary

This chapter identified the key elements of the research. It provided a background into the research and the questions that are to guide the research. It also detailed justifications for the research by briefly discussing the areas pertaining to I.T., collaborative networks and government. It then briefly outlined the methodology that shaped the research, a description of the limitations of the research, a brief summary of the subsequent chapters, and a list of definitions that have been applied throughout the research. The following chapter will review the current state of knowledge in the subject area and will develop a theoretical foundation to the research.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The flow of the chapter can be represented as follows:

Introduction → Policy Context → Business Models → Collaboration → Gaps in Research → Summary

This chapter will review the literature pertaining to three key areas. These areas include firstly the policy context of the Commonwealth and Victorian State Government regarding the adoption of I.T. by Australian businesses and the policy regarding the arts sector, secondly, electronic business models, and thirdly collaboration. These areas have been selected as they address the key objectives of the research problem. Throughout this chapter, the research objectives will be justified and the questions that shape the research and inform the future chapters on analysis and findings, will be refined.

It is important that the research review the literature, policy and reports at both the Commonwealth and State level of government. This review will ensure that current directions in the arts sector are understood, that integrated policy initiatives are identified, funding agreements revealed, and the development of strategies to assist the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN) adopt I.T. and online business functions are clarified. These areas will be discussed in section two and will include three sub-sections. The first sub-section will include a description of the major initiatives undertaken at Commonwealth level, including the policy frameworks for the Information Communications Technology (I.C.T.) industry. The second sub-section will undertake a similar review of the Victorian Government initiatives, and will also include information regarding the current arts policy and how this shapes and impacts on the VRGN adopting I.T. and online business models. The third sub-section of the policy context area will look specifically at the arts industry in Australia, and then focus on the Victorian sector, in order to further refine the picture of how the Victorian Regional Gallery Network is currently using I.T. and online technologies and identify what it will need to consider if it is to increase this usage.

The third section of the chapter will discuss the variety of business models that have been discovered through the literature search, including eBusiness models and b-web models. This
discussion serves to review the types of business models that may be best suited to the VRGN.

The fourth section addresses the concept of collaboration and its characteristics, including a discussion on software that will facilitate collaboration and the social or cultural traits that enable collaboration to successfully occur.

The review of literature will conclude by drafting a ‘collaboration model’ that will serve as a model on which the future research on the VRGN will be tested and by identifying the gaps in the literature that will need to be addressed prior to commencing the research.

The fifth section will identify the gaps in literature that have been discovered as part of the Literature Review – these gaps include areas that require attention prior to the research proceeding to methodology design stage, and will lead into Chapter Three.

The sixth and final section will summarise the main points from the review of literature, and introduce the following chapter, which deals with preliminary research on the Victorian Regional Gallery Network.

2.2 Policy Context

![Diagram of Policy Context]

2.2.1 Commonwealth Government

The Australian Commonwealth Government has outlined a framework for the I.C.T. industry that provides for a series of strategic approaches to assist the nation develop coherent and coordinated approaches to managing the I.C.T. area. These areas include Leadership, Research and Development, Infrastructure, Skills, Promoting ‘Technology Australia’, Building Innovative Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Networks and Clusters, the
Information Base for the I.C.T. Industry (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003a).

This framework is consistent with and underpins the approach of the research in that it identifies that those parts of government and business that will benefit most from the transformative role of I.C.T. are those which treat I.C.T. as a key strategic resource for achieving organisational goals rather than as a purely technical input (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003a). Given this, there are gains to be identified not so much from the I.T. specialists, but from the senior managers within the organisations i.e., those staff that drive the business (Davenport 1997, Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2000, Smith 2002).

The Online Council is a committee comprising Ministers from the Australian Government, State Governments, the Northern Territory Government and the President of the Australian Local Government Association. The Council addresses a broad range of issues that drive the growth of Australia's information economy. In its September 2003 meeting, the Council noted several items (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003c), including the Enabling Our Future report, and identified several items pertaining to this report that highlighted the interlinking this research has with other government departments and committees. These items included:

- improving I.C.T. investment attraction and I.C.T. strengths promotion
- improving coordination of I.C.T. strategies between jurisdictions
- facilitating recognition of the critical enabling role of I.C.T. in improving productivity, driving business efficiencies and supporting innovation
- improving accounting for the total national I.C.T. capability
- making it easier for SMEs to sell to governments and big business
- bringing together major focal points of R&D activity and the innovation infrastructure to drive cluster development

The Online Council in September 2003 had amongst other items on its agenda, improving eGovernment service delivery, reviewing the National Broadband Strategy and strategies pertaining to sustainability of Online Access Centres (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003c), indicating that issues of strategic connectivity and accessibility are its priorities.
Online activity has been shown to benefit a variety of organisations in different ways and it is already clear that eCommerce will bring significant changes to business, consumers, government and economy (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2000). Thus, much of the eCommerce information available can be applied to the non-profit organisations, in that these organisations need to understand what is required to participate in online activities (National Office for the Information Economy 1999).

‘The Internet is not just about commerce. The key tools of eCommerce, namely networked information technology (I.T.) can also be effectively applied to the non-profit sector. In doing so, both small and large organisations can - like business - increase efficiency, provide better service and optimise outcomes for their members or clients. And they can do so by spending up big, minimally or not at all’ (National Office for the Information Economy 1999, p.2).

Government also needs to address concerns about ownership, access and distribution of information. It has a major role in emphasising the importance of telecommunications to national and business infrastructure by building national backbones and helping to provide gateways to other nations (Chidambaram & Zigours 2001). Government also needs to understand and support the notion that technology by itself does not ensure the coming of the virtual society, but rather it is the enabler and shaper of activity and resources (Davenport 1997), and that assistance is required to accelerate the uptake of eBusiness by the small to medium enterprises (National Office for the Information Economy 2002).

The efficiencies brought about by eCommerce are expected to result in a variety of locations, with the highest demand likely to be strongest in areas related to tourism and associated support services (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2000). Government is attempting to stimulate online local content that reflects Australia’s values, identity and character (National Office for the Information Economy 2003).

The Commonwealth Government has attempted to facilitate the introduction of best use eBusiness practices across industry, governments and the community generally (Graeme 2001). Government has worked to develop and engender trust and certainty in eBusiness transactions by the broader community, and has legislated and regulated where appropriate and where it may assist country regions (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2000).
The Government further supports and facilitates the development of high speed interactive infrastructure, with appropriate best practice access and pricing conditions including available bandwidth (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003c). As such it strives to enhance skills formation and research, education and training, development and innovation, and is in a position to play a leadership role (Graeme 2001). This highlights an area for the research to review, in that this perspective is also supported by the Victorian Government with respect to the galleries’ capacity and ability to use I.T. within a collaborative network (Arts Victoria 2001). It also creates a bipartisan approach in the coordination of I.C.T. initiatives – including the previously mentioned Online Council, which has Ministerial representatives from each State and Territory across Australia.

The Commonwealth is also striving to make Australia a world leader in the availability and effective use of broadband (National Office for the Information Economy 2003a), whilst also seeking to remove any existing legal impediments to the use of electronic transactions through the Electronic Transaction Act 2000 (Attorney General’s Department 2004).

The issue of bandwidth and its affordable access by business and citizens is the key to effective digital communication (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003c, National Office for the Information Economy 2003a). Without sufficient bandwidth, businesses, organisations and individuals are relegated to an internet connection that cannot handle much more than text and simple images, broadband infrastructure at a local level, but with connections to State-wide and National networks or backbones, is at the heart of wiring up the country to facilitate online innovation. It will herald the beginning of the new operational paradigm (Graeme 2001) and may prove crucial for the VRGN which deals with graphical content.

Bandwidth will likely continue to occupy a large part of the discussion about connectivity until it is resolved. In this instance, all levels of government are working together in an attempt to link up the country in the most effective, and in some instances competitive, manner (National Office for the Information Economy 2003a). However, access alone is not the issue when it comes to broadband take-up, with a lack of understanding of key benefits of broadband related innovation playing a role (National Office for the Information Economy 2003b).
In summary, the literature demonstrates that there is support at policy level in the Commonwealth Government to prioritise initiatives regarding the access to and availability of communications technology. At operational levels the Commonwealth is attempting to kick-start the application of eBusiness and other forms of digital technology through targeted funding initiatives to the small to medium sector (National Office for the Information Economy 2002). This places the VRGN and its member galleries, in a position to reference commonwealth policy to develop I.T. and networking solutions, especially as these may apply to eBusiness solutions. Furthermore, the literature demonstrates an appreciation of the obstacles and problems that the sector may face in its effort to adopt electronic practices, especially as these relate to connectivity. Given this, the research has relevance to Commonwealth priorities for the development and application of I.T., and provides further support to the foundation for the research in developing solutions.

2.2.2 Victorian Government

There is an existing body of work outlining the various policy directions, frameworks and statements from the Victorian Government regarding the I.C.T. industry (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development 2002a, 2002b, Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001, Department of State and Regional Development 1999, 2002a, 2002b, Multimedia Victoria 2002). These documents provide a reference point for the study in that it locates the Government’s perspective and themes for the use of I.T. and I.C.T.

The Victorian Government provides a framework to link issues that are considered important to citizens, with measurable priority actions (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001). It is an expression that strives to deliver ‘a fair, sustainable and prosperous future for tomorrow’ (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001, p.3). This framework is relevant to the research in that it details eleven key strategic issues, many of which contribute to the task of the research, including:

1. Valuing and investing in lifelong education
2. High quality, accessible health and community services
3. Sound financial management
4. Safe streets, homes and workplaces
5. Growing and linking all of Victoria
6. Promoting sustainable development
7. More jobs and thriving, innovative industries across Victoria
8. Building cohesive communities and reducing inequalities
9. Protecting the environment for future generations
10. Promoting rights and respecting diversity
11. Government that listens and leads

Within these eleven key strategic issues, are specific references that support the uptake of I.T. by the arts industry, including ‘Valuing and investing in lifelong education’, ‘Growing and linking all of Victoria’ and ‘Building cohesive communities and reducing inequalities’. The priority actions for ‘Valuing and investing in lifelong education’ include ensuring that the educational sector is sufficiently linked up through technology to participate and gather information. The research will provide an opportunity to deliver services and information to these groups, or alternately, pave the way for an enriched understanding into the types of content that may be delivered, disseminated or presented through the online medium. The priority action items for ‘Growing and linking all of Victoria’ include building faster and more efficient communications networks and infrastructure, which necessarily include facilitating an increased number of users to the Internet and its associated new technologies. Finally, the priority action items for the ‘Building cohesive communities and reducing inequalities’ issue include supporting partnerships with local government that can deliver initiatives that are meaningful to a local community’s needs. The research therefore draws strength and relevance from more than a quarter of the key strategic issues illuminated in the framework (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001) and as such is firmly positioned to provide a meaningful example of implementation of policy at both a local level and with clear demonstrable results.

The Victorian Government is also developing the Telecommunication Purchasing Management Strategy (TPAMS) that aims to deliver a whole-of-Government solution to the purchasing, supply and management of telecommunications to Victorian Government departments, divisions and agencies (Multimedia Victoria 2003b). This strategy, coupled with the overarching Growing Victoria Together (GVT) statement (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001) supports the use of technologies to improve and enhance the quality of life for citizens and business people alike, and as such provides ample room to develop strategies for the implementation of an arts sector-specific solution.
The TPAMS initiative proposes to
‘provide Victorian government departments and agencies with a better range of telecommunications services, more competitive telecommunications pricing and give them the ability to access the latest technology to improve their operations’ (Multimedia Victoria 2003b).

The TPAMS initiative will provide a central policy and operational hub from which to plan and determine a component of the physical infrastructure that may be required to implement a collaborative network. Connectivity, interoperability and collaboration within the online environment by default proposes a degree of infrastructure, which although not necessarily forming a significant component of this research, will play a central role in the roll-out of any coordinated purchasing or management of a telecommunications network. As the TPAMS initiative has a ‘strong focus on delivering broadband services to regional and country Victoria’ (Multimedia Victoria 2003b) it also links closely with the research.

The Victorian Government, through its ‘Putting People at the Centre’ innovation document, further proposes a vision that allows for the increasing use of new technologies to assist citizens, business and government to operate in a more connected manner (Department of State and Regional Development 2002a). The vision specifically notes a government centric approach to assist Victorians’ needs from government to be made possible by harnessing the capabilities of information networks and communications technologies as they evolve (Department of State and Regional Development 2002a). There are four pillars detailed within the vision including ‘Substantially improving support services to citizens’, ‘Providing better community engagement and more effective democracy’, ‘Using innovation in finding new opportunities’ and ‘Creating a framework for ongoing reform within government’. The third of these pillars, ‘Using innovation in finding new opportunities’ provides a policy background in which to locate the research, in that it proposes to exploit the developments in new technology to provide greater benefits to the citizens of Victoria. This pillar has two specific strategies for meeting these goals and achieving the benefits of this exploitation including ‘investigating and experimenting’ and ‘investment’.

Electronic business, or eBusiness refers to conducting business on the Internet, including buying and selling, servicing customers and collaborating with business partners; whilst electronic commerce (or eCommerce) is often associated with the buying and selling of goods and services on the Internet (TechTarget 2004). The Victorian Government, similar to the Commonwealth, applies strategies to facilitate the adoption of eCommerce at a State level
including encouraging the take-up of online initiatives by business; producing a local regulatory environment; having a specific focus not just on metropolitan interests, but on regional and rural conditions and issues; research and development programs; skills formation and understanding the community’s needs (Department of State and Regional Development 2002b).

The former of the two adequately allows for the research to push the application of new technologies within the gallery sector with the benefit of its audiences or business relationships clearly in mind. It sets up the possibility of an online service delivery mechanism without specifying the type of activity that would be operational in the online space. The open-ended nature of this policy engagement also encourages the research in this instance, as it supports without confinement the spirit of any proposed activity.

Similarly, there is ample policy direction within the area of government charged with developing the policy initiatives for new technologies and communication. These policy frameworks or strategies are designed to explore ways that technology and innovation can be teamed to provide an opportunity for business and industry to exploit technologies, and which have a flow through benefit to Victorian consumers or citizens (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development 2002, Department of State and Regional Development 1999, O’Brien 2000). It is also well placed to trial new technologies and develop pilot projects to challenge emerging ideas (Department of State and Regional Development 1999) including greater interaction with private sector partners.

Government is also considering the development of new industry models for sustainability of the arts industry including incubators, networked organisations, and co-operatives (Arts Victoria 2002). These models, being considered by government, contribute to the transition to a knowledge-based economy, and support the research as it provides the opportunity for the VRGN to drive the new technology industry ‘particularly with regard to provision of content and creative design’ (Arts Victoria 2002).

The Victorian Government sets out three broad goals and four key strategies for the arts industry specifically, in order to facilitate strategic partnerships between arts organisations and all three levels of government, business (and) the educational sector (Arts Victoria 2003a).
The three goals are:

1. Arts for all Victorians: to create a culture of participation
2. On the threshold: to create an economy and financially viable sector based on implementing innovative solutions
3. Creative place: to support a dynamic cultural sector. This policy notes that ‘Victorian artists and arts companies will project an image of innovation in the global marketplace as a measure of progress (Arts Victoria 2003a)

The four key strategies of the policy are:

1. Developing artists, ideas and knowledge
2. Engaging creative communities
3. Building creative industries
4. Creating place and space (Arts Victoria 2003a, p.3)

The arts policy lists several priority actions, with the fourth pillar, ‘Creating place and space’ particularly relevant to the research where it notes establishing a centralised online resource to enable, amongst other things, the development and presentation of digital content by the small to medium arts sector as well as the larger cultural portfolio agencies (Arts Victoria 2003a).

In summary the literature reveals the Victorian Government has a role in developing innovative uses of technology, and ensuring people have access to education and training (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development 2002b), as well as the necessary infrastructure to connect communities and develop strategic approaches to increase the availability and affordability of access for regional and rural Victoria (Department of State and Regional Development 1999). The Victorian Government has provided a framework that supports bringing communities together and encourages the educational network to develop electronic relationships. This provides an incentive for the galleries within the VRGN to develop the capacity to provide information to these networks, whilst also demonstrating relevance to the Government’s identified strategic issue. Similarly, the TPAMS and GVT policy frameworks (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001, Multimedia Victoria 2003b), although broad and focused at whole-of-government solutions, provides fundamental support to the application of I.T. by the VRGN and its subsequent capacity to provide cultural products and services to its audiences and customers. The ‘Putting People at the Centre’
document (Department of State and Regional Development 2002a) which articulates a vision that supports government information and services being increasingly discovered through alternate and innovative channels including online technologies, also contributes to justification of the research problem and its relevance to the VRGN.

The search of literature contributes to the research question’s search to develop models of collaborative online technologies, and is subsequently bolstered by the Victorian Government’s vision to use innovation in finding new opportunities. Furthermore, the review into the Victorian Government has provided substantiation of the objective of the research, which seeks to understand the role that government plays in developing I.T. applications by the arts industry, particularly as this may apply to the VRGN.

2.2.3 Arts Industry

The literature search did not discover a large body of documented material that relates specifically to the Victorian arts industry. As the research problem seeks to view the conditions under which the VRGN currently operates, the review therefore looks outside the local environment with a view to assess the general use and application of I.T. across a fairly broad landscape. In doing this, the literature search begins to develop a picture of how the arts sector in general is using collaborative tools and the types of business models that have been applied to specific groups within the arts. As this research is concerned with understanding the VRGN, this section will also draw on past research that has been uncovered as part of the literature review, to flesh out issues that impact on the VRGN’s use of I.T., collaboration and subsequent online business activities.

Recent studies into the use of I.T. by the small to medium arts sector (Arts Victoria 2001, Geiselhart & Huta 2003, Lamshed 1998, United Focus 2003) note that the sector continues to be challenged by the complexity of the medium and the most appropriate adoption of the technology to ensure business outcomes are effectively supported. These studies note the key issues including connectivity in regional areas, the presence of a web culture and adequate skills, training and professional development for staff.

I.T. is being adopted by organisations, but the level of adoption varies between segments (Arts Victoria 2001). The Internet is being used to display static and often outdated information, and organisations are not achieving their goals due to a lack of specific
commercial and technical skills sets (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development 2002b, National Office for the Information Economy 1999, Smith 2002).

The arts industry has a general appreciation of how the Internet can deliver marketing benefits to an organisation (Werry & Mowbray 2001) which is important as audiences of arts organisations are ‘internet savvy’ (Arts Victoria 2001). This therefore provides the trigger and opportunity to further develop arts organisations’ uses of technology, specifically their website and online area. There are not however many local, published studies which indicate how this appreciation translates to affecting the way in which arts organisations conduct the business of art.

The arts sector is similar to other business sectors of similar size, especially as this relates to capitalising on I.T. and understanding how the Internet can achieve business requirements (Department of State and Regional Development 2002b, Shepard & Singh 2004), whilst specific work for the arts sector continues regarding assistance to creators, producers and traders with the management of their content in the digital environment (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003).

An understanding of Digital Rights Management (DRM) will become essential if an organisation is to manage copyright material with the intention of making it available to others/users (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts n.d.) especially via the Web. DRM will also provide a mechanism or systematic approach to ensure that an organisation is protected from infringing copyright laws and equally important, that artists or content creators are not exploited either directly or inadvertently by the system that purports to support them. Due to the complexities of the management of the digital rights area, and the fluid state of development within it, this research will refrain from delving into it, except to comment that these issues are complex and have the capacity to significantly impact on the ability of an organisation to manage its digital content.

One such organisation that plays a central role for the museum and gallery sector is Australian Museums and Gallery Online (AMOL). This organisation provides listings and information related to the museum and gallery profession as well as resources for participating in the digital environment through its website. Most notably, the AMOL website provides a resource that addresses the needs of professionals in the field, and which is useful in that it
provides a model for coordinating and encouraging standards and common procedures/protocols across a sector.

The arts sector is a collection of cultural organisations with artists, business and audience stakeholders informing its processes (Arts Victoria 2001). Given this, the Victorian sector can develop a collective internet strategy around the use of the Web as an ecosystem of subcultures (Porter 1997), one which reviews the role of its community spirit when creating online constructs (Werry & Mowbray 2001). The research becomes more relevant in light of this approach, as it provides an opportunity to test the extent to which technology can supply the technical solutions to information, whilst assisting with communication and social interactions (Jonscher 1999). In light of this, the research can begin to fine tune the research sub-questions which will be used to understand how the VRGN uses I.T. to deliver collaborative solutions.

The remainder of this sub-section is spent looking at several examples of organisations using I.T. and the internet to achieve their goals.

Infoxchange Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that has developed a sophisticated online ecosystem. This organisation was a joint winner in the Public Service and Democracy category of the 2000 Stockholm Challenge Award, as an example of how information technology might be used in a new and innovative way (Infoxchange 2003). The organisation is focussed on community development using information technology as a primary tool to create positive social change, and it has a strong history of supporting sector based networks and communities of interest. The use of its I.T. systems provide for a range of services that can be distributed on a state-wide and national network, including subscribing to a range of topics of interest and participation in an exchange of information with other participants of the network. The audience/clients of Infoxchange includes community sector organisations, community workers and communities of interest, and as such, it has become a leader in the development of low cost and simple-to-use information systems for these groups.

Infoxchange details five core strategies in achieving its business objectives (Infoxchange 2003):

1. Building information systems and services within its core markets by adding value to existing services and current customers
2. Placing a strong emphasis on providing solutions to its customer's needs
3. Building strong relationships with and between its customers
4. Establishing strategic partnerships with agencies, organisations and community groups, and
5. Promoting its services and products actively through its activities

Infoxchange is relevant to this research in that it provides an example of an integrated organisational system that is relevant to the arts industry because it uses technology as an enabler to achieve its business objectives.

One Victorian organisation specialising in delivering art specific information targeted to Australian arts workers using an online environment is Arts Hub (Arts Hub 2005). The organisation delivers information to its customers through both its website and email bulletins, which can also be personalised. The site includes:

- **Jobs Bulletin:** including employment listing of positions vacant and positions wanted in Australia, the UK and USA
- **News:** industry news and current affairs from both Australia and overseas
- **Industry Events Calendar:** including information regarding happenings, events and activities, from training seminars to grants closing dates. Subscribers to Arts Hub can also add their own entries
- **Pathways:** information categorised under a number of subject headings, including 'Performing Arts' and 'Museums and Galleries'

Arts Hub distinguishes itself in the Australian cultural sector because it is a commercial operation, drawing its primary operating revenue from its subscription fees.

The Creative Community Action Research (CCAR) project (National Office for the Information Economy 2003) is an example of a project that reviewed the use of I.T. by arts and cultural organisations. The project looked at collaborative processes to review the mechanisms required to create and present content online, specifically to foster creation, digitisation and the showcasing of local community-based art and cultural content online.

The project identified six business models currently operating within the local arts and cultural sectors drawn from across Australia. These models, briefly stated include:
1. **self-promotion model** – site that promotes the artist or organisation
2. **merchant model** – site that facilitates the money transactions of the services or products online by credit card
3. **portal model** – niche website that cultivates a well defined user demographic
4. **online gallery model** – sites that provide online spaces for artists in a particular field to demonstrate their work
5. **brokerage model** – one that draws the supply and demand sides of a product or service together by creating an online marketplace for them to meet; and
6. **online community model** – an online gathering place for people and business sharing some commonality in various aspects

The project report concluded that the self-promotion model was the most common, with very few organisations prepared to distribute broadband content; findings which are consistent with previous studies undertaken on the arts sector (Arts Victoria 2001, Lamshed 1998). The project notes that ArtSource was the only organisation to attempt the brokerage model by providing employment and referral services for local artists, by matching artists looking for jobs with clients wanting artists for projects (Artsource 2003); in essence an eMarketplace, creating a supply and demand model of products and services.

The study (National Office for the Information Economy 2003) made several observations which are relevant to the research, including:
- the presence of low broadband take-up rates
- more than half of the participating organisations did not seek financial assistance to maintain their web presence and as such, most online showcases demonstrated a lack of broadband application in the text and images used
- most of the organisations were in receipt of some form of government funding, which the study claimed indicated their inability to break out of a dependency role
- an inherent flaw with the merchant model as it is applied to the arts sector, in that customers wanted to physically see the work prior to purchasing, and
- the prohibitive cost of setting up an eCommerce facility

As such, the study concluded that from a cost benefit perspective, an online merchant model was not cost effective. The study also concluded that the ArtSource eMarketplace model was appropriate to apply in Canberra due to common themes, even though there were practical issues such as price schemes and online payments that would continue to pose problems for it.
The study also could not resolve whether the brokerage model, applied to an online arts environment, would be both self-sustaining and stimulate content; two conditions that were part of the original outcomes of the study. These findings of the CCAR project will be revisited in future chapters of the thesis, when the findings of the VRGN are investigated.

Workshops were recently delivered to approximately 130 participants from just over 100 Victorian organisations, which provided a unique opportunity to hear and observe the main challenges and opportunities that eBusiness presents to cultural organisations in Victoria (United Focus 2003). The subsequent report of the workshops noted that there is a wide recognition of the importance of being online, but achieving a sustainable online presence that adds value to their day-to-day business remains difficult for many organisations. For others it is not yet a goal that they would recognise or articulate, the Internet still being seen only as a promotional tool (United Focus 2003).

A number of key issues emerged from the workshops including:

- the scarcity of time and money to develop and maintain websites
- the need for the development of a web culture in organisations that positively influences their adoption of eBusiness
- the need for management skills, training and professional development
- the presence of poor telecommunications connectivity in regional Victoria which affects the ability of cultural organisations to engage in eBusiness efficiently
- the lack of awareness of governance and legal issues

The report observed that many organisations would benefit from managers and staff undertaking more formal training in areas such as business planning, marketing, time management and risk management. These findings are consistent with other areas of business, not just the arts (Davenport 1997, Department of State and Regional Development 1999, Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2000) and as such begin to shape the study ahead.

The report further noted that currently, only a few cultural organisations are alert to the opportunities and challenges presented by broadband access to the Internet (United Focus 2003). The prevailing thinking (notes the report), is that the website will always reflect their current business which itself will never change, rather than allowing for the possibility that future internet trends may lead them in new directions (United Focus 2003). Several
recommendations were made to address these issues including the promotion of local collaboration across cultural sectors and related industries, the promotion of existing professional development resources, and the development of an eBusiness bureau service for the Victorian arts sector.

May (2000) argues that businesses are now disintegrating and reformulating in response to customer demand and doing so using electronic networks. Whether the arts industry takes this as a path to follow and to what extent its adoption of I.T. rests with innovation, is yet to be tested. As Hagel & Armstrong note,

"we suspect that the skills required to organise a community will be important. . . . . The key to becoming a successful organiser over time will be the ability to aggregate members, retain them and encourage them to make transactions" (in Werry & Mowbray 2001, p.13).

On reflection of these findings, and the literature drawn out to this point regarding the arts and the government, themes are beginning to emerge which point to general and broad policy support for the development and uptake of new technology, with an arts sector which is keen, but essentially ignorant of the capacity and opportunities that online technologies can deliver. This is consistent with an objective of the research, which seeks to analyse the operating environment of the VRGN in order to understand the type of technological and collaborative network that would be best suited.

This sub-section reviewed the application of I.T. and online business models operating within the arts sector. The literature search was not able to locate many references to the use of I.T. within the VRGN. As such there is gap of knowledge which will need to be completed prior to commencing the more detailed research activities. This research will be required to address how the galleries within the VRGN are using the online mode to deliver business objectives, and seek to identify the operation of business models which may support collaborative techniques. This work will be undertaken in the following chapter and will assist in clarifying how the objectives of the research are to be achieved i.e. role of government, identification of electronic business models, and the issues that affect the development of a collaborative network. This sub-section contributed to the focus of the research by ascertaining that the small to medium arts sector (a group to which the VRGN belongs) does not exploit I.T. to its full advantage, nor does the literature reveal that the VRGN is adopting technology efficiently to achieve its business outcomes. However the VRGN’s use of I.T. especially in the areas of
marketing will benefit from an audience that has been identified as ‘internet savvy’. The literature also introduced a notion of a collective internet strategy for the VRGN (Porter 1997), as well as the recognition by the sector of the difficulties in achieving a sustainable online presence (United Focus 2003). Both these concepts will be reviewed later in the chapter, in the sections dealing with business models and collaboration.

This now completes the review of the policy context in which the VRGN operates. The following sub-section will review the business models that can be applied within the online environment, and attempt to contrast the models identified in the arts sector, with those that operate within the business environment. By undertaking this type of comparative analysis, the research can begin to articulate which models are best suited to the VRGN, and what it must do in order to adopt these models.

### 2.3 Business Models

The previous section reviewed the policy context which impacts on and affects the way in which the VRGN operates. It identified, through the Creative Community Action Research project, a number of business models found to be operating across the local arts and cultural sector of Australia. This sub-section extends the review of electronic business models in order to develop a picture of those models which are best suited to the VRGN and collaborative practices. In undertaking this work, this section will attempt to compare and contrast models that have been found through the literature search.

A business model as defined by Slywotzky is the ‘totality of how a company selects its customers, defines and differentiates its offerings (or response), defines the tasks it will perform itself and those it will outsource, configures its resources, goes to market, creates utility for customers and captures profits. It is the entire system for delivering utility to customers and earning a profit from that activity’ (Slywotsky 1995, p.4).

However, for the arts sector, a simpler definition is a useful place to start, one that refers to the act of defining or describing the organisation’s place in the market – that is, how it works, why it exists and how it plans to survive (Graeme 2001). This approach can also extend to an
electronic business model, one that simply refers to using the Internet for doing business (National Office for the Information Economy 2003c), rather than a more complex definition that serves to offer the organisation’s core value proposition online, and generate its principle income over the Internet (Graeme 2001, Sweeney, 2001). Waddell also provides a simple definition of eBusiness as ‘the process whereby technology and communication are combined to enable business to sell, buy, provide information to customers and collaborate with suppliers electronically’ (Waddell 2002, p.2). For the purposes of contrast and comparison however, it is useful, to review the breadth of eBusiness models that have been identified as operating in the business sector.

Timmers (2000) has identified eleven online business models all of which he notes can be found operating on the Internet and which are based on value chain deconstruction; i.e., on identifying value chain elements and identifying possible ways of integrating information along the chain. And while many of these models can be found under different names, it is prudent to list them in total along with a brief description.

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]
In contrast to these eleven models, Graeme (2001) notes that there are six broad categories that can be applied to an eBusiness scenario including: Online Sales, Market Maker, Content, Infomediary, Affiliate and eBusiness Revenue Model (Graeme 2001).

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]
The above table highlights that of the six business models identified in the CCAR project only two of these can be shown to be incorporating an eBusiness model, whilst the remaining business models relate to non revenue-generating activities, including self promotion, and community. The literature search also does not uncover the use of these eBusiness models operating within the VRGN, which further supports the requirement to undertake preliminary research on the VRGN, in order to confirm this and to further clarify the goals of the research.

As the literature has previously indicated that the VRGN is not using I.T. to enable its business, or to develop eBusiness opportunities (United Focus 2003), it is likely that a more simple sellers market scenario is being used by the galleries (Figure 1).

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

The sellers market is typically a business-to-consumer marketplace where a single seller (or gallery) does business with many buyers (customers/audience) – a one-to-many business model. This model is consistent with an independent approach of organisations, where there is not a focus on the customer, nor is there evidence of using collaboration or aggregation to achieve value added propositions, or increase market exposure. This model can apply to most arts organisations’ use of their websites, where they are individually striving to communicate with their buyers or consumers. This model can also be tested in the preliminary research conducted in Chapter Three.

It is also useful to contrast the traditional business process with the eBusiness design. The traditional business process that can be applied to the VRGN, has the customer at the end of the design receiving the products and services that are created as a result of the core competencies of the organisation or company.
An eBusiness design would result from reconfiguring and integrating the companies’ competencies, their market channels, application infrastructures and employee talent, in order to exploit their capabilities and competencies to create rich customer experiences (Kalakota & Robinson 2001).

These two diagrams indicate the shift in the organisation’s focus in delivering the product, in that the traditional model process is determined by the product (in the case of the VRGN, this could include the resources, exhibitions and activities offered by the gallery, and which may include the retail outlet), and in the latter model, the customer’s/audience’s needs are determining the process and subsequent delivery mechanism. The distinction between the two processes will require a shift in the operational paradigm of the VRGN (which is currently consistent with traditional processes) in that the audiences and revenue raising principles may begin to determine the activities of the organisation and the manner in which it presents them. For the galleries within the VRGN to operate effectively within the online environment, an assessment of each gallery’s goals and objectives will be required to determine the characteristics of this engagement and the appropriate strategies.

This assessment may also include reviewing three key lessons of eBusiness (Kalakota & Robinson 2001). The first involves transforming business processes into digital form; the second requires decentralising management whilst at the same time centralising coordination operations, and the third is the creation of an eBusiness application architecture that enables the company to improve customer satisfaction and reduce operating costs.

In contrast to the eBusiness models described above, the b-web further defines the business to include a distinct system of suppliers, distributors, commerce service providers, infrastructure providers and customers that use the Internet for their primary business communication and
transactions (Tapscott, Ticoll & Lowy 2001). This definition removes the profit-making motive whilst catering for revenue and income.

The b-web shares components of the eBusiness model in that it identifies the Web as the environment from which income/revenue can be sourced or obtained. However the b-web approach allows for a more flexible approach to online activity in that it acknowledges and identifies communication relationships as playing a central role (Tapscott, Ticoll & Lowy 2001). Virtual organisations have also become synonymous with companies trading via the Web and as such are well suited to web-based communications (May 2000). B-webs can come in five configurations: Agoras, Aggregation, Value Chain, Alliances and Distribution Networks. A brief summary of these models follows (Table 3):

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]
The above table details the key value propositions of the b-web model and notes that all with the exception of the Value Chain, could be suitable for the VRGN.

Having reviewed the different types of business models identified in the CCAR project, and considered these in respect to eBusiness and b-web models, a picture is starting to form which shows the requirements for the VRGN in utilising eBusiness practices. The following chapters (Chapters 3, 5, 6) will analyse the VRGN and its member galleries in order to develop a picture of the network’s business models and modus operandi, including its use of I.T., eBusiness and the Internet, with a view to identifying which models and principles will be best for the VRGN to adopt.

When defining electronic activity, a distinction can be made between electronic markets and hierarchies. The former sees the flow of materials being coordinated by a decentralised system and may include relationships that may be short-lived or transaction specific. Whereas the latter has the value chain being directed by management decisions either in a single firm or across interacting firms (Romm & Sudweeks 2000). As such one is disparate and determined by the exchange of electronic resources, and the other, is centrally managed and controlled in order to determine the make-up and composition of the end product. This is an important point as these two markets show distinct ways that the VRGN could electronically engage, whilst also determining the characteristics of collaborative engagement, an area that will be discussed in the following sub-section.

In the increasingly competitive business environment, the need for competitive differentiation is greater than ever (Kalakota & Robinson 2001) with strategic alliances playing a role in linking trading partnerships together to enhance competitive strategies, or creating value by linking specific facets of the business of two or more firms (Reuer 2004, Yoshino & Rangan 1995). This approach may also show significance for the research as it seeks to understand the balance between the individual gallery’s operations as a business unit, whilst also highlighting the benefits that strategic alliances between the galleries (and across the VRGN as a whole) could deliver to their markets.

The inclusion of ‘collaboration’ as an area of review is in response to the two broad types of digital marketplaces which have appeared on the business scene; that of horizontal and vertical marketplaces. Horizontal marketplaces connect buyers and sellers across many industries providing indirect procurement resources, whilst vertical marketplaces provide
products that are specific to trading partners in a given industry (Fingar & Aronica 2001). The latter marketplace provides opportunities for the arts sector in both the development of collaborative online networks and an online sales model assisted by the development of the portal and vortal or vertical marketplace portals (TechTarget 2004).

The creation of what Malone (in Romm & Sudweeks 2000) refers to as the interorganisational electronic networks model may be one that is appropriate for the VRGN as this model can improve coordination between the galleries in two contrasting ways; the first by enabling electronic networks to improve the efficiency (or reduce the cost) of searching for appropriate goods and services; and the second through using electronic networks to reduce the cost of integrating a particular purchase request with the point of sale – that is through data interchanges. The first of these two possibilities can have real benefits within the VRGN, especially in relation to locating a particular performance (and subsequent sale of ticket) or the searching of multiple and regional diverse collections across the state from a single access point. As such, the creation of electronic brokerage or integration networks would allow for the development of a market, rather than hierarchical relationships to emerge. This approach is consistent with the nature of the arts sector and this would in turn provide support for collaborative environments to begin to emerge within the VRGN.

The Internet can be seen as an enabler (Chidambaram & Zigours 2001, May 2000, Porter 2001), making certain activities increasingly economically feasible, but it is neither an adjudicator nor guarantee of credibility or success (May 2000). The organisation that moves from a physical to a virtual identity is usually an extended enterprise, which positions the arts sector as one that is likely to be able to exploit the rules of online engagement, in that virtual organisations are associated most often with creative service industries where networking for added capability has always been the norm (May 2000). And as the research question seeks to understand how the VRGN can remain competitive, the literature is revealing that the notion of networking across physical and virtual boundaries is becoming increasingly important.

This also may play out well for the arts sector in that it could be argued that although the arts organisations pre-exist in the physical world, they have advanced communications paradigms that are central to their contact with not only the audience base, but with commercial and business partners. As such, it is likely that communication within the VRGN will play a central role in any collaborative activity that attempts to share resources and audiences.
This section reviewed several electronic business models and contrasted these against what had been discovered in the literature (especially regarding the CCAR project) and how it may relate to the VRGN and collaborative online activity.

The literature surrounding the six eBusiness models (Graeme 2001) highlighted that only the Online Sales, Market Maker and Content models were identified as operating in the Australian arts sector. In the case of b-webs, it found that most models were suitable to be applied in the VRGN circumstances, providing the opportunity to apply additional value propositions to a model that may be considered for the VRGN. This review served to highlight the type of characteristics that a VRGN specific business model may require, including alliances, aggregation and a sense of community, especially if it is to move past a ‘product-focused’ business model, and move into a ‘customer-focused’ business design (Kalakota & Robinson 2001). This shift in business focus will also be contrasted to the Sellers Market model that is most likely prevalent in the VRGN; one that will also need to be tested in the preliminary study. In the final parts of this chapter, these characteristics will be placed alongside those pertaining to collaboration, and those collected in the policy section, to begin to build a picture of the collaborative model most suitable to the VRGN.

These findings will need to be further tested on the VRGN, through undertaking a preliminary study into the online presence of the galleries that make up the network.

2.4 Collaboration and its Characteristics

As the previous section on business models demonstrated, the capacity to cooperate and share information and resources, is becoming a central function to operating in the online environment. As the research question seeks to consider collaborative online technologies as a mechanism for the VRGN competing in the cultural sector and remaining financially viable, collaboration and its characteristics is an area that requires discussion.
This section will therefore review the characteristics of collaboration and discuss both the human elements and I.T. components or tools that deliver a collaborative mechanism. In defining what might be included in a discussion of collaborative online networks, there are now many instances that show practical applications. Of interest as well, is the development of commercially generic I.T. applications to suit collaborative activities, and the prevalence of internet environments that provide easy and funnelled access to a variety of information. Such websites are referred to as portals, a term which is generally synonymous with a gateway to information (Kontzer & Turek 2003), and which applies to a website that is or proposes to be a major starting site for users when they get online or that users tend to visit as an anchor site (TechTarget 2004). There are general portals (Yahoo, Excite, Netscape, Lycos, CNET, Microsoft Network, and America Online’s AOL.com) and specialised or niche portals (ArtsHub, carsonline, NineMSN, Seek).

A number of large access providers offer portals to the Web for their own users. Most portals have adopted the Yahoo style of content categories with a text-intensive, faster loading page that visitors will find easy to use and to return to. Companies with portal sites have attracted much stock market investor interest because portals are viewed as able to command large audiences and numbers of advertising viewers (TechTarget 2004).

The raison d'être of portals is dissemination of knowledge captured in electronic form (Mack, Ravin & Byrd 2001). Typical services offered by portal sites include a directory of websites, a facility to search for other sites, news, weather information, email, stock quotes, phone and map information, and sometimes a community forum.

The portal has the capacity to provide myriad opportunities for business including improved business processes, aggregating the company’s content, delivering increased application functionality whilst at the same time creating collaborative links between companies, their partners and customers (Kontzer 2002b). This technology is suitable to be applied to the Victorian arts sector because the increasing participation and collaboration within the sector is dependent upon building appropriate technology and infrastructure (Arts Victoria 2001).

A common application of a portal is the ability to create a shared workspace, often short-lived and self-managed, while incorporating resources and online information (Palmer 2003). This project style approach may suit the VRGN to facilitate discussion on topical issues and engender collaborative practices.
Collaboration can be defined as ‘to labour (in literary or scientific work) as the associate of another or of others’ (Russell, Bean & Vaughan 1947, p.334) and this serves to give a warning into the social nature of collaboration in that it is often ad hoc as well as chaotic. The organic processes that define some collaborations are in opposition to processes that may be able to be scripted, automated and controlled through structured process management. Collaboration requires facilitation, and as such the portal is being used more and more by organisations to enable work to be shared, and less to enforce rules and regulations (Palmer 2003). Organisations that build systems which place the individual user in control (May 2000), must also be able to respond to the resulting fluid relationships. Alternately, organisations are redesigning their internal structure and external relationships to create knowledge networks that facilitate improved communication of data, information and knowledge, while improving coordination, decision-making and planning (Warkentin, Bapna & Sugumaran 2001).

These uses of portals and collaborative environments allow organisations to customise an online space for their project, which could be an advantage for galleries in the VRGN (and the artists which they represent); an environment which is often associated with fluid and impulsive actions, and creative processes.

The portal environment can be as simple as providing an online space for community engagement, through to delivering sophisticated and innovative I.T. solutions for larger companies. Either way, it will ideally operate with little need for human interaction (Mack, Ravin & Byrd 2001) and preferably with maintenance outsourced (Hutchins 2003). Considerations such as services to be offered through the portal, systems and data integration, management and security determine the level of complexity that the portal will need to accommodate in order to satisfactorily provide the business tools required.

An example of commercially available portal software is the ‘Project Coordinator’ product. This product includes functionality that mirrors or replicates a project management office. Components of this product therefore include areas called the lobby, the project room, project briefing board, project planners, discussion board, project team room (including emailing and calendars) and the project home (or intranet) page. The Project Coordinator product doesn’t require specific user training, since its interface and navigation logic resembles the most common software, which allows a very quick set-up of a project (Project Coordinator 2004). This software can also be rented for the short term or for a small scale project (on a three
monthly basis) and can be immediately available requiring no installation as it is hosted on the site of the vendor. Client requirements are minimal, with a user needing an internet connection and running Internet Explorer Version 5 or better. This is one such example of a commercially available collaborative online environment which has ‘out of the box’ or easy to set up and run characteristics.

There are dozens of similar software available, (including shareware) that provide for a collaborative online environment. A listing of these can be found in Table 4.

The economies of scale can also be facilitated through industry portals where every participant wins. An example can be seen in the shipping industry, where carriers and shippers connect to each other through a single EDI link (electronic data interchange) to the portal. When new shippers join an industry portal, they immediately gain access to all carriers participating in the portal, and vice versa and in so doing, the portals play a major role in removing inefficiencies from the ocean shipping process (Samwel 2003).

The portal functionality is not restricted to the commercial arena with governments increasingly using portal technology to make it easy for citizens to access their services and to reduce the cost of doing business with government. Government-to-government portals facilitate reporting requirements and let Commonwealth, State and Local Governments share information and cooperate in providing services to citizens (Boardman & Doherty 2003), whilst government-to-citizen portals attempt to package up Government services into one online interface to facilitate people working with Government (Australian Government Information Office 2004, Multimedia Victoria 2004). And although the VRGN is not as large or complex as Government, the uses of portals in the aforementioned areas highlight the possibilities of the galleries sharing information to a common audience, increasing access to their products and resources, and developing customer-centric approaches.

Properly applied arts collaborations can also be a useful mechanism to redistribute artistic creativity into the community, shore up arts organisations and help a broader array of stakeholders feel part of their cultural fabric (Preece 2004). In the teaching environment, collaboration can also be through the usage of web logs or blogs (O’Connell 2003) and shared virtual teaching environments (McFadzean & McKenzie 2001) to encourage participation and interaction amongst students and lecturers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@task</td>
<td>Extended project management software, including document sharing, scheduling, threaded messaging, etc. Also available as a hosted service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSCW Shared Workspace System</td>
<td>A web-based environment for collaborative document editing and other shared work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrightSuite</td>
<td>Features both asynchronous collaborative tools (forums, calendars, scheduling, etc.) and real-time tools (conferencing and instant messaging). Source code is available for complete customisability. Requires Microsoft Access, SQL Server, or MySQL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convea</td>
<td>Intranet platform for collaborative work, featuring threaded discussions, real-time chat, instant messaging, group scheduling, file management, and more. Requires Internet Explorer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deme</td>
<td>Free, open source platform for small to medium-size groups who make decisions democratically. Features discussion forums with integrated email capabilities, collaborative document authoring, and polling. Requires PHP and MySQL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate.com</td>
<td>An environment for collaborative group work, including real-time chat, asynchronous discussions, surveying, and brainstorming tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groove</td>
<td>Peer-to-peer collaboration system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hipergate</td>
<td>Open source Java-based suite of applications, including collaborative tools, contact management, project management, content management, and more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IsoSpace</td>
<td>Workspaces featuring real-time web and video conferencing, instant messaging, and persistent message boards, document management, etc. Built on a J2EE platform; available both as licensed software and as a hosted service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Forum</td>
<td>Designed to facilitate building &quot;community knowledge&quot;, allowing users to view the knowledge base from different perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotus Domino</td>
<td>Domino permits any web browser to interact securely with a Notes database (including discussions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotus QuickPlace</td>
<td>Team collaboration work space. Also available as a remotely hosted service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netscape Collabra Server</td>
<td>Successor to Netscape News Server</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Team Support</td>
<td>A free web-based centre for collaborative work. Supports discussion, voting, an information repository, and other features. This is a research project still in progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OutlookFolders</td>
<td>Server software that performs many of the same functions as Microsoft Exchange Server, at a far lower cost. Allows team members to share information from their individual Outlook databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProjectWeb</td>
<td>Project management and collaboration system with a strong emphasis on design and construction projects. Features secure file sharing, change notification, threaded discussion, history tracking and mark-up collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projistics</td>
<td>Project management and collaboration system featuring task, resource and time management, calendar and status reports, opportunity management, resource management and knowledge management using a document centre and knowledge base, customisable workflow engine, issue and bug tracking, change management system, and risk management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RealizationEngine</td>
<td>Open source system for collaborative work using threaded discussions. Available free under the GNU General Public License. Non-GPL licenses can be purchased. Also available as an inexpensive hosted service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplify</td>
<td>A platform for building intranets for collaboration, implemented entirely in PHP. Requires MySQL or other SQL database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAMate</td>
<td>Web interface to the TEAMate client/server groupware system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamware Office</td>
<td>Groupware system that works with proprietary client software or a web browser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WikiWikiWeb</td>
<td>A simple but powerful tool that's unlike anything else. Essentially, a wiki is an open-ended, interlinked set of web pages that anyone can edit or add to. A wiki can be used as a discussion forum, a database, an organically grown encyclopaedia. There are now many versions, written for many different platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows SharePoint Services</td>
<td>A collection of services for Microsoft Windows Server that you can use to share information, collaborate with other users on documents, and create lists and Web Part pages. Also serves as a development platform for creating collaboration and information-sharing applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeno</td>
<td>Open source groupware designed to support structured, goal-directed discussion about designs, plans, proposals or other documents subjected to review by a group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The blog provides an informal thread of discussion, usually written in a journal style (TechTarget 2004) which encourages engagement – to that end, it provides a useful and perhaps more relevant tool for managing fluid or organic communication processes that depend upon or require ad hoc and multiple themes being simultaneously discussed from multiple sources in the one virtual meeting place, including educational environments (Richardson 2003).

From portals to blogs, collaboration is now seen as essential in developing additional value from the online environment.

Shared virtual teaching environments can involve computer mediated communications methodologies that attempt to incorporate collaborative learning into a course structure. These methodologies include information retrieval, the use of electronic mail and bulletin boards and participating in computer conferences. This environment encourages anytime/anyplace learning, which enables participants to log on to the system at any time and anywhere in the world (McFadzean & McKenzie 2001).

But the subject matter and any mediation used in these environments is critical to adoption rates. Merely providing access to a discussion board will not necessarily create conversation, or exchange knowledge; there must a mutual desire or understanding of the effort required if a meaningful result is sought. Collaboration proceeds to deeper levels as relationships form and naturally deepen (Fingar & Aronica 2001). For the VRGN and its use of collaboration, these relationship can include commercial incentives, in that businesses may be more prone to invest in the act of collaboration if it can be shown to deliver real and/or tangibles benefits, for example income or revenue (McFadzean & McKenzie 2001, Vangen & Huxhman 2003).

Use of online collaborative technologies, including portals, blogs, and email, can be effective using both high end and benign technology (i.e. simple, common, everyday applications). The more participants in these networks become geographically dispersed, and the higher use of public or commercial infrastructure then the less control users can have over the infrastructure that carries their transactions, content and enquiries. This can be an issue for the arts sector given the high levels of graphic content and secure financial transactions that could become central to their online presence. The capacity of virtual conferencing to engage in discussions and consultations is also becoming increasingly important to remote users or members that are geographically dispersed in the network (Health Share 2004). As such,
success of collaboration for the VRGN will rest with its ability to engage in a discussion that occurs across the state over networks which are becoming increasingly out of their control and decentralised.

Collaborative online technologies have been applied in the education and science areas as a means to access and use digital technology and to provide participants with a means of research and collaboration (Centre for Networking Technologies for the Information Economy 2004, Education Network of Australia 2004, The Learning Federation 2004).

The essence of the process is about distributed communication and information, with the Web playing an ever-increasing role in this distribution network. This is pertinent to the research at hand, as the arts environment is closely tied to interaction and community.

Collaboration within the electronic mode can also be distinguished by the capacity of the user to access information when required, and to tap into flexible tools of technology (Microsoft Australia Small Business Centre 2004). The variety of collaboration tools suitable for use by the Victorian small to medium arts sector include shared calendar systems, shared contact databases, centralised document storage, announcement boards and virtual conferencing.

The shared calendar system would be useful for the VRGN in that it provides the capacity to deliver calendars online in order to provide easy scheduling of meetings. The shared contact database is similarly important to have centralized as it reduces the possibility of users not having access to contact details, whilst maintaining a single point for information. The centralised document storage facility allows for efficient editing and swapping of documents within a secure environment, whilst announcement boards provide the capacity to communicate to the members of the collaborative team.

At a minimum, the process of collaboration in the online mode should contain the ability to share documents and information (Palmer 2003).

Other collaborative environments use the online as a communication service, linking the members of the network to facilitate the growth of the network and to discuss common interests and practices (Education Network of Australia 2004, VAPAC 2004), or to link disparate groups to share information and technical features (Burton 2001, Centre for

In order for collaboration strategies to occur, partners should be able and willing to both distribute knowledge to other members and integrate knowledge made available to them (Halme 2001). Furthermore, while the collaborative partners may have unequal power bases from which to draw, the assumption is that all collaborative participants will be, and should be equal within the confines of the collaborative project (Walker 2003). These occurrences of collaboration between organisations consequently involve sets of negotiations, whether these are fluid and loose, or are influenced by market and authority based relationships, or are based on autonomous participation (Phillips, Hardy & Lawrence 1998, Walker 2003).

Collaboration is also closely linked with the key characteristics of the strategic alliances (Yoshino & Rangan 1995). The first characteristic of strategic alliances is that the participating organisations are pursuing a set of common goals, and that they remain independent subsequent to the formation of the alliances. The second characteristic is that the partnering organisations share the benefits of the alliances and control over the performance of the tasks or activities; and the third characteristic is that the partnering organisations contribute on an ongoing basis in one or more key strategic areas.

For the VRGN, collaboration can occur both within market structures, and between galleries or other organisations for research, exhibition and communication purposes. These are important considerations for the research, as an analysis of the regional galleries will need to understand the conditions under which collaboration can occur, and the activity or business requirement that is necessary to guide successful collaborative engagement and the subsequent development of eBusiness strategies.

The Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres is an organisation that;

“promotes and fosters a cooperative network of performing arts centres across Victoria which strive for arts industry best industry practice in their artistic programming management and operations so as to encourage and support the performing arts throughout Victoria and bring the performing arts to Victorians” (VAPAC 2004).

This organisation shows characteristics of collaborative structures because it is an assemblage of performing arts centres from across Victoria, appears to utilise strategic alliances to address
its market, and has a single website through which the organisation conducts business. Given that the literature search has discovered few examples of online collaboration occurring within the gallery network in Australia, and no examples of it within Victoria, this places VAPAC in a position of uniqueness within the Victorian cultural context. As this Victorian organisation is also funded by Arts Victoria, there would appear to be sufficient basis to conduct additional research on the organisation. Consequently, a case study will be undertaken to review the organisation’s operating structures, and to gain a clearer picture of its collaborative activities. As this study exists outside the scope of the Literature Review, it will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter which also includes the preliminary study of the galleries of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network.

Notions of trust, knowledge sharing and collaboration become central elements of interorganisational relationships (Black et al. 2002, Vangen & Huxhman 2003). These elements are particularly important for the arts if interorganisational relationships are to involve the development of innovation or new business practices. Trust in this instance, is best understood in terms of the ability to form expectations about the aims and the partner’s future behaviour in relation to these aims. A necessary condition for trust is that expectations can be formed on the one hand, and fulfilled on the other (Vangen & Huxhman 2003), a theme that will be pertinent when the gallery network is discussed in greater detail in future chapters.

The discussion of collaboration would not be complete without some comment on the elements that lead to successful collaboration. Some of the issues considered important when considering bringing teams together include having a good understanding of why they are working together, being acquainted and supported by formal structures (i.e., located in the same area), respecting one another, having past experience in the other’s domain and bringing complementary strengths (Camino & Heidrich 2003). And although these elements seem self evident, it reinforces the human and communication characteristics of collaboration; characteristics that will need to be tested on the VRGN by this research.

A current example of collaboration within the arts and cultural sector in regional Victoria is the Creative Gippsland organisation. Creative Gippsland is a cooperative marketing enterprise that seeks to create a successful, positive and vibrant cultural tourism image for Gippsland. Its goals and objectives include:
• To develop sustainable cultural tourism in Gippsland
• Increase visitor numbers
• Increase length of stay
• Increase employment and participation in the cultural industry
• Assist the development of market-ready product
• Enhance the cultural experience of visitor and residents (Creative Gippsland 2003).

It includes performing arts, theatre, dance, music; visual arts and craft facilities; museums and historical societies; historic sites, villages and tourism interpretive centres; festivals and special events. It is developing a Gippsland Cultural Tourism Cooperative Marketing Strategy in response to the recognition that there will be significant value to the region if the arts and cultural sector develops closer working relations with the tourism industry. The strategy will be developed collaboratively whilst recognising and maintaining the cultural uniqueness and integrity of each municipality and community.

It is of interest to note that of the above objectives, the majority relate to the business or financial components of the cultural industries, rather than to the experience that is being offered by those cultural venues. This provides a substantiating perspective on the research, in that it reinforces the key areas which are expected to benefit from collaboration and eBusiness. These areas relate predominantly in the first instance to the business rather than experiential functions of the gallery, with visitation and audience engagement by-products of effective networking.

The work undertaken in this chapter highlighted the policy context needed for the VRGN to adopt new business paradigms. It also identified a variety of characteristics for the business model that is to be applied in the VRGN, including strategic alliances, aggregation with other galleries and a sense of community. To conclude this section of the chapter, these characteristics will be placed alongside those pertaining to collaboration, and those collected in the policy section, in order to build a picture of the collaborative model most suited to the VRGN. By drawing from various components of the literature, this exercise starts to collect the ingredients of a model to be applied to the VRGN; a model that can use collaborative online networks to assist the VRGN remain competitive, financially viable, relevant and active in providing cultural product to its audiences/customers.
Drawing from the information discovered through the Literature Review, the collaboration model for the VRGN has the following ingredients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration model has all of:</th>
<th>Collaboration model has some of:</th>
<th>Collaboration model has at least one of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration software / I.T.</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>eBusiness models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Calendar</td>
<td>• Access to networks</td>
<td>• Online sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shared documents</td>
<td>• I.T. support</td>
<td>• Market maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Central database</td>
<td>• Funding</td>
<td>• Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Document storage</td>
<td>• Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Announcement boards</td>
<td>• Stakeholder fulfilment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Virtual conferencing</td>
<td>• Innovation/experimentation</td>
<td>with value propositions relative to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Agora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Aggregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Distributive networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strategic alliances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge distribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negotiations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Incentives</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 Collaboration model ingredients

This model can be used as a counterpoint for reviewing the online presence of the galleries in the VRGN, and will provide a foundation on which to assess the VRGN preparedness for collaborative networks and subsequent eBusiness strategies.

2.5 Gaps in Current Research

The research reviewed in this chapter evaluated a range of programs to gauge the extent to which the Victorian arts sector has the capacity and ability to successfully exploit or deploy I.T., by looking at the variety of policy contexts at Commonwealth and State levels, different business models, and collaboration characteristics.

The review has identified a relative lack of information on the specific business functions of the galleries within the VRGN, which makes it difficult to review the cost-effectiveness and priority of sharing resources and collaborating on achieving common business practices. Statistical and quantifiable work needs to be undertaken in order to gain an accurate
assessment of the sector’s state of preparedness to fully exploit digital technologies, including comparative analysis of the business plans. The exact implication of the Best Value Service Review (which will be discussed in the analysis section) and which will become mandatory for all councils, is still not known, nor are the opportunities it may present in triggering more coordinated or collaborative adventures across the sector.

The analysis undertaken on the Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV) is also introductory in this study due to effort being focussed on the membership of the galleries in the regional gallery sector, rather than a membership body. Further analysis of the organisation is required in future research.

Some exploratory work on other gallery networks operating in other states of Australia may have been useful in reviewing or benchmarking a level of cooperation active within the sector, as would have been the analysis of other government models of financial support to these organisations. The same comment can be said for other industry service organisations or membership organisations operating in other states.

Additional gaps in the literature search regarding the policy context sub-section, included a lack of specific information at the local government level regarding the VRGN and the galleries’ individual business strategies, and any I.T. initiatives at the state or local level that would impact (negatively or otherwise) on the VRGN adopting a shared I.T. infrastructure. These and other issues regarding the role of the State Government and Local Council, and their respective I.T. departments, will determine the design of the methodology to be applied to this research.

Similarly, analysis on the Victorian arts sector’s use of I.T. and eBusiness in general is scant, and highlights the deficiency of government statistical data gathering activities in this area. The documentation regarding the Creative Community Action Research project (National Office for the Information Economy 2003b) has provided a useful resource to review the arts sector’s capacity to exploit I.T. and eBusiness in a sustainable manner, but also serves to highlight a lack of comparative studies being undertaken elsewhere in the country, especially Victoria. The Literature Review could find no examples of either Victorian or Australian studies into collaboration practices operating within the arts or cultural sector, suggesting that this area is yet to be explored by researchers.
This chapter was not able to discover literature or documentation which detailed the operation of each gallery within the VRGN, nor compare and analyse their online delivery mechanisms or strategies. As forewarned within this chapter, this information gap constitutes outstanding data that is required prior to finalising the methodology design to be applied to the research. This preliminary research into the galleries’ use of online services, in addition to the case study on the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres, will provide an additional layer of review which can be used to confirm the sub-research questions that are embedded in the problem statement and research question.

2.6 Summary

This section will summarise the main points of the chapter, and provide an overview of the results of the Literature Review.

The research question, asks how the VRGN can provide cultural product to its audiences and customers, through the use and application of collaborative online networks and eBusiness technologies? In addressing this question, the objectives of the research are to identify the role of Government in supporting collaborative online networks; to identify an appropriate collaboration model that uses eBusiness and that can be applied to the VRGN; and to provide an analysis of the typical operating environment of the VRGN and the requirements that will enable the implementation of a collaborative online network.

The Literature Review therefore sought to investigate these objectives by defining three areas – policy context of the Government, electronic business models, and collaborative characteristics (sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4).

Section 2.2 outlined the policy context for the Commonwealth, Victoria and the relationship to the arts portfolio. It highlighted a Commonwealth I.C.T. industry framework (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003a) that treats I.C.T. as a strategic resource for achieving organisational goals; the development of national strategies to address issues of connectivity and accessibility across the country (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003c); and the acknowledgment that
Electronic commerce will significantly impact on the way in which business is conducted across government, business and consumers, and that the not-for-profit sector of which the VRGN is a member, requires a better understanding of the environment in order to participate (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003a, National Office for the Information Economy 1999). This was supported by studies conducted at the Victorian State Government level (Arts Victoria 2001, Lamshed 1998, United Focus 2003), which continued to list training, a lack of resources and awareness of opportunities for I.T., and access to connectivity as issues that determine the Victorian arts sector’s use of I.T. and online technologies.

Other policy initiatives within the Victorian State Government serve to demonstrate, at the policy level, widespread support for the application of I.T. by the community including the VRGN. These policy contexts include equity of access to information (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001), improved telecommunications networks for regional Victoria (Multimedia Victoria 2003b) that assists in connecting citizens, business and Government (Department of State and Regional Development 1999, 2002a), and using innovative uses of technology to provide access to education and training (Department of State and Regional Development 2002b). The development of industry models for sustainability including networked organisations and co-operatives (Arts Victoria 2002) is further policy support for the VRGN to investigate new operating paradigms.

Section 2.3 contrasted a number of eBusiness models (Graeme 2001, Kalakota & Robinson 2001, Tapscott, Ticoll & Lowy 2001, Timmers 2001) to measure their suitability to the VRGN. This exercise drew findings from the Creative Community Action Research project (National Office for the Information Economy 2003b) to identify models which may be pertinent for the VRGN. Concepts such as interorganisational electronic networks, strategic alliances and horizontal/vertical marketplaces (Fingar & Aronica 2001, Reuer 2004, Romm & Sudweeks 2000, Yoshino & Rangan 1995) were introduced as a way of identifying the benefits for the galleries in trading together to enhance competitive strategies, and in using I.T. to increase efficiencies of searching for goods and services across the VRGN.

Section 2.4 reviewed the variety of software that can be used in collaborative environments and identified the social and cultural characteristics of collaboration that the literature considers necessary if successful collaboration is to occur. This discussion resulted in the
drawing together of the sections’ main elements, into a collaboration model that can be used to review collaboration occurring within the VRGN.

Section 2.5 identified the gaps in literature that were discovered in carrying out this process, and highlighted a lack of information pertaining to the VRGN which is required to develop a stronger justification for the research. As such, the following chapter (Chapter Three) will undertake a preliminary investigation of the online activities of the galleries within the VRGN and describe a case study of the VAPAC in order to refine the research approach and inform and clarify the sub-questions of the research problem.
CHAPTER THREE – PRELIMINARY RESEARCH ON THE VICTORIAN REGIONAL GALLERY NETWORK

3.1 Introduction

The flow of the chapter can be represented as follows:

At the end of the previous chapter, the Literature Review revealed a lack of specific information on the use of I.T. in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN), as well as the nature of collaboration practices and eBusiness processes that may be applied in the VRGN. As there was no substantial published literature on the use of technology and online collaboration within the Victorian arts sector, a preliminary data collection activity was undertaken to discover whether online collaboration activities and related business models were currently in use in the VRGN. In addition to this preliminary study, a case study was undertaken on the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC) in order to gather an understanding of that organisation’s background and objectives. With this information in hand, the research can begin to fine tune the research question asked at the beginning of the thesis, and develop a series of sub questions that are informed by all that has come before this point. Thus the literature review, the identified gaps in knowledge, the preliminary study and the case study, will guide the investigative process of this research, and inform the next chapter (Chapter Four) when the research design and methodology is considered and discussed in detail.
3.2 Characteristics of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network

The previous chapter was unable to discover information regarding the way in which the galleries within the VRGN relate to each other, or develop business strategies which exploit I.T. and the online mode. As the research question seeks to review the use of collaborative online networks and eBusiness technologies by the VRGN, the focus of this chapter is to review the characteristics of the galleries through reviewing their websites and online presence.

For the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN) to provide locally specific information to its audience, as well as provide specialised industry information (for example access to collection objects or research material) it may need to cooperate interorganisationally (Black et al. 2002) to leverage the capabilities of other marketplaces and other gallery entities. The creation of strategic alliances with other galleries will provide opportunities to affordably connect with audiences from across the country and globally (Robin 2001) and to communicate using new paradigms (Education Network of Australia, 2004, Halme 2001). Therefore this data collection sought to identify the degree to which collaborative practices were occurring within the VRGN, and to discover examples of alliances (strategic or otherwise) between galleries, or galleries and other commercial entities.

The research problem argues that those galleries that stay out of the collaborative environment may risk being overshadowed by, or excluded from working with those organisations that operate in, and aggressively create, alliances (Fingar & Aronica 2001) or strategic partnerships with other galleries or businesses.

For the gallery network to make use of the collaborative environment, it needs to move past a simple ‘see, buy, get’ approach that rudimentary online transactions support (Fingar & Aronica 2001, p.77) and which was highlighted in the sellers diagram in the previous chapter. It needs to be able to demonstrate that it has product that can be presented in a collective or vertical marketplace, and show that it possesses the necessary characteristics to engage in the environment.
The goal of this preliminary study therefore is to review the online presence of the regional galleries; to test and compare their use of the Web and any existing online strategies and how these are integrated with their business objectives.

The galleries selected to form part of this study belong to the group of organisations which have been identified by Department of Premier and Cabinet through Arts Victoria as being situated in regional areas, and which are currently in receipt of recurrent funding from Arts Victoria. The organisations include:

1. Ararat Gallery
2. Ballarat Fine Art Gallery
3. Benalla Art Gallery
4. Bendigo Art Gallery
5. Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum
6. Geelong Art Gallery
7. Gippsland Art Gallery – Sale
8. Hamilton Art Gallery
9. Horsham Regional Art Gallery
10. Latrobe Regional Gallery
11. Mildura Arts Centre
12. Shepparton Art Gallery
13. Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery
14. Warrnambool Art Gallery

As the research is concentrating on collaborative process within Victorian Regional Gallery Network, the list is therefore not inclusive of all galleries in receipt of recurrent funding from Arts Victoria – it excludes those that are not located in regional areas, including Heide Park and Art Gallery (Bulleen - metropolitan), McClelland Gallery and Studio Park (Frankston - outer metropolitan), Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery (Mornington Peninsula - outer metropolitan), Monash Gallery of Art (Wheelers Hill - metropolitan).

Arts Victoria, in supporting these 14 regional galleries with the provision of recurrent funding, seeks to achieve a common outcome from all. This outcome is;

‘The operation of a regional art gallery as part of a state wide network of galleries meeting best industry practice in their management, operations and artistic programming’ (Arts Victoria 2002).

Those galleries, in accepting recurrent funding, must outline and define their individual stated (business) objectives to Arts Victoria. Arts Victoria in turn, uses these objectives to measure the performance of the specific galleries in the acquittal process. In short, these objectives are
a clear and measurable statement of intent of the galleries’ annual activity, and provide this research with a group of galleries of manageable size, that have similar reporting requirements to Government, and which have structured business processes and accountability processes in place i.e., they are a group of professionally operated galleries spread across the state. The research will uncover in future chapters whether given these attributes, there is an expectation by Government that these galleries collaborate rather than operate in isolation from each other. The Literature Review was not conclusive in this area.

These business objectives (which relate to the gallery’s specific business planning documents) also provide a useful snapshot into the priorities of the gallery. When viewed as a collection across the galleries included in this study, shared and common themes emerge which serve as potential areas for collaborative effort.

3.3 Web Checklist – Preliminary Data Collection

![Diagram](Image)

Studies drawn out in the Literature Review, and spanning several years, noted that Victorian arts organisations were generally not using their websites to deliver on their business requirements (Arts Victoria 2001, Lamshed 1998, United Focus 2003), but this data was not able to be separated to contain information specifically relevant to the VRGN. Therefore further specific analysis was required on the galleries that formed part of the VRGN (as defined in this research).

A review of the regional galleries’ websites was undertaken prior to conducting field research. This review served to identify the way in which galleries stated objectives were being achieved through their online presence. More specifically, given their stated objectives, the review served to assess how the websites were contributing to achieving these goals i.e., aligning stated outcomes with actual resources. For example a gallery stating that increased access to its collection was an objective, could be contrasted with whether the website was used to facilitate this access (or parts thereof); another example would be where a gallery seeks to expand its audience bases, or increase educational services as an objective, corresponding with a review to ascertain if this functionality was part of the site.
This information was also used as proof of concept for the research; to determine whether more detailed analysis and comparative work would be warranted. The review gathered information on the 14 regional galleries’ websites around a series of themes that were commonly or persistently noted in their respective stated objectives (Arts Victoria 2003b) and which formed a component of their funding agreement with Arts Victoria.

These themes included:

- care of and access to their collection
- cultural tourism (i.e., initiatives that seek to attract audiences through a combination of tourism and cultural attractions)
- public programming including education and outreach
- business planning
- local relevance/visititation, and
- some form of shop or commercial venture

The themes were integrated into a checklist, against which each gallery’s website was reviewed. If a gallery addressed these themes on the website, their identifying number was placed against that entry. Short notes were made against each gallery if required. The checklist included six main areas: eCommerce, Collections, Programming, Education, Local Tourism and Subscriptions/Revenue.

This process was undertaken to track and quantify the extent to which a gallery’s online presence provided consumer consummation i.e., an online resolution that could include options to purchase, distribute information, download forms or associated materials. It also sought to easily quantify the common categories of the websites across the sector, and to identify any signs of advanced networking or collaboration on a business-to-business, business-to-customer/audience relationship model (Appendix A.1 RGN Web checklist).

The results of this comparison assist and support the approach and possibilities of this research, whilst also highlighting on a local level, the common themes and approaches of the galleries (when viewed as a collective).
3.4 General Comments on Findings

The checklist was intended to collect data specifically relating to the online presence and functionality offered by collaboration and eBusiness for each of the regional galleries. Its secondary purpose was to demonstrate the approach of the study and to confirm that the research has some logic and relevance to the VRGN. The checklist is sufficiently focused on the business processes of the organisations to be able to return some indicative findings and raise some further questions.

It also simultaneously highlights the lack of online collaboration within this group, in that no evidence was found of any form of coordinated activity occurring. The study also noted a variety of different domain names of websites being used, a lack of a common content management system, and varying degrees of affiliation (direct or indirect) with the local councils (Appendix A.1 RGN Web checklist).

The general findings of this preliminary research are:

- Galleries are not directly targeting curriculum in schools, but rather applying programs to in-coming visits from schools – there is no specific reference to Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or art appreciation on the websites, indicating the galleries are not using the website to achieve business outcomes related to providing educational resources to school groups
- There is essentially no direct access to the gallery’s collections online, and very little is accessible on the website in general, except for design elements on the webpages
- Visitation to physical spaces, or clusters of organisations (say within a geographic region) does not appear on websites, therefore the audience of the sites are not aware of any other cultural or tourist facility or feature aligned or within the physical location of the gallery or city. This demonstrates an opportunity yet to be exploited, where alliances or programming initiatives with other cultural or tourist facilities could be developed for a variety of purposes e.g., joint marketing, audience development, cooperative programming to name a few
- The capacity to distribute information about public programs (or any other feature of the gallery) via downloads on the websites, is technically possible on the sites
(through the use of software like PDF or by offering MS word document to download directly from the webpage) but this is rarely being provided on sites

- There are no examples of gallery outreach programs using the web to enhance delivery of programs and to subsequently increase access to the material/interpretation of collections to those groups that cannot physically travel to the organisation. That is to say, that program material could be placed on the website to assist organisations with pre or post visit information, or provide information arranged within curatorial themes, but this does not appear to be occurring

- Websites are rarely being used to market the physical places, events or local attractions offered or maintained by the galleries

- No gallery is offering online sales, and only a handful make reference to the retail/commercial function of the facility

As previously stated, these preliminary findings provide information on how galleries working within the VRGN apply the online environment (or their internet presence) to the outcomes and objectives that they need to achieve to operate and receive recurrent funding from Arts Victoria.

In the final section of this chapter a review of the research sub-questions will be undertaken to identify the full compliment of issues that need to be covered in the research, and which also flow from and are triggered by, the findings in the preliminary study. As such, the themes being uncovered at this stage can be incorporated into the methodology, to assist in gaining an understanding of the issues around a shared internet presence (whether this is the development of a portal or other type of alliance) for the galleries, and the impact that shared business outcomes may have on the future operational paradigm of the galleries.

However before addressing the research sub-questions, the details of the case study undertaken on the Victorian Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC) will follow. The information from the case study will serve to compare an organisation (that is considered to successfully apply collaborative techniques and which works within the online environment), with the collaboration model developed in the previous chapter. By performing this type of early comparison, the sub-research questions can benefit from these findings.
3.5 Case Study – Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC)

The Literature Review identified the requirement to undertake a case study approach into VAPAC. VAPAC is an industry service organisation serving the Victorian performing arts network, and is generally considered by arts professionals who are aware of it, as an exemplary collaborative network that utilises online technologies (VAPAC 2004). This approach is justified in that more information is required on the organisation so that the findings relating to its objectives and operating practices may inform the data gathering components of the future research into the VRGN. Specifically, the case study will investigate areas within VAPAC that may have bearing on issues identified in the research problem and subsequent question, specifically as they relate to the use of online technologies and collaborative practices.

3.5.1 Background

VAPAC started as an initiative of local government through the Municipal Association of Victoria. The original structure of VAPAC included an Executive Committee managed with the executive support of the Municipal Association of Victoria and a Managers Standing Committee.

In 1994 the structure of Local Government changed dramatically and in 1996 VAPAC responded to this by incorporating a structural change of its own. VAPAC is a one tiered organisation of member delegates. It aims to provide a ‘strong direction for supporting the touring of high quality performing arts throughout the State; encouraging professional development of its members; developing the Performing Arts Centres’ facilities and equipment; and nurturing strong ties with Local Government, State Government, and the Arts Industry Members’ (VAPAC 2004).

Currently VAPAC has a membership of 43 Victorian Performing Arts Centres (which is not the full complement of performing arts centres) within the state. The mission statement notes that VAPAC promotes and fosters a co-operative network of performing arts centres across
Victoria which strives for arts industry best industry practice in their artistic programming management and operations so as to encourage and support the performing arts throughout Victoria and bring the performing arts to Victorians (VAPAC 2004).

It is of interest to note that the business objectives of the organisation have not significantly changed over the years – VAPAC claims that this is likely because the issues being dealt with are just as relevant today as they have always been, and shows that the organisation has ‘got it right’ (VAPAC interviews 11 August 2004).

3.5.2 Objectives

VAPAC has structured its business objectives into four key areas – networking, management, facilities and programming. The specific objectives for each are as follows:

Networking

The development of a strong touring network is a key area of activity for the organisation. Without artistic content (product) touring the regional sector, the organisation claims it would not be able to access the product it requires to attract an audience – it notes that it is cost-prohibitive for the individual organisations to develop product on their own. As such, the performing arts centres (or presenter organisations) need to buy-in product and exploit a sophisticated touring circuit, rather than create it themselves. Collaboration across the organisations occurs due to the fact that the venues share audiences (VAPAC interviews 11 August 2004).

The VAPAC membership actively operates as a collective, in that it uses its member numbers to share and develop content as well as for general communication requirements. It is also a coordinated organisation in that it will actively work with producers of product to develop a touring market of a specific product for its members; whilst at the same time, act as the first port of call to the member organisations for untried product. This provides an invaluable industry network for unknown producers wishing to access a presenter network efficiently, whilst also providing a strategy to move product around the state and pull appropriate product from Melbourne to rural areas.
The VAPAC membership also enjoys inward networking, where the Executive ensure that the members meet formally at least three times per year and utilise an online bulletin board and email to maintain continuous contact with the members. This information needs to be relevant and timely in order for the bulletin board to deliver ongoing value to the members. There is a strong set of sub-networks operating in VAPAC (existing both within the physical and virtual space) including a network for box office staff, technical managers and function coordinators. These networks are primarily information sharing networks and in some instance have coordinated the roll-out of generic software or training sessions (VAPAC interviews 11 August 2004).

The organisation notes six core strategies in its Strategic Plan that it must address to be an effective network of performing arts centres in Victoria including:

1. Effectively marketing the organisation
2. Encouraging VAPAC membership
3. Ensuring owner delegates are informed about VAPAC business
4. Engaging in regular real-time meeting
5. Developing and maintaining an active electronic communication for members

Management

The management objective of the organisation concentrates on professional development, training and the development of sophisticated managerial skills across the member organisations. The organisation uses I.T. through its website and discussion list to assist in the dissemination of the opportunities or events it has planned.

VAPAC did not set out to be an Industry Service Organisation (ISO) – that is an organisation specifically working on behalf of the entire sector of performing arts centres - but more a networking facility for its members. This sets the organisation apart from many other membership-based organisations that do define themselves as industry service organisations, in that there is a considerable individual drive that pushes the VAPAC agenda, rather than an executive position attempting to deal with the multifarious issues of an entire sector. This ‘personality’ of the organisation is another one of its features, one that allows it to ‘do what it
wants’ (VAPAC interviews 11 August 2004). It is interesting to note that the suite of regional and metropolitan organisations that constitute VAPAC are essentially replicated in other states across Australia, yet the operating model of VAPAC has yet to be successfully implemented elsewhere in Australia.

The performing arts centres share business objectives, but like galleries, the degree to which the individual organisations need to focus on business objectives, and the attention required to operate the facility, varies. VAPAC will consider bulk purchasing where possible and other coordinating activities that would be meaningful for its members. VAPAC notes that at the end of the networking and professional development activities, collaboration is occurring, and it is good for business.

The core strategies VAPAC has identified to achieve the best industry standards of management are:

1. Supporting and encouraging the internal VAPAC networks
2. Encouraging and supporting member centres’ staff to undertake training (VAPAC 2004)

Facilities

The facilities objective addresses the effective management of facilities operated by the VAPAC members - and the development of best practice and design through extensive documentation. One such piece of documentation is the ‘Oh What a Beautiful Stage’ benchmarking report that was developed by Arts Victoria in 1996/97 to assess whether Victorian performing arts venues are reaching the right level of professional capability and to set benchmarks for performing arts centres across the state. The report has set a standard for the arts industry internationally, and VAPAC was instrumental in bringing this study to fruition.

VAPAC is currently sourcing the necessary funds to update this report, which is likely to include computer aided design (CAD) renderings of each of the venues. Although many of the larger venues will already have CAD renderings available on their websites or in other publications, VAPAC intends to use the revision as an opportunity to bring the other organisations up to this level. In this way, the full complement of member organisations is
able to deliver quality and uniform information. This is another example of VAPAC coordinating activities that benefits the entire membership.

The core strategies VAPAC has identified to provide stakeholders with access to the best practice in facilities design and operation are by:

1. Encouraging the upgrade and improvement of venues and facilities
2. Developing online technical specifications

Programming

The fourth objective concentrates on programming product within the venues of the Victorian performing arts centres. Although the programming decisions are the responsibility of the individual venue managers, ‘good programming relies on good government policy and strong local council relationships’ (VAPAC interviews 11 August 2004) – central to the programming role therefore, is access to quality product that can be marketed and which will result in the performing arts centres earning income.

A core component of VAPAC’s programming function is the coordination of product exhibition and display. The “Showcase” is a successful event organised by VAPAC to introduce and display Victorian artists and product to prospective buyer or partners including their member art centres. This event is coordinated in association with Regional Arts Victoria.

The core strategies VAPAC has identified to assist in the development of quality artistic programs are:

1. Ensuring members have access to information on quality artistic product; and continuing partnerships with touring partners
2. Supporting members to extend marketing techniques
3. Representing product at key touring forums
4. Supporting both interstate and intrastate touring networks
5. Offering support to potential producers of quality products (VAPAC 2004)
3.5.3 Comment

The following figure contrasts the VAPAC model with the collaboration model drafted in the previous chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration model Has all of:</th>
<th>VAPAC</th>
<th>Collaboration model Has some of:</th>
<th>VAPAC</th>
<th>Collaboration model Has at least one of:</th>
<th>VAPAC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration software / I.T.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>eBusiness models</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Calendar</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>• Access to networks</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>• Online sales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shared documents</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>• I.T. support</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>• Market maker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Central database</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>• Funding</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Document storage</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Training</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Announcement boards</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Stakeholder fulfilment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Virtual conferencing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>• Innovation / experimentation</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>with value propositions relative to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Agora</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Alliances</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Aggregation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strategic alliances</td>
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<td>• Distributive Networks</td>
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<td>• Knowledge distribution</td>
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<td>• Negotiations</td>
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<td>• Incentives</td>
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</table>

Figure 5 Collaboration model applied to VAPAC

Results from the case study indicate that the VAPAC model has the majority of the collaboration software (excluding document storage and video conferencing), has all of the collaboration characteristics, and the majority of the policy context supporting its operation (VAPAC receives operating funds from government, but these are not specifically targeted for collaboration). It does not have an eBusiness facility, but does engage in value propositions that support alliances and aggregation of products and services. Given that VAPAC is considered an exemplary collaboration network (by its members), the draft collaboration model supports this and substantiates some of the factors of their success.

The VAPAC model is a successful membership-based organisation that serves a regionally dispersed group of organisations, all of which have similar business objectives and operational requirements. Of interest is that the model has not been replicated in other states, where similar conditions and financial and commercial imperatives exist for the performing arts centres. As such, the VAPAC model may be an anomaly in collaborative networks – a model that resists replication due to its culture of collaboration and ‘personality’ (or the
personalities of its members) – or a model that is yet to be researched and its components described sufficiently to be cloned or applied in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network.

3.6 Research Questions

Given the preliminary research into the galleries’ websites, and the material uncovered in the Literature Review including the introduction of the research questions, this sub-section will now revisit the research question and its objectives and by detailing the sub-questions, will outline any considerations and justifications that impact on, and determine the material to be collected in the future parts of the study.

The research question restated is:

How can the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN), as a provider in the cultural and entertainment sector, deliver cultural product to its audiences (customers) through the use and application of collaborative online networks and their related e-business technologies?

The following set of sub-questions has been designed to address this question.

3.6.1 Question One: What are the types of collaboration that occur in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network?

This question looks at identifying collaborative networks and their business models and identifying any determining features of the collaborative network that may be pertinent later in the implementation stages.

This question investigates how collaboration is occurring in the VRGN, and reviews these instances against the collaboration model previously outlined in the research. The question will examine the role that government plays in these collaborative activities and outline the perceived barriers the galleries may face in adopting collaboration. The question will also address the issues which may assist in driving the adoption of collaboration within the VRGN.
This first question describes the nature of collaboration that is occurring within the VRGN.

3.6.2 Question Two: What are the business objectives of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network and what are the most suitable eBusiness models?

This question describes the operating landscape of the galleries within the VRGN. It seeks to identify and describe the landscape of the VRGN. Without a comprehensive understanding of the business environment of the sector, and the operating implications, the research cannot determine a suitable collaboration and eBusiness environment for the VRGN. The question also reviews the operating environment of the galleries, including its administrative and technical requirements, and reviews the variety of audiences of the galleries and the VRGN and whether these can be shared. The question then addresses the eBusiness models previously identified in the research to determine which may be the most suitable within the VRGN.

3.6.3 Question Three: What is required to support the operation of collaborative online networks within the Victorian Regional Gallery Network?

This question examines the components necessary to plan and implement a collaborative solution to the VRGN. An analysis of the role of government and I.T. will provide fertile ground for any future implementation.

This question will also consider the type of technology that could be applied in a collaborative online network (is it the application of new technology?). This question reviews the availability of broadband in the regional districts and the role it would play in delivering many of the functional elements of a collaborative online network. This is also particularly important for the gallery sector, which apart from its relatively low level of I.T. application, is traditionally wary of technologies that question the status or role of the collection object. The question will include the non-technical issues surrounding collaboration and the level of intervention required by government (including state and local) to facilitate the adoption. Further business analysis will be undertaken on the galleries in order to combine the business requirements of the galleries, with the components of collaboration.
3.7 Summary

This chapter described the characteristics of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network, and introduced findings from a preliminary study into the galleries’ use of the online environment.

The issues arising from analysis of this information has informed the approach of the research and assisted in refining the research questions. These issues indicate that galleries are not using their websites to achieve several outcomes including:

- providing educational resources and rich programming material to a variety of audiences including the educational sector
- increasing community access (on a variety of levels) to the facility
- increasing visitation to the organisation and developing new audiences
- marketing the gallery
- developing alternate revenue streams

Furthermore, the preliminary research uncovered themes which can be further investigated to gain a clearer picture of the factors surrounding the galleries’ use of I.T. and the Internet. These themes include an apparent lack of a shared online environment for use by the gallery sector, and the existence of shared or common business objectives by the galleries. As preliminary as these findings may appear, when they are contrasted with the prerequisites for adopting vertical marketplaces and collaborative activities, they indicate that the VRGN is in a position to investigate exploiting I.T. and collaborative strategies, and this further justifies the research.

The exercise of comparing the VAPAC model with the draft collaboration model served to strengthen and substantiate the draft model and its ingredients for collaboration, whilst also testing its application on a working model. The outcome of this exercise returned strong results in the characteristics of collaboration, its use of I.T., and a supporting policy context. As the VAPAC model does not engage in eBusiness, this component of the model could not be tested. However, the results did identify VAPAC as possessing the attributes of a collaborative network using online technologies.
CHAPTER FOUR - METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The flow of the chapter can be represented as follows:

This chapter will provide justification for the research design and its subsequent methodology as it is applied to both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research, and provide an overview of the ethics relating to conducting the research.

This research seeks to analyse how a specific segment of the public sector manages core business. Given that the VRGN receives the majority of its funding from government, this research proposes some significant benefits not just to the VRGN, but also to the areas of policy, scholarship, best practice in gallery management, digital rights management, and general application of I.T. within the museum/gallery sector. It also seeks to be transparent in the way in which data is collected from members of the gallery sector (Fontana & Frey 2000), process driven and project managed in order for its findings to be readily re-usable in other areas including other state-based gallery networks, or other similarly networked communities.

The work of the research is applied research; research that is for the benefit of those galleries charged with the responsibility of preserving, presenting and storing material culture on behalf of the people of Victoria. This environment has specific local and community requirements. Yet, it is also bound by similarities that produce problems and requirements shared across the galleries at the local level.

The purpose of the research is to explore, explain and describe the manner in which collaborative techniques can be utilised by the VRGN. These collaborative techniques will specifically address business outcomes of the galleries members and could include a range of areas. The research will seek to understand the nature of these explorations – and in the
process, attempt to define and outline the environment required to implement and embrace such technologies.

4.2 Justification for Research Design

Before embarking on the discussion of methodology, this section will review the different types of research design that can be applied, and will justify the adoption of the approach used in the research, for the research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of the data (Bryman 2001), and will reflect the driving priorities of the research. The research methodology, to be described later in this chapter, merely provides the technique for collecting the data that has been subsequently prioritised by the work outlined in the previous chapter. Given this, the research questions (and sub-questions) have been fine-tuned in the preceding chapters, with the Victorian Regional Gallery Network being defined as the central component of the research.

By clearly defining the unit of analysis for the research, that is, defining the target for the research as the VRGN, as distinct from the galleries contained within the VRGN (Yin 1994), the study increases its chances of containing the research’s propositions and staying within feasible limits (Yin 1994). The research question poses questions of the VRGN which are ‘how’ and ‘why’ in nature, and as such, the case study design is the best method of understanding the unit of analysis. This design provides a strategy that supports the formulation of propositions, in addition to reflecting on important theoretical issues (Yin 1994) and assisting with identifying evidence related to the research question.
In the discussion of research design, Bryman (2004) identifies five main designs. In Table 5, a brief discussion of each is included, alongside a justification for its inclusion/exclusion from the research.

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

The case study type was selected as the preferred type as the researcher was to systematically gather in-depth information on a single entity, i.e., the VRGN. The case study approach allows for participant observation and unstructured interviewing, as well as for using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. And although it can be difficult to determine whether it is better described as a case study or a cross sectional research design (Bryman 2001), the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies on a single case determined this selection. The type of case study is described as ‘critical’ in that the researcher has a clearly specified supposition to be put towards the VRGN, although it also bears close resemblance to the ‘exemplifying’ type, in that it is interested in understanding the context of the issues being focused on in the VRGN, and which relate to collaboration and I.T.
The methodology deployed in the research needed to be able to effectively gather and collect relevant information from a variety of sources including gallery staff (Directors and Curators) and council staff (Information Technology Managers) - the information being sought was a combination of qualitative and quantitative information. As such, two main approaches were utilised: a questionnaire using the Likert and Dichotomous scale was designed to collect data regarding the operations of the gallery, and a series of interviews were developed to address specific questions to the VRGN. A discussion of the two types of data gathering processes follows, firstly regarding the quantitative through the questionnaire, and then a discussion on qualitative gathering through interviews.

4.3 Quantitative Methodology

As previously mentioned, a questionnaire was designed in order to collect data from the gallery Directors and industry service organisations, regarding the operations of the gallery and the VRGN.

Given that each question sought to gain a response from a single group of respondents (i.e., Directors of the regional gallery), and that the questions were mutually exclusive with non overlapping categories, the nominal scale was applied (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2001). This measurement scale was considered against the other measurement scales of ‘ordinal’, ‘interval’ and ‘ratio’. It was selected due to information required from the questionnaire being classified as basic, categorical and gross information (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2001) which could be expanded upon at the time of the interviews with the Directors.

As such, the results of the questionnaire were used as a commencement point for the interviews, and as a point of discussion including confirming and/or validating the themes of the questionnaire (Bryman 2001).

The Likert scale was used to quickly and quantifiably rate the respondent’s reaction to a given statement (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2001). This was required as it provided a point from
which comparison could be made and from which measures could be charted. The Likert scale was chosen over other scales such as the ‘category’, ‘numerical’, ‘semantic differential’, and ‘stapel’, as it was best suited to examine how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed with statements pertaining to the Victorian Regional Gallery Network and notions of collaboration.

The scales that were applied ranged from using five to seven points, and were selected as they allowed the researcher to pose specific statements and questions to respondents in order to measure and compare attitudes amongst the gallery Directors (the respondents). The ‘Dichotomous’ scale was also applied in the questionnaire because it allowed the respondent to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to a series of questions. By applying the nominal scale to these questions as well, the questionnaire was able to elicit responses to questions that required the contrast of a positive/negative pole.

The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis in order to further explore and expand on the themes identified in the Likert questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed prior to interviews occurring, providing sufficient introductory information from the interviewee to inform the subsequent interview.

The Likert scale was applied in order to collect data from the staff of the regional galleries. The data to be collected was contained in three parts and covered seven areas:

Part One: Galleries, the Victorian Regional Gallery Network, Collaboration, Information Technology, Online
Part Two: Frequency of Collaboration
Part Three: Other Activities

The last page of the questionnaire included a list of definitions of all words that appeared in *italics* throughout the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to refer to this list if they required assistance in interpreting the question.

The questionnaire was sent to all potential interviewees prior to being interviewed as part of the qualitative data gathering process. The completed questionnaire had to be received by the interviewer prior to conducting the interviews with the gallery representative. There were 62 questions in total, with all respondents completing the questionnaire. From a total of 992 total
answers (i.e., 15 respondents each addressing 62 questions) - 973 were highlighted and 17 were left blank. This amounted to a completion rate of questions of approximately 98%. When a selection was not made on the survey, the total number of responses to be counted as part of creating percentages for that question, was correspondingly reduced by the number of blanks received.

The questionnaire addressed issues relating to the business operations of the galleries. Part One of the questionnaire applied a five point Likert scale with the central point being neutral.

The scales were:
- “strongly disagree”
- “disagree”
- “neither agree or disagree”
- “agree”
- “strongly agree”

There were 50 questions in this section.

Part Two applied a seven point ascending scale to rate the frequency with which collaboration occurs.

The scales were:
- “not at all”
- “daily”
- “weekly”
- “monthly”
- “quarterly”
- “annually” or
- “other”, with respondents unable to elaborate on the “other” option.

There were seven questions in this section.

Part Three applied a Dichotomous scale of “Yes” and “No” to measure five questions relating to coordination aspects of the galleries.

The questionnaire was emailed to all respondents and the completed questionnaire emailed back to the interviewer to be transferred into an Excel spreadsheet (Version 2000).

Part One of the questionnaire was designed to identify and ascertain some core issues surrounding the operations of the galleries within the VRGN, including business objectives and council and government objectives. It also dealt specifically with the relationship of each gallery to the VRGN. The areas dealing with collaboration examined the conditions under
which collaboration could occur within the sector, whilst also identifying the presence of any leaders or drivers that may impact on collaboration. Information Technology played an important role in the questionnaire in serving to measure the state of play of I.T. within the galleries, and finally the questionnaire contained several questions concerned with the online environment as an environment in which the galleries operate. In all of these 50 questions, the respondents were asked to select only one of the measures (or number between 1 and 5) that best described the extent to which they agreed with the statement.

Part Two of the questionnaire examined the frequency with which collaboration occurred within the galleries, and asked a series of questions that required the respondent to indicate only one measure of frequency. The respondents were also permitted to select a “not at all” or “other” box if the frequency scales were not adequate.

Part Three gathered direct Yes / No responses to several questions regarding other activities around the nature of collaboration and coordination amongst the sector. These questions sought to identify the presence of activities that could be shared or undertaken with other organisations. As with all the other questions, respondents were asked to select only one choice (in this case Yes or No) or leave the answer blank.

The questionnaire posed and reposed questions to the respondent around the same issues as a way of internally validating their responses. As mentioned previously, the results of the questionnaire were also used in the interviews to validate responses in a more discursive environment.

4.3.1 Questionnaire pilot study and data validity

The questionnaire was pilot tested for validity including suitability of language, logic, issues to be covered and relevance to the VRGN. This pilot test was undertaken prior to the questionnaire being finalised, and was conducted with a prospective respondent to ensure that the feedback was pertinent to both the questionnaire format and target audience. This validity included face validity to gauge responses to the format and flow of the questionnaire, and content validity to ensure that the measures in the questionnaire were adequate and representative of a set of items that tested the issue (Bryman 2001, Mason 1996). It also provided an understanding of the concepts or situational factors that the interviews attempted
to uncover as part of the grounded theory approach to the research (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2001). Criterion-related validity was not required as the respondents were from the same sector, and differentiation between the respondents was not required. Construct validity was excluded from the scope.

As a result of this pilot study, the use of some terms was tightened to make the meaning clearer, especially as this applied to the use of the word ‘business’ and a glossary of terms was included at the back of the questionnaire.

4.3.2 Questionnaire compilation of data

Each question was allocated a unique number in an Excel spreadsheet, and each of the scales was allocated a number or value in order to chart the responses to the questions.

For Part One, (questions 1 – 50) the scale of “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “agree” and “strongly agree” were identified in the spreadsheet as 1,2,3,4,5 respectively.

For Part Two (questions 51- 57) the scale of “not at all”, “daily”, “weekly”, “monthly”, “quarterly”, “annually”, and “other” were allocated the numbers 1-7 respectively, and for Part 3 (questions 58 – 62) the scale of “Yes” and “No” were allocated the values “Yes” and “No” respectively.

Formulas applied to each question enabled graphs to be generated from these results, providing a visual representation of the spread of the responses. The formulas were based on the frequency that a scale was received for the specific question, expressed as a percentage of the total number of responses received for that question.

The charts generated for each question were then individually analysed and commented upon, including a summary for each sub-section of Part One, i.e., Galleries, VRGN, Collaboration, Information Technology, Online, and for Parts Two and Three. For a full listing of the questions used in the interviews, refer to Appendices A.2 – A.5. For a copy of the questionnaire, and the results and associated graphs, refer to Appendix A6 & A.7.
4.4 Qualitative Methodology

The research undertaken is not ethnographic in nature, although many of the methodologies that determine the role and activity of the interviewer can be applied, so that a shared and collaborative understanding can be found to the problem statement. The research will include conducting interviews, in order to define business requirements, rather than to study activity or behaviour.

The concept of collaboration can be applied within the investigative process and because of this, the process can be regarded as collaborative research that includes equal participation between participant and researcher (Angrosino & Perez 2000). As the study has implementation as a possible future outcome, it is also appropriate that the participants have some control over the study and its findings – as collaborators, they will have to own any proposed solution to be able to support its implementation.

As the research targeted collaborative online networks, the interviews focus on identifying the most effective mechanisms and business conditions in which a collaborative network could exist, rather than an open and general exploratory based research.

The research is not attempting to define or identify a phenomenon, nor distinguish between differences of those working inside and outside the VRGN. As such, the interviews are no longer neutral tools of data gathering (Fontana & Frey 2000) but are active interactions which are applied to gather information and contextualise comments across the VRGN.

And whilst there are arguments for the neutrality of researchers to be preserved, it will not be applied in the research gathering stage, due to the fact that a professional relationship exists with the majority of the interviewees, therefore allowing for subject areas and issues to be developed and expanded upon in the course of the interviews. Given this, the researcher is an
active participant in qualitative research with the interview becoming a critical tool for developing new frameworks and theories (Anderson & Dana 1991).

The research approach was mindful of the position of power and role that the researcher has in conducting the study (Lal 1999), due to his senior position held within government at the time that the interviews were conducted, as well as pre-existing professional relationships with the sector.

The interviewer sought to return the research to the sector (Patai 1991) and to situate the research by overt announcement of the intentions of the study and the expectations of the process, including gaining the sector’s expressed interest and permission to participate - with a view to it benefiting from the outcomes of the research – whether these be implementation focused or information focused for future reference.

The approach to be taken with this study was drawn from the learnings of qualitative research, especially in the use of reflexivity to understand the comments and actions of subjects (Hollway & Jefferson 2000).

As previously stated, the research is as much an investigative process as it is collaborative, in defining a business solution. As such, it requires not only support from the participating organisations, but their involvement and engagement in the analysis of the needs and requirements. This approach underpins the study (as much as the outcome is defining collaborative networks) in that the manner in which the study was conducted was collaborative in nature.

**4.4.1 Development of types of interviews**

The main source of information was collected through structured interviews from three key groups. The groups were:

- Group 1: Victorian Regional Gallery Network and Industry Service Organisations
- Group 2: I.T. Managers of Local Councils
- Group 3: Government representatives from Arts Victoria.
All interviews were conducted in person, and all were undertaken on the work site of the participant, except three, which were conducted at a place of convenience for the participant. Supporting research was undertaken through desk research – primarily through the Literature Review and investigation of current documentary evidence or references.

The interviews and completed questionnaires (and the subsequent compilation) constituted the majority of the data gathering and provided the source for analysis, alongside the original field research benchmarking exercise and analysis of the galleries’ websites.

The participants were required to answer a series of questions about the nature of their business as it may relate to collaborative networks and the online environment. Each interview group was only asked to comment on their area of expertise or work environment. The interview structure and question lists were predetermined prior to commencing this stage of the research – each participant being asked the same set of questions pertinent to the particular interview group number (1, 2 or 3). The interview lasted approximately 1 ½ hours.

Group 1 questions concentrated on the operation of the regional art galleries and the role of industry service organisations in relation to the regional art galleries.

Group 2 questions concentrated on the role of I.T. infrastructure and associated conditions of use by the galleries and local councils (where appropriate).

Group 3 questions reviewed the role of government policy and areas of assistance for the VRGN through funding programs, strategic interventions and policy.

4.4.2 Recruitment

All of the Victorian regional galleries included in the research were galleries that are in the public domain (PGAV 2004). All contact with the participants from these galleries was through information that is publicly available, or through personal contact. Participation in the research was voluntary in nature and the investigator recruited the participants. As previously mentioned, the participants all hold specific positions within each organisation, which determined their inclusion in the study. In other words, the study sought to interview
people that hold specific positions in the galleries, rather than people that have specific characteristics or attributes. The study is in this instance using a specific selection criterion.

4.4.3 Outline of questions posed

The interview methodology was used to gain a clearer understanding of the environment in which the VRGN operates, whilst investigating the factors that would contribute to these organisations making use of online technologies. The interviews therefore needed to address not only the VRGN, but those associated with it – the Industry Service Organisations (ISO), which plays a part in coordinating the sector on behalf of its membership. The ISOs to be included in the study included the Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV), and the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC). Museums Australia (Victoria) and Regional Arts Victoria were identified as likely participants but were not included in the final schedule of interviews. The PGAV and VAPAC arguably represent the majority of the professional cultural organisations in the state and as such collectively oversee over most of the cultural activity occurring throughout Victoria.

The questions to be asked of the gallery Directors and Industry Service Organisations therefore concentrated on the broadest areas of the topic. These included the concept of collaboration and any barriers and constraints to it; the Director’s use and understanding of I.T. generally and the internet specifically and the manner in which it manifests in their regional area; and importantly, the gallery’s stated business objectives. The responses to the questions provided a meaningful roadmap into the current operating environment and conditions, hinting at possible future strategies and I.T. requirements to achieve business objectives.

The second group of interviews was concerned with understanding the practical issues around the utilisation of I.T. generally and online technologies specifically as it is, and can be applied to the specific geographical location of the galleries. The 14 galleries are spread across the state of Victoria, and there may be factors that determine the use of technology in rural and regional areas that are different to metropolitan based organisations. The questions therefore asked of the I.T. managers of the Local Council (or the gallery representative in the case where the gallery is not owned and operated by Council) sought to identify:

- any constraints and barriers to infrastructure implementation and application
• issues of service, availability and capacity of telecommunications in non-metropolitan areas

• Council policy or business plans for I.T. support and any future roll out of broadband (a factor which will likely drive increased connectivity between communities whilst also drive the creation and development of content for new online networks)

• the development of future policy frameworks or strategies that will assist in delivering telecommunication capacity to the galleries

The third and final group to be interviewed included representatives from the State Government funding body, Arts Victoria. By posing questions to both Local Council and State Government, the research sought to define the characteristics of government funding that directly impacts on the capacity of the galleries to exploit digital technologies generally, and online collaborative tools specifically. The interviews posed questions regarding the role of the funding body in the administration and operation of the galleries, including business planning and the strategic implementation of I.T. and online networks; the role of state-wide networks for addressing regional telecommunications issues and covered strategies and initiatives that are coordinated at a State or Commonwealth level.

4.4.4 Pilot study

One of the three interviews was pilot tested for validity including suitability of language, logic, issues to be covered and relevance to the VRGN. This pilot test was conducted with a prospective respondent and was undertaken prior to interviews commencing and sought to ensure that the approach, focus and structure of the interview and its questions would best suit the interviewees. The pilot also tested duration so as to keep the interviews to a set timeframe.

4.4.5 Schedule of respondents

The interviews were conducted over a three month period, with the majority of the regional interviews (Groups 1 & 2) being conducted in an intensive four week period. Interviews for Group 3 were conducted shortly after this. A minimum of two interviews were conducted in each of the 14 regional areas, which included the gallery Director or representative, and the
Local Council I.T. Manager or representative. The interviews were in most cases conducted back-to-back with each other, enabling data validation to occur (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2001), and the opportunity to pose follow-up questions that could not be answered by one or other of the interviewees.

4.4.6 Interview protocol

Interviews were tape recorded and the interviewer took notes during the interview. The interviews were structured, but were presented in an informal way and predominantly conducted in the offices of the interviewee. The ensuing discussion responded to particular issues raised as part of the information gathering process, so that the discussion could cover ground not necessarily identified in the list of questions. However, all set questions were either asked by the interviewer, or were answered by the interviewee through general discussion or direct response to the question being posed - this included those instances where the interviewee did not know the answers to the questions posed. A copy of the business plan (where available) was also requested as part of the interview process.

In some cases the interviewee took it upon themselves to follow up on some outstanding issues and forward the findings to the interviewer.

The interviews were conducted in clusters, due primarily to the availability of the respondents, the physical distances that needed to be covered, and the timeframe available to conduct the interviews. There were six main batches of interviews:

- Batch one: Ballarat, Ararat, Horsham and Hamilton
- Batch two: Morwell, Sale
- Batch three: Bendigo, Shepparton, and Benalla
- Batch four: Geelong and Warrnambool
- Batch five: Swan Hill, Mildura, and Castlemaine
- Batch six: Melbourne

A total of 29 interviews were conducted. The notes from the interviews were analysed for common themes or issues that resonated with a particular question or group of questions, and
were read in contrast with the findings of the questionnaire. A copy of the interview list of questions is included in Appendices A.2, A.3, A.4 and A.5.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations regarding the study were informed by two processes – the first by an understanding of the ethical consideration of undertaking the research, and the second, a process that was determined by the RMIT Design and Social Context Human Research Ethics Sub-committee.

As such, the process for interacting with the respondents through conducting interviews followed ethical approaches including ensuring that participants would not be placed in a vulnerable position with the researcher, or put at risk by taking part in the research (Kellahear 1989). As the researcher had a pre-existing relationship with many of the respondents in his professional capacity as an officer of the Government of Victoria, care was taken to ensure that the respondents understood they were interacting with the researcher ‘personality’.

Furthermore, as the research required the respondents to engage in an open and safe manner without fear of repercussions for being involved in the study, the identity of the respondents was protected at all times and confidentiality was guaranteed as a matter of process, and to ensure their involvement in the process (Homan 1991).

As the research involved seeking information directly from participants, approval from the RMIT Design and Social Context Human Research Ethics Sub-committee was required prior to field work and data gathering commencing. This process involved submitting substantial details outlining project particulars, details of participants (including the identification of any vulnerable participants), estimation of potential risk to participants and project classification, informed consent, confidentiality of research records and other issues including details on the location of the interviews, and an overview of the types of questions to be asked of the participants.
The application to the Sub-committee was used to assess the risk level category and myriad ethical considerations that may be involved the research. The outcome of the application to the Sub-committee resulted in the research being approved at a Category Risk Level 2, as the participants in the study could be identified as being involved (simply by definition of the study’s target segment – the Victorian Regional Gallery Network of which there are only 14). The application noted however that the individual or specific responses to the interview questions would not be detailed or made public through the research, and that no comment would be directly attributed to any specific person or detailed in the final research.

For a copy of the Ethics letter - Invitation to Participate – Plain Language Statement and the Consent form refer to Appendices A.8 and A.9 respectively.

4.6 Summary

This chapter justified the use of the Case Study design, as it allowed an intensive examination of the VRGN (its setting), as well as catering for a combination of qualitative and quantitative research (Bryman 2001). The other types of research methodology were discussed and subsequently excluded from the research. The chapter then outlined the considerations when developing the quantitative and qualitative methodology used in the research.

The quantitative considerations included the design of the questionnaire and the associated compilation of data, whilst the qualitative sub sections related to the development of the interviews, recruitment of interviewees, the interview questions, pilot study, schedule of respondents and the interview protocol. The chapter concluded with a section detailing the ethical considerations of the study.
CHAPTER FIVE – PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

“as one becomes increasingly reliant on technology, technology needs to become increasingly reliable”…….(Dir. Int.)

5.1 Introduction

The flow of the chapter can be represented as follows:

The previous chapter developed an argument for the justification of using the case study design, and the application of the quantitative and qualitative methodology to collect the data. These two methodologies involved the completion of a questionnaire by the gallery Directors, and a series of structured interviews undertaken mostly at the place of work of the gallery Directors and the I.T. managers of Local Council. As the following chapter (Chapter 6 – Discussion and Analysis) will analyse these findings, this chapter will therefore be contained to the presentation of the results from the questionnaire, including a summary of each part of the questionnaire, and a summary of the main themes and issues that emerged from the interviews.

This chapter draws out the main findings from each question included in the questionnaire, and combines it with the results from the interviews, in order to provide commentary that is based on both quantitative and qualitative data gathering exercises. This provides the opportunity to contrast the two types of methodologies, whilst developing a broad base on which future analysis in Chapter Six can occur.
5.2 Findings and Comments

This section will present results to each of the questions posed in the questionnaire, and provide comments on the findings from the interviews. The findings from the questionnaire are divided into eight categories: Galleries, VRGN, Collaboration, I.T., Online, Frequency of collaboration, other activities, the PGAV and Government. Findings from the interviews with the Directors of the regional galleries, I.T. Managers of the Local Council, representatives from the Industry Service Organisations, and representatives from Arts Victoria are also included in this section.

Where a commentary refers to results from a specific question, the number of the question is noted in brackets (e.g., Q2 for Question 2). As the identity of the interviewees is to remain confidential, individuals can neither be identified in the findings, nor have comments directly attributed to them. Given this, reference to their contribution to the interview will be through identifying the participant by overall work group only i.e., Directors Interviews (Dir. Int.), I.T. Managers Interviews (I.T. Int.), Government Interview (Govt. Int.) or ISO Interview (ISO Int.).

For a full listing of the questions used in the interviews, refer to Appendices A.2 – A.5. For a copy of the questionnaire, and the results and associated graphs, refer to Appendix A6 & A.7.

The findings in this section are presented in tables, organised into the categories noted above, with the specific commentary for each question included for each question. The responses to the scales are presented as both percentages, and through the use of a shading device (Table 6). The shading device is divided into the follow scale to enable a graphic overview of results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6 Shading device applied to Questionnaire results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shading scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.1 Galleries

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements regarding the gallery in which they work and any collaborative activity undertaken at their gallery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Gallery Collaborates</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Strongly disagree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Neither %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Strongly agree %</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 with artists</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Respondents returned either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ to this question, indicating that there is agreement by the galleries in collaborating with artists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 with administrators</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>The majority of respondents (93%) either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates with administrators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 with other galleries in the VRGN</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>The majority of respondents (80%) either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates with other galleries in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network, whilst just over 10% ‘disagree’ with this statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 with other galleries (outside of the VRGN)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>87% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates with other galleries (outside the VRGN). This indicates strong support for collaboration outside of the local network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to achieve business objectives</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates to achieve business outcomes, 28% of the respondents alternately either ‘disagree’ with this statement, or selected ‘neither’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to achieve Council objectives</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-47</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>80% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates to achieve Council objectives, with 20% selecting either ‘disagree’ or ‘neither’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to achieve government objectives</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Approximately two thirds (67%) of the respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates to achieve government objectives, with the remaining selecting ‘neither’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Questionnaire comments**

All of the responses to these questions returned a majority response that was no less than “agree”. Of significance the “strongly agree” majority responses were for:

- **Question 1** The gallery collaborates with artists
- **Question 3** The gallery collaborates with other galleries in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network, and
- **Question 5** The gallery collaborates to achieve business objectives

Question 7 returned the highest number of responses that chose “neither” at 31.25%. The galleries see themselves as collaborating across a variety of areas including with artists, administrators, the Victorian Regional Gallery Network and galleries in other states. The majority of the questions returned combined responses of “agreed” to “strongly agreed” above 80%, with artists and administrators returning responses above 90%. The galleries also see collaboration as a way to achieve Council objectives, as well as those of their business and government objectives (although some saw the latter two as less applicable).

**Interview comments**

Comments from the interviews indicate that gallery and ISO staff generally feel isolated from the I.T. environment – they do not understand how it works or what it can do, and hence are not in a position to consider the use and application of technology in any strategic or business manner. They claim this is due primarily to ignorance on their behalf, and a result of not prioritising training of I.T. Staff have no real understanding of the I.T. environment, so feel they isolated, become increasingly removed from it, have little working knowledge of the systems or of their capabilities, have little knowledge of what can be done, resulting in their not harnessing the power and capacity that standard desktop systems provide (Q28, 29, 31). It is not an issue of access to technology, or the capacity to purchase and acquire, as is the case in many small to medium organisations (Q33, 34) – but not engaging in the technology that is available at their workspace. An observation would be that I.T. is simply not part of the core competencies of gallery Directors, and as such is not used effectively to achieve business objectives (Q35, 36).

Galleries do not engage in cross communication in any real of effective manner (Dir. Int.), except in the one-off cases where a gallery may be working with another gallery on a specific project (a finding which appears to be contradicted in the results in Q2, 3 & 4). As a result,
most of the industry intelligence, or ‘body of knowledge’ held collectively by the staff of
galleries is not disseminated across the sector, and Directors of the galleries consider that the
PGAV, as the membership/industry service organisation supporting the sector, is incapable of
addressing this knowledge-retention issue.

The business of the sector, or the product that it creates, is not valued or held by the sector as
a combined product or cultural output, therefore there is no sector-wide strategic planning
approach to the delivery of common or core product areas (Dir. Int.). These product areas
would include:

- Presentation of exhibitions
- Revenue generation
- Publishing
- Education services
- Touring activities
- Digitisation
- Collection management
- Audience development
- Sector research (Dir. Int.)

The activities or processes that are required to deliver these products are not considered in a
strategic planning approach. These activities would include:

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Sharing of information
- Coordination
- Advocacy and lobbying (Dir. Int.)

5.2.2 Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN)

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the
statements regarding the Victorian Regional Gallery Network.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victorian regional gallery network (VRGN)</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Strongly disagree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Neither %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Strongly agree %</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>has a shared set of values</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>47% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the VRGN has a shared set of values, with 33% selecting ‘neither’ and 20% ‘disagree’. As such, over one half do not at least ‘agree’ with this statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has common administrative requirements</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40% of respondents ‘agree’ that the VRGN has common administrative requirements, with one third of the respondents selecting ‘neither’ and over one quarter of the respondents selecting either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has common business objectives</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the VRGN has common objectives. 27% selected ‘neither’ and 20% ‘disagree’ with the statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operates as a collective</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Approximately 43% of respondents either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ that the VRGN operates as a collective. 50% of respondents selected ‘neither’, with only 7% selecting ‘agree’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborates with each other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60% of respondents ‘agree’ with the statement that the VRGN collaborates with each other whilst 13% ‘selected ‘disagree’ and over a quarter (27%) selecting ‘neither’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborates with each other in programming areas</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40% ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the VRGN collaborates with each other in programming areas, with approximately one quarter (27%) of respondents either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. The remaining 27% selected “neither”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborates with each other in administrative areas</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50% of respondents selected 'neither’ in regards to the statement that the VRGN collaborates with each other in administrative areas. 43% of respondents either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, whilst only 7% selecting ‘agree’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborates in a formal way</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40% of the respondents selected ‘neither’ when asked whether the VRGN collaborates in a formal way, with one third (33%) selecting either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ and 27% selecting ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’, indicating that the respondents do not necessarily view collaboration as occurring on a formal basis within the VRGN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborates in an informal way</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Approximately 67% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that collaboration occurs informally within the VRGN, with only 13% selecting ‘disagree’. Given the results to the previous statement, responses to this question indicate that the gallery Directors see collaboration occurring more often as a result of informal structures, than in formal structures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Questionnaire comments**

The respondents were ambivalent about a shared set of values and common administrative requirements, although just over one-half agreed there are common business objectives. Almost one-half of the respondents do not believe the VRGN operates as a collective, although they do think that the galleries in the VRGN collaborates with each other, although 46% note that this collaboration occurs in programming areas, with responses spread regarding administrative areas (50% selecting “neither”). However the respondents clearly agree with the informal manner in which collaboration occurs (67%), which is consistent with the findings in Question 17 (Table 9), regarding spontaneous relationships (53%)

**Interview comments**

There is a distinction between galleries that are owned and operated by Council and those that are not. In the VRGN, the majority of galleries fall into the former category, with only three galleries operating to some extent independently of the Local Council. The galleries that fall into the latter category are Ararat Art Gallery, Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, and Geelong Art Gallery. These galleries still have relationships with Council, but as Council does not own them, they do not appear to receive the same level of support that the other galleries do, nor are they required to submit Council reports detailing operation and performance. All galleries however receive recurrent funding from Arts Victoria (Arts Victoria 2003b).

The galleries in the VRGN have the capacity to share business requirements, and this would be most pronounced with galleries that are similar in size of collection and scale of operations. It was expected that the grouping of like-to-like galleries (including whether it is Council owned and operated) can be used to apply common key performance indicators (KPIs) or to group common business objectives (Dir. Int.). The interviews confirmed this, and identified a common set of business objectives including collection management, programming, audience development, exhibitions, visitation, financial management, acquisitions and conservation (drawn from the Web checklist). Importantly, galleries also create product and material that can be shared or used by other organisations (which is supported by responses received for Q60 of the questionnaire), but often do not actively seek to pass it on, or disseminate it widely.
The interviews highlighted that there are opportunities for developing gallery audiences, especially as these may relate to the education sector, as the galleries do not specifically target primary, secondary or tertiary curricula. They also found that the programming of the galleries needs to be as diverse as possible to respond to the various audience groups of the local and surrounding communities. For example, exhibitions need to cover subjects ‘from racing cars to stuffed horses’ in order to attract the attention of a limited audience base (Dir. Int.). This has already lead to a diversity of programming that includes local artists in an effort to increase community engagement and to market the collections and its perceived strengths to the community (Dir. Int.). The Directors suggested that the community spaces and access spaces within the galleries make the connection to the community even more obvious.

There are different types of communities within the regions, and gallery Directors are aware of the interests of these groups in order to reach out to them. The emphasis placed on the local environment is a vexed one for the Directors and staff of the galleries, in that local tastes and opinion are not always consistent or in line with the objectives of the gallery or of the Council (Dir. Int.). As a result, local residents are not always seen to be stakeholders of the gallery (Dir. Int.). However, the stakeholders are different and varied depending on the region, and as one Director put it, ‘you can’t be promoting a rarefied environment anymore if you want to attract families’, and providing ‘permission for the audiences’ is very important (Dir. Int.).

However, some galleries are not comfortable with this dependence on the fickle audience, and will also choose to program regardless of the locals and their tastes, choosing not to “show popular crap . . . and you can quote me on that” if it means compromising on the quality of the work shown (Dir. Int.).

Of interest around the issue of audience and their tastes, is that the majority of the galleries do not formally track or measure their audiences, nor are there any clear statistics regarding the profile of their audiences and how this may impact on, or affect visitation. Visitation figures are important statistics used by the gallery, Local Council and State Government, for measuring the gallery’s relevance to and position in the community. Visitation figures vary significantly across the sector, ranging from 14,000 to 84,000 people annually (Arts Victoria 2002b), with the methodology and manner in which an attendance is registered also varying;
for example visits to the café, openings, special events and the like, are sometimes included in overall visitation figures (Dir. Int.).

The overwhelming majority of the Directors noted that their gallery was short staffed, or understaffed in some way; and/or that the amount of work to be undertaken was at times overwhelming if activities such as digitisation, collection management, researching the collection, additional public programming and fund raising were added to the list (Dir. Int.). However there were no Council or government reports or documentation that could be drawn on to identify appropriate staffing and resourcing levels for the galleries. There is minimal sharing of staff, and coordinated professional development is minimal for non-Council owned organisations, and difficult to organise where it is available, as the time away from core activities makes it time-prohibitive.

The issue of resourcing and approximating the appropriate level required for the specific organisation requires an understanding of stakeholder expectations and organisational goals. It has been noted more than once in the interviews, that resourcing issues are never going to change, and that galleries need to be working ‘smarter and not harder’ (Govt. Int.) and prioritising activities to ensure that the workload is manageable. Those galleries that can share resources or balance the operational issues with staffing levels cite a more enjoyable work environment than those that seem not to be able to control the outputs or the manner in which they are delivered by the gallery (Dir. Int.).
### 5.2.3 Collaboration

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements regarding collaboration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Strongly disagree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Neither %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Strongly agree %</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 in the VRGN requires spontaneous relationships for it to be effective</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that spontaneous relationships are required to achieve effective collaboration within the VRGN, with a total of 47% selecting ‘neither’ and ‘disagree’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 in the VRGN requires leadership from Government for it to be effective</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>One third of respondents (33%) selected either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ when asked if collaboration requires leadership from Government for it to be effective. Responses to both ‘neither’ and ‘agree’ were level at 33%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 in the VRGN requires leadership from Council for it to be effective</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Similarly, responses to a statement that collaboration in the VRGN requires leadership from Council to be effective, 47% of respondents selected either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, with 13% of respondents selecting ‘agree’. The return for ‘neither’ was higher than the previous question at 40%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 in the VRGN requires leadership from gallery Directors for it to be effective</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>93% of respondents selected ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ against the statement that the VRGN requires leadership from gallery Directors for it to be effective. This indicates significant support for this statement, especially when viewed in relationship to the responses to the previous two questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 in the VRGN requires leadership from an Industry Service Organisation (PGAV, MAV, RAV) for it to be effective</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Responses also indicate that there is support for the statement that collaboration requires leadership from the industry service organisations for it to be effective, as 20% of respondents selected ‘neither’, and there were no selections of ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Council actively supports collaboration</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>More than half (53%) either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement that Council actively supports collaboration, with 27% selecting either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, and 20% selecting ‘neither’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Government actively supports collaboration</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>One third of respondents selected ‘disagree’ and one third ‘agree’ regarding the statement that Government actively supports collaboration. Responses to ‘neither’ were 27%, and 7% for ‘strongly agree’. As such, 40% either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>No. of respondents</td>
<td>Strongly disagree %</td>
<td>Disagree %</td>
<td>Neither %</td>
<td>Agree %</td>
<td>Strongly agree %</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Service Organisations (ISO) are important for the effective operation of the VRGN (note: as distinct from the ISO’s members)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47% of the respondents either “agree” or ‘strongly agree’ that ISOs are important for the effective operation of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (as distinct from being effective from the perspective of its membership). 13% selected ‘disagree’ with more than a third (40%) selecting ‘neither’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISOs coordinate and act on issues that are important to the members of the VRGN</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53% of respondents selected either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ against the statement that ISOs coordinate and act on issues that are important to the members of the VRGN. Although no responses selected ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, 47% selected ‘neither’ in response to this statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISOs are the most effective mechanism to facilitate collaboration between the members of the VRGN</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27% respondents selected ‘disagree’, whilst 27% of respondents selected ‘agree’ to ‘strongly agree’ to the statement that ISO are the most effective mechanism to facilitate collaboration between the members of the VRGN. The highest response rate was for ‘neither’ at 47% suggesting that there is not a strong opinion either way about this statement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questionnaire comments**

Responses to these questions indicate that collaboration on the whole is not necessarily considered a high priority by the galleries. Half of the respondents indicated that collaboration requires spontaneity to be effective, whilst the respondents see little value or leadership from the Government or Council. A significant majority (93%) believe collaboration requires leadership from the gallery Directors and over 80% indicated that it also requires leadership from the ISO, even though the responses conversely indicated that the gallery Directors are divided on the effectiveness of the ISO to facilitate collaboration between the galleries.

**Interview comments**

Collaboration in the VRGN is the result of informal relationships, often dependent upon, or determined by personal relationships between the participating galleries (Q17), a sense of trust, and based on a history of knowledge sharing (Black et al 2002). The PGAV is well placed to provide this focus (Q21), yet it is perceived as being unsuccessful in this area.
There is seen to be a need expressed by gallery Directors, for collaboration, but it is often ‘just too difficult sometimes to get it all going’ (Dir. Int.). This comment relates strongly to the previous issue of resourcing levels in the galleries, that the Directors are often too busy to make time for something that will in the long run, add value or produce an outcome far greater than they are able to manage on their own. This situation is in many cases explained away by the sheer number of exhibitions some organisations undertake - with some mounting more than 40 shows per year – an amount which on the whole is the result of a decision made by the gallery and not determined or influenced by funding partners like the Local Council, Arts Victoria or the Australia Council (Dir. Int., Govt. Int.). It is also exacerbated by the majority of galleries choosing to produce the majority of their exhibitions in-house, as opposed to drawing from the touring circuit or co-producing exhibitions (Dir. Int.).

Different projects create different collaborative opportunities, including cataloguing, collection management and content management systems. Other areas for collaboration included sharing academic papers, to information and knowledge management issues, special interest groups information, merchandising and local artists product, postcards and discrete objects (Centre for Networking Technologies for the Information Economy 2004, Education Network of Australia 2004). The issue of branding a product becomes more complicated though when more than one gallery is seen to be presenting the product/object, or if an Industry Service Organisation (like the PGAV) markets on behalf on the membership; which it has done in the past with the provision of a brochure promoting the members (unanimously declared a success), or the creation of a paper bag that can be used to package products bought at gallery shops (not necessarily voted successful by the membership).

Information Technology was also seen as a key component of collaboration in that it increases efficiency in communications and dealings with the customer base, produces better media penetration, and provides more diversity of output (Samwel 2003, Warkentin, Bapna &Sugumaran 2001).

However, the VRGN notes that the sector is still too ‘metro-based’ (Dir. Int.) and is also based on one-to-one relationships that often reinforce power relations. The sector has a culture of rivalry, and although ‘no one is trying to take away the business, there is little information sharing’ (Dir. Int.), and that ‘greater collaboration would imply a greater exchange of material’ (Black et al. 2002, Directors Interviews, Phillips, Hardy & Lawrence 1998).
Within the VRGN, there are clusters or hubs of galleries that, for reasons of geographic proximity, are more prone to sharing resources and information, than are others. These clusters develop both informally and formally, are typified by the sharing of exhibitions and other resources; although some also conclude ‘not a lot of consciousness goes into it’ (Dir. Int.). The particular cluster will determine if it operates to share information or exhibitions, and whether its combined audience profile determines the possibility of touring an exhibition. The clusters that were identified by the study include the following cities and areas:

a. Hamilton, Warrnambool, Horsham (and possibly Ararat) with the South Australian town of Riddoch sometimes being included
b. Castlemaine, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo
c. Mornington and Bendigo (although Mornington is outside the scope of this study due to it being classified as outer metropolitan)
d. LaTrobe, Shepparton, Bendigo and Warrnambool
e. Mildura, Broken Hill, Swan Hill and South Australia – an area referred to as the Darling Murray Basin and which is interesting for it connects three states and has galleries in arguably some of the most remote areas of the country
f. Castlemaine, Horsham and Hamilton
g. Shepparton, Benalla and Bendigo
h. Swan Hill, Castlemaine, Mildura and Bendigo (and sometimes Shepparton) – referred to as the Calder Strip after the Calder Freeway, which connects the towns

Some clusters are effective because they are a group of like-to-like galleries; for example, Castlemaine, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo which all have similar types and sizes of collections and have similar art historical profiles (all galleries are significant cultural organisations in the townships). The Calder strip shares a transit route that offers marketing and promotional opportunities to the galleries, as well as the opportunity to share costs in bringing goods and services to areas that are not within affordable transit from Melbourne. The Darling Murray Basin cluster is of interest too in that it is one of the few clusters that actively works against the Melbourne-centric pull and has seen the marketing and programming opportunity in its ‘unique remoteness’ (Dir. Int.).

Collaboration in the VRGN may however eventually come down to identifying the financial incentives, therefore providing ‘real value’ to the sector (Vangen & Huxhman 2003).
5.2.4 Information Technology (I.T.)

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with statements regarding the operation and implementation of Information Technology (I.T.) as it is applied in the galleries and its role in assisting with collaboration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10 Information Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information Technology (I.T.)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 There is a common I.T. environment across the VRGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 There is a Standard Operating Environment within the gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Council determines the I.T. infrastructure of the gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 The gallery drives I.T. developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Council drives I.T. developments in the gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Government drives I.T. development in the gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 I.T. infrastructure is easily available to the gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Broadband infrastructure is easily available to the gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 I.T. is well utilised by the gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology (I.T.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36   I.T. is well utilised by the VRGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37   I.T. plays an important role in the delivery of collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38   VRGN understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39   Council understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40   Government understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41   Council has an I.T. strategic plan that incorporates the gallery’s activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42   The gallery has an I.T. strategic plan that incorporates its activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questionnaire comments

The I.T. area is one where there is a high frequency of responses that spread equally across the ‘disagree’, ‘neither’ and ‘agree’ scale, indicating that there is no commonality or consistency in the way in which I.T. is being implemented, utilised and considered for the gallery and VRGN.

Results indicate that there is not a common I.T. environment implemented across the VRGN, although galleries do tend to have a standard operating environment that is determined by Council (a finding that was also substantiated by the interviews). Responses to statements regarding I.T. and broadband availability show that on the whole it is readily available to the galleries, although opinion is divided about how well it is utilised by the galleries and VRGN. (Note: responses to the interviews indicate that most galleries, when referring to I.T., normally mean email and discussion lists).

The majority of respondents indicated that I.T. plays an important role in collaboration, yet the VRGN and Council are perceived as not having an understanding of this; 53% of respondents did however acknowledge that Government had an understanding of the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration. Only 20% of respondents agreed that Council had an I.T. plan incorporating the gallery, whilst at the same time 27% of the galleries indicated that they have an I.T. plan for the gallery.

Interview comments

‘The future may not look that much different, but it will be quicker’ . . . . (I.T. Int.)

For those galleries that are owned and operated by Council, the I.T. environment is handled by the Council’s I.T. department, which is often advantageous for the gallery staff, in that a resident expert is available to assist with general help desk queries, whilst also looking after the administration associated with managing an I.T. environment (supported by findings in Q29). Most Councils have brought the I.T. management back into Council functions which have resulted in savings due to the ability to control their I.T. environment. One Council estimates that since bringing I.T. back in-house, costs have decreased by $3-400,000 per year with response times decreasing so that the majority of fixes are resolved within 24 hours (I.T. Int.).
Council now provides all software and hardware for the gallery, ‘if it plugs into the power plug, it’s our responsibility’ (I.T. Int.), excluding specialist software such as collection management systems, and including any content management system that may drive the corporate Council website; the VPN/LAN networking connectivity including ADSL (available in most city centres to a radius of 4 kms); management of an SOE (standard operating environment); and the roll-over or change-over of hardware on a regular basis occurring most commonly every three years (I.T. Int., Q28, 29). The result of this Council-provided service allows for gallery staff to have a problem free approach to I.T., but it also means that it is tied to whatever the Council may be offering or proposing. This is in most cases not an issue, except in one or two situations where the gallery and Council are not in agreement about the possibility of an online profile for the gallery separate to Council (Dir. Int.).

Galleries are not high users of I.T., so ‘they’re easy money’ (I.T. Int.) for the I.T. department. Some managers will also take an interest in the operations of the gallery and assist in non-core related activities such as the development of specific databases, customisation/html coding of websites/pages, or designing spreadsheets. In the case where the galleries are not Council owned, strong informal relationships with the I.T. department are crucial to ensure the gallery can piggy back with Council SOE and any hardware rollout (Dir. Int., I.T. Int.).

Most galleries do not know if there is an I.T. strategic plan in operation at Council (Q41, Q42). Most Councils do not have an I.T. strategic plan. Most galleries also expect that if there were an I.T. plan, it would specifically mention the gallery, yet those plans that do exist, in fact do not mention the gallery. So there are false expectations by the galleries that their operations are sufficiently captured by the Council planning processes (if existent). This is also consistent with the findings from the questionnaire, which showed a strong non-committal selection when asked about strategic planning activities in Q41 and Q42.

Councils are traditionally risk averse operators, and this relates strongly to the majority of the I.T. departments, in that they do not innovate or lead in the take-up of technology. Generally speaking though, Councils do not engage in areas that are not part of their core business, so I.T. developments within the gallery environment are likely to occur outside of any Council lead initiative and more a result of independent project activities, a view supported in part by responses to Q30 and Q31. This is particularly telling for the advancement of the digitisation of collections, which is becoming increasingly important to substantiate the value of the
collection (now considered an appreciating asset, and not a depreciation in accounting terms) to the Council and financial controllers (I.T. Int.).

A series of I.T. manager networks, which are broken into geographic regions, coordinates communication between the statewide municipal I.T. departments. These networks provide the opportunity for managers to share information between each other and are often the triggers for collaboration or coordinated I.T. projects (I.T. Int.). A few Councils take a consortium approach to purchasing, whilst also testing the market for competition. This network can often be the spike required to trial collaboration, because there is a feeling in some Councils that ‘you just can’t keep going it alone’ especially when coordinating Geographic Information Services (GIS) aerial photography (I.T. Int.). But several managers commented that ‘it is hard enough to break down silos in Council let alone trying to break them across Councils (sic)’ (I.T. Int.) – this comment is especially pertinent when investigating aggregated purchasing or rolling-over hardware and software that is common throughout most Councils, and which is dominated by standard Microsoft products (I.T. Int.).

But there is a general agreement amongst galleries and Industry Service Organisations that I.T. will make things easier, especially in the use of email for standard communication. The interviews with gallery Directors revealed that there was no technical reason why galleries cannot share resources, especially cataloguing systems, web content management system and any online collection management tool. There are ‘lots of opportunities, but we’re ignorant and don’t know what’s possible’ (Dir. Int.). It was also proposed by some I.T. managers that galleries don’t harness the power of technology that can be used across all their business functions (supported by responses by Directors to Q47) – there is little expertise in-house and limited resources and training to be able to rectify this situation. One example was of a gallery that did not realise that it had access to a gigabit network into Council, a network that is unattainable for most galleries.

As noted in the Galleries sub-section, the provision of I.T. is not a burning issue for the galleries. Councils are generally risk averse (I.T. Int.), especially in the take-up of I.T., yet there are not many instances where the I.T. departments of Council-run galleries (of which the majority of galleries belong) could be said to be holding back the galleries in their application of technology, evidenced by a lack of strategic planning by the galleries (Q42). Directors note that their staff generally have a low level of knowledge of I.T. in general, and are not aware of the opportunities that broadband and the online environment can provide (Dir. Int., I.T. Int.).
5.2.5 Online environment

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements regarding the availability and use of the online environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Strongly disagree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Neither %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Strongly agree %</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43 Online technologies facilitate collaboration</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>60% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that online technologies facilitate collaboration. 7% selected ‘disagree’ whilst one third neither agree nor disagree with the statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 Online technologies are available for use by the gallery</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that online technologies are available for use by the gallery, with approximately one quarter neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement and 13% selecting ‘disagree’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 Online technologies are available for use by the VRGN</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Less than half (43%) of the respondents ‘agree’ that online technologies are available for use by the VRGN, whilst exactly half neither ‘agree’ nor ‘disagree’. 7% selected ‘disagree’ to the statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 The gallery uses its website to achieve its objectives</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43% of respondents selected ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ to the statement that the gallery uses its website to achieve its objectives. Exactly half of the respondents selected ‘agree’ to the statement, with 7% selecting ‘neither’, suggesting that the group of directors are equally divided on the use of their gallery websites to achieve organisational objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 The gallery uses the online environment to transact business functions e.g., banking, purchasing, office supplies, payment of bills</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47% of respondents ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ that the gallery uses the online environment to transact business functions, with over a third (40%) agreeing with the statement. 13% selected ‘neither’ in response to this statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 The gallery uses the online environment to receive information required for its business functions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>More than two-thirds of the respondents (67%) ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery uses the online environment to receive information required for its business functions, with 13% selecting ‘disagree’ and 20% selecting neither ‘agree’ nor ‘disagree’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 The gallery uses the online environment to communicate with its audiences</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>More than one-third (40%) of the respondents ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ that the gallery uses the online environment to communicate with its audiences, whilst 47% ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with this statement. 13% neither ‘agree’ nor ‘disagree’ with this statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 The gallery uses the online environment to communicate with its stakeholders</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47% of respondents ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery uses its online environment to communicate with its stakeholders, whilst one third (33%) ‘disagree’ and 20% neither ‘agree’ nor ‘disagree’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questionnaire Comments

The majority of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that online technologies are available for use by the galleries and VRGN with 60% agreeing that online technologies facilitated collaboration. The manner in which galleries use the online environment and their websites however, does not show a consistent activity or common approach. 67% did agree that the online environment is used for business functions, although statements targeting business transactions and communication with stakeholders and audiences returned responses from across the scales.

Interview comments

The majority of the galleries do not appear to have sophisticated websites (Dir. Int., I.T. Int., RGN Web checklist), nor is there a sufficient understanding by the gallery Directors or the PGAV as to what could be achieved in the online environment (Dir. Int., ISO Int.). The use and role of the galleries’ own websites varies, with most Directors not having a sufficient understanding of how their website operates, or indeed what it contains. There is a ‘generation gap and a lack of fluency’ (Dir. Int.) with technology, which supports the fact that I.T. is not used to communicate with audiences (a finding which is also supported in Q49), and as one Director put it, ‘the gallery is dumb with I.T.’. Placing the collection online is also ‘not part of our main game’ for some galleries, who are prioritising audience development over the development of online activities (and which they consider to be mutually exclusive activities). Others are taking an alphanumeric approach to digitisation (‘we’re up to ‘i’”) as a way to prepare for increasing the availability of online services (Dir. Int.).

The provision of ADSL is an interesting one for the local community, in that the service is limited to a set radius from the city centre – consequently the delivery of broadband services is problematic to non-centre dwelling residents, although it may be perfectly appropriate for other audiences (who are not local and) who have access to broadband services, including people in other cities, or people who live in metropolitan communities. Regardless of this supply proposition, Councils and galleries alike support the broadband ‘always on’ environment as ‘the future is about being connected regardless of where you are and what you want” (I.T. Int.).
There have been notable instances where Council has innovated in the use of new technology including webcasting Council meetings, or in the use of handheld devices for mobile operators. Some Councils are ‘big on providing the full service’ (I.T. Int.) whereas others reason that there is no financial requirement to offer online (or credit card) payment options, B-Pay or online registration facilities (I.T. Int.).

Council is an important player in the community for developing benefits for small and local businesses to use I.T. – this is often the role of the Economic Development Branch (where available), which often exists to assist local businesses in their take-up of I.T. Some branches have gone to the extent of setting up websites (Swanhill Online 2004) or in hosting workshops and seminars presented by technology providers.

From the Council I.T. perspective, most gallery websites ‘ain’t good, but [they’re] not broken either’ (I.T. Int.). However some Directors do not have a vision of what could be achieved with an online environment, with one or two identifying online exhibitions posing a viable option to presenting information, especially if it can reduce travel times between city centres (an issue particularly important for staff who are required to travel in rural and remote cities).

Those Directors who see the advantage of the Internet see it as playing an important role – the Internet is used as their own research tool (‘Google forever’ – Dir. Int.), and using as much of the technology to make business functions easier including accessing Sothebys auction house, eBay, CD Rom, jpeg formats and emailing catalogue essays and the like (Dir. Int.). These Directors see the online environment becoming the norm for viewing, experiencing or ‘getting access to’ (Dir. Int.) many things which are currently experienced ‘onsite’, but they are also careful to add that the main function of the gallery is to get people inside the space and physically engage with the work (Dir. Int.).

The complaint most commented upon by the interviewees regarding the use of technology within the gallery network was that there was insufficient training in the use of the technology, although both Directors and I.T. managers noted that training was available – what seems likely is that the galleries do not prioritise the training and professional development to this area, because they see it as a role of government to provide customised (and subsidised) training and resources to spearhead online technologies, especially as these relate to digitisation, arguing that they do not have resources or skills to undertake this work themselves. It is unlikely this situation will change whilst this mentality prevails and while it
is a priority action for government (Arts Victoria 2001, Department of State and Regional Development 1999, United Focus. 2003).

The gallery websites and staff use of I.T. to date, particularly regarding digitisation of collections and the presence of online publishing is (with some exceptions) basic and minimal (RGN Web Checklist). This is often exacerbated by the fact that many organisations rely on volunteers or students to undertake this work (Dir. Int.) - work that arguably constitutes core gallery operations. The websites are either pages contained within the Council’s corporate website, and as such are presented as a business unit of Council, rather than a cultural entity.

Where the gallery has its own dedicated website, the site is often minimal and has not been kept updated with current information with very few of the websites offering anything more than static pages with a small number of images of the collection, and no online searchable databases (Q46).

Email is the predominant electronic communication application, with MS Office the standard desktop suite (I.T. Int.). The galleries and the PGAV have access to a dedicated email newsgroup supplied by Australian Museums and Galleries Online initiative (AMOL), but it is used in an ad hoc fashion, and not to deliver on strategic issues or coordinated communication (ISO Int.).

5.2.6 Frequency of collaboration

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the frequency with which the activity identified in the statements occurred.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Collaboration</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Not at all %</th>
<th>Daily %</th>
<th>Weekly %</th>
<th>Monthly %</th>
<th>Quarterly %</th>
<th>Annually %</th>
<th>Other %</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you collaborate on research activities?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Responses of 21%, 29% and 29% were scored against ‘not at all’, ‘weekly’ and ‘monthly’ for the question regarding how often collaboration occurred on research activities. ‘Quarterly’ and ‘annually’ returned responses 14% and 7% respectively. There was no response for ‘daily’ and ‘other’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you collaborate on public programs?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>More than half of responses selected ‘monthly’ and ‘quarterly’ (29% each), with ‘weekly’ 21% the next highest of the scales when asked how often collaboration occurred on public programs. Responses of 7% were received for ‘not at all’, ‘annually’ and ‘other’. There were no response for ‘daily’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you collaborate on exhibitions?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Over one-third (36%) of respondents selected ‘monthly’ in response to the question about frequency of collaboration on exhibitions. ‘Quarterly’ was selected by 21% of respondents, with ‘weekly’, ‘annually’ and ‘other’ receiving 14% response rates. ‘Daily’ and ‘not at all’ were not selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you collaborate on marketing?</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31% of respondents to the question regarding the frequency of collaboration on marketing activities, selected ‘quarterly’, with ‘monthly’ receiving 23%. ‘Annually’ and ‘other’ each received 15% of the selected responses, with the remaining two scales each receiving 8%. ‘Daily’ was not selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you collaborate on tourism initiatives?</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Over one half (54%) of respondents selected ‘annually’ in response to the question regarding collaboration on tourism initiatives. ‘Quarterly’ received the next highest response rate at 23%, the remaining scales each registering 7% except ‘daily’ and ‘weekly’ which were not selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you collaborate on education programs?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>One-third selected ‘quarterly’ in response to the question regarding collaboration on education programs. Respondents selected ‘not at all’, ‘weekly’, ‘monthly’, ‘annually’ and ‘other’ at 13%, with ‘daily’ not receiving any responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you collaborate in other areas?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>‘Quarterly’ received the highest responses rate at 31%, followed by ‘monthly’ at 23%. Responses to ‘not at all’ and ‘weekly’ each received 15%. ‘Daily’ and ‘other’ received 8% and ‘annually’ was not selected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Questionnaire Comments**

The questions regarding the frequency of collaboration showed responses spread across the scale. Responses to “research activities” tended to the ‘weekly/monthly’ scale (57%); “public programs” returned ‘monthly/quarterly’ scale (57%), “exhibition” returned a ‘monthly/quarterly’ scale (57%), “marketing”, a ‘monthly/quarterly’ scale (54%), “tourism initiatives” had respondents returning in the ‘quarterly/annually’ scale (77%), and “education programs” returned a ‘quarterly’ scale (33%). On the whole, these results indicate an active program of collaboration within the gallery environment, with collaboration least likely to occur on a daily basis.

These results may go some way to interpreting the responses received in the Collaboration section (questions 17-26), in that collaboration occurs on the terms of the individual gallery directors, and is not overly influenced by other organisations or I.T.

**Interview comments**

*The gallery sector is coordinated, but not necessarily to the benefit of the whole sector* . . .

(Dir. Int.)

The responses indicate that it is generally agreed that for collaboration to happen, there needs to be a balance of what the sector wants, and what the galleries believe the sector needs. This often includes a strong marketing sense, and as one Director put it, ‘you need to make the market and then make it accessible, as the market will not come to you’ (Dir. Int.). As such, those galleries that use collaboration as a strategy do so in order to extend the exposure of the product – as it allows for an extended shelf life of an exhibition whilst increasing audience exposure to the work (Dir. Int., Q54). There is a sense amongst the Directors interviewed that better marketing outcomes could be achieved through collaboration, although there wasn’t any clarity on precisely what the collaborative effort would entail.

There have been examples where galleries have coordinated their marketing initiatives (Q54), and of interest in these initiatives is that the selection or choice of the galleries to participate has been informed not by a shared set of objectives or product, or as a result of any quantitative or qualitative findings, but more out of a sense of shared values, ethics or ‘feel’ of the galleries (Dir. Int., Vangen & Huxhman 2003, Walker 2003.).
5.2.7 Other Activities

These questions asked the respondents to indicate a Yes / No response to questions posed regarding other activities within the VRGN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13 Other activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you co-author catalogues?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you co-present exhibitions or public programs with other galleries?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you produce content or product that can be used by other organisations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you communicate on marketing or tourism initiatives with other organisations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you undertake research projects that include other municipalities?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questionnaire comments**

The galleries responded that they tend to keep research activities within their own municipalities, even though they will use collaboration for marketing and tourism initiatives.

There is an overwhelming support for the collaborative presentation of public programs with other galleries (70%). Most importantly though, responses to this part of the questionnaire showed a 100% response to producing ‘content or product that can be used by other organisations’. This was the only question to receive a unanimous response, and as such lends weight to the central task of the research i.e., that information can be shared amongst the group, and this sharing could occur through research projects, tourism or marketing initiatives, or through the co-presentation of exhibitions or public programs. Furthermore responses to this part of the questionnaire indicate that there is scope for organisations to work with each other on a variety of fronts, either cooperatively creating material, or repurposing existing material.
5.2.8 Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV)

‘The PGAV is articulating its objectives and it is delivering these to the satisfaction of the membership’. . . . . . . (ISO Int.)

**Background**

In 1956 the Regional Galleries Association of Victoria (RGAV) was initiated. It toured significant shows across the State, and was comprised of gallery Directors from across Victoria. In 1982/3 it changed its name to the Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV), ostensibly to present a more united approach to government and industry (Dir. Int.). Today, the PGAV represents a strong, relevant and dynamic network of public galleries, art museums and contemporary art spaces across regional and metropolitan Victoria. The PGAV promotes the public gallery sector and facilitates communication and information exchange between cultural institutions (Public Galleries Association of Victoria 2004) and as such is considered an Industry Service Organisation.

**Present**

The PGAV is an incorporated association and is managed by an elected Board. The Board is currently made up of representatives from the professional and permanent staff of member galleries as well as the advisory committees of member galleries.

The business of the PGAV is predominantly professional development and facilitating meetings of gallery Directors. The organisation has 33 members – all public galleries as defined in the rules and regulations: i.e., not-for-profit, without significant commercial activities, and which are owned and operated for the benefit of the public – this therefore excludes venues for hire. Membership includes galleries, museums and contemporary arts spaces (excluding Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Centre for Contemporary Photography and Gertrude Contemporary Spaces). Members include 20 regional organisations (as defined by the PGAV) including the 14 in this study, along with Mornington, McClelland (Frankston), Wangaratta, Arts Space Wodonga, Central Goldfields Gallery (Maryborough) and East Gippsland Art Gallery.
The PGAV is a membership-based organisation that services its members. As such the PGAV is not an ISO and would not lobby on behalf of the industry, but only for its members. This makes for an interesting counterpoint to the approach taken by Arts Victoria.

The goals of the organisation include:
- Facilitating communication between the members
- Advising government
- Liaising with other bodies in other states
- Advocating on behalf of the members
- Performing a marketing role
- Developing professional programs (in response to members’ needs) and,
- Generally assisting its members.

**Interview comments**

‘collectively we are strong’. . . .(Dir. Int.).

There is a varied response and opinion from gallery Directors, about the PGAV in general, and its role and function within the VRGN. Some have commented that it is an organisation searching for a reason to exist, others saying that it has a difficult task in trying to manage the issues of two distinct groups of galleries – that of metropolitan based and regionally located galleries (Dir. Int.). The organisation is funded at a minimal level (the Executive Office position is 0.4 full time equivalent), which determines the type of projects and activities it can successfully undertake (ISO Int.). Some would see the organisation as one that is trying to link the rural organisations to metropolitan audiences and issues, whilst linking metropolitan issues to the rural audiences.

There is a sense that the organisation needs to be playing a leadership role (supported by responses to Q21), and being an advocate to government, (a function in which it is not perceived to be successful) with some supporting the idea that it needs to be a conduit, through which all government communication can be channelled (Dir. Int.). There are a number of projects that the membership would like to see the PGAV undertake (including benchmarking studies, audience development, assistance with digitisation), and it would be fair to say that on the whole the concept of the PGAV is supported, but the operations and
functional elements currently in place are not wholly embraced. This opinion is supported through responses in the scores entered into the questionnaire.

Some Directors argue that the PGAV is no longer capable of representing the two groups of galleries that make up the membership – the regional and metropolitan – and that this has been the case since the amalgamation of the Regional Gallery Association of Victoria with the Victorian Public Galleries Directors Association of Victoria (known to the inner sanctum as the ‘VicPigs’) to make the PGAV a single ‘unified’ body (Dir. Int.). The argument highlights the tension between the galleries and the different types of issues and consideration that a metropolitan or a regional gallery may face. (Dir. Int., Govt. Int.)

5.2.9 Government

‘Galleries need to work smarter, not harder’ . . . . (Govt. Int.)

Interviews with the Victorian State Government were confined to Arts Victoria, the organisation responsible for implementing the government policy on the arts, and providing recurrent funding to the galleries within the VRGN. As a questionnaire was not completed by this group, this sub-section will only deal with information collected through the interviews. The interviewees included the Director of the organisation and client managers directly responsible for the regional gallery and Industry Service Organisation network. The majority of the business managers in the Local Councils with responsibility for the galleries were reluctant to be interviewed for this study, opting to leave it to the I.T. managers to make comments on the gallery’s operation and I.T. environment. This was unfortunate, as it confined the local government comment to the broad area of I.T. and not necessarily in assessing the delivery of outputs to the local municipalities. The majority of the comments from the Local Councils can be found in the I.T. sections of this report.

Arts Victoria plays the role of a minor funding partner with galleries. The majority funding partner is Local Council, which supports the galleries with up to 80% of their operating expenditure, including building and infrastructure requirements (Arts Victoria 2003b). However the funding provided by Arts Victoria is normally targeted towards programming and operating activities outlined in the funding schedule Arts Victoria enters into with each gallery. Of interest though, is that Arts Victoria is perceived by the staff of the galleries as
playing a larger role in the funding mix of the galleries than is currently the case (Dir. Int.). This could be due to the fact that Arts Victoria funds activities that require additional cash resources above and beyond what is provided, or expected, by Council for the operation and staffing of the gallery.

In the case of the Industry Service Organisations, Arts Victoria funds make up the majority of funding received from Government, with membership fees making up the bulk of the earned income.

Generally, Government perceives collaboration as a positive and important ingredient in developing a strong gallery network and in delivering services into the sector (Govt. Int.). State Government provides financial incentives to the galleries, and it ‘funds for outcomes’ (Govt. Int.), supporting galleries to deliver ‘high quality exhibition programs that are accessible to the community’ (Govt. Int.) as expressed in the arts policy, ‘Creative Capacity +’ (Arts Victoria 2003a). The notion of accessibility in this instance encompasses both a physical and cultural accessibility standard. The Government therefore enters into a ‘pay for delivery’ (Govt. Int.) relationship with the galleries, with the items or output groups that are to be bought being expressed within the policy.

Collaboration is seen by Government as important for the Industry Service Organisations as it can assist with marketing projects, however these Industry Service Organisations are not necessarily supported by Arts Victoria to be collaborative, but rather as a peak industry body (as distinct from membership organisations which both VAPAC and PGAV essentially are) ‘that represent the issues and problems of the sector’ (Govt. Int.). It is an assumption by Arts Victoria that it is supporting the sector as a whole, when it supports the Industry Service Organisations (PGAV, VAPAC).

There is a tension in this funding model in that the Industry Service Organisations are funded to support the sector which is also being funded, presumably to assist the sector deliver on its business objectives – yet there is not a single overarching corporate plan for the sector (which is expressly supported by each gallery) that can be used to assess the effectiveness of the gallery network and the Industry Service Organisations in delivering against government objectives, other than in broad government policy terms of ‘supporting the generation of arts activity for the audiences of Victoria’ (Govt. Int.). The result is a group of organisations which each have primary accountability to separate authorities (whether it be a mix of
government agencies – Local, State and Commonwealth- or Boards of Management), and as such have no clear mission or mandate to enact strategic cooperation across the sector.
Generally, I.T. is seen as a mechanism which can provide a strong online presence for the galleries, that will eventually enable those people who are remote, to have greater access to the organisations (Q35, 36, 37). The galleries are not seen to be particularly strong users of I.T., and the interviews indicated that government sees them as having a business requirement to work together, especially in using their networks to achieve their business outcomes.
Government notes that the VRGN is consistent in saying it is under-resourced, yet it claims that the galleries fail to share resources or use collaborative strategies (including the use of I.T.) that will assist them to alleviate this problem. I.T. can assist the galleries to ‘work smarter not harder’, and to deliver value adding ingredients such as digitised collections, streamlined purchasing processes, collection management systems and the general dissemination of the sector’s ‘body of knowledge’ (Govt. Int.). Government sees I.T. as a mechanism or tool that can provide the ‘technical means to link organisations and people’. Government identifies itself as a likely supporter of these initiatives through either targeted funding or funding tied to certain conditions being met (Q40).

The VRGN is, however, seen by government as operating on a sophisticated level. The forté of the galleries is the care and presentation of the collection, and not so much in delivering on their business plans or marketing programs. The government believes that galleries need to raise their profile, get audience data and perform audience research, and ‘to use their individual business plans as functional documents’ (Govt. Int.) that guide and chart their strategic activities (as distinct from business plans being reviewed annually – most likely at the time of revision prior to submitting to Council or government for the next year).
Government believes that there are common areas amongst the galleries, especially with regard to the development of business plans that it sees as generally needing work, whilst it also recognises that the sector is competitive and that rivalry exists amongst the members of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (Govt. Int.).

There is general support for the concept of an Industry Service Organisation representing the VRGN (Q21), one that embraces a ‘public benefit’ (Govt. Int.) role to manage the variety of stakeholders present in the sector. The Industry Service Organisations can be a useful conduit to and from government, assisting both groups to disseminate information effectively through a simplified and single communication channel, although both sides are quick to point out that this does not replace one-to-one communication when required (Dir., Govt. & ISO Int.).
There is a belief that galleries need to respect their specific ISO and need to see benefit from directly informing it of any strategic or lobbying requirements it may have for it, rather than allowing the organisation to self direct from an executive or independent position (Govt. Int., ISO Int.). As such, the ISO needs the support of Government and the industry it is representing (i.e., the galleries) as there is tension when the ISO represents both the regional gallery sector and a metropolitan membership (Govt., ISO Int., Q21, 24, 25, 26).

In supporting the galleries, Government identifies successful stakeholder management as essential, and will often look to see if organisations have the right mix in their management teams to deal with the many issues facing the sector today (Govt. Int.). When asked what could be achieved in the future with a coordinated sector, several issues were immediately identified. These issues included:

- increasing brand awareness
- engagement with audiences
- increased visitation
- access to collections
- development of a sense of pride
- innovation
- fundraising strategies
- a shared vision, and a
- higher profile (Govt. Int.)

This suggests that there is room, in the eyes of the State Government, for the sector to be a stronger force in the cultural landscape of Victoria.

State Government funds the gallery sector for outcomes, and not necessarily for coordinating or communicating their efforts across the sector (Govt. Int.). The sector therefore tends to lead itself, although it must be able to demonstrate or at the least argue that it is delivering on the arts policy in order to be eligible for funding from Arts Victoria. The galleries of the VRGN are all in receipt of recurrent funding and have been for many years, regardless of the arts policy of the day or the political party in power. Funding levels are for all intents and purposes, static. Arts Victoria does not want to get too close to the business of the galleries (for example it does not have staff on the galleries’ Boards or Committees of Management), choosing to let it and the PGAV self determine the initiatives they undertake (Govt. Int.). However the intentions and aspirations of the government of the day often entail some re-
alignment of outcomes by the organisations and this is especially the case with the PGAV where it has struggled to increase its funding levels from Arts Victoria. The Victorian Regional Gallery Network is considered a stable network by government (Govt. Int.), and although the regional areas are politically important, the sector itself does not register often in the bureaucracy as requiring urgent attention or intervention (Govt. Int.).

Alternately, Local Councils, Mayors and their CEOs often play an important and active role in harnessing the various communities in their municipalities to engage on a united front in order to assist the community as a whole in taking advantage of an opportunity (Dir. Int.). This is especially the case with developing the take-up of technology by small to medium businesses, and gathering community support for the cultural organisations of the municipality. Several Councils also actively work to develop external partnerships whether this be with other Councils, educational institutions, training programs or the provision of commercial services, in the name of encouraging future growth of the community, for example community banks, and the development of Virtual Private Networks for the city (I.T. Int.).

5.3 Summary

This chapter provided detailed commentary on the presentation of the results from both the questionnaire and the interviews conducted as part of the research. The results indicated that the galleries see themselves as collaborating across a variety of areas of their business environment, although it is not necessarily considered a high priority, and is likely to be undertaken on the terms of the individual gallery Directors, rather than for the good of the VRGN. Results from the questionnaire indicate that collaboration does however require leadership from either the gallery directors or an industry service organisation to make it effective. There appears to be little consistency in the way in which the I.T environment of the individual galleries is being implemented for the benefit of the VRGN, although Microsoft products (Windows) appears to be the standard operating environment of the galleries and Council. Responses also indicate that the galleries are ‘broadband ready’ (i.e. broadband/ADSL is available to the galleries) although this connectivity is not necessarily well utilised or exploited by the galleries. Online technologies are however, on the whole
available and are seen as important in the development of collaboration between the galleries. Galleries produce content that can be used by other organisations, and the results indicate that there is capacity for organisations to work with each across the areas of business, marketing and tourism.

The next chapter (Chapter Six) will provide a detailed discussion and analysis of the sector, with specific regard to addressing the research questions (as outlined in Chapter 3).
CHAPTER SIX – DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

The flow of the chapter can be represented as follows:

This chapter provides detailed analysis of the results of the research, using the research sub-
questions, and their associated issues to guide the analysis and as a structure for the chapter.
Therefore, this chapter has three main sections (for each sub-question) and a summary
section.

The following sections analyse the research sub-questions using results that have been drawn
from the questionnaire, interviews and Literature Review. When information or comments
have been drawn from the interviews, or the questionnaire, the appropriate acknowledgement
has been made. The format for interview citations is Directors Interview (Dir. Int.),
Government Interviews (Govt. Int.), I.T. Managers Interviews (I.T. Int.), and Industry Service
Organisations Interviews (ISO Int.). Where the results or findings from the questionnaire
have been used, the question number of the questionnaire is cited e.g., (Q29). Where multiple
citations of the questionnaire are used the questions are cited using commas to separate the
questions e.g., (Q16, 31-35, 40). Where both interviews and responses to the questionnaire
are cited together, the interview is cited first, and the question number second e.g., (Govt. Int.,
Q56.)
6.2 Question One: What are the types of collaboration that occur in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network

This question investigates how collaboration is occurring in the VRGN, and reviews the collaboration model previously outlined in the research. It examined the role that government plays in these collaborative activities and any barriers the galleries may face in adopting collaboration. The section ends by highlighting issues which may assist in driving the adoption of collaboration within the VRGN.

6.2.1 Components of collaboration

The activity of the galleries in the instances where collaboration occurs, and the nature of their output highlights that communication transfer is the central exchange action amongst the galleries. Examples of this include the development of a catalogue essay (Q58), discussing touring options, writing grant applications, discussing selection of objects (Q59), and discussing tactics for promotion or marketing opportunities. The action includes an exchange and sharing of information, with the purpose of creating a final and single product (e.g., catalogue essay, marketing brochure, tour schedule). In these instances, the output can be defined as a single flow of information (e.g., draft 2 of essay sent to person B, awaiting comments to be incorporated into draft 3 etc.). Where an activity relies on discussion and engagement, analysis and interpretation of data or information, the single lines of communication become less than effective, and more time consuming. Thus the rules of engagement are no longer linear and this is often when staff need to travel to other venues to facilitate the communication. The ensuing interrelation is the ‘act’ of collaboration, the result or outcome being the ‘product’.

The decision to collaborate with other galleries may depend upon the specific project requirements and objectives, the capacity of selected partners to be able to respond appropriately in terms of time, resources, capacity to contribute as required, and the ‘fit’ within the group (Dir. Int., Q20). These items are not easy to measure, as a single activity is often determined by or impacts upon, the previous action or activity. It becomes even more complex when the transfer of information is required to be between more than two points, and
where sharing and discussing information is the key to an understanding or revelation of information (Dir. Int.).

The components of collaboration for the individual galleries in the VRGN therefore, are determined by the type of project and its sub-projects. This is more than cross-communication and includes complex areas of negotiation and interpretation (characteristics of collaboration) and highlights the functional elements of collaborative software that could be used to facilitate the collaboration process (as shown in Table 14).

In instances where galleries develop coordinated activities, and have identified a shared set of values, galleries may achieve this without the application of a specific technology. When galleries do collaborate, it is more likely to be with other galleries. One of the common reasons for this is that there is a perceived matching of the organisations in terms of collection size, or position within the cultural landscape. As these relationships are not measured, it is difficult to gauge the effectiveness or results that these combined efforts produce.

When collaboration occurs in the VRGN, it is normally in an informal or spontaneous fashion (Q17) and is likely to be related to the creation of multi-venue exhibitions (Q1,2) and associated material (Q53, 59). This collaboration occurs not just with other galleries (as noted above) but with the artist(s) or organisation(s), which may have a development role in the product.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration model applied to the VRGN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration model</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has all of:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration software / L.T.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Calendar</td>
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<td>- Shared documents</td>
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<td>- Central database</td>
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<td>- Document storage</td>
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<td>- Announcement boards</td>
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<td>- Virtual conferencing</td>
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<td>Collaboration characteristics</td>
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Collaboration characteristics

Table 14 lists the necessary ingredients for collaboration, and when contrasted with the findings from the research, it becomes apparent that several areas are missing in the VRGN example. Directors do not necessarily trust each other (Dir. Int.), and as the size of the galleries varies across the VRGN both in terms of infrastructure and collection, there is not an equality of professional standing amongst the Directors (Dir. Int.). Directors cited a lack of knowledge distribution throughout the VRGN (Dir. Int., Q14), especially as this related to administrative areas, and this may also be due to their perceived lack of common administrative requirements (Q9). The research also showed little support for galleries working together to collectively negotiate combined incentives (Dir. Int., Q11). Given these findings, and when contrasted with the collaboration model, the research suggests that the VRGN does not yet possess the necessary characteristics to collaborate effectively.

Collaborative software / I.T.

The gallery sector has access to adequate levels of I.T. (Q 33, 44, 45) and notes that an increasing ‘reliance on technology requires technology to become increasingly reliable’ (Dir. Int.). As Councils determine the operating system and predominantly use Microsoft products (I.T. Int., Q28, 29), much of the office desktop therefore is standard across the VRGN. However the research did not find examples of the galleries using collaborative technologies when engaging in joint or collaborative activities, although the galleries did have access to the email discussion list provided by AMOL (which was not well utilised by the galleries). Email is the predominant electronic collaboration and communication device (Arts Victoria 2001, Dir. Int.) and there is no single website that facilitates communication amongst the sector, including the peak Industry Service Organisation’s (PGAV) website (ISO Int.). The findings suggest that each gallery therefore has sufficient technology and software to undertake its individual functions, but they are yet to use collaborative software to engage with other galleries.

Those organisations that are owned and operated by Local Council receive support in the implementation of the Council’s Standard Operating Environment (predominantly MS Windows environment). The galleries have access to Council’s local area network (LAN) and therefore have ‘broadband’ (via ADSL) connectivity to the Internet. Local Council’s I.T. departments are predominantly risk averse but support the concept of online collaboration, although are quick to add that it is dependent upon what this physically means for the network.
or the department’s administrative functions, as ‘the devil is in the detail with these things’ (I.T. Int.). The costs and individual responsibilities associated with implementation and maintenance of any such network is an issue for consideration, with some Councils more inclined to undertake experimentation due to the presence of a proactive Council or CEO (Dir. Int., I.T. Int.).

When the VRGN’s use of software and I.T. is contrasted with the components listed in the collaboration model (Table 14), several comments can be made. The table highlights that the VRGN is missing or has not available, all software characteristics of the collaboration model except for an Announcement board, which is supplied by the AMOL discussion list. Galleries do not use a shared calendar system, nor share documents other than through emailing versions of documents to each other (Dir. Int.). The research did not identify the presence of a shared network that would enable a central database or document storage and virtual conferencing was not being used at all (Dir., I.T. Int.). Given these findings, and when contrasted with the collaboration model, the research suggests that the VRGN does not yet possess the necessary software and I.T. environment to collaborate. However, given that the galleries have support from the I.T. departments of Council, collaborative software solutions may be found within existing Council applications which to date have neither been offered nor used by the galleries.

6.2.2 Government support for collaboration

State and Local Government are major stakeholders in the operation of the regional galleries (Govt., Dir. & I.T. Int.). State Government through Arts Victoria, supports the galleries for a variety of activities and programs in order to deliver against the arts policy. However they do not provide direct support or infrastructure for a collaborative environment (Govt. Int., Q18), nor do they articulate the operation of a collaborative operational environment by the VRGN as a priority (Dir., Govt. Int.). Both Arts Victoria and Local Councils have a direct effect on the operation of the galleries, and do not produce an environment that is antithetical to the concept of collaboration – however, they do not prioritise or encourage it either (I.T. Int.). The galleries are crucial to the State Government’s delivery of cultural services to the regional and rural communities, and Arts Victoria has several funding programs that specifically target regional communities and the ongoing viability of the regional cultural community (Govt.
Int.). Collaboration between the galleries to present increased cultural product (either online or as a result of collaboration) to these areas would be one way to address these priorities.

In the case of Arts Victoria’s support for the PGAV, this is done with the knowledge that it is a membership-based organisation (as distinct from an Industry Service Organisation), even though Arts Victoria has expectations that the diversity and spread of the PGAV membership allows it to make comments and generalisations regarding the sector that it is supporting. In doing so, Arts Victoria assesses the PGAV by its capacity to deliver to the sector as a whole (Govt. Int.). The Government plays a role as a stakeholder and participant in the cultural sector; a role often disputed by the sector as being the opposite. They argue Arts Victoria exists outside the sector and is watching and documenting the sector’s activities. This is further confused by comments made by gallery staff who consider State Government as the lead agent for the development of any possible collaborative online network (of the VRGN), although this comment is not necessarily supported by the responses to Q18 which indicate that one-third of the Directors do not consider the Government as playing a leadership role in collaboration.

The gallery Directors therefore do not believe they have the resources to deliver collaboration on their own, and see it as the role of Government to provide financial resources to fund such collaborative activities (Dir. Int.). This leaves the Government as occupying dual spaces – as an observer or ‘archivist’ of the cultural sector, and as an investor. Given that government will only fund those activities of the VRGN that can be demonstrated to be delivering Government policy (Govt. Int.), it is crucial therefore that one of two things occur. The VRGN projects could be designed to meet Government policy objectives, or the VRGN and gallery sector seek a role and voice in the formulation of policy at both a bureaucratic and political level.

The role of Local Council however is different. The Local Council ISO, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), has played a coordinating role in the I.T. Managers group, a role that has seen several aggregated purchases of I.T. equipment proceed. This has led to a discussion of an entity being set up to purchase hardware and software on behalf of its membership, comprising 78 municipal Councils across the State of Victoria (I.T. Int.). This type of entity and its characteristics of collaboration (i.e., trust, strategic alliances, knowledge distribution, and communication) would also contribute to the development of a collaborative environment.
The Local Councils have similar restrictions to the State Government in that they are constituted to prioritise service to their municipal constituents and this does not always involve collaboration or communication across municipalities. However, there are precedents to assume that such a specific dialogue could be given support by CEOs and Councillors alike (Dir. Int.). There has also been a history of State and Local Governments engaging in fruitful discussions (I.T. Int.), although some criticism of late has been levelled at the State Government’s new branch of the Chief Information Officer for not consulting with the MAV especially regarding the availability of telecommunications in the regional and rural sectors (I.T. Int.).

Local Councils financially support up to 80% of the galleries’ operating expenses (Arts Victoria 2003b), and are the owners of the collections held by the galleries, the value of which can run into several million dollars per institution. In 2001, Victorian regional galleries registered a total turnover of $8.3 million, received $1.1 million in support from Arts Victoria and $3.4 million from Local Government (Arts Victoria 2002b).

For this reason, the galleries’ operations are carefully monitored by these two stakeholders through the development of specific performance tracking devices such as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and financial statements. The Local Councils are also undergoing the Best Value Service Review, a process that seeks to review the cost and quality of the services Council is supporting (Govt., Dir. & I.T. Int.). That said, State Government monitors the galleries through the revision of business plans and cannot radically shift the focus of a sector, which has a membership and operating values with a history of more than one hundred years (Govt. Int.). A more interesting issue would occur if the Government decided to significantly reduce the level of financial support currently provided to the galleries in the VRGN, in order to support another component of cultural activity (Govt. Int.). It is due to the possibility of this occurring (however unlikely) that Arts Victoria cannot provide confirmation of funding levels to galleries within the VRGN outside of the recurrent funding cycles - anywhere between 1 and 3 years (Govt. Int.).

When the role of the Government and its policy context is contrasted with the components listed in the collaboration model (Table 14), several comments can be made. Local Government, through the Local Council, provides access to networks, I.T. support and training to the staff of the galleries (Govt, Dir., I.T. Int., Q33, 34). Funding is not prioritised for collaboration practices by the galleries, nor is innovation and experimentation of I.T.
endorsed by most Local Councils (Govt, I.T. Int.). The capacity for the galleries and the PGAV to develop and supplement stakeholder relationships (as shown by MAV or the I.T. Managers group and their subsequent relationships with Local Council) is also not supported by the research. Given these findings, and when contrasted with the collaboration model, the research suggests that the VRGN does not yet posses all the ingredients of the policy context, required to collaborate.

6.2.3 Barriers to adopting collaboration

The issues to be addressed in order to adopt collaboration are more cultural or behavioural, rather than technical (Dir.Int., I.T. Int., Q28, 29, 31, 34, 35), with the most frequent barrier being time and an unwillingness to share information or partner with other organisations (Vangen & Huxhman 2003). This is consistent with the individualistic approach of most galleries, and the lack of consideration given by the galleries and their Councils to the operations and activities of their neighbouring galleries in delivering on requirements.

Other issues that were identified as barriers by the respondents include:

- poor time management
- the absence of a culture of sharing or disseminating information especially as it relates to knowledge management
- no role models in collaboration
- poor or no awareness of the capacity of technology to achieve business requirements
- a lack of training and opportunity to innovate

Given this, the barriers to adoption of collaborative practices by the galleries in the VRGN indicate that the current business practices of galleries are not conducive to collaboration. These issues are also supported in the previous section dealing with collaboration which noted a lack of both knowledge distribution and a culture of sharing between the galleries were also contributing to a lack of collaboration. The absence of a role model in collaboration for the galleries indicates that the VRGN may require leadership from a gallery or ISO (Q20, 21) to embrace collaboration. The respondents indicated that they do not consider that the PGAV fulfils this role (Dir. Int.). The issues of poor time management and a lack of training and opportunity to innovate indicate that the gallery Directors do not prioritise collaboration over other areas (Dir. Int.). This is supported by Directors who consider that adequate training is
provided by Local Council, and that the schedule of exhibitions and public programs are primarily determined by the Gallery (Dir. Int.).

### 6.2.4 Drivers of collaboration

The Directors and their staff are ‘time-poor’ and ‘cash-strapped’ (Dir. Int.). The majority make regular submissions and write reports to their respective Council managers, as well as submit grant applications to the relevant funding bodies (such as Arts Victoria, Australia Council, Myer Foundation). Furthermore, the work of managing a gallery facility has become more complex and accountable, whilst the resources available for undertaking these increasing commitments are remaining static or decreasing. As such, the Directors of the galleries are well aware of the current state of play of their funding and what is required of them and the facility to maintain it.

The gallery Directors therefore, need to address this imbalance and target those outputs that are suffering or have been re-prioritised as a result of new ‘essential’ activities and reporting placed upon galleries. The research suggests that a different operational concept is required for the galleries; one that enables the galleries ‘to work smarter and not harder’ and to enable staff ‘the time to dream and reflect’ (Dir. Int.) about their duty of care to their galleries’ collections and the stories contained within. Therefore, the activities that can drive collaboration will be those that can address the critical issues such as time and resources.

Responses from the research have highlighted that current operational practices within the gallery sector are reinforced by a variety of factors (Dir. Int., ISO Int.). These factors when contrasted with the characteristics of collaboration show that the issues that accentuate the current operational practices, are related to the characteristics of collaboration (as outlined in the collaboration model) which is presented in Table 14.
Staff also experience varying degrees of stress, and complain of being time poor, having access to low levels of training and professional development, and often feeling that they are ignorant of the issues affecting the sector due to poor cross-sector communication. Many of these issues have already been identified in this section.

The drivers for collaboration can provide relief from these factors and focus on improving the functional capacity of the gallery, whilst achieving its reporting requirements. The attributes of this new paradigm as drawn out from the interviews would include:

- exhibition co-development as a core activity (to encourage scholarly research into collections)
- a focus on regions rather than city centres
- development of touring circuits and product showcases
- shared outreach programs and staff sharing for remote audiences
- joint training programs
- regular industry information forums in both physical and virtual space
- coordinated and strategic sector-wide research and audience development programs

These attributes contribute to approaching work as a shared activity and therefore addresses issues including more time for staff, sharing of expenditure and resources, and increased income from cross marketing initiatives. As participants become more engaged and collaborate more, productivity increases (Black et al. 2002), and galleries gain a better understanding of their audiences and the subsequent requirements of their cultural institutions.

As Local Government (through the respective Council) is the primary stakeholder of the galleries, there is increasing pressure for the galleries to remain viable from the Council perspective. These pressures provide an incentive and substantiation for collaboration, as it
can be shown to deliver benefits relating to costs, increased efficiencies, maximisation of resources and the development of commercial advantages through partnerships. There are precedents for galleries collaborating either together or with other parties to develop cultural product, as there are in Local Council for the aggregated purchasing of I.T. equipment. The conditions in which collaboration can occur between the galleries of the VRGN exist within the current environment of galleries; what is required now is a review of how the business objectives and operating environment of the galleries can deliver benefits through deploying eBusiness models.

6.3 Question Two: What are the business objectives of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network and what are the most suitable eBusiness models?

This question describes the operating landscape of the galleries within the VRGN. By gathering a comprehensive understanding of the business environment of the sector, the operating implications, and the audiences which the galleries serve, the research can begin to focus on the most suitable types of eBusiness models that can be applied to the VRGN.

6.3.1 Business objectives of the VRGN

The research reviewed the various business objectives of each gallery in order to form a common set of objectives for the sector (Dir. Int., RGN Web checklist). These objectives pertain to the majority of institutions and are dependent upon the size of their collection, the audience base and regional demographic profile of the organisation and regional area, the number of staff and their capacity to present a professional retail outlet.

The objectives derived from the interviews and put into broad areas, include:

- Programming
- Budgeting
- Visitation
- Collection
- Conservation
- Acquisitions and Loans
- Merchandising
The objectives of the galleries are predominantly determined by gallery staff in consultation with the Local Council representative (Dir. Int.). The reporting relationship may include a committee of management with input from Councillors, Council managers and gallery professionals, or direct reporting between the Director and his/her immediate manager/ supervisor. The relationship the gallery has with the Council, and the cultural profile or reputation of the gallery, will also determine how the gallery operates i.e., as a separate entity to the Council, or as a member of a business unit of Council (Dir. Int.).

As the Council has a role in the day-to-day operations and outputs of the gallery (Dir. Int.), this role can have its advantages and disadvantages for the gallery. The advantages include community support for the gallery if the Mayor is (for example), chair of the exhibitions committee and chooses to promote the gallery wherever possible (Dir. Int.). The disadvantages include a Council that may see only costs in the operations of a gallery, and therefore pushes to increase visitation or the number of exhibitions mounted per annum, to demonstrate the value being received by Council of a heavily subsidised operation (Dir. Int.). Both of these scenarios impact on the gallery being able to achieve its business objectives.

6.3.2 Operating environment of the sector and its administrative and I.T. requirements

The operating environment of the galleries is similar and supported by the capacity to develop common business objectives and I.T requirements (Govt. Int., I.T. Int., Q28, 29). As previously noted, the difference in operating environments between galleries, lies in the relationship the gallery has with the Council management team, its stakeholder management strategies, and its relative size and complexity as an organisation. As such, the work to be undertaken by the gallery staff within Council is influenced by the position the gallery occupies as a functional element of Council (Dir. Int.). In some instances, Directors also have responsibility for other venues owned by Council, or line management responsibility over staff that is not part of the gallery environment (Dir. Int.). Leaving this aside however, the museological work required to be undertaken by the galleries, and the extent to which it can be shared across the VRGN is determined by the size and operational complexity of the organisation.
Although there are generic managerial issues each Director must consider, the degree to which these occupy the attention of the Director and staff will also largely depend on the size of the gallery and its community.

To illustrate this point the operating environment of the Ararat Gallery Inc. and Ballarat Fine Art Gallery can be contrasted. The operating environment of the former includes a membership of 160, a relatively small collection (approximately 300 objects), two exhibition spaces, and services a city population of 7500 people – managing an attendance of 6500 visitors per annum (Dir. Int.). In contrast, the operating environment of Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, has a significant community responsibility (upwards of 1000 members), arguably the finest regional art historical collection in Australia, several temporary and permanent exhibition spaces classified by the National Trust, services a population of about 85,000 and has an attendance of over 50,000 people per annum (Dir. Int.).

Although these two galleries are at the opposite extremes of the network, it is a useful exercise to highlight the variances of shared or similar activities of the organisations’ operating environments. Therefore although collection management is a core activity for all the galleries (Dir. Int.), the type and scale of the collection management system (and whether it has web-enabling capabilities) will vary depending on the size of the collection. The same can be applied for other operational issues including a digitisation program, retail outlet, and most other business functions, including HR issues, infrastructure and maintenance work, publicity and marketing, education and public programs, and ad hoc audience development work.

The determining factor when selecting an I.T. solution for the gallery’s operating environment therefore depends largely on what is available at Council, or what the gallery can afford (Dir. Int., I.T. Int.). The result is an individual approach to managing the operating environment of each organisation often determined by Council processes and procedures, rather than the adoption of standard business procedures and business I.T. applications that can be applied across the VRGN (Q30, 31, 39). The absence of a standard collection management system utilised across the VRGN is a case in point.

Therefore, as the operating environment of the individual galleries is similar, and the business objectives can also be shown to be similar, there are benefits for the VRGN in becoming a collaborative and coordinated sector. These benefits could include the identification of I.T.
applications that could be developed collaboratively by the galleries and I.T. managers, as well as the development of eBusiness strategies for adoption across the VRGN. The development of a benchmarking exercise would also contribute to developing best practice for the efficient administration and operation of the VRGN, especially if it were to take into consideration the relationships with various stakeholders (ISO Int.).

6.3.3 Audiences (visitation)

The research confirmed that the collection of audience and visitor details and statistics is an area that requires some attention by the galleries (Dir. Int.). The majority of respondents in the interviews could not provide definitive details about their audiences, nor exact numbers of visitors to the venue. However the Directors have a ‘gut’ feeling regarding those who visit, and the areas from which they come (Dir. Int.).

The collection of visitor details is varied and diverse across the sector, as is the definition of what constitutes visitation. For example, some galleries count a visitor as anyone who enters the facility, whether this is to browse the gallery shop, have a coffee at the café (if available) or to view an exhibition. As most galleries do not charge an entrance fee, the venues cannot rely on entrance receipt figures as a source of data (Dir. Int.). The contentious issue of whether attendance at openings is included in the overall attendance figure is yet to be resolved (Govt. Int., Dir. Int.).

Given this, there is no data on the audience of the galleries in the VRGN, or on the profile of audiences contained within a regional or geographic area (Govt. Int.).

Some galleries have captured visitation patterns in the past, indicating levels of local patronage, and visitors to the city. These figures are of some importance in understanding the movement of audiences and the capacity of organisations to share audiences. This may impact on decisions regarding the type of exhibition or product that can be shared between galleries and the educational, marketing and promotional opportunities that can be assigned to these joint products (or conversely to products that are unique to a venue). It is not clear however whether it impacts on programming decisions, as the Director’s capacity to create a diversity of programming will depend on the collection base of the organisation and the availability or affordability of alternative product to present (Dir. Int.).
The presence of clusters or hubs operating within the VRGN network has been previously commented upon. The research was only able to identify the existence of these clusters, and hence some detailed work is required to investigate the operation and functioning of these networks. However some general comments can be made regarding the clusters and their relevance to the issues of audiences.

The clusters are alliances between galleries that have identified that a partnership or relationship can exist between each other (Arts Victoria 2003a, Cauley de la Sierra 1995, Yoshino & Robinson 1995). This relationship may be one-off or ongoing depending on the nature of the collaboration or activity. The bearing these clusters have on the issues of audience(s) is that often the relationship of the cluster is determined by the capacity of the galleries to share product between each other (Dir. Int.). This includes having similar collection profiles that enable objects to be shared or loaned across the partners, similar exhibition programs that enable joint or co-production between venues, and similar or complementary style of venues that allows for joint marketing of the public programs.

The application of a cluster paradigm therefore relies upon a form of interpretation regarding the make-up of the audience(s) having been undertaken. The reasons given by the Directors (who work in clusters), for working with the clusters paradigm include:

- The galleries share physical audiences and therefore do not program together but can cooperate on marketing issues addressing local or regional events
- The galleries do not share audiences, and therefore can afford to program together in order to increase audiences for a single product
- The galleries share a tourist route and therefore market themselves in association with this route
- The galleries share a cultural and/or transit route and therefore promote themselves as part of this route (e.g., a highway, or frequently travelled route)
- The galleries share a similar style or profile and therefore offer a similar experience for the benefit of a specific audience profile – art historical, contemporary art, craft, ceramic, socio-demographic groupings to name a few (Dir. Int.)

Of interest regarding the use of the cluster paradigm by the galleries to share content or marketing collateral, is that the galleries have not undertaken quantitative work to substantiate the value or effectiveness of these strategies (Dir. Int.). This is not surprising considering that there is a similar gap of knowledge regarding audiences and visitation figures to their venues.
Given this, the Alliance model has been identified as operating in the VRGN in the collaboration model (Table 14).

6.3.4 eBusiness models

As previously noted, there are a common set of business objectives and similar operating environments that can be applied to the galleries, which leads to opportunities for developing collaborative and cooperative activities. A revision of the eBusiness models previously identified in the research is now warranted in order to assess them for suitability to the VRGN.

The size and relative simplicity of the cultural sector in Victoria, makes many of the eBusiness models identified in the research too complex or large to be able to be implemented. The cultural sector has traditionally supported the Alliance models of business, where a community of members has a role in developing content for the Marketplace (National Office for the Information Economy 2003b). The Alliance model has been identified in the VRGN through its collaborative strategies. The arts may also be well suited to the Agora model in that there is a product that may be attractive to many buyers, the identity of whom is not known at the time that the product is made available online.

The VRGN, by virtue of its limited and finite membership, is also well placed to develop a Buyers Market, where a tightly controlled consortium of companies in a given industry procures goods and services from many suppliers (Fingar & Aronica 2001). Of interest in this model is that neither the galleries nor the PGAV see an opportunity with this model although all can see where common products could be acquired (Dir. Int.). Even in Local Council, where there is already a sophisticated communication network and access to the Municipal Association of Victoria portal, there are only a handful of examples where this type of aggregated purchasing process has been fully exploited to achieve costs savings (I.T. Int.).

The eBusiness table outlined in the Literature Review can now be updated with VRGN details, indicating which models are operating in the VRGN and which could be suitable (Table 16). This table outlines the six business models previously identified (Graeme 2001), and shows that the galleries operating within the VRGN could develop eBusiness models that support transaction, network and content focused activities. The research does not indicate
that the galleries are ready to adopt models that are customer, relationship or revenue focussed as described in the table, or to create a network of websites. A discussion of the eBusiness models follows.

The simplest model that could be implemented across the VRGN is the Online Sales model or a retail portal (Dir. Int., Govt. Int.). This model is transaction focussed and involves selling directly to customers online. This model could be applied to the VRGN to offer gallery-specific merchandise and products to an online audience including gallery souvenirs, local artists’ products, exhibition catalogues and publications drawn from the institution’s collection. This model could operate at the individual level (i.e., from each organisation’s website) or be an aggregator of gallery product on a single VRGN portal, which would promote and sell products from across the participating galleries’ inventories. This model would also enable the VRGN to cooperatively invest in the implementation of the Online Sales portal. Benefits from economies of scale for implementing this model (e.g. digital cameras for photographs of images, portal navigation design, hosting and transaction fees) could also be realised. This model would address the business objectives of merchandising and collection.

The Market Maker model is network focussed and provides internet facilities that allow other organisations and consumers to transact goods and services online. This eBusiness model could include the development of a collaborative marketplace for the galleries within the VRGN. This marketplace would go beyond the first generation of business-to-business exchanges, and would be a place where collaboration, not necessarily transactions, determines the network and where digital objects and products become a component of a larger integrated electronic system linking all organisations and their operations (Fingar & Aronica 2001). In this model, the collaborative network may include a series of web connections including public and private organisations that have a commercial relationship with the galleries. It could exist within a shared space utilising common platforms and content management systems. This model would enable the VRGN to become a single entity of cultural activity, rather than a group of disconnected organisations, each attempting to solve similar problems on a local level (Dir. Int.). This model is more sophisticated than the Online Sales model and would involve greater systems integration between participating galleries. However, as the galleries each share common business objectives, the manner of business to be transacted in this marketplace can deliver benefits at operational and administrative levels, as well as realise commercial or revenue benefits. This model would address all the business objectives
including Programming, Budgeting, Visitation, Collection, Conservation, Acquisitions & Loans, and Merchandising.

The Content model, as the name suggests, is primarily content focussed. This model sells access to content or information to those that are targeted as the audiences of the content. This model would allow the galleries to aggregate their more sophisticated online product to audiences that would be willing to pay for accessing this information. This product could include items such as online catalogues, collection objects, programming information, education material, rich video material and digital stories, and is a model that would also benefit from the galleries aggregating their content to a single online site or portal. The audiences for this model could include educational sectors (including researchers), remote and rural groups and organisations that cannot physically access the galleries, and international audiences to name a few. This model would require the presentation of sophisticated digital material which may not currently exist, through a portal, the development of which could benefit from a sector-wide approach to content creation strategies. This model would address the business objectives of Programming, Visitation, Collection and Merchandising.

The remaining three models – Infomediary, Affiliate and eBusiness revenue – are not considered suitable to the galleries within the VRGN due to the complexities associated with their implementation or their non-suitability to the gallery sector. The Infomediary model which is customer and audience focussed, involves selling information to other organisations. It is not considered suitable for the VRGN as it involves an advertising model or fee paying model that would likely not be sustainable by the galleries’ audience or customers. The Affiliate model, which is primarily relationship focussed, includes a relationship between sender and receiver websites. It is likely to be unsuitable for the galleries within the VRGN due to an insufficient commercial market for the galleries’ products. The eBusiness Revenue model has revenue as its main focus. It is likely to be too complex for the galleries within the VRGN as it involves online commercial interactions which are beyond the current commercial conditions of the gallery network, and as such beyond a network that would be web-enabled.
6.4 Question Three: What is required to support the operation of collaborative online networks within the Victorian Regional Gallery Network?

This question examines the components required to realise a collaborative solution for the VRGN. An analysis of the technology to be applied in the collaborative online network (including the availability of broadband) coupled with a discussion on the non technical issues, and the level of intervention required to adopt collaboration will be examined. Further business analysis will be undertaken on the galleries in order to combine the business requirements of the galleries, with the components of collaboration.
6.4.1 Technology to be applied in a collaborative online network

The role and application of I.T. within the sector can be improved through a coordinated approach to its usage (I.T. Int.). This would include customising several desktop applications, for example, mailing and visitation databases, financial spreadsheets and exhibition cost sheets, word templates, as well as the coordinated purchasing of scalable I.T. solutions to be shared and applied across the VRGN.

As Councils predominantly use Microsoft products (I.T. Int.), much of the office desktop or the applications that it supports could be standardised across the VRGN. A coordinated I.T. operating environment would be advantageous in several immediate ways. It would facilitate and allow for more effective training, allow for centralised updating and maintenance, encourage a streamlined service especially as it applies to licenses and contracts and by doing so, could exploit aggregated purchasing models to deliver best value and market competitiveness (I.T. Int., Multimedia Victoria 2003b). It would also enable sharing of information, the development of common file storage and associated standards to be applied.

The coordinated roll-out of I.T. solutions to the VRGN also has the added proposition of managing and controlling the I.T. requirements of the sector, as there will be an awareness of the requirements of each user and a subsequent documentation of their usage. This has the capacity to develop into a systematised analysis of I.T., as deployed by the VRGN and can be used to identify new software and applications that may be required for the sector.

The technology to be used for collaboration will ideally be able to be deployed and managed on a decentralised or distributed basis (Palmer 2003). This is consistent with current web-enabled content management systems or websites with the facility to manage groups of people with internet access (Project Coordinator 2004), many of which do not require significant internet connectivity, or large financial outlay to purchase or lease a secure online space (Project Coordinator 2004). The Collaborative Online Desktop managed by Artshub is one recent and local example, which is currently free and in beta testing (as of Nov 2004).

Furthermore, as the members of the VRGN are literally spread from east to west and north to south of Victoria, any technology used needs to be able to be administered effectively regardless of the location of the trouble spots (Burton 2001).
The type of technology that can be applied to deliver a collaborative environment is now becoming ubiquitous in the online environment (Palmer 2003). The content management system that can deliver simple web-enabled collaborative environments is no longer a piece of complex code that needs to be purpose built requiring heavy investment. Instead, content management systems are becoming part and parcel of messaging applications, which deploy web-intuitive design and a suite of standard web desktop graphic devices (Microsoft Australia Small Business Centre 2004, Project Coordinator 2004). Training is suggested but not required to get the system up and running with little effort. As the application to be deployed is web-enabled, the desktop system of the member user is no longer so crucial, requiring access to the Internet and the setting of system configurations to enable the features of the website to be viewed with optimum effects. A majority of the Councils use the same content management system (Aussoft) to manage their websites, and this could also be customised for the gallery sector.

The determining factor in selecting a system would be what works best for the Councils (Govt. & I.T. Int.). As the Literature Review sought to demonstrate, there is now a selection of collaboration spaces available that are free, or are shareware, drastically reducing the amount of time and programming expense that is required to develop and customise a collaborative online environment. These software applications generally offer very similar functionality including threaded discussions, document management, chat areas and calendars. Many of the software houses also offer hosting as an option as well, further reducing the amount of technical capabilities required by the organisation using the software.

At the time of the research, broadband (or more specifically, ADSL) was available in all regional city centres where the study was conducted. The extent to which connectivity extended to the community or outlying townships depended upon local circumstances and the progress Telstra has made in the area. As a general comment, ADSL is available in a 4 km radius of the city centre (or exchange). There are variations to this rule, but for the purposes of this research, this finding is sufficient in that all galleries have access to an ‘always on’ internet connection (Q34). This is important for the online collaborative space, in that being able to message or contact the members at any moment enhances the functionality of the product and encourages fluid communication (Department of State and Regional Development 2002b, National Office for the Information Economy 2003c, Romm & Sudweeks 2000).
Although business and citizens living and working in the city centre have access to broadband, this does not extend to a broadband network between city centres – but rather that those organisations with access to broadband can do business electronically and take advantage of accessing the Internet at various broadband (fast) speeds (maximum 2 mbps). Thus an important element of the collaborative online network to be applied to the galleries, is that it will be operating over public lines; and not involve the installation of a dedicated, secure, virtual private network.

As such the collaboration occurs over the Internet using a fast connection, as distinct from a dedicated fibre network exclusively connecting all the galleries. This latter solution however technically possible would be cost-prohibitive, due to the costs of installing cable between the city centres and managing the subsequent network. However, there may be opportunities in the future to make use of existing dedicated fibre optic networks that currently exist for other industries and which have spare capacity e.g., the rural health network, and the transport network VicTrack (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development 2002a).

The research therefore identifies the requirements of a simple-to-use and basic software model and confirms the functionality of the collaboration software as outlined in the collaboration model – i.e.: a web-enabled system that includes calendar system, shared documentation, central database, document storage, announcement boards and virtual conferencing. The availability of broadband services in the regional areas provides the necessary connectivity for the galleries and therefore for the VRGN, to operate over the Internet with an ‘always on’ connection. Those Councils that also demonstrate leadership in the early adoption of technology may be useful as future test environments for piloting collaborative networks that exploit technology.

6.4.2 Non-technical issues surrounding collaboration

The issue most revealing regarding the gallery sector’s capacity to collaborate is not related to access to I.T. and training, but rather to the business culture of the participating organisations. The rivalry or competition amongst gallery Directors and staff impacts on the sector’s capacity to develop cross-sector collaborative practices (Dir. Int.). The way in which the organisations are perceived by their peers, and the flow-on this may have in shared business
practices and combined activities, has the net effect of creating sub-sectors within the network, causing alienation and tension amongst the members (Black et al. 2002).

The non-technical issues surrounding collaboration are related to developing new social or cultural business practices that support and encourage community and sector-wide engagement (Vangen & Huxhman 2003). This engagement need not be ‘community’ in spirit, but based on measurable results that demonstrate the business and commercial advantages of working in association with other organisations (Vangen & Huxhman 2003). The organisations each have experiences in realising benefits from coordinated or collaborative activities; these experiences however need to be re-cast in broader organisational objectives (Phillips, Hardy & Lawrence 1998). The gallery sector has many examples where this has delivered some outstanding results, and it may require leadership from the ISO (or similar placed body) to disseminate the results of these examples. The research suggests that communication and documentation, in this instance, is the key to providing demonstrable benefits to working with the galleries, rather than against. This is particularly important to combat the time resources gallery staff claim are gradually reducing, (Dir. Int.) whilst also brainstorming the many cluster formations (formal and informal) essential to the delivery and development of eBusiness and sector-wide initiatives.

This analysis is supported by the findings in the questionnaire, which showed that the galleries collaborated with artists, administrators, galleries in the VRGN and other galleries (Q1, 2, 3, 4). The results also showed that galleries’ frequency of collaboration ranged from monthly to quarterly (Q51 – 57). This provides fertile ground for the strategic or more formal application of collaboration across the VRGN, an application that is required in order to deliver an improved operating environment for the sector. This is also supported by the results of the questionnaire that show that the VRGN does not use collaboration as effectively as the individual galleries do, suggesting that the levels of collaboration can increase at the sector-wide (macro) level (Q1-5, 12).

The research findings have been supported in the I.C.T. industry framework report (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003), that proposed the gains to be realised (by strategically using I.C.T.) will be more likely identified not so much by the I.T. specialists, but by the senior managers within the organisations, i.e., those that drive the business of the organisation.
6.4.3 Level of intervention required to facilitate the adoption

The level of intervention (by third parties) required to facilitate the adoption of collaboration within the sector needs to be measured to ensure that the subsequent engagement and acceptance of new models or paradigms are sufficiently owned by the membership. These third parties (including the different tiers of government) can play an independent role in the transference of information, and document the benefits of applying a collaborative model, but eventually, it is the VRGN that needs to be able to operate within any boundaries that are constructed.

These boundaries form the rules of engagement for collaboration and will be formed as a result of all stakeholders and players working in a cooperative manner. Therefore the intervention required by different groups is dependent upon the solutions necessary, but will include an overall commitment to achieving a collaborative online model and supporting cooperative activities that such a commitment requires (Black et al. 2002, Vangen & Huxhman 2003).

The research indicates the level of intervention required in the I.T. area could include:

- selection and agreement of an online collaborative environment
- the provision of necessary I.T. infrastructure/capacity and technical support, including training (Arts Victoria 2001, Department of State and Regional Development 2002a, United Focus 2003)
- a form of a Memorandum of Understanding regarding adherence to desktop standards

The research indicates the level of intervention required by Local Council could include:

- a cooperative approach to the alignment of business objectives across the VRGN
- support from senior staff for the development and maintenance of an online collaborative environment
- cooperative arrangement regarding the purchase and use of desktop software in order that the online solution can be applied
- provision of managerial and administrative support in the facilitation of networks and partnerships across municipalities
- provision of expertise in the development of value adding relationships as can be delivered by the Economic Development branches
The research indicates that the level of intervention required by State Government (Arts Victoria in particular) could involve:

- support for the collaboration model including amending contractual agreements or administrative elements such as Key Performance Indicators, with the galleries to ensure that the model delivers to Government priorities and policy
- funding for the project documentation, including technical and functional development of the software to deliver the collaborative online environment
- including the project as a core deliverable in the Centralised Online Resource being developed by Arts Victoria throughout 2004 – 2007
- mandating a level of collaboration amongst the membership to ensure certain practices are streamlined (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development 2002b, Govt. Int.), or insist on the development of shared practices that can be delivered through collaboration and which can be shown to have cost and time saving elements

Currently, the overarching outcome Arts Victoria seeks in funding the galleries is ‘the operation of a regional gallery as part of a state-wide network of galleries meeting best industry practice in their management, operations, and artistic programming’ (Arts Victoria 2003b). It is worth noting at this point that the PGAV may need to change as a result of the level of leadership that the VRGN requires to work in an open or cooperative manner (Q21).

Intervention and support from Government can also be articulated through describing the activities of the collaborative space as delivering to Government policies and strategic priorities. The over-arching policy driver for the Bracks’ Government is the ‘Growing Victoria Together’ (GVT) statement (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2001). The development of the collaborative online network can be clearly aligned to several of the strategic issues of the GVT specifically ‘Growing and linking all of Victoria’, and ‘Building cohesive communities and reducing inequalities’ and as such, provides a policy background on which Government support can be argued. It can also be argued that the collaborative online network is providing a specific state-wide network that requires connectivity and can demonstrate this through strategic alliances with Local Councils and cultural organisations. The TPAMS initiative (Multimedia Victoria 2003b) and the ‘Putting People at the Centre’ document (Department of State and Regional Development 2002a) can also be shown to have relevance here. They provide another policy position from which State Government can support the development of the collaborative online network, as the latter document expressly
identifies electronic networks as central to the dissemination of information and activation of communication channels.

Furthermore, the collaborative online network can be seen to be central to the ‘Creative Capacity +’ arts policy (Arts Victoria 2003a) in that is provides a core component to delivering digital content to the people of Victoria through an online mechanism. This delivery is central to the ‘Creating Place and Space’ strategy that includes as a priority action, the establishment of a centralised online resource (Arts Victoria 2003a), to enable distribution of digital content by the small to medium sector. Given this evidence of policy drivers from several Government agencies, it can be argued that the role of Government in relation to the collaborative online network could be one of proactive encouragement and direct intervention in support of facilitating the VRGN to become a collaborative online entity.

6.4.4 Business analysis

In Chapter Three, some general comments were made on the findings of the review of the VRGN websites that was conducted in 2003, prior to the field research (Appendix A.1 RGN Web Checklist). These findings identified the following:

- galleries are not directly targeting curriculum in schools and are not using their websites to achieve business outcomes related to providing educational resources to school groups
- there is essentially no direct access to the galleries’ collections online
- visitation to physical spaces, or clusters of organisations does not appear on websites
- the capacity to distribute information via downloads on the websites is rarely being provided
- there are no examples of galleries using the Internet to enhance delivery of programs and to subsequently increase access to material
- websites are rarely being used in marketing
- no gallery is offering online sales

The review proposed that the VRGN did not share an I.T. environment, and the research has shown that there is adequate I.T. provisioning but it is focussed towards the Council and local community, rather than to collaboration. The review also proposed that the VRGN did not
coordinate its online resources. It also found that the business objectives of the galleries could be common for all members of the VRGN (RGN Web Checklist Appendix A.1).

These findings have now been substantiated by the research and this informs the design of models or activities that may form part of a collaborative engagement. Results from the questionnaire also showed that the galleries in the VRGN have access to the online material (Q44), but that they do not readily exploit this access or connectivity to transact business functions (Q48), or communicate with audiences (Q49) including stakeholders (Q50). The analysis from the questionnaire suggests that there is ample scope to develop improvements in the use of online technologies (Q35, 36). The findings also indicate that the galleries possess the technical capacity to collaborate, but lack a business approach with which to exploit it.

An example of this can be seen in the provision of information on gallery websites in respect to the development and dissemination of educational and public program information (RGN Web Checklist Appendix A.1). All the galleries engage in some way with the same State educational sector, yet do not produce coordinated curriculum based material that could be developed across the VRGN and applied to all schools in the State. Some organisations have education officers (varying from 0.2 to 1.0 FTE) and this assists with incoming visits, yet neither outreach nor general material is created in a cooperative fashion that can be used in the regions or across the State (Dir. Int.). Furthermore, this material is not available from the website as a free download, therefore making the dissemination of hardcopy material dependent upon an actual visit or human intervention. This misses an opportunity to provide pre and post visit material to local schools.

The research found that the capacity, willingness or consideration by galleries to provide sophisticated information on their websites is limited to a small number (Dir. Int.). This applies not just to educational material, but also to marketing and tourism material, general information about the gallery and exhibition program, collection profile and access to digital images and associated information of some key works, calendar of events, and retail information to mention a few.

The type of information that can be placed either as a web page, or a downloadable document (Portable Document Format – PDF) does not require complex technology. The research suggests that galleries find it difficult to prioritise the development and posting of this
information to their website (Dir. Int.). And the reason invariably given by staff for this situation occurring is because they are ‘time-poor’.

This analysis therefore proposes one interpretation on the results and findings from the interviews and questionnaire. The response proposes four pillars that support the development of the sector as a whole, rather than individual organisations and is seen as a mechanism to assist the VRGN achieve its strategies. These pillars are:

- Information sharing
- Cross communication
- Coordinated staff training and professional development
- Sector-wide research & development projects

The response includes several strategies that will assist in the development of a collaborative online network, strategies that are collectively enacted to develop a collaborative space. These strategies include the development of:

- Sustainable levels of public programming including exhibitions
- Value adding propositions
- Digital assets including management strategies
- Audience(s)
- Educational and marketing collateral and subsequent opportunities
- Cluster or network circuits, especially as these relate to touring and audiences
- Aggregated online retail capacity

The business rules that are forming out of the research subsequently reinforce the new paradigm of engaging in a community of practice, rather than an individualistic approach to the administration of a cultural facility. Although each organisation will require specific attention at a local level, the ‘rules of engagement’ embrace collective intelligence and mutual exploitation of common ground.

The relationship between the pillars and the strategies is presented below and indicates the flow between the collaborative online network, and its components.
Figure 6 Pillars and strategies for the VRGN and collaborative online network

The figure presents the four pillars and seven strategies informing the implementation of the collaborative online network. This figure shows that these pillars and strategies reflect many of the ingredients of the collaborative model proposed earlier in the research, and indicates how these ingredients might be interpreted for specific circumstances – in this case, the VRGN.

6.5 Summary

This chapter provided results and discussion of the three main questions posed for this research.

In response to the first question of what types of collaboration occur in the VRGN, the research did not find any collaborative networks operating in the VRGN. It found that where collaboration did occur between galleries, it did so without the use of collaborative technology and that this is supported at Government level, where galleries in the VRGN are funded to deliver against Government priorities, and not necessarily to collaborate with each other. The collaboration model was used to identify the areas which need additional focus to properly support online collaboration.
The collaboration between the galleries is determined by the type of project being undertaken, and that although technology is not used for collaboration, it is not seen as a barrier to adopting collaborative practices. Given this, a new concept was suggested to drive collaboration between the galleries; one which uses partnerships and sector-wide engagement to deliver services locally, but with a regional focus. The use of these types of strategic partnerships has been successful across Local Government in I.T. purchases and may also provide Council with opportunities to benefit from cost efficiencies, increase capacity and reduce risk (Cauley de la Sierra 1995, Department of State and Regional Development 2002a). As a result, the drivers of collaboration can be seen to have an economic and cultural development aspect, which include sharing costs and resources between galleries.

The research then identified seven broad business objectives for the galleries and found that as the galleries are business units of Council, these objectives are determined by both staff and Council. The operating environment of the galleries within the VRGN is similar across the galleries however the scale of the operations will determine the degree of activity being undertaken. The research found little information on visitation to the galleries, city or regional centres that would support further analysis. Clusters or strategic alliances have been used by some galleries with success, particularly where products could be shared between the participating organisations. The types of eBusiness models that would suit the VRGN are those that support transaction, network and content focused activities. These models would be suitable to support a collaborative approach by the galleries, and could be used to enhance partnership or aggregated functions.

The picture being developed through the research therefore is one that shows a consistency of business objectives, operating environments and I.T. requirements across the galleries. This indicates that the application of collaborative technology to coordinate the galleries within the VRGN would be beneficial for both the galleries and their stakeholders.

Finally the research focussed upon what is required to support the operation of collaborative online networks within the VRGN. It was found that the technology required for the VRGN’s collaborative online network is commercially available. The research also noted that the availability of broadband services in the regional areas provides the sufficient level of connectivity for the galleries to operate with an ‘always on’ connection to the Internet. The research found that the non technical issues surrounding collaboration are related to developing new social or cultural business practices that support and encourage community
and sector-wide engagement. It suggests that the development of cross-sector communication and documentation processes will also provide demonstrable benefits of collaboration to the galleries. The research also found that the findings in the RGN Web Checklist (Appendix A.1) were substantiated by the research and as such, inform the design of models or activities that may form part of a collaborative engagement between the galleries. The research subsequently proposed pillars and strategies that might inform the implementation of the collaborative online network specifically for the VRGN.
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The flow of the chapter can be represented as follows:

This final chapter will provide conclusions regarding the research problem and questions, discuss the implication for theory, policy and practice as a result of the research undertaken, and provide a commentary on implications for future research. This chapter draws in the main points from the research and concludes the discussion.

7.2 Conclusions about Research Questions

This section will provide a conclusion for each of the research questions posed throughout the research. There were three research questions.

7.2.1 Question One: What are the types of collaboration that occur in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network?

The Victorian gallery sector is not using collaborative technologies when engaging in joint or collaborative activities. When the galleries do collaborate, this is undertaken informally and may involve the use of email (Arts Victoria 2001). There is no single website within the
sector that facilitates internal communication amongst the members of the network including PGAV’s website (ISO Int.). However, VAPAC is considered by its members to be an exemplary collaborative network that uses its website to achieve it objectives. Outside the arts, collaborative networks are prevalent in the educational and research areas (Centre for Networking Technologies for the Information Economy 2004, Education Network of Australia 2004).

The galleries engage in an active program of collaboration (Q51 – 57), but it is determined by the approach of the Directors, and not necessarily led by an organisation, although there is scope for this to change (Q18 - 21). The galleries also have access to the necessary technology, support and infrastructure to develop online initiatives (Q28, 29, 34, 38, 44). Given this, the VRGN could adopt a strategic alliance (Cauley de la Sierra 1995) approach to developing collaborative eBusiness models.

Table 17 Collaborative model – VAPAC & VRGN contrasted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration model Has all of</th>
<th>VAPAC</th>
<th>VRGN</th>
<th>Collaboration model Has some of</th>
<th>VAPAC</th>
<th>VRGN</th>
<th>Collaboration model Has at least one of</th>
<th>VAPAC</th>
<th>VRGN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration software / I.T.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>eBusiness models</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Calendar</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to networks</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Online sales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shared documents</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>• I.T. support</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Market maker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Central database</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Document storage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Training</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Announcement boards</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>• Stakeholder fulfilment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Virtual conferencing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Innovation / experimentation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collaboration characteristics

| Trust | Yes |
|       |     |
| Communication | Yes | Yes |
| Equality | Yes |
| Strategic alliances | Yes | Yes |
| Knowledge distribution | Yes |
| Negotiations | Yes |
| Incentives | Yes |

with value propositions relative to:

• Agora
• Alliances | Yes | Yes |
• Aggregation | Yes |
• Distributive Networks

To highlight this, a model was drafted, in which the characteristics of collaboration (drawn out of the Literature Review and the research) could be identified. This model included collaborative software/I.T., collaborative characteristics, policy, eBusiness models and value propositions. This draft model was proposed as one way in which these components could be placed over the VRGN, in order to document the presence of collaborative practices, and the

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associated online activities. For a point of contrast, and to highlight differences between an organisation that is considered exemplary in collaborative practices, VAPAC is placed alongside the VGRN (Table 17).

The research also identified that Local Government (through the Local Council) is the primary stakeholder of the galleries. This therefore indicates that for galleries to be successful in using collaboration, they need the support of Local Council and its senior staff. The Council also places pressure on the galleries to remain financially viable in their operations, and this provides an incentive and substantiation for collaboration to occur between the galleries in the VRGN. The research found that collaboration can deliver benefits to Council which relate to costs, increased efficiencies, maximisation of resources and the development of commercial advantages through partnerships.

7.2.2 Question Two: What are the business objectives of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network and what are the most suitable eBusiness models?

The research uncovered a common set of business objectives running through the VRGN (Dir., Govt, I.T. & ISO Int., Q8-10, 60). These objectives are relevant to the majority of organisations operating within Victoria, although the extent to which they shape daily functions of the organisations is dependent upon the size of their collection, the audience base and regional demographic profile of the organisation and regional area, the number of staff and their capacity to present a professional retail outlet.

The common business objectives of the VRGN include:

- Programming: creating and presenting an exciting schedule of programs
- Budgeting: operating within budget and working to the ‘not-for-loss’ approach
- Visitation: developing audiences and creating access to the venue
- Collection: researching and developing the collection held by the gallery which is owned by the people of the State
- Conservation: caring for the works held in the collection
- Acquisitions and Loans: refreshing the collection through acquiring new works, and contrasting the collection with items in other collections
- Merchandising: developing revenue streams for the facility
The identification of a set of common objectives could be further enhanced to assist in developing standardised reporting and funding agreements with Government, and forming the foundation on which a Collaborative Online Network would deliver.

There is also no single eBusiness model identified in the research that would necessarily be excluded from the cultural sector due to its inherent structure, but rather the size and relative simplicity of the cultural sector in Victoria, makes many of the electronic business models too complex or large to be able to be implemented, especially when viewing models such as consumer-to-consumer models, or business-to-business models.

The research found that the Online Sales model or a retail portal could be implemented by the VRGN (Govt. Int.). The Online Sales model is transaction focussed and involves selling directly to customers online and could be effectively used by the galleries within the VRGN to offer gallery-specific merchandise and products including gallery souvenirs, local artists’ products, exhibition catalogues and publications drawn from the institution’s collection.

The remaining eBusiness models were assessed for their suitability to the VRGN with the eBusiness table outlined in the Literature Review updated to indicate which models are operating in the VRGN and which could be suitable (Table 18). This table outlines the six main business models previously identified (Graeme 2001), and shows that the galleries operating within the VRGN could apply three eBusiness models including the Online Sales model (transaction focussed), the Market Maker model (network focused) and the Content model. The research does not indicate that the galleries are yet ready to adopt the Infomediary model (customer focussed), Affiliate model (relationship focussed) or eBusiness Revenue model (revenue focussed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>eBusiness Model</strong></th>
<th><strong>Operating in VRGN</strong></th>
<th><strong>Suitability to VRGN</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Sales</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Maker</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infomediary</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eBusiness Revenue</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2.3 Question Three: What is required to support the operation of collaborative networks within the Victorian Regional Gallery Network?

The issues that support the operation of collaborative networks and which have been addressed by the research include the use of appropriate technology and infrastructure, and the culture of the participating organisations to engage on a collaborative basis. In support of this question, the research also developed strategies for collaboration and pillars of activity to be applied to the sector.

Content management systems that can manage online activities and communication and deploy web-intuitive design along with a suite of standard web desktop graphic devices (Microsoft Australia Small Business Centre 2004, Project Coordinator 2004) are becoming standard in messaging applications. This coupled with appropriate technology and broadband connections (Q28, 29, 34) are important for the online collaborative space, and in developing and encouraging effective fluid communications (Department of State and Regional Development 2002b, National Office for the Information Economy 2003c, Romm & Sudweeks 2000). The determining factor in selecting a system for the VRGN would be what works best for the Councils, as they may ultimately have responsibility for running the system over their network (Govt., I.T. Int., Q29).

The non-technical issues pertinent to the development and operation of a collaborative network include the development of new social or cultural business practices that support and encourage community and sector-wide engagement (Vangen & Huxhman 2003). The galleries have previously benefited from collaborative activities and the collaborative online network will need to draw on these experiences in order to re-cast them in broader organisational objectives (Phillips, Hardy & Lawrence 1998).

The research has supported findings by the I.C.T. industry framework report noted in the Literature Review (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts 2003), that hypothesised that gains to be realised (by strategically using I.T.) will be more likely identified with the senior managers of the organisations, than with the I.T. Managers (Q37).

The research found that there would be levels of intervention required by the Local Council and Arts Victoria to facilitate the adoption of collaborative practices within the galleries of the VRGN. Specifically, Local Council will need to support the cooperative approach to the
alignment of business objectives across the VRGN, as well as provide support from senior staff. State Government through Arts Victoria, would also need to show support for the collaboration model and its subsequent cooperative arrangements across the galleries, and could also be in a position to have this reflected in its Key Performance Indicators and as a deliverable to its Centralised Online Resource.

The analysis in this section proposed an interpretation on the results and findings drawn from the interviews and questionnaire. This interpretation served to highlight a single response to information uncovered. The response proposed four pillars that support the development of the sector as a whole, and seven strategies to assist in developing a collaborative online network.

7.3 Conclusions about Major Research Question

The major research question problem, as expressed in Chapter One was:

How can the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (VRGN), as a provider in the cultural and entertainment sector, deliver cultural product to its audiences (customers) through the use and application of collaborative online networks and their related e-business technologies?

The research problem sought to review the application of a collaborative online network within the context of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network as a means to deliver value adding solutions for income generation and cultural product while seeking new business opportunities offered by the use of I.T. and the Internet. The research sought to address this problem by investigating the operations, relationships with stakeholders and electronic business models of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network. Given this, the research was limited to

“Online Collaboration in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network.”
The conclusions that can be drawn out of the research, and which apply to the research problem include:

i. The use of internet technology by the VRGN does not appear to be limited by technical issues in that galleries note that they are well supported by council I.T. departments (Q29,33, 34, 44, Dir. & I.T. Int.). Therefore a technological foundation exists on which to develop possible I.T. and collaborative online solutions for the VRGN, as the Council I.T. departments currently provide technical support and assistance to the gallery, and the I.T. Managers are currently engaged in state-wide forums regarding the use of I.T. in Council (I.T. Int.).

ii. The technology required to develop collaboration in the first instance is not a barrier to implementation as it is common technology (Microsoft Australia Small Business Centre 2004, National Office for the Information Economy 2003c, Project Coordinator 2004).

iii. Knowledge of the characteristics of collaboration including understanding the dynamics of trust, communication, equality, strategic alliances, knowledge distribution, negotiations and incentives is essential if collaboration is to effectively and productively occur in the gallery network (Black et al. 2002, Phillips, Hardy & Lawrence 1998, Vangen & Huxhman 2003). The findings of the research indicate that collaboration currently occurs in the galleries (Q1-7, 51-57), but it is hampered by a culture that can sometimes work against the sector as a whole (Dir. & Govt. Int.).

iv. A Collaborative Online Network model has been proposed which may enable the gallery sector to share information, encourage communication, coordinate training and professional development opportunities and develop sector-wide research and development projects. The development of the Collaborative Online Network would also assist in addressing the core issue of the research question concerning the provision of cultural product to state audiences through an online environment, and providing incentives to reduce cost and share resources.

v. The eBusiness model that could assist the VRGN in remaining competitive and active is most likely to use the Online Sales model. This model may provide an opportunity to exploit vertical aggregation (Fingar & Aronica 2001, Kalakota & Robinson 2001,
Reuer 2004) of the Victorian arts industry and to develop a portal or ‘vortal’ where the VRGN and its products and services can be marketed on a singular basis to the Internet audience. The Online Sales Model also assists in developing a revenue stream for the galleries which may assist in its long term sustainability.

This work sets out an example of a new operational paradigm for the VRGN, by outlining requirements to develop collaborative strategies for the sector as a whole. The creation of strategic alliances is well documented in the business environment (Reuer 2004, Yoshino & Rangan 1995), but the advantages of these alliances are yet to be realised or tested within the Victorian arts sector.

The research contributes to the body of knowledge in this area by undertaking qualitative and quantitative research into the operations of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network, and in doing so, develops new knowledge in the operations of this sector, and the opportunities offered by collaborative online networks.

### 7.4 Implications for Theory

The research details a schedule of work undertaken in order to address the research problem, and to develop an understanding of the VRGN and its capacity to utilise collaborative online networks and related eBusiness technologies. The Literature Review demonstrated that this research is missing from the list of published material currently available on the sector, revealing scant research pertaining to the Australian arts industry using technology in a collaborative manner (National Office for the Information Economy 2003b).

The research identified for the VRGN to commence an engagement with eBusiness, it may need to consider shifting its business model design which is a traditional design (and product focussed), to one that has the customer needs driving the process.
The application of an eBusiness design may include the development of an Online Sales model; one that is transformed from the single sellers market to one that aggregates products from a variety of suppliers (mostly galleries in the VRGN) to an increased audience and customer base (Figure 7, 8).

[Copyrighted material omitted. Please consult the original thesis.]

As noted in the previous chapter when discussing the Online Sales model, the strategy to develop a single online sales point rather than developing one for each gallery will assist in delivering marketing and promotional advantages, in that a single portal will not be competing with other retail portals from the same sector, and will complement each organisation’s physical and virtual presence.

It also develops a business rule based on collaboration and cooperation, a rule that provides direct financial benefit or incentive to the participating organisations (Vangen & Huxhman 2003).

The research, in developing a collaboration model, may now require field testing on the Victorian galleries and VRGN to further refine the interrelationships of its components to the VRGN. This is especially the case for linking the ingredients included in the collaboration model with those required for the specific collaborative activity; for example different eBusiness models may require different collaborative software and draw on different aspects of collaborative characteristics.
7.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

Whilst this research identifies and discusses the considerations under which a collaborative space in the VRGN could be developed, the outcome of this research can be applied elsewhere. As such, the research has the implication that the theories underlying collaboration within the VRGN could be applied to other groups or organisations within the State (e.g., medical practitioners, accountants, community artists, educationalists) as well as other groups of galleries in other states, on the condition that the driving forces are consistent with the model proposed here.

Other implications for this research include developing closer ties with regional councils, especially as the Best Value Service Review is expected to become the default Local Council strategic plan (Dir., Govt. & I.T. Int.) that will determine the outputs for the galleries.

Furthermore, the findings from the interviews consistently indicated that there are no firm figures or statistical approaches to gathering visitor trends in regional and rural Victorian cultural facilities and cities. Without this information, the real picture of audiences and their movement within the State, cannot be measured or understood.

Lastly, the research proposes a role of the PGAV, one that it may not be able to consider due to external circumstances. This may result in the development of a new Industry Service Organisation for the sector, or herald the changing place of a membership based organisation, one which has greater involvement by its members (as is the case with VAPAC), and which may essentially be driven by sector business plans.
7.6 Implications for Further Research

As mentioned in Chapter One, the research does not provide an overview of purchasing telecommunications for the VRGN, nor does it provide in-depth consideration of the technical requirements to implement, build, project manage and maintain any type of collaborative online network. The initial research identified one type of model that may be applied to a collaborative online network in the VRGN. Future research could involved undertaking a pilot project to trial the Collaborative Online Network and to measure its effectiveness on the pilot group, or to develop other models to be applied to the VRGN.

As also mentioned in the previous sub-section, and in Chapter One, the research has been restricted to the Victorian landscape and its associated conditions. However there is scope to review other networks of regional galleries both within Australia and in other parts of the world, to search for the existence of functional and effective collaborative structures.
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APPENDICES

A.1 RGN Web Checklist

List of organisations:
1. Ararat Gallery  
2. Ballarat Fine Art Gallery  
3. Benalla Art Gallery  
4. Bendigo Art Gallery  
5. Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum  
6. Geelong Art Gallery  
7. Gippsland Art Gallery – Sale  
8. Hamilton Art Gallery  
9. Horsham Regional Art Gallery  
10. Latrobe Regional Gallery  
11. Mildura Arts Centre  
12. Shepparton Art Gallery  
13. Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery  
14. Warmabool Art Gallery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website section headings</th>
<th>Orgs that use section heading</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage of sample (14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitions</td>
<td>2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collections</td>
<td>4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>2, 4, 5, 6, 12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Us</td>
<td>2, 8, 10, 11, 14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>6, 8, 9, 10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links</td>
<td>8, 9, 12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>5, 9, 14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gallery</td>
<td>6, 7, 11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>6, 7, 9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>5, 10, 11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>12, 14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s New</td>
<td>4, 8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>10, 12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History highlights</td>
<td>8, 9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Us</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Us</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join Us</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Exhibition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venues</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual gallery</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Organisations that apply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-commerce 1: (shop and catalogue)</td>
<td>2 - info only; 4 – listing; 5 – listing but no contact details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-commerce 2: (online fulfilment)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection 1: image</td>
<td>2 – single image; 4 – no image; 5 – simple; 6 – few images; 8 – extensive listing;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 – simple paragraph w/ 20 images attached</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection 2: searchable</td>
<td>8 – reference AMOL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs 1: exhibition details</td>
<td>2 – virtual tours; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 12; 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs 2: downloadable</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education 1: program details</td>
<td>2; 4; 6; 8; 10; 11; 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education 2: downloadable</td>
<td>6, 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Tourism Information</td>
<td>8 (map)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship revenue generation</td>
<td>4; 5; 6; 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES**

1. Ararat Gallery  www.arrarat.vic.gov.au  
5. Castlemaine  www.castlemainegallery.com  
8. Hamilton  www.hamiltongallery.org  
9. Horsham  www.horsham.net/gallery  
10. LaTrobe  www.latrobe Regional Gallery.com  
11. Mildura  www.milduraarts.net.au  

**URL by domains**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>1:14</th>
<th>1:14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.gov.au</td>
<td></td>
<td>.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.com</td>
<td>3:14</td>
<td>.net.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.org.au</td>
<td>1:14</td>
<td>Tally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A.2 Interview Questions: Gallery Directors and ISO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business requirements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the business/corporate requirements of the organisation – delve (copy of the Business plan prior to the interview if possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are the business requirements achieved and implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does this determine or impact on operational issues eg. IT spend, programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the primary business objectives of the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe each in detail – how are they formerly defined (in annual report or performance agreements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are the BOs measured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are these measurements used in any forward planning or performance evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does this determine or impact on operational issues eg. IT spend, programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Business Objectives be shared or made common across the VRGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What role does technology play in achieving BOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What role does the web/online play in achieving BOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the constraints of technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the constraints of the online environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the expectations of your stakeholders inc Govt (local/state/federal) and audience(s) (not necessarily related to technology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the gallery meeting the expectations of its stakeholders – how is this measured and demonstrated?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VRGN – these questions related directly to the VRGN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the sector coordinated? Leading question – delve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the VRGN operate as a collective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the role / relevance of industry service organisation like PGAV, MA(V), RAV to assist in delivering BO of the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does a partnership / joint activity work within the VRGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there joint ownership of projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a requirement or need for collaboration in the VRGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a requirement or need for online interaction between the VRGN (this could go to eC applications that may be utilised in other parts of govt ie rates, utilities etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What could be achieved with a VRGN collaborative environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the gallery work with artists or other galleries to create artistic product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the gallery work with other types of organisations or people in the creation of new programming content that can be used by all the parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the gallery work with other galleries to create material that can be used by all participating organisations ie. Marketing material, research, procurement, educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the Organisation use collaboration as a strategy to achieve goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What role does IT play in this collaboration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what areas does the VRGN collaborate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is increased collaboration envisaged for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is being done to achieve this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you provide examples/instances where Collaborative techniques were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used? Or could have been used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was this experience like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you heard of the VAPAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you tell me how they operate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see this organisation as <em>exemplarily</em> for collaborative networks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IT (Information Technology)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the budget available for IT spend – and as a percentage of total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who determines this budget and what capacity has the org to alter or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affect this amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this spend and other business requirements spend allocated on a cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by cost basis, or by an annual allocation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What determines or impacts on this budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who determines the operating environment of the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there plans for BB roll out of municipal services and/or resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Council have a IT strategic plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{copy if available}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it specifically mention the gallery – delve and discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does council develop commercial relationships to be used across all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>own assets/facilities, or does it negotiate on a case by case basis –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goes to IT spend and BB roll out across all council run orgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know if your organisation has the same or similar business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requirements as other regional galleries in other municipalities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do councils collaborate on achieving common business requirements (ie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local tourism, IT, telephony, leasing vehicles, purchasing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a culture of experimentation or investigation of using new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technologies to deliver on business outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there resources to manage digitisation at a local level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there an SOE for council run orgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think is the role of IT in enabling your operations/business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think is the role of BB in enabling your operations/business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What could the environment look like in 5 years time i.e re operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business and in relation to internet / Cn / BB roll out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What proportion is driven by local issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A.3 Interview Questions: I.T. staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IT (Information Technology)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the budget available for IT spend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who determines this budget and what capacity has the gallery to alter or affect this amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this spend allocated on a cost by cost basis, or by an annual allocation to the gallery?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What determines or impacts on this budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there projects to aggregate demand on business requirements across municipalities with a view to spreading expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who determines the operating environment of the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there plans for BB roll out of municipal services and/or resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What determines BB roll out (apart from the presence/absence of BB infrastructure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: what is the status of BB network in the regional area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Council have a IT strategic plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{Example}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it specifically mention the gallery – delve and discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does council develop commercial relationships to be applied across all of its owned facilities, or does it negotiate on a case by case, institution by institution basis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there shared or common business requirements for council municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do councils collaborate on achieving common business requirements (ie local tourism, IT, telephony, leasing vehicles, purchasing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a culture of experimentation or investigation of using new technologies to deliver on business outcomes within council {example}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there resources to manage digitisation and interoperability at a local level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there an SOE for council operated organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the council internally manage its IT requirements, inc the gallery?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does council support the establishment of Collaborative networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the role of IT in enabling businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the role of BB in enabling businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What could the environment look like in 5 years time i.e re business and in relation to internet / Cn / BB roll out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the drivers for IT policy to regional areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What proportion is driven by local issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does Council support the development of IT to regional areas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What strategies, program are in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are their objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are they managed and measured and evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is responsibility allocated across municipalities and jurisdictions (inc State, and Federal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the role of commercial entities in delivering IT services to regional area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what ways can/does govt directly or indirectly support commercial opportunities in regional areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any case studies or examples which may be relevant or pertinent to his study esp BB networks or IT suppliers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A.4 Interview Questions: Arts Victoria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see collaboration as a useful tool?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the galleries / ISO could use collaboration as a strategy to achieve goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What role would you see IT / online playing in this collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware of any areas in which the galleries / ISO currently collaborate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the levels of collaboration between the galleries / ISO should increase in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can be done to achieve this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Business requirements**

| What does AV expect from the individual galleries / ISO ie performance, outcomes, audiences etc– delve esp re number of shows |
| Are there common requirements that govt seeks from the galleries / ISO? that can applied to each org? or to the ISO? (exhibitions, income revenue – shop – digitisation, public programs, education etc) |
| Do you think there are generic primary business objectives that can applied to the galleries / ISO |
| What are the roles of the ISO in relation to delivering govt policy / priorities for the VRGN |
| Expand |
| Does AV independently assess the organisations to determine if they are achieving their stated BOs : if not how are they substantiated or reported to AV |
| Is this sufficient |
| Role of Council’s Best Value Service Review |
| How are these measurements used in any forward planning or performance evaluation |
| Does this determine or impact on support to the organisation |
| What role does technology/web/online play in the organisations achieving their Bos |
| What are the constraints of technology / online technology for the organisations |
| Who are your stakeholders |
| What are the expectations of your stakeholders re the VRGN |
| Are the organisations (and the VRGN) meeting the expectations of its stakeholders – how is this measured |
**VRGN**

Does the VRGN operate as a collective  
What is the role / relevance of industry service organisations like PGAV, MA(V), RAV to assist in delivering BO for organisations  
How does a partnership / joint activity work  
Is there joint ownership of projects  
Is there a requirement or need for collaboration in the VRGN  
Is there a requirement or need for online interaction within each organisation (this could go to eC applications that may be utilised in other parts of govt ie rates, utilities etc)  
Should ISOs (PGAV, MA(V), VAPAC) be a conduit to govt? or be an endorsed communication channel to sector  
What could be achieved with a VRGN collaborative environment  
Is the sector coordinated? Leading question – delve

**IT (Information Technology)**

Do councils collaborate on achieving common business requirements (ie local tourism, IT, telephony, leasing vehicles, purchasing  
Is there a culture of experimentation or investigation by the councils, galleries and ISO of using new technologies to deliver on business outcomes  
Are there resources to manage digitisation and interoperability at a local level  
Is there an SOE for council run orgs  
What do you think is the role of IT in enabling the business of the organisation and the VRGN  
What could the environment look like in 5 years time i.e re business and in relation to internet / Cn / BB roll out  
What proportion of this environment is driven by local issues
A.5 Interview Questions: Victorian Association of Performing Art Centres (VAPAC)

Question

Business requirements

1. What are the business/corporate requirements of VAPAC – delve (copy of the Business plan prior to the interview if possible)
2. How are the business requirements achieved and implemented
3. Does this determine or impact on operational issues eg. IT spend, programming
4. What are the primary business objectives of the organisation
5. Describe each in detail – how are they formerly defined (in annual report or performance agreements)
6. How are the BOs measured
7. How are these measurements used in any forward planning or performance evaluation
8. Does this determine or impact on operational issues eg. IT spend, programming
9. What role does technology play in achieving Bos
10. What role does the web/online play in achieving BOs
11. What are the expectations of your stakeholders inc Govt (local/state/federal) and audience{s} (not necessarily related to technology)
12. Is VAPAC meeting the expectations of its stakeholders – how is this measured and demonstrated?

IT (Information Technology)

13. What is the IT budget for VAPAC
14. Who determines this budget and what capacity has the org to alter or affect this amount
15. What determines or impacts on this budget
16. Who determines the operating environment of the organisation
17. Do councils collaborate on achieving common business requirements (ie local tourism, IT, telephony, leasing vehicles, purchasing
18. Is there a culture of experimentation or investigation in Councils of using new technologies to deliver on business outcomes
19. Are there resources to manage digitisation at a local level
20. Is there an SOE for council run orgs
21. What do you think is the role of IT / BB in enabling your operations/business
22. What could the environment look like in 5 years time i.e re operations/business and in relation to internet / Cn / BB roll out
23. What proportion is driven by local issues
VPACN – these questions related directly to the VPACN

24. Is the sector coordinated? Leading question – delve
25. Does the VPACN operate as a collective
26. What is the role / relevance of industry service organisation like VAPAC, RAV, AAPAC to assist in delivering BO of the organisation
27. How does a partnership / joint activity work within the VPACN
28. Is there joint ownership of projects
29. Is there a requirement or need for collaboration in the VPACN
30. Is there a requirement or need for online interaction between the VPACN (this could go to eC applications that may be utilised in other parts of govt ie rates, utilities etc)
31. What could be achieved with a VPACN collaborative environment

Collaboration

32. Does VAPAC work with artists or other galleries to create artistic product
33. Does VAPAC work with other types of organisations or people in the creation of new programming content that can be used by all the parties
34. Does VAPAC work with other PACs to create material that can be used by all participating organisations ie. Marketing material, research, procurement, educational
35. Does VAPAC use collaboration as a strategy to achieve goals?
36. Expand
37. What role does IT play in this collaboration
38. In what areas does the VPACN collaborate?
39. Expand
40. Is increased collaboration envisaged for the future
41. What is being done to achieve this
42. Can you provide examples/instances where Collaborative techniques were used? Or could have been used
43. What was this experience like?
### A.6 Questionnaire

**PART ONE**

These questions require you to identify the extent to which you agree with the statement. Circle / bold-out the number that best describes the extent to which you agree with the statement. Choose only one answer, or leave blank if unsure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions: Regional Gallery Directors</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GALLERIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 The gallery collaborates with artists</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The gallery collaborates with administrators</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The gallery collaborates with other galleries in the Victorian regional gallery network</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The gallery collaborates with other galleries (outside of the Victorian regional gallery network)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The gallery collaborates to achieve business objectives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 The gallery collaborates to achieve council objectives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 The gallery collaborates to achieve government objectives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VICTORIAN REGIONAL GALLERY NETWORK (VRGN)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 The VRGN has a shared set of values</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 The VRGN has common administrative requirements</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10 The VRGN has common business objectives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 The VRGN operates as a collective</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 The VRGN collaborates with each other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13 The VRGN collaborates with each other in programming areas</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 The VRGN collaborates with each other in administrative areas</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 The VRGN collaborates in a formal way</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 The VRGN collaborates in an informal way</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COLLABORATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Collaboration in the VRGN requires spontaneous relationships for it to be effective.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Collaboration in the VRGN requires leadership from govt for it to be effective</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 Collaboration in the VRGN requires leadership from Council for it to be effective</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Collaboration in the VRGN requires leadership from gallery directors for it to be effective</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Collaboration in the VRGN requires leadership from an Industry Service Organisation (PGAV, MAV, RAV) for it to effective</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Council actively supports collaboration</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Government actively supports collaboration</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 Industry Service Organisations (ISO) are important for the effective operation of the VRGN (note: as distinct from the ISO’s members)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions: Regional Gallery Directors</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 ISOs coordinate and act on issues that are important to the members of the VRGN</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 ISOs are the most effective mechanism to facilitate collaboration between the members of the VRGN</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (I.T.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 There is a common I.T. environment across the VRGN</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 There is an Standard Operating Environment within the gallery</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 Council determines the I.T. infrastructure of the gallery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 The gallery drives I.T. developments in the gallery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Council drives I.T. developments in the gallery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Government drives I.T. development in the gallery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 I.T. infrastructure is easily available to the gallery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Broadband infrastructure is easily available to the gallery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 I.T. is well utilised by the gallery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 I.T. is well utilised by the VRGN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 I.T. plays an important role in the delivery of collaboration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 VRGN understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 Council understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>40 Government understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>41 Council has an I.T. strategic plan that incorporates the gallery’s activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 The gallery has an I.T. strategic plan that incorporates its activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>ONLINE</td>
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<tr>
<td>43 Online technologies facilitate collaboration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>44 Online technologies are available for use by the gallery</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>45 Online technologies are available for use by the VRGN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>46 The gallery uses its website to achieve its objectives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 The gallery uses the online environment to transact business functions ie. banking, purchasing, office supplies, payment of bills [example]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 The gallery uses the online environment to receive information required for its business functions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 The gallery uses the online environment to communicate with its audiences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 The gallery uses the online environment to communicate with its stakeholders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART TWO

These questions require you to identify the frequency at which the items may occur. Tick or place an X in the box that best describes your response. Choose only one answer, or leave blank if unsure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Quarterly</th>
<th>Annually</th>
<th>other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you collaborate on research activities?</td>
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<td>How often do you collaborate on public programs?</td>
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<td>How often do you collaborate on exhibitions?</td>
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<td>How often do you collaborate on marketing?</td>
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<td>How often do you collaborate on tourism initiatives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do you collaborate on education programs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do you collaborate in other areas?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PART THREE

These questions require a “Yes” or “No” response. Circle / Bold-out the answer that best describes your response to the question. Choose only one answer, or leave blank if unsure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you co-author catalogues?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you co-present exhibitions or public programs with other galleries?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you produce content or product that can be used by other organisations?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you communicate on marketing or tourism initiatives with other organisations?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you undertake research projects that include other municipalities?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEFINITIONS TO BE APPLIED TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

This questionnaire focuses primarily on the subject of collaboration. For the purposes of this questionnaire only, collaboration refers to the act of working together to create a new body of work or activity, as distinct to the definition of cooperation, which is the act of working together to one end.

COLLABORATION: The act of performing or creating work together, especially artistic, literary or scientific work.

COOPERATION: The act of working or operating together to one end; joint operation; concurrent effort or labour.

VICTORIAN REGIONAL GALLERY NETWORK: The list is inclusive of all organisations in receipt of recurrent funding from Arts Victoria excluding Heide Park and Art Gallery (Bulleen - outer metropolitan), McClelland Gallery and Studio Park (Frankston – outer metropolitan), Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery (Mornington Peninsula – outer metropolitan), Monash Gallery of Art (Wheelers Hill – metropolitan)

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES: Those objectives that are formally documented or stated and that which describe the key business focus of the organisation.

PROGRAMMING: that area of the gallery’s activities that results in a public presentation or component of a public presentation.

SPONTANEOUS RELATIONSHIPS: relationships that were not pre-emptively planned, or overtly managed.

COUNCIL: refers to your specific local council entities

GOVERNMENT: refers to state government entities

IT: information technology – most commonly used to describe computer hardware or software, and telecommunications products or services such as telephone systems, broadband networks or the internet.

ONLINE TECHNOLOGIES: the software and hardware that is used to engage in the online environment

STANDARD OPERATING ENVIRONMENT: the IT environment in the Organisation or Council

ONLINE ENVIRONMENT: the environment that can only be accessed through a telephone line, broadband network or similar type technology ie: internet, extranet, intranet
A.7 Questionnaire Results

A.7.1 Question and responses 1 – 7 - Galleries

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements regarding the gallery in which they work and any collaborative activity.

The questions and responses in this section are as follows and returned the following responses:

1. The gallery collaborates with artists

![Chart 1: The gallery collaborates with artists]

Chart 1: respondents returned either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ to this question, indicating that there is agreement by the galleries in collaborating with artists.

2. The gallery collaborates with administrators

![Chart 2: The gallery collaborates with administrators]

Chart 2: the majority of respondents (+90%) either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates with administrators.
3. The gallery collaborates with other galleries in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network

Chart 3: the majority of respondents (80%) either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates with other galleries in the Victorian Regional Gallery Network, whilst just over 10% 'disagree' with this statement.

4. The gallery collaborates with other galleries (outside of the Victorian regional gallery network)

Chart 4: over 80% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates with other galleries (outside the VRGN). This indicates strong support for collaboration outside of the local network.
5. The gallery collaborates to achieve business objectives

Chart 5: approximately 70% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates to achieve business outcomes. 28% of the respondents alternately either ‘disagree’ with this statement, or selected ‘neither’.

6. The gallery collaborates to achieve council objectives

Chart 6: 80% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates to achieve council objectives, with 20% selecting either ‘disagree’ or ‘neither’.

7. The gallery collaborates to achieve government objectives

Chart 7: approximately two thirds (67%) of the respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery collaborates to achieve council objectives, with the remaining selecting ‘neither’.

Comment

All of the responses to these questions returned a majority response that was no less than “agree”. Of significance the “strongly agree” majority responses were for:

- Question 1 The gallery collaborates with artists
- Question 3 The gallery collaborates with other galleries in the Victorian regional gallery network, and
- Question 5 The gallery collaborates to achieve business objectives

Question 7 returned the highest number of responses that chose “neither” at 31.25 %

The galleries see themselves as collaborating across a variety of areas including with artists, administrators, the Victorian Regional Gallery Network and galleries in other states. The majority of the questions returned combined responses of “agreed” to “strongly agreed” above 80%, with artists and administrators returning responses above 90%.

The galleries also see collaboration as a way to achieve council objectives, as well as those of their business and government objectives (although some saw the latter two as less applicable).

A.7.2 Questions and responses 8 – 16 – Victorian Regional Gallery Network

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements regarding the Victorian Regional Gallery Network.

The questions and responses in this section are as follows:

8. The VRGN has a shared set of values

![Chart 8: The VRGN has a shared set of values](image)

Chart 8: 47% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the VRGN has a shared set of values, with 33% selecting ‘neither’ and 20% ‘disagree’. As such, over one half do not at least ‘agree’ with this statement.
9. The VRGN has common administrative requirements

Chart 9: 40% of respondents ‘agree’ that the VRGN has common administrative requirements, with one third of the respondents selecting ‘neither’ and over one quarter of the respondents selecting either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’.

10. The VRGN has common business objectives

Chart 10: 53% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the VRGN has common objectives. 27% selected ‘neither’ and 20% ‘disagree’ with the statement.

11. The VRGN operates as a collective

Chart 11: approximately 43% of respondents either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ that the VRGN operates as a collective. 50% of respondents selected ‘neither’, with only 7% selecting ‘agree’.
12. The VRGN collaborates with each other

Chart 12: 60% of respondents ‘agree’ with the statement that the VRGN collaborates with each other whilst 13% ‘selected ‘disagree’ and over a quarter (27%) selecting ‘neither’.

13. The VRGN collaborates with each other in programming areas

Chart 13: 46% ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the VRGN collaborates with each other in programming areas, with approximately one quarter (27%) of respondents either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. The remaining 27% selected ‘neither’.

14. The VRGN collaborates with each other in administrative areas

Chart 14: 50% of respondents selected ‘neither’ in regards to the statement that the VRGN collaborates with each other in administrative areas. 43% of respondents either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, whilst only 7% selecting ‘agree’.

15. The VRGN collaborates in a formal way

Chart 15: 40% of the respondents selected ‘neither’ when asked whether the VRGN collaborates in a formal way, with one third (33%) selecting either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ and 27% selecting ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’, indicating that the respondents do not necessarily view collaboration as occurring on a formal basis within the VRGN.

16. The VRGN collaborates in an informal way

Chart 16: approximately 67% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that collaboration occurs informally within the VRGN, with only 13% selecting ‘disagree’. Given the results to the previous statement, responses to this question indicate that the gallery directors see collaboration occurring more often as a result of informal structures, than in formal structures.

**Comment**

The respondents were ambivalent about a shared set of values and common administrative requirements, although just over one-half agreed there are common business objectives. Almost one-half of the respondents do not believe the VRGN operates as a collective, although they do think it collaborates with each other, although 46% note that this collaboration occurs in programming areas, with responses spread regarding administrative areas (50% selecting “neither”). However the respondents clearly agree with the informal manner in which collaboration occurs (67%), which is consistent with the findings in Question 17, regarding spontaneous relationships (53%).
A.7.3 Questions and responses 17 – 26 - Collaboration

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements regarding collaboration.

The questions and responses in this section are as follows:

17. Collaboration in the VRGN requires spontaneous relationships for it to be effective

Chart 17: 53% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that spontaneous relationships are required to achieve effective collaboration within the VRGN, with a total of 47% selecting ‘neither’ and ‘disagree’.

18. Collaboration in the VRGN requires leadership from govt for it to be effective

Chart 18: one third of respondents (33%) selected either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ when asked if collaboration requires leadership from government for it to be effective. Responses to both ‘neither’ and ‘agree’ were level at 33%.
19. Collaboration in the VRGN requires leadership from council for it to be effective

Chart 19: similarly, responses to a statement that collaboration in the VRGN requires leadership from council to be effective, 47% of respondents selected either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, with 13% of respondents selecting ‘agree’. The return for ‘neither’ was higher than the previous question at 40%.

20. Collaboration in the VRGN requires leadership from gallery directors for it to be effective

Chart: 93% of respondents selected ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ against the statement that the VRGN requires leadership from gallery directors for it to be effective. This indicates significant support for this statement, especially when viewed in relationship to the responses to the previous two questions.
21. Collaboration in the VRGN requires leadership from an Industry Service Organisation for it to be effective

Chart 21: responses also indicate that there is support for the statement that collaboration requires leadership from the industry service organisations for it to be effective, as 20% of respondents selected ‘neither’, and there were no selections of ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’.

22. Council actively supports collaboration

Chart 22: more than half (53%) either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement that council actively supports collaboration, with 27% selecting either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, and 20% selecting ‘neither’.
23. Government actively supports collaboration

Chart 23: one third of respondents selected ‘disagree’ and one third ‘agree’ regarding the statement that government actively supports collaboration. Responses to ‘neither’ were 27%, and 7% for ‘strongly agree’. As such, 40% either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement.

24. Industry Service Organisations (ISO) are important for the effective operation of the VRGN (note: as distinct from the ISO’s members)

Chart 24: 47% of the respondents either ‘agree” or ‘strongly agree’ that ISOs are important for the effective operation of the Victorian Regional Gallery Network (as distinct from being effective from the perspective of its membership). 13% selected ‘disagree’ with more than a third (40%) selecting ‘neither’.
25. ISO coordinate and act on issues that are important to the members of the VRGN

Chart 25: 53% of respondents selected either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ against the statement that ISOs coordinate and act on issues that are important to the members of the VRGN. Although no responses selected ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, 47% selected ‘neither’ in response to this statement.

26. ISO are the most effective mechanism to facilitate collaboration between the members of the VRGN

Chart 26: 27% respondents selected ‘disagree’, whilst 27% of respondents selected ‘agree’ to ‘strongly agree’ to the statement that ISO are the most effective mechanism to facilitate collaboration between the members of the VRGN. The highest response rate was for ‘neither’ at 47% suggesting that there is not a strong opinion either way about this statement.

Comment

Responses to these questions indicate that collaboration on the whole is not necessarily considered a high priority by the galleries. Half of the respondents indicated that collaboration requires spontaneity to be effective, whilst the respondents see little value or leadership from the government or council. A significant majority (93%) believe collaboration requires leadership from the gallery directors and over 80% indicated that it also requires leadership from the ISO, even though the responses conversely indicated that the gallery directors are divided on the effectiveness of the ISO to facilitate collaboration between the galleries.
A.7.4 Questions and responses 27 – 42 – Information Technology

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with statements regarding the operation and implementation of Information Technology (I.T.) as it is applied in galleries and its role in delivering collaboration.

The questions and responses in this section are as follows:

27. There is a common I.T. environment across the VRGN

![Chart 27: There is a common I.T. environment across the VRGN]

Chart 27: 33% of respondents selected ‘agree’ to the statement that there is a common I.T. environment across the arts, with over one quarter selecting ‘neither’ and 40% ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ with the statement.

28. There is an Standard Operating Environment within the gallery

![Chart 28: There is an Standard Operating Environment within the gallery]

Chart 28: Over70% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement that there is an SOE in the gallery, with 13% selecting ‘disagree’ and the remaining 13% ‘neither’.
29. Council determines the I.T. infrastructure of the gallery

Chart 29: similarly, 67% of respondents indicated that they either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement that council determines the I.T. infrastructure of the gallery, with over one quarter (27%) either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ with the statement.

30. The gallery drives I.T. developments in the gallery

Chart 30: 47% of the respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery drives I.T. developments in the gallery, with 27% of respondents selecting either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. As such over one quarter of organisations neither ‘agree’ nor ‘disagree’ with the statement.
31. Council drives I.T. developments in the gallery

Chart 31: 47% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement that Council drives I.T. developments in the gallery, with one third of respondents selecting either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. 20% of the respondents selected ‘neither’ in response to this statement.

32. Government drives I.T. development in the gallery

Chart 32: more than half of the respondents (53%) either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ that government drives I.T. development in the gallery, with a correspondingly high response rate for ‘neither’ (47%). There were no responses for either ‘agree’ or strongly agree’, indicating that the directors shared a perception that government does not drive I.T.
33. I.T. infrastructure is easily available to the gallery

Chart 33: Over one quarter of respondents either ‘disagree’ or strongly disagree’ that I.T. infrastructure is easily available to the gallery, whilst 47% ‘agree’ that it is. 27% selected ‘neither’ in response to this statement.

34. Broadband infrastructure is easily available to the gallery

Chart 34: 64% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that broadband infrastructure is easily available to the gallery, whilst 21% ‘disagree’ and 14% selected ‘neither’.
35. I.T. is well utilised by the gallery

Chart 35: Over half (53%) of the respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that I.T. is well utilised by the gallery. 20% of respondents ‘disagree’ with this statement and over one quarter (27%) selected ‘neither’.

36. I.T. is well utilised by the VRGN

Chart 36: 36% of respondents ‘agree’ that I.T. is well utilised by the VRGN, with 43% selecting ‘neither’. 21% of the respondents ‘disagree’ with this statement, which in contrast to responses to the previous statement, suggests that directors may feel that I.T. is better utilised by the gallery, than it is by the Victorian Regional Gallery Network.
37. I.T. plays an important role in the delivery of collaboration

Chart 37: 58% of respondents selected ‘agree’ to the statement that I.T. plays an important role in the delivery of collaboration. 21% of respondents selected ‘neither’ and ‘disagree’, indicating that the majority of directors acknowledge a role for I.T. in collaboration.

38. VRGN understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration

Chart 38: 21% of respondents ‘disagree’ that the Victorian Regional Gallery Network understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration, with 36% selecting ‘agree’. The remaining 43% selected ‘neither’, indicating there is a large proportion of Directors who are undecided in this matter.
39. Council understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration

Chart 39: 47% of respondents selected ‘neither’ in response to the statement that Council understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration. The responses for ‘disagree’ (13%), were approximately one third of those of ‘agree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ (40%).

40. Government understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration

Chart 40: more than half the respondents (53%) ‘agree’ that Government understands the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration, with 40% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and 7% selecting ‘disagree’.
41. Council has an I.T. strategic plan that incorporates the gallery’s activities

Chart 41: responses to this question indicate that 40% of respondents ‘disagree’ with the statement that Council has an I.T. strategic plan, with 40% selecting ‘neither’ and the remaining 20% ‘agree’.

42. The gallery has an I.T. strategic plan that incorporates its activities

Chart 42: 40% of respondents also ‘disagree’ that the gallery has an I.T. strategic plan, whilst slightly less than the previous statement selected ‘neither’ (33%). Approximately one quarter of the respondents selected ‘agree’ (which is slightly higher than responses received to the previous question).

Taken together, responses to Qs.41 and 42 indicate that 40% of gallery directors consider that neither council nor the gallery has an I.T. strategic plan that incorporates the gallery’s activities.

Comment:
This area is one where there is a high frequency of responses that spread equally across the ‘disagree’, ‘neither’ and ‘agree’ scale, indicating that there is no commonality or consistency in the way in which I.T. is being implemented, utilised and considered for the gallery and VRGN sector.

Results indicate that there is not a common I.T. environment implemented across the VRGN, although galleries do tend to have a standard operating environment that is determined by council (a finding that was also substantiated by the interviews). Responses to statements
regarding I.T. and broadband availability show that on the whole it is readily available to the galleries, although opinion is divided about how well it is utilised by the galleries and VRGN. (Note: responses to the interviews indicate that most galleries, when referring to I.T., normally mean email and discussion lists).

The majority of respondents indicated that I.T. plays an important role in collaboration, yet the VRGN and council are perceived as not having an understanding of this; 53% of respondents did however acknowledge that government had an understanding of the role of I.T. in facilitating collaboration. Only 20% of respondents agreed that council had an I.T. plan incorporating the gallery, whilst at the same time 27% of the galleries indicated that they have an I.T. plan for the gallery.

### A.7.5 Questions and responses 43 - 50 - Online

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements regarding the availability and use of the online environment.

The questions and responses in this section are as follows:

43. **Online technologies facilitate collaboration**

![Chart 43](chart.png)

Chart 43: 60% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that online technologies facilitate collaboration. 7% selected ‘disagree’ whilst one third neither agree nor disagree with the statement.
44. Online technologies are available for use by the gallery

Chart 44: 60% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that online technologies are available for use by the gallery, with approximately one quarter neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement and 13% selecting ‘disagree’.

45. Online technologies are available for use by the VRGN

Chart 45: less than half (43%) of the respondents ‘agree’ that online technologies are available for use by the VRGN, whilst exactly half neither ‘agree’ nor ‘disagree’. 7% selected ‘disagree’ to the statement.
46. The gallery uses its website to achieve its objectives

Chart 46: approximately 43% of respondents selected ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ to the statement that the gallery uses its website to achieve its objectives. Exactly half of the respondents selected ‘agree’ to the statement, with 7% selecting ‘neither’, suggesting that the group of directors are equally divided on the use of their gallery websites to achieve organisational objectives.

47. The gallery uses the online environment to transact business functions ie. banking, purchasing, office supplies, payment of bills

Chart 47: 47% of respondents ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ that the gallery uses the online environment to transact business functions, with over a third (40%) agreeing with the statement. 13% selected ‘neither’ in response to this statement.
48. The gallery uses the online environment to receive information required for its business functions

Chart 48: more than two-thirds of the respondents (67%) ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery uses the online environment to receive information required for its business functions, with 13% selecting ‘disagree’ and 20% selecting neither ‘agree’ nor ‘disagree’.

49. The gallery uses the online environment to communicate with its audiences

Chart 49: more than one-third (40%) of the respondents ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ that the gallery uses the online environment to communicate with its audiences, whilst 47% ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with this statement. 13% neither ‘agree’ nor ‘disagree’ with this statement.
50. The gallery uses the online environment to communicate with its stakeholders

Chart 50: 47% of respondents ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the gallery uses its online environment to communicate with its stakeholders, whilst one third (33%) ‘disagree’ and 20% neither ‘agree’ nor ‘disagree’.

Comment

The majority of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that online technologies are available for use by the galleries and VRGN with 60% agreeing that online technologies facilitated collaboration. The manner in which galleries use the online environment and their websites however, does not show a consistent activity or common approach. 67% did agree that the online environment is used for business functions, although statements targeting business transactions and communication with stakeholders and audiences returned a responses from across the scales.
A.7.6 Questions and responses 51 – 57 - Part 2

These questions asked the respondents to indicate the frequency with which the activity identified in the statements occurred.

The questions and responses in this section are as follows:

51. How often do you collaborate on research activities?

Chart 51: responses of 21%, 29% and 29% were scored against ‘not at all’, ‘weekly’ and ‘monthly’ for the question regarding how often collaboration occurred on research activities. ‘Quarterly’ and ‘annually’ returned responses 14% and 7% respectively. There was no response for ‘daily’ and ‘other’.

52. How often do you collaborate on public programs?

Chart 52: more than half of responses selected ‘monthly’ and ‘quarterly’ (29% each), with ‘weekly’ 21% the next highest of the scales when asked how often collaboration occurred on public programs. Responses of 7% were received for ‘not at all’, ‘annually’ and ‘other’. There were no response for ‘daily’.
53. How often do you collaborate on exhibitions?

Chart 53: over one-third (36%) of respondents selected ‘monthly’ in response to the question about frequency of collaboration on exhibitions. ‘Quarterly’ was selected by 21% of respondents, with ‘weekly’, ‘annually’ and ‘other’ receiving 14% response rates. ‘Daily’ and ‘not at all’ were not selected.

54. How often do you collaborate on marketing?

Chart 54: 31% of respondents to the question regarding the frequency of collaboration on marketing activities, selected ‘quarterly’, with ‘monthly’ receiving 23%. ‘Annually’ and ‘other’ each received 15% of the selected responses, with the remaining two scales each receiving 8%. ‘Daily’ was not selected.
55. How often do you collaborate on tourism initiatives?

Chart 55: over one half (54%) of respondents selected ‘annually’ in response to the question regarding collaboration on tourism initiatives. ‘Quarterly’ received the next highest response rate at 23%, the remaining scales each registering 7% except ‘daily’ and ‘weekly’ which were not selected.

56. How often do you collaborate on education programs?

57. How often do you collaborate in other areas?

![Chart 57: How often do you collaborate in other areas?]

Chart 57: ‘Quarterly received the highest responses rate at 31%, followed by ‘monthly’ at 23%. Responses to ‘not at all’ and ‘weekly’ each received 15%. ‘Daily’ and ‘other’ received 8% and ‘annually’ was not selected.

**Comment**

The questions regarding the frequency of collaboration showed responses spread across the scale. Responses to “research activities” tended to the ‘weekly/monthly’ scale (57%); “public programs” returned ‘monthly/quarterly’ scale (57%), “exhibition” returned a ‘monthly/quarterly’ scale (57%), “marketing”, a ‘monthly/quarterly’ scale (54%), “tourism initiatives” had respondents returning in the ‘quarterly/annually’ scale (77%), and “education programs” returned a ‘quarterly’ scale (33%). On the whole, these results indicate an active program of collaboration within the gallery environment, with collaboration least likely to occur on a daily basis.

These results may go some way to interpreting the responses received in the Collaboration section (questions 17-26), in that collaboration occurs on the terms of the individual gallery directors, and is not overly influenced by other organisations or I.T.
A.7.7 Questions and responses 58 – 62 - Part 3

These questions asked the respondents to indicate a Yes / No response to questions posed regarding other activities within the VRGN.

The questions and responses in this section are as follows:

58. Do you co-author catalogues?

![Chart 58: The majority of respondents (60%) selected ‘no’ in response to the question about co-authoring catalogues.](chart)

59. Do you co-present exhibitions or public programs with other galleries?

![Chart 59: close to three-quarters (73%) of respondents selected ‘yes’ in response to the question about co-presentation of exhibitions or public programs with other galleries.](chart)
60. Do you produce content or product that can be used by other organisations?

Chart 60: every respondent (100%) selected ‘yes’ to the question regarding product that can be shared by other organisations, indicating that there may be support for the concept of increased sharing of information across the sector.

61. Do you communicate on marketing or tourism initiatives with other organisations?

Chart 61: 67% of the respondents selected ‘yes’ to the question regarding communication on marketing or tourism initiatives with other organisations, indicating that approximately two-thirds of the respondents are working with other organisations in this area.
62. Do you undertake research projects that include other municipalities?

Chart 62: 67% of respondents selected ‘no’ to the question regarding whether research projects are undertaken with other municipalities. This may indicate that research projects are predominantly contained within the organisation or local area, and do not cross over into other municipalities. Alternately, it indicates that one-third (33%) of the respondents are undertaking research with other municipalities and therefore creating projects that extend beyond their own municipal borders.

Comment

The galleries responded that they tend to keep research activities within their own municipalities, even though they will use collaboration for marketing and tourism initiatives. There is an overwhelming support for the collaborative presentation of public programs with other galleries (70%). Most importantly though, responses to this part of the questionnaire showed a 100% response to producing ‘content or product that can be used by other organisations’. This was the only question to receive a unanimous response, and as such lends weight to the central task of the research i.e., that information can be shared amongst the group, and this sharing may occur through shared research projects, tourism or marketing initiatives, or through the co-presentation of exhibitions or public programs. Furthermore responses to this part of the questionnaire indicate that there is scope for organisations to work with each other on a variety of fronts, either cooperatively creating material, or repurposing existing material.
Dear

My name is James Harley and I am currently undertaking research into Online Collaborative Networks in the Victorian Regional Gallery Sector. This study is being undertaken as part of a Masters of Applied Science – Building – Project at RMIT in the School of Property, Construction and Project Management. The area in which I am undertaking research is the Victorian subsidised gallery sector and the way in which it can exploit digital technologies to achieve business objectives. The research seeks to identify the most appropriate and effective way that the State government can assist in the take up of digital technologies. As such the research is primarily concerned with identifying an appropriate environment in which these digital technologies can be expanded upon, applied and utilised.

At the heart of the study lies the fundamental question, “What is the best way collaborative online technology can be used by the gallery sector, and what role can Government play?” In answering this question, I will also attempt to flesh out some general concepts of collaboration, and the part it plays in an online networked environment.

The research has three broad objectives.

- the identification of an appropriate model of collaborative networks using internet technology that can be applied to the target group;
- the analysis of the operating environment of the target group that will determine the implementation of the collaborative network;
- the identification of the role, function and activity of the Victorian Government in supporting the proposed implementation.

As part of the information collecting process, I am writing to invite you to participate in a one-to-one interview. The interview will take no longer than one hour and will be conducted at your place of work, or a mutually convenient site chosen by you. I seek your permission to audiotape the interview for accuracy and later analysis and transcription purposes. Your comments will not be directly attributable to you or your organisation. You may withdraw from the interview at any time, and any unprocessed data may also be withdrawn at your request.

If you are willing to consent to being interviewed for this research, can you please complete and retain the attached consent form for collection at the time of interview. Please contact me directly, or my supervisor at RMIT on telephone: 9925 2230, if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

James Harley
Masters Applied Science - Candidate

Associate Professor Peter Stewart PhD
Head of School
Property, Construction and Project Management
Senior Supervisor

0438 854 988
9925 2230
A.9 Ethics Letters – consent form

Consent form for persons providing non-confidential information

Name of interviewee:

Project Title: Online Collaborative Networks in the Victorian Regional Gallery Sector

You share the copyright in your tape-recorded interview. This includes the rights to edit, reproduce, publish, broadcast, transmit, perform or adapt the interview. This form asks you to give your copyright to James Harley. However, this form also lets you put restrictions on how the interview may be used during your lifetime and it does not stop you from using the interview yourself.

I, __________ assign to James Harley any copyright owned by me in the interview recorded on (date) on the understanding that James Harley will use the interview, or allow others to use it, only on the following conditions:

1. Conditions: The interview may be listened to, read and cited for research purposes but anyone wanting to edit, reproduce, publish, broadcast, transmit or adapt the interview during my lifetime must get my written permission first, unless reasonable attempts to contact me are unsuccessful. I understand that I may send change of address notices to James Harley.

I understand that the audiotapes of the interviews will be held in RMIT’s School Archive where it will remain for five years, or any period identified by RMIT as appropriate. I also understand that I will receive a copy of any transcript that is made, that I may delete any information from this transcript, and that I am granted permission to reproduce, publish, broadcast, transmit, perform or adapt the interview myself.

I further understand that although comments made in the interviews will NOT be directly attributable to me, that my identity may be known through identification of the organisation and position details being included in the study, and that as such, I may withdraw from the research at any given time.

Interviewee: 

Name: 
Address: 
Telephone: 

Investigator: James Harley

Signature: ...........................................................................................................
Date: .............................................................................................................

Signature: ...........................................................................................................

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Secretary, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, University Secretariat, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 9925 1745.
Details of the complaints procedure are available from the above address.