



Hui Rangahau Tahī
BRCSS Network

CREATING E-RESEARCH COMMUNITIES: THE AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL PROJECT

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Context

- Change in Government 1999
- Evidence based policy –whole of Government approach
- New networks –e.g. SPEAR (Social Policy Evaluation and Research) BRCSS (Building Research Capability in Social Sciences)
- Created interest in E Social Science
 - National Library digitisation project
 - SPEAR data saving, sharing and greater access to Government data
 - BRCSS – tertiary sector create capacity and capability with an emphasis on building skills in the social sciences that contribute to “development, implementation monitoring and evaluation of research grounded public social policy”
 - Virtual Centre of Research Excellence for Social Sciences in New Zealand

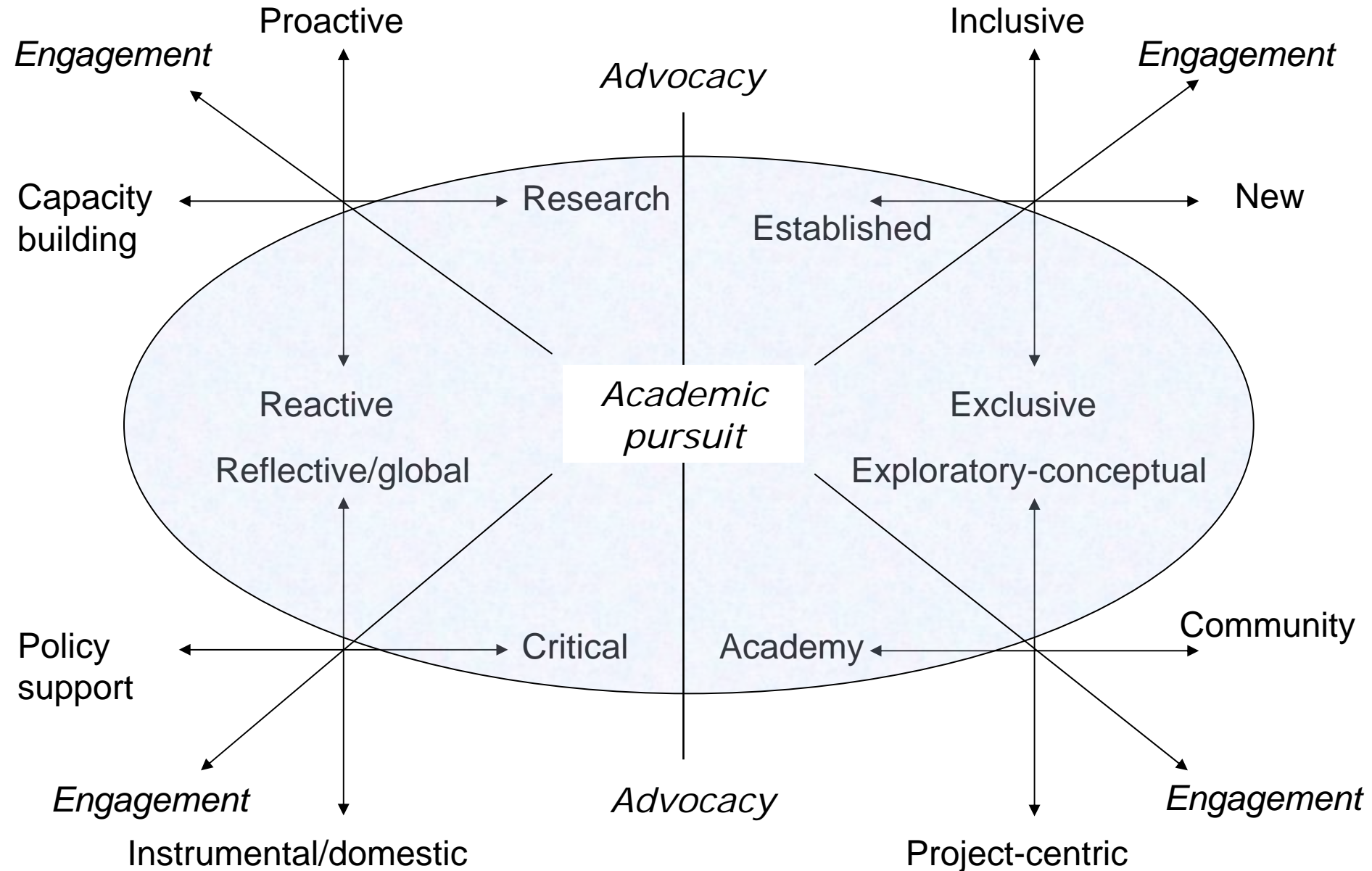


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Building the New Network

- Series of Challenges
- Based on 36 programmes of funded research - not previously connected
- Developed into four research themes
 - New wealth creation and distribution systems in a globalizing context
 - Social justice and development
 - Sustainability of diverse households, communities and settlements
 - Transmission of wealth and knowledge in context of demographic change

BRCSS: Contested dimensions of a mandate





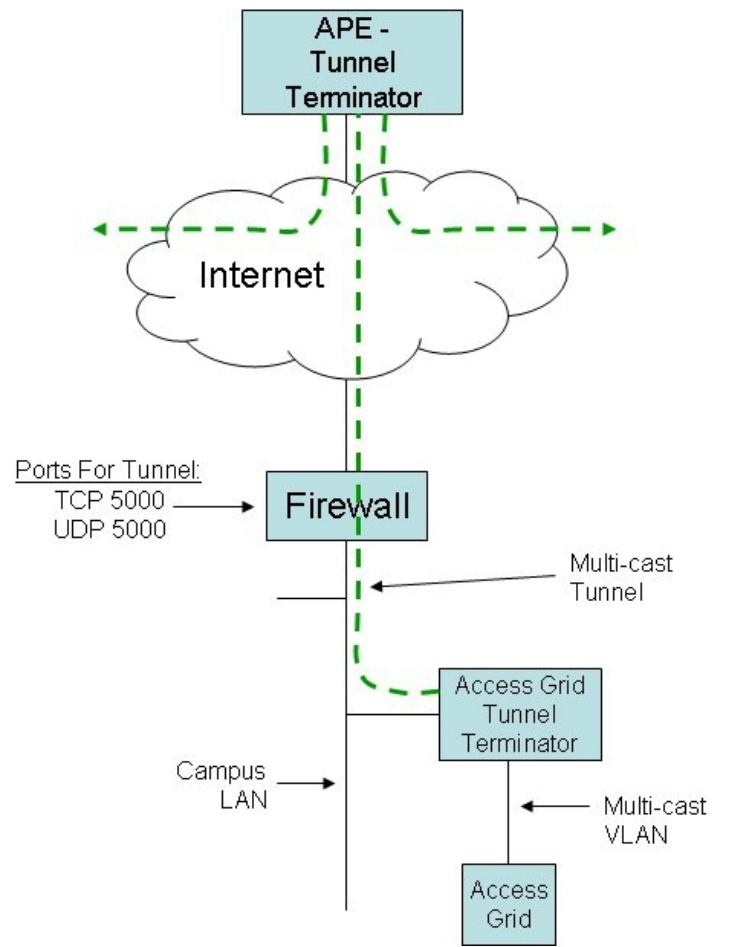
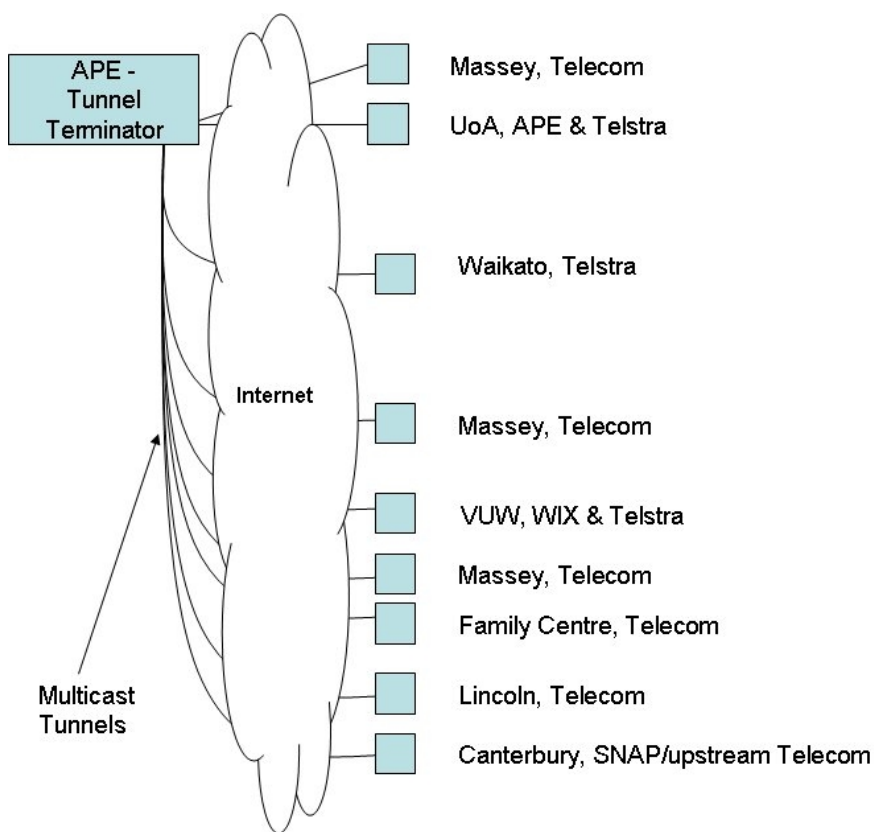
Building the Network-Access Grid

- BRCSS virtual network
- Create virtual meeting spaces through virtual rooms
- New knowledge spaces – new forms of practice greater emphasis upon inter disciplinary and inter institutional collaboration
- BRCSS- Grid 10 sites across the country at six universities and one community based research centre (NGO)
- 10 megabyte (max) connection across the grid



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Network Links





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Building a Virtual Research Community

- Virtual research community – based on using computer mediated communication for collaborating and research practice
- Need for such communities to share a common interest, exchange information, create an environment to accommodate these needs, and develop rules, norms, and trust
- Access grid allows for “co-presence”
- Adds visual clues while also facilitating the sharing of digital documents and presentations
- Range of uses to date



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Table 1 Access Grid Usage.

Grid Use	Number of Occasions/Frequency	Number of Nodes	Number of participants
BRCSS Management Group	Monthly from November 2005	Up to 8	12
BRCSS Research College	Intermittent	10	40
Post Graduate Forum	Initiated March 2006 bi-monthly	10	40-50
Research Activities	Focus groups NZ Values Survey March/May	3-4	12-30
Research seminars and workshops	April onwards	Variable	15-25
Research meetings	December onwards	2- 3 node linked at anyone time	Upwards of 2
International Linkages	Number since December 2005	Bilateral links between nodes in NZ /overseas	1-4



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Issues with use

- Physical organisation of the space
- Levels of satisfaction with AG technology
- Size of group
- Standardised of set up and equipment –technical group established
- Structuring sessions to create more natural set of interactions
- Developing protocols and booking system
- Bandwidth limitations affects quality and range of tools used
- Ethics re use and recording of sessions and security.



Creating Knowledge Spaces

- Political project of government and of Social Science
- Emergence of E Social Science as part of a reconstituting of social research practice - after neo liberal government third way focus on evidence based policy
- New knowledge spaces seen by government – reconstituting activity in terms of technical competencies and contribution to policy relevance
- BRCSS rethinking social science as a critical reflexive research practice for 21st century
- Creates a series of tensions



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Figure 3 Constructing a Knowledge Space

