

Proposal for SALTIS implementation group for interoperable learning services

Background

Attempts to build a market for VLEs and digital learning services have been frustrated by the lack of sound global standards for technical interoperability. These services are now vulnerable in the face of government efficiency savings. At the same time, the emergence of more independent, cash-rich schools will create new opportunities for software that supports integrated teaching and learning services.

A project to improve VLE interoperability, managed by Becta and supported by SALTIS and the IMS GLC, finished in September 2010. The project's outputs offer a sound basis on which the industry can create more effective interoperability solutions, aligned with global standards.

Proposal

SALTIS will manage a working group committed to carrying these project outputs forwards according to the following timescale:

Dec 2010–Feb 2011	Adapt outputs to the commercial priorities of WG participants
Mar 2011–May 2011	Support early implementation work
May 2011–Aug 2011	Build mutual confidence through bilateral interoperability trials
Sept 2011–Dec 2011	Run simple conformance & certification programme
Jan 2012	Launch kitemarked products at BETT 2012.

Key technical benefits of kitemarked systems will be to:

- support the disaggregation and remixing of multiple content types;
- manage consistently IP, branding and presentation of content;
- handle the reporting of scores and the saving of state;
- allow VLEs to manage content delivered on separate web-sites.

Further benefits may be included, subject to interest from participants. The differing priorities of participants may be recognised by making some features optional. The January 2012 launch will provide the basis for further work to support out-of-browser content, multi-player activities, and the handling of creative outputs.

Participants would be asked to make the following staggered commitments:

End November 2010	Statement of intent to participate
April 2011	Payment of subscription (£500–£2,000 based on turnover)
June 2011	First bilateral demonstrations of interoperability
Sept 2011–Dec 2011	Pass conformance & certification programme

A meeting will be held at BESA offices between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on 16 November 2010. Contact Crispin Weston on crispin.weston@saltis.org or 07780811806 for details.