

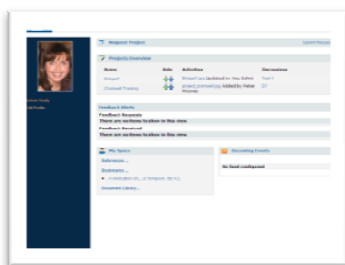
A Virtual Research Environment for the Humanities

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Trinity College Dublin, Softedge (an Irish SME) and Microsoft have collaborated to build a VRE for Humanities researchers.

It involves the extension of proven technologies to bring together existing collaboration, communication, search and social networking technologies into a single coherent framework. The VRE has been created by enhancing the Core Microsoft Research Information Centre (RIC) framework for use by Humanities researchers (1). Another version is currently under development for the Biomedical Sciences, at the British Library in partnership with Microsoft Research (2).

The first phase of the project consisted of the following main elements:



Personal Portal

Developing an enhanced User Interface (UI):

The original user interface (UI) of the Microsoft RIC was inadequate for our target audience – the Humanities researchers. In order to enlarge the user population, the UI has been made more intuitive. This was done by actively obtaining inputs from the TCD Humanities researchers.



Project Portal -
Review Literature

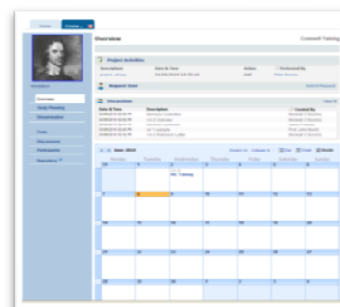
Developing connectors to selected Humanities digital content:

From within RIC, search queries can be submitted to multiple information sources and the results presented in a single window. Therefore, building connectors from the RIC to high priority humanities sources is an essential part of this project.

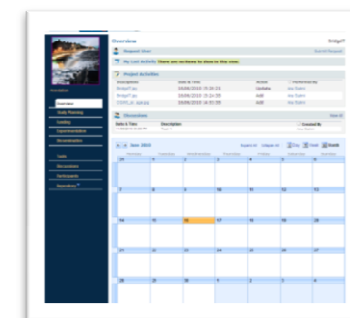
Two research groups were identified as participants in this phase, each with differing requirements:

- 1) The Oliver Cromwell Letters and Papers Research Project requires a strong collaborative textual editing environment as the work revolves around analysing text documents.
- 2) The Bridge-IT Project aims to create 'living history' breathing life into raw data and primary source material and therefore needs to handle the processing of not only text, but also audio, video and pictures.

The requirements of these groups are being used as the core for developing a template to support the teaching of M.Phil students in Classics and History



Cromwell Letters and
Papers -Project Overview



Bridge-IT - Project
Overview

Initial feedback from the pilot groups has already developed a working platform for their research needs. Further refinements are in train to enhance the VRE prior to its availability to a broad range of humanities researchers within TCD.

(1) Research Information Centre Framework - <http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/projects/ric/>

(2) Barga, R.S., Andrews, S., and Parastatidis, S. "A Virtual Research Environment (VRE) for Biomedical Researchers." *International Conference on Advanced Engineering Computing and Applications in Sciences*. (2007): 31-38. Digital Object Identifier 10.1109/ADVCOMP.2007.14