Abstract: In recent years many changes to the funding and management of universities have taken place. In the current climate of academia in Australia professional academics find themselves immersed in the culture of the managed university that uses the rhetoric of commitment to flexible delivery as justification for the implementation of technological systems designed to increase accountability, surveillance and control. At the same time, some argue that the focus on research, quality teaching and effective pedagogy has lessened. This paper looks at how changes to the experience of being academic impact on the work of academics as the power relations of the university continuously reposition them, and how academics in turn display resistance technologies. Changes in the technologies of management/administration used by the university have resulted in what some academics have described as a loss of valuing of their knowledge and expertise.
Introduction
This paper uses data gathered during a research project that was focused on the imposition of a new online Learning Management System (LMS) in a top down model. During the initial phase of that data collection, other data presented itself and was difficult to ignore. This second set of data made its presence felt during a period when an array of new system-wide technologies was being implemented by the university. The data used in this paper demonstrates how university systems in the 21st century are increasingly using the technologies of surveillance and auditing and their accompanying discourses in an attempt to regulate and control the relations of power within what have become ‘managed universities’. Academics, faced with the impacts of these technologies in their everyday work, in turn produce ‘resistance technologies’in response to these ongoing changes in their experience of being academic. Davies (2003) describes some these changes since the 1970s;

In the university context, in the early 1970s, the period that can be characterised as high modernity (Archer, 2002), we had (generally) benign leaders who observed the professional work of their staff at a distance. … Their value in their professional lives was tied, in part, to … professional expertise and knowledge. The quality of institutional life was characterised by a high level of social integration and individual commitment to being socially responsible… instead of these (more or less) benign leaders [of the 1970s] who could rely on our own internalised gaze to monitor our own work, we have the multiplied gaze of the workers on each other, their gaze shaped by the policies and practices emanating from management. The multiplied gaze infiltrates and shapes the way work is understood. (Davies, 2003 p. 92)

Davies articulates a concern that for many academics underlies a general unease with the manner in which increased use of technologies of surveillance and control are impinging on their work as academics.

Background
During what started out as a study of the ways in which academics responded to the new LMS, which was supposedly focussed on the introduction of online teaching and learning, it became increasingly apparent that an array of new technologies that incorporate auditing and surveillance components that have little to do with online teaching and learning - but have much to do with the corporatisation of the University - was being simultaneously adopted across the university. This seems to be a common experience. Davies (2003 p. 190) described how in universities in 2005, demands for ‘transparent accountability’ (along with many other of managerialism’s terms) were
made into imperatives that were in turn justified as a response to severely limited financial resources. Davies highlighted the fact that much of the resource base that was previously available to support professional work has been redirected into surveillance and auditing, somehow remains invisible, or at least is generally not spoken about, or subjected to critique’ (Davies, 2003 p. 190). This paper attempts to render visible some of the surveillance and auditing technologies that have been proliferating within this (and other?) universities under the cloak of introducing computer-based technologies to support teaching and learning.

Many professional academics in Australia and other countries currently find themselves immersed in the culture of the managed university that is increasingly focussed on systems designed to increase accountability, surveillance and control, while their pedagogical experiences are becoming increasingly technologically mediated. In 1996 Gee asserted that language had become the primary tool of organisational control, ordering the knowledge production in the cognitive workplace, producing identity and access to networks, but in 2007 managerial control technologies are providing another layer/tool to this ‘pervasive system of regulation’ (Gee et al., 1996). These control technologies are continuing to steadily increase in number and scope.

**Surveillance and auditing technologies**

When a new online learning system was being imposed on academics in this university many were initially unaware of its surveillance capabilities. They were more concerned about the manner in which it impacted on their pedagogical practices but as time goes by academics are becoming increasingly aware that this is only one of a variety of technologies that have the capacity to increase control and surveillance that are being imposed by the university executive. During interviews conducted into the impact of the introduction of a new Learning Management System (LMS) on academics, many academics referred to a directive from the executive that all units in all courses must have a presence in the LMS. Academics also mentioned other changes such as directives from executive in the form of email alerts to look at items posted to the university Portal web pages, and a faculty directive to use the online calendar (diary) so their whereabouts could be tracked by non-academic staff. This
has more recently been augmented by new technologies to identify plagiarism and the recording of face to face lectures. All of these items might in themselves seem innocent and/or innocuous but each contributes to the collection of surveillance and accountability measures and, combined in this way, they point to a workplace atmosphere that is the antithesis of what university life, as described by Davies, was about in the past. Further investigation into the array of accountability technologies being rolled out by the university lead to questions about how academics respond to these technologies.

**The standardisation of Academic work**

The experience of being academic has been reconstituted and transformed over the years. These transformative practices have provided challenges for academics but this period of increased auditing and surveillance has added to the complexity of their experience of work and in some ways has threatened their sense of self as professional academics. Cutler (1995 p. 15) refers to this ‘sense of awareness that creates senses of who I am and who others are that can be called a sense of presence’. In times of significant change any threat to this sense of awareness, or presence is heightened. Mann (2003 p.1), also reflects on her experience of unease about her sense of identity in an online group. She explains that this adds to the complexity that teaching, particularly in the online learning environments, creates. Many academics may be highly experienced in face to face teaching environments but online communications make different demands on their pedagogy and positions them differently in relation to their students. My study found that some academics were challenged to establish an online presence when using the new LMS that is mandated for used in the teaching of all units in all courses at the University.

**Herding Cats – the challenge for the ‘managed’ university**

This vignette from an interviewee provides some insights into how academics in the 21st century perceive their workplace. ‘Herding the cats’ has an undercurrent of disquiet about the purposes and negative consequences of the increased use and forms of surveillance and accountability being implemented in the university.
“The whole game for administration in universities is basically about herding cats. If you haven’t got a lively lot of cats operating then your university isn’t much of a university. If you’ve managed to herd the cats into their cages and get them to perform all the things that cats perform in their daily lives within the cage, then you may have a very controlled system but you’re not going to have a very interesting one. And this is also a problem for the management of educational situations whether it’s a classroom or a school or a university or department or faculty or whatever. The problem is always this tension between bureaucratic accountability for the expenditure of funds and time and effort and the attempt to get some kind of predictability in what’s going on and the inherent anarchy of the world of knowledge. I think this is a continuing problem for institutions like universities. At the moment I think academic identity is being reshaped by a much more bureaucratic view of the role of the university lecturer. I think this has been defined in a more technical and bureaucratic sense than it ever has been before whether you look at teaching or whether you look at research or whether you look at participation in university activities.

So what you look for I think in an educational sense, and in the sense of trying to create an interesting, intellectual, and vibrant community are people who are going to rub up against each other in a rather uncomfortable fashion in some ways; but to do that in a professional way which creates a dynamic and a feedback and I think that is one of the challenges for faculty. There may be some academics who are quite happy to live a standardized, bureaucratized simplified existence and are much more interested in the process of that bureaucratization than they are in the intellectual dynamic of their field and transforming one into another is problematic. But it’s the intellectual dynamic, it’s not the quality assurance processes (the processes that allow you to deliver a reliable, moderately good quality product) that lead to recognition as a world class university. It’s not the quality assurance processes that gain the reputation for a university and create an excitement for the students. It’s the lively herd of cats that do it.”

The ‘herd of cats’ highlights the concern of academics who see their workplace moving from a vibrant intellectual one into a bureaucratic form where the primary focus is on paper/computer work (busy work?) and the standards of teaching and learning rather than a vibrant intellectual community in which the academic cats ‘rub’ up against each other as they go about their intellectual work. In the ‘Herding Cats’ vignette this academic demonstrates an understanding of the tension inherent in intellectual institutions – ‘a tension between bureaucratic accountability for the expenditure of funds and time and effort and the attempt to get some kind of predictability’ that also want to be recognised as vibrant intellectual communities. An awareness of the financial considerations and demands for accountability that universities are faced with are also demonstrated but acknowledgement of the reasons why the executive may have acted in these ways does not vindicate their decisions.
The shaping of academic identity by decisions based on bureaucratic imperatives leaves this academic with concerns about the effects on intellectual vibrancy. The strategies being put in place to increase the standardisation of university teaching and learning practices can be seen as a process of standardisation or ‘homogenisation’.

**The technologies of standardisation**

As well as the imposition of a LMS which includes the facility to monitor student behaviours with the LMS, some of the other new technologies of accountability, surveillance and control have been implemented by the university in recent years. They are: ‘The Portal’ - a web based calendar - as well as living, breathing human actors who patrol lecture theatres, tutorial rooms and corridors to collect data on the room usage (with their consequent fines for misuse or under use) and the ability or commitment of all staff, including academics, to lock their offices when they are not physically sitting or standing in them.

The Portal is a web page for staff and students, the web based calendar where staff can record their movements such as meetings and teaching commitments and which allows other University staff and students to view the academic’s calendar at any time. WebCT Vista is the Learning Management System (LMS) the use of which has been mandated for all units in all courses across the university.

**The Learning Management System**

The decision taken by the University to impose the use of a new online teaching and learning environment on academics can also be seen as one component of a push to greater accountability, control and standardisation. While online learning has been encouraged in the past (Zeegers, 2002), in this top down model the university developed more elaborate corporate policies about online learning that explicitly define what each level of ‘onlineness’ requires.

In this particular case, the university made it a requirement that all units for all students are required to have some level of online presence; this includes units that are
otherwise taught face to face with undergraduate students. The level of ‘onlineness’ required included: ‘level of online interaction (basic, extended online, wholly online)’ (School Administration Officer, 2003). Academics were required to inform administrative staff as to the level of onlineness that would be used in each unit. This requirement was made at a time when many of the staff did not have sufficient knowledge about the system and/or the system components to make such decisions in any sort of informed manner. Whereas academic practices had in the past been more individualistic, individual units utilising a range of modes of communication and delivery, recent policies have become more prescriptive, building in an increasing range of accountabilities.

The Learning Management System was selected (Peszynski, 2005) to manage, support and promote the use of online technologies in the teaching and learning process. It has the capacity to collect a multitude of data that can be used to monitor and manage both student and academic activity. Following selection and a trial phase the university executive created regulations to force all academics to use the LMS. As part of the requirement to use it in all units in all courses, the university is also standardising the format of all unit guides which must be based on templates that are provided to unit chairs. Students cannot be given printed unit guides but must be told instead to go to the LMS and download the unit guide. This is one way of trying to ensure that all students visit the LMS at least once for each unit. It also saves the university the cost of photocopying unit guides. Letters have to be sent out to off campus students to tell them to visit the LMS to receive their unit guides and to access course materials.

**The Portal – a panoptic technology**

The Portal, a web page on the university server, is ‘forced’ open each day as staff start up their computers. The university management has deemed that all messages that were formerly sent out as global emails must now be placed on ‘the portal’ for staff to read. A global email, that is, one that goes to all staff, alerted staff to the change to the method of communication.

The Senior Executive has recently been considering the way we communicate across the University. Under current arrangements, global emails are
frequently issued; often they deal with every-day matters. We fear that important information might not be read due to the high volume of global email traffic. In the future, the only global emails sent to you will be those dealing with matters of emergency. Only the Vice-President (Administration), … or I, can authorise a global email. It follows that, should you receive a global email, you will know that it deals with a matter of great importance.

The University Senior Executive was attempting to change the way members of the university carried out their communications. Academics were ‘encouraged’ to use ‘The Portal’ instead of global emails by way of email reminders such as this one.

Pop-in to the Portal to see another exciting Research and Doctoral Studies Opportunity! (Owner-ed-aca, 2004)

The university was gathering data about the use of The Portal and therefore the behaviours of academic staff. And even though most academics were not aware of the surveillance of this site or the data being collected about their behaviours, many still bypassed or ignored it for other reasons. Academics reported that The Portal was an unnecessary place to visit. They made comments such as, “I have enough to do without going to the Portal to see stuff people could send me by email if they really wanted me to know.”

The lack of interest by University staff in the requirement to use The Portal apparently caused the executive to look for other solutions. This is demonstrated by the following events. A message was placed on The Portal requesting staff to undertake a confidential survey about The Portal. Later an email message was sent out to the Faculty which read:

The Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Online Services) is conducting a survey to investigate student and staff satisfaction with the Deakin Portal. We hope to work out why some people find it useful and others don’t, so that we can make the portal more useful and user friendly.

Apparently staff required an email reminder to go to the Portal to complete the survey about using the portal.

The Faculty also setup a Faculty-only section on The Portal for its staff to gain access to Faculty specific information. The Faculty executive sent out this alert by email:
As announced … in this week's Newsletter the new 'Faculty of Education' topic/section in the Portal will become the default method of communication for the Faculty regarding news, announcements, information and other important things.

Please ensure you visit regularly. You might want to set the Portal as the homepage in your browser.

A great deal of energy was expended trying to get staff to use the Portal technology. The recommendation for staff to set ‘the Portal’ as their homepage did not work either. So the University came up with another solution. As each person logs onto the network each day the Portal is forced open on their computer as part of the start up process (without any consultation or any announcement to staff). Some academics thought they could simply change their computer settings back to the ones they wanted to stop this happening, but this was not the case because each morning the computer network logon system changed the settings back to the institutionally determined ones.

The university also collects data about staff behaviours within the portal area such as who visits, how many items are read, time spent in this area etc. Even so, many faculty members, especially academics, demonstrate resistive behaviours by closing the portal each day straight after it opens or by ignoring it (Wells, 2005). This vignette from one faculty member who kindly gave permission to include this entertaining (but slightly disturbing) window into the experience.

Dear Colleagues

Now that I am a little less distracted by end of year assessment, assignment marking, submission of results, preparation of next year's unit guides, conference paper preparation, grant application preparation and other distractions I have had time to attend to those wonderful global emails that keep on popping up on my machine, telling me to go to The Portal for an important message..

I want to share with you some of my pleasure and excitement at the treasure trove I have discovered. The Portal is a truly wonderful invention; a cornucopia of delights. And best of all it increases the number of global emails that keep on popping up on my machine, telling me to go to The Portal for an important message. I mean, it is surely obvious to anyone that rather than send me an important message directly it is so much more efficient to send me an email (sometimes several in quick succession) telling me that there is an important message for me on The Portal. And it is so much fun getting there! I mean, after 27 clicks...
and re-entering my password five times I finally get out of Eudora and into The Portal. And what do I find? Snakes and ladders? No! A pea and thimble trick. I love pea and thimble tricks, but with my luck I always choose the wrong thimble. Usually I choose ME, but the important message for ME is never there. Perhaps it is under WORK! (I take that as an instruction but that's what I am doing isn't it? And so efficiently too!) And then I am distracted by today's cartoon. What a ripper. I haven't laughed so much since I saw Guernica for the first time. And the VicRoads traffic congestion map. Wonderful. I can see the little red dot of the VC's car ploughing its way between the ring road and the tunnel. And the endless, limitless choices in that list of important messages! (Well, they must be important mustn't they. They are on The Portal). Then a moment's disillusion. Not such a good day after all. So many messages. So many messages that seem unimportant or irrelevant. I must surely be mistaken. My important message must be there somewhere. After all it is important and I mustn't give up! I plough on.

Then it occurs to me. I remember being told when The Portal was set up that its purpose was to prevent me being pestered by unimportant and irrelevant global emails. The genius of the system strikes me. The Portal is actually the University repository of irrelevant and unimportant information!! But, scrolling down through the almost limitless choices in endless lists of unimportant and irrelevant information I come across some real gems. I am sure they don't deserve to be banished to The Portal. The one I liked best was the one that told me of the three day sale in the General Store. I rushed down immediately and bought a discounted pie, a stale chocolate bar and a copy of yesterday's Fin Review. Fantastic!

But I still haven't found my IMPORTANT MESSAGE. I definitely need SUPPORT, so I look under that thimble. Still no pea (thank god for the spellchecker). Maybe ‘WHAT'S ON. Great Keppel Island Tour.’ Wow! I think that this is maybe a reward for all that hard work we have put in over the year. Disillusion again. Maybe ‘EDUCATION’. Click again.

YEA! Here it is at last. What does it say? This REALLY IMPORTANT MESSAGE? It says 'to get your important message please go to these sites' - gives me two web addresses and tells me to look there for my important message!! Now that is what I call efficient use of electronic media. And I understand completely why the global email I started with could not contain such important information. But I have had forty five minutes of entertainment (or was it work? Surely it was work; serious, useful, efficient and effective work). It takes genius to design such a system and we can only be grateful that the University has access to such talent and grateful too that we can spend an hour or so each day being entertained as well as employed. I recommend The Portal to you as a way to increase your efficiency and keep a smile on your face. Really, truly, Portalisation is a wonderful thing (personal communication).
DCAL is a web-based calendar which all staff are encouraged to use to record the many events they are involved in. Anyone with a university login and password can login and check on the whereabouts of any other staff member if they have recorded this information on DCAL. Even though they are continuously encouraged to do so, many academics rarely record their movements in this format making the tracking of their movements more difficult for administrative staff. Some academics find this electronic diary very useful and take into their range of technologies wholeheartedly but the majority ignore it or refuse to use it.

**How can we understand the bureaucratisation of the university?**

One of Foucault’s insights into relations of power is that they are more effective when hidden from view. Although knowledge and technologies are being used to control and regulate individuals and populations in this university, the official version of things is that they are ‘working in our interests’, ‘taking care of us’, looking after us and watching over us ‘for our own good’ (Dahaner et al., 2000 p. 68). The university does not publicise the fact that it is collecting data on the staff usage of various technologies including use of the Portal but when use was lower than desired more control technologies were put in place in an attempt to force increased usage.

The unseen control and regulatory technologies (Dahaner et al., 2000 p. 68) and surveillance technologies described in this paper underlie much of the work of academics and nearly all the work of administrative staff. Many use The Portal, DCAL and the Learning Management System without always being fully aware of how our use of them is recorded, monitored, analysed and used as they function as a pervasive system of regulation (Gee, 1996). Using Foucauldian terms we could say that the university has imposed a range of technologies of discipline and ‘one of discipline’s concerns is with producing docile, healthy bodies that can be utilized in work and regulated in terms of time and space’ (Dahaner et al., 2000 p. 50) as it attempts to control the relations of power by imposing a range of surveillance technologies in this institution.

The university administration and many of the staff who work in that area seem inclined to view management systems (who and what do they manage?) and their
associated protocols and procedures, as important strategies to keep the work of universities under control. A great deal of university funds have recently been diverted to this type of effort. Data is collected about the behaviour of all university staff in relation to ‘the portal’. Some faculty members send emails to the faculty requesting that they visit the portal to view messages about a certain topics.

But if universities want to be interesting, intellectual, challenging, dynamic and vibrant communities full of ‘lively cats’ then they may need to rethink the decisions to impose this range of technologies of accountability and surveillance that may well work against these ideals and in fact may be limiting factors.

**Resistance technologies**

Many of the academics interviewed explained the strategies they use to cope with this array of technologies. Some try to abide by guidelines and be ‘good’ academics. In particular they try to use the LMS in innovative ways to enhance the teaching and learning experience. Even those who do positively adopt these technologies find the business model upon which they were developed doesn’t allow them to easily embrace them within the pedagogical modes of teaching to which they are committed. They say that the discussion format has many limitations that weren’t evident in the previous conferencing system. Many of the academics described the system as ‘clunky’ and all complained about it being very slow. A constant refreshing process is one of the causes of the slowness of the system. They find their interactions with the software to be limited due to a lack of many of the common forms of functionality they commonly use on their own computers such as the ‘drag and drop’ facility.

Some of the academics who were less positive in their comments described how they find that tasks such as uploading, and consequently finding files in the system after they have been uploaded, to be beyond them in many cases even though they are able to complete such a task on their own computers. The ‘build’ facility where online spaces are created is only used rarely by academics, normally before semester to prepare materials for their units. As a consequence, some academics forget how to do the things they have learnt once because they do not do them again until the following semester. They feel that they are positioned as unskilled workers and even if they do
learn how to complete a task, such as uploading a file, the system which is constantly being ‘upgraded’ changes and the skill or knowledge they had is no longer relevant.

By far the most common, and possibly the most powerful, resistance technology is the refusal to use, or to actively ignoring the technologies whenever possible. But there are some academics, particularly those who teach only in the face to face mode, who actively work to position the LMS in a negative way to their students and colleagues. They comment on their perceptions of the failings of the LMS. Their lack of knowledge about and skill with the system can mean at times that they ridicule it for things that it in fact could do if the academic knew how to do it. These academics seem to assume that the students do not want to use it. They declare that the students say it is a waste of time. But if academics do not provide opportunities for the students to use the system in meaningful ways it should not be surprising if the students do not see it as worthwhile.

The Professional Workplace

The continuous pressure being applied from the administration to use the technologies points to their lack of success in imposing these technologies. Even so, the continuous pressure impacts on academic work. In this instance, a technology that has not been readily taken up by academics has seen the administration search for alternative ways to force them to accept it. Academics are bombarded with reminders about expectations that they will use these technologies. The constant discourse about the requirements to use such technologies causes some academics to feel guilty – a guilt that is an added pressure they could well live without. Even those who take the technologies up receive constant reminders to use these technologies. Academics find that their time for research, writing and teaching is continuously being eroded by ‘busy work’ in the form of compliance with such requirements.

University ‘staff to student’ ratios in this university have increased in recent years. They have changed from 1 Faculty member to 10.98 students in 1977 to 1:24.29 in 2000 in this university (Hay et al., 2002), a 150% increase over 23 years. In ‘Deleuzian Concepts for Education: The subject undone’ St. Pierre (2004) notes that Deleuze’s 1990 premonition of education turning into business has today become a
reality which privileges a single model of educational research with its top-down linear rationality and conformity to mandatory theory. St. Pierre reminds us of the fragility of a subject situated within the conservatism of oppressive power relations in the educational community. It is specifically because of this fragility that the experience of being a professional academic may be affected by large scale imposed change and increased surveillance technologies at a time when academic teaching workload has increased considerably.

Foucault’s contention that disciplinary power works to quietly coerce people into forms of behaviour and attitudes of mind amenable to the institution is seemingly being played out in this university. These disciplinary technologies have many similarities in common with the Panoptic Gaze. And as Davies explains “Panopticism … controls gazes and gazers. It most blinds a body to its own objectification, to its having become a site and a sight line” (2003 p.1). This institution is watching over its academic staff by monitoring their behaviours through the use of a variety of new technologies, including the new LMS, and other regulatory demands, protocols, procedures, controls and surveillance mechanisms. These technologies are used by the executive as it attempts to more easily monitor and regulate the behaviours and attitudes as well the work practices of academics. Now, as Davies says, we have the multiplied gaze of the workers on each other, their gaze shaped by the policies and practices emanating from management. The multiplied gaze infiltrates and shapes the way work is understood (Davies, 2003 p. 92).

It is hoped that the attention that has been paid to the forms of panopticism currently playing out in the academic work place in this paper has illuminated some of the effects of this panopticism on what is means to be an academic at this time and in this space and the concern expressed by Davies (2003) that little or no attention has been paid to the actual effects on academic work that this new panopticism might have, other than to monitor the meeting of institutional objectives.

**Conclusion**

As the imposition of these new technologies, with their associated surveillance aspects, disrupt the professional work of academics they perform resistance technologies that in turn affect the power relations. As Danaher states, “power never
achieves what it sets out, or claims, to do” (Danaher et al., 2000 p. 77). Power relations are never able to completely control things because they always produce resistance technologies in some form. Academics in this study displayed resistance technologies such as avoidance strategies, ignoring or using alternative technologies that were perceived to be a better fit with their pedagogical visions. The rise of surveillance systems is part of a global trend towards accountability and financial 'responsibility' (as well as a global audit culture) which some see as a threat to what it means to them to be an academic. Lessening of emphasis on quality teaching and effective pedagogy, less support and respect for their research commitments, and a rise in the discourses of accountability makes it increasingly difficult for people to pursue the traditional 'academic career path' with research, scholarship and pedagogy being relegated to a position behind the performance of very specific notions of what it means to be a 'good academic' in these contemporary times.
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