The Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) is "directed towards support for innovation in higher education institutions". One of the key funding areas in Cycle 1 was to enhance teaching and learning.

The John Paul II Library, National University of Ireland Maynooth, put in a successful bid in May 2006 under this theme to establish an "appropriate and innovative service" that would "welcome and manage student expectations" around the provision of essential reading material.

The resulting Core Text Project aims to address the expectation that the Library will provide access to essential reading material for each student when required, including distance and part-time learners. This poster will outline this project, evaluate progress and explore its future development.

**Introduction**

The core text project is responding to student needs in the library.

**Project Outline**

- **Scope**: This involved outlining the project, identifying stakeholders, their needs and expectations, defining the aim, objectives and expected outcomes. This first step was crucial in giving structure and direction to the planning and implementation stages.

- **Plan**: A Project Manager was appointed for one year in August 2007 and began by preparing a detailed project plan.

- **Implementation**: This involved identifying core text material, sourcing it electronically and if not available electronically, seeking copyright permission to digitise it. Students can access material via the library catalogue or if access is restricted to the students of a specific module, via the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Moodle.

- **Evaluation**: Overall, feedback has been very positive. Usage reports are showing a high level of use at all times of the day and night, including Christmas Day! In addition to improving access to core text material, students also have greater flexibility in how they choose to use the material. For example, students can use the Library's facilities to download material to MP3 players. More qualitative feedback needs to be gathered before the project concludes.

**Outcomes**

- **277 Core Text Items Available 24 Hours a Day**

  "It ties in well with the culture and expectations of our talented and tech savvy iPod generation students." (Mr Tom Mulvey, Department of Business and Law) "Easy and open access to essential readings...and provide students with a greater range of readings and the means to get access to them." (Professor Sean Ó Riain, Department of Sociology)

**Future Development**

While the evaluation of this project to date has been very encouraging, how it develops as an integrated library service will be determined by more qualitative feedback from students and academic staff. The findings of a number of recent research projects provide useful indicators:

- **Teaching of Psychology**: Students are more likely to use electronic core textbooks than full time students, indicating the value of the service to the ever increasing numbers of part-time students.
- **Teaching of Sociology**: The trend in libraries to only maintain electronic versions of textbooks is likely to place extra demands on the campus IT infrastructure.
- **Teaching of Music**: Students will have more opportunity to personalise their core texts as full content collections are now being marketed as e-content collections that include book chapters, journal articles, encyclopedia articles, sheet music, maps and audio-books.
- **Business and Law**: As current expectations are achieved, new expectations will emerge. For example, students may expect the Library to provide e-book readers.

**Conclusion**

- **Feasibility Check**: "Is this project worthwhile?" - the response is very definitely "yes". It is succeeding in achieving its aim and objectives and ultimately addressing the needs of the students and fulfilling expected outcomes. Furthermore, it has the potential to develop into a key and valuable service for the future.