Technical support

RESILIENCE & CREATIVITY CANVAS

graphite.page/hiig-navigating-crisis

ANTICIPATION
BEFORE A CRISIS...

COPING
DURING A CRISIS...

ADAPTATION
AFTER A CRISIS ... IS BEFORE A CRISIS

INFRASTRUCTURE & RESOURCES
TECHNICAL SETUP (HARDWARE, SOFTWARE) FOR LEARNING PROCESSES, SPECIALISED TRAINING, TUTORIALS, GUIDELINES

… how do you make sure the resources you provide are accessible and appropriate to the needs of teaching staff?

… how do you envision and develop a new infrastructure flexible enough to be used across units?

By listening. If I got the same question over and over again, I knew it was time to clarify the provided information or add additional tutorials or guidelines. If you wanted people to use open-source solutions, you needed to make it easy for them. Because not everyone was convinced just because your data was protected and it was so much more flexible.

… how do you improvise when needs regarding infrastructure and resources suddenly change?

Ad-hoc improvisations in technical infrastructure unfortunately often meant drawing on commercial software. Because as much as I hated it, we just couldn't develop and set up our own AI model at a moment's notice. But of course, then we always needed to decide on one software, figure out licensing costs and terms – a lot of red tape, to be honest.

… how do you translate ad-hoc infrastructural solutions into long-term structures?

… how do you adapt your technical resources to contribute to institutional learning?

We do always check how much of the systems we implemented are being used. So to translate these ad-hoc solutions into long-term structures, I like to create an overview of how the systems are used and what can be done using open-source tools. So a kind of translation of experiences into open-source practices.

COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION
PROCESSES FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY, MULTI-LEVEL COLLABORATION, LINES OF COMMUNICATION

… with whom do you typically collaborate within and beyond your institution to explore new technical support options for teaching?

… which communication networks, spaces and channels are useful to develop creative solutions for technical enablement?

Of course, I was an active member of an open-source only community, where I often collaborated with people beyond the university. And that is also where creative ideas emerged. Together, we'd look at a problem and tinker around until we'd find the best solution. Within the university, I collaborated with my colleagues, of course, but beyond that, it was mostly just when someone came to me for help. But all of that was done via our ticketing system. I didn't use chats or emails for anyone other than my colleagues from IT.

… who do you collaborate with to develop ad-hoc technical solutions to keep teaching processes running?

… how do you communicate technical support offers so they are usable across the institution?

Especially in a crisis, the ticketing system was gold. I got to keep an eye on all the incoming requests and could prioritise accordingly. That allowed me to spend the most time working with other IT staff to make sure that our ad-hoc set up is running smoothly. In all honesty, though, because there were so many tickets, it was difficult for us to catch up. But we didn't want to offer one-on-one support because everything teachers needed to know can be found in our learning management system. I had set it up so that they got a notification whenever we updated the resources, so everyone was informed of new developments.

… how do your modes of collaboration change?

… with whom do you engage in critical discussions about which technical innovations should remain?

Collaboration really hasn't changed that much. We keep doing what we always do: monitor systems, analyse usage and then decide what services to keep up and which to discontinue.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
INCORPORATION OF PERSPECTIVES, ALLOCATION OF TASKS AND ROLES, DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

… who do you rely on to prepare your IT services for changing needs?

… who is involved in proactively exploring avenues for IT development?

I mostly relied on my colleagues from the IT department, and beyond that not so much. I mean, of course, we were part of a whole university infrastructure and needed to play our part, but that didn't affect my everyday job. And the same for exploring new avenues, I would say. I mean, why would people without technical knowledge be involved in that?

… what is your role in making decisions about IT development?

… how do responsibilities around creative problem-solving in IT solutions for teaching shift?

I didn't really make decisions, I just made sure to keep systems running. It was my boss who needed to make the big decisions, which was not always easy. Especially when everybody had an opinion on AI – whether they understood the technical foundations of it or not – and wanted to be part of those decisions. But actually, the not-knowing was sometimes good for us because we could use that as a loophole to experiment with the possibilities of AI, flying somewhat under the radar.

… who needs to be involved to ensure that improved technical support is sustained and rolled out across the institution?

In general, we haven't actually changed that much because our processes work pretty well. But we did need to shift responsibilities to expand our area of expertise on genAI. We also have an AI lead now – someone to bundle all the incoming requests and demands around AI, like a key point of contact. Because with so many topics going around, it's easier to distribute responsibilities clearly and not have everyone work on everything all the time.

CONTEXT
REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

FOR EXAMPLE: POLICIES AND REGULATIONS, FUNDING, DISCIPLINARY CULTURE, FACULTY GUIDELINES, IT ACCESSIBILITY

How do external conditions influence your creative ability to navigate change?

Money is tight for universities and technical infrastructure costs money, so that's definitely one factor. We can't always provide the infrastructure we want because there is not enough money. But the bigger issue actually is keeping our Internet connection stable. That's always an issue but especially with AI, we need bigger server capacities and a strong connection.

IDENTITY
THE INSTITUTION'S SELF-UNDERSTANDING

FOR EXAMPLE: MISSION STATEMENTS, TEACHING CULTURE, SENSE OF BELONGING, ROUTINES AND PRACTICES OF COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

How do the self-understanding of your institution and the corresponding internal dependencies influence your creative ability to navigate change?

I couldn't actually say that it did. I mean, we are committed to open-source and in that sense, the open-source policy does limit our scope of action. Because open-source AI models take time to build, there are always trade-offs.