

How could the process be improved according to feedback from the eTIPS team?

(Excerpt from UHI & Edinburgh Napier's 2016 Annual Report by Laurence Patterson and Errol Rivera)

During year two, between the publication of the first and second eTextbooks, the evaluation team needed a way to summarise the main lessons learned from the experience of creating Book One. This was also seen as an opportunity to facilitate the team's group reflection on their work for the purposes of streamlining the next book's production. The evaluation team designed an "Observation and Action Matrix" for this purpose (**Fig.15**). The matrix was populated with project issues observed by the team. Those issues were then divided between Management/ Authoring/ Publishing/ Website/ and Distribution. The team then discussed the "challenge" and the "opportunity" presented by the issue, as well as a "consideration", i.e. elements of the issue that could not be changed. From there, the group agreed on a "response or recommendation" for each item. Of the twenty-seven items listed, thirteen were management related, five were authoring related, five were production related, and four website related.

While over half the issues were cited as managerial in nature, information gathered from the team seems to indicate that the project management itself wasn't the issue, but rather the limitations that were placed on it. These limitations were largely cited as originating from the institution itself, and could be traced back to the working time available to academics. To combat this, going into Book 2, the team took specific actions including, increasing the number of authors and sources of material, more detailed planning, more frequent communication, giving earlier due dates for materials, standardizing styles, and even suggested incorporating content creation into ongoing academic work.

Whereas the process of creation of either the first or the second eTIPS eTextbooks did not deviate seriously from their proposed timelines, a number of areas for improvement are suggested. The team recognized that to sustain and scale up institutional publishing, a clearer separation of roles would assist in setting achievable individual objectives. Alongside this, clearer, more defined and agreed quality guidelines for writing and design, and initial training and ongoing support for academic writing, and the use of specialist software like Calibre, would assist in avoiding discrepancies. Beyond the scope of the eTIPS project, future commissions are likely to involve working between authors who are less 'connected' with the design and publishing process than those on this project. To this point, authors have not been required to sign any kind of legally binding contract or agreement.

The problems associated with sourcing pre-existing content, and with commissioning authors to the second eTextbook appear to remain a result of recognising time allocation. Partner institutions should seek appropriate and consistent work and time allocation models for colleagues that recognise the strategic importance for learning and teaching that draws on an institutionally published text. Time allocation is likely to require recognition and agreement from senior management.