

*ITinteroperability is a newsletter aimed at informing you about technical, standards and interoperability projects pertinent to education in Australia. It includes news items on local interoperability projects as well as summarising activity in international standards bodies relevant to education in Australia.*

*New editions of ITinteroperability are published once every two months.*

*If you wish to subscribe to this newsletter, please send a blank, plain text email to: [join-itint@edna.edu.au](mailto:join-itint@edna.edu.au)*

- [Australian News](#)
- [News from Standards Bodies](#)
- [About ITinteroperability](#)

## Australian News

### IDEA10 - Learning futures: technology challenges

The popular IDEA series of events will take place in Melbourne next March. Included will be IDEALab (10 March), a technical workshop focusing on current and emerging technologies that support learning. The Technology in Open Forum (11-12 March) will cover opportunities and challenges for the infrastructure necessary to support digital education. Once again, the IMS GLC Learning Impact Award Australian Regional Finals will be included in the IDEA10 program. Winners will automatically qualify for the international [IMS GLC Learning Impact 2010 Awards](#). It is hoped that Australian entries will be just as successful as the last two years' set of finalists who went onto win global recognition. This is a great opportunity for education managers and decision makers, as well as implementers, consumers and suppliers of information technology in Australian education. IDEA10 is supported by the University of Southern Queensland and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

More information can be found at [IDEA10 website](#).

## The Systems Interoperability Framework - progress in the Australian Schools Sector

A business case for national adoption of the Systems Interoperability Framework (SIF) in the Australian schools sector recently gained endorsement from the Australian ICT in Education Committee (AICTEC). AICTEC includes representatives from all State and territory school systems as well as representatives from the training and university sectors. The business case will shortly be considered by state and territory school system CEOs and education ministers on a path towards endorsement as a national standard for Australian schools, as has happened in the United Kingdom.

In addition to national adoption of SIF standards, the business case argues for a three year interoperability program to assist implementation of SIF by school systems and facilitate national collaboration in building digital education infrastructure. The business case forecasts benefits in terms of accelerated deployment of digital learning systems and improved access to data nationally as well as financial benefits for schools and schools systems. The business case is supported by evidence gathered in a series of interoperability pilot projects involving four Government schools systems, the Victorian Catholic Education Commission, two ministerial companies (education.au and The Curriculum Corporation) and eight vendors. The pilot projects focused on solving data exchange and synchronisation problems faced by most jurisdictions.

The SIF AU Interim Board has recently approved support for a further set of six pilot projects which focus on delivering student information and e-Learning services across school, jurisdiction and sector boundaries. In the meantime, work continues to finalise the production version of the localised SIF data model critical to meeting Australian needs in readiness for the implementation of key jurisdictional projects. The full SIF Implementation AU 1.0 is due to be published during the last quarter of 2009.

More information can be found at [SIF-AU website](#).

## Launch of LORN

An enhanced version of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector's national Learning Object Repository Network (LORN) was officially launched on Friday 27 August at a cocktail reception attended by over 90 delegates at the 2009 ACPET Conference. Key features of the new LORN include:

- My LORN, which allows visitors to the site to register and create their own personal learning object list
- Enhanced search functionality and options

- LORN's upcoming e-transaction facility, which will allow users to purchase from multiple sources at the same time and to manage their purchases through LORN

More information can be found at [LORN website](#).

## Creating standards for the development and adoption of technology-enhanced learning

The University of Melbourne's e-Scholarship Research Centre held a workshop in August to review e-Humanities infrastructure that had recently been developed in Australia. The workshop highlighted a number of services with great potential for the Australian education community, including the [National Library of Australia's newspaper digitisation website](#) which lets school students and researchers read the full text of Australian newspapers going back to the Sydney Gazette in 1803. The digitisation delivery service even allows users to help correct mistakes in the digitisation process, and has built a community of text correctors around this effort. Another e-Humanities service of relevance to education was the National Library's "[Integrated Discovery Prototype](#)" which presents results from many collections simultaneously (books, pictures, newspapers, maps etc.)

## E-standards Update

The VET sector's national [E-standards Expert Group](#) met recently in Melbourne. The group is currently overseeing research and investigations in a number of key areas including:

- **Web Accessibility:** An investigation of the 2008 W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) has recently been completed and is being considered by the group
- **Trust Federation:** Stakeholder consultations and the development of a set of use-cases are underway in preparation for a trust federation trial in VET
- **Persistent identifiers:** In collaboration with LORN repositories, a trial using persistent identifiers for learning objects is investigating the business rules and policy issues for facilitating long-term access to digital resources in VET
- **Emerging technology trials:** Five Registered Training Organisations were funded in 2009 to undertake trials of technologies considered to be emerging in the VET sector. The trials are exploring topics such as geo-tagging, longevity for wiki content, utilising RSS, 2D barcodes and mobile technologies for learning.

More information can be found at [E-standards for Training Reference Site](#).

## VET E-portfolio Showcase 16 October

This inaugural event is an important opportunity for teachers and trainers, managers and ICT professionals within the vocational education and training (VET) sector to learn from and interact with some of the most highly regarded e-portfolio researchers and leaders both within Australia and internationally to discuss how the national training system can best utilise e-portfolios. The one-day program includes an excellent variety of conference sessions and networking opportunities designed to help you share ideas and experiences with e-portfolio experts and other conference participants. This Showcase is hosted by the national training system's e-learning strategy, the [Australian Flexible Learning Framework](#).

More information can be found at [E-portfolios Showcase website](#).

## Service Oriented Architecture and Enterprise Learning Integration Summit

A summit to discuss approaches to Service Oriented Architecture in education will be hosted by IMS on 22 October at Oracle in California. A number of speakers will discuss the challenges education organisations face with enterprise integration. The summit will consider identity management, user provisioning and outcomes reporting, as well as discussing good practice SOA approaches. This follows on from the public release of the IMS SOA white paper entitled "Adoption of Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) for Enterprise Systems in Education: Recommended Practices".

More information can be found at [IMS website](#).

## Update on Technical Standards Focus Groups

Focus Groups for the [Technical Standards for Digital Education project](#) have all kicked off, discussing schools sector interoperability requirements across seven themed activities. The Link Affiliates team within ADFI at the University of Southern Queensland has started blogging about current work on the following themes:

- [Curriculum Description including competencies](#)
- Learning Content Discovery and Exchange - Stage 1 of software piloting is complete refer to blog [Part #1](#) and [Part #2](#)

More information can be found at [the project website](#).

## News From Standards Bodies

### IMS Global Learning Consortium

*creating standards for the development and adoption of technology-enhanced learning*

- [IMS October Quarterly Meeting](#): The final IMS Quarterly Meeting for 2009 will be held on 19-22 October in Redwood Shores, California. The meeting topics will include User Provisioning, Service Oriented Architecture, and an Enterprise Learning Integration Summit.
- IMS Global Learning Impact awards: The [2010 IMS Global Impact awards](#) will be held in Long Beach, California 17-20 May 2010. The [Australian Regional Finals](#) will be held in Melbourne at the IDEA10 series of events in March.

### OASIS (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards)

*... driving the development, convergence and adoption of open standards for the global information society*

- OASIS has been working since 1997 on standards for Service Component Architecture, a framework for building Service-Oriented Architecture components in both Java and C++, and promoted by vendors such as IBM and Oracle. As part of its work, OASIS is launching a [Public Review](#), ending Oct 7, for three bindings of the framework to communication protocols and technologies: to Web Services, JMS, and JCA.

More information can be found at [OASIS \(News 17 August 2009\)](#).

### W3C (World Wide Web Consortium)

*... developing interoperable technologies*

Topical issues include:

- The W3C HTML Working Group has published Working Drafts of "HTML 5" and "[HTML 5 differences from HTML 4](#)". HTML 5 is a significant update to the web page markup language, with new

features focused on Web applications

- The W3C Web Applications Working Group has published updates to Working Drafts of [XMLHttpRequest](#) and [XMLHttpRequest Level 2](#). These are part of the Web application technology stack, enabling standards-based AJAX-style interactive websites
- The W3C Web Applications Working Group has published a Last Call Working Draft of [Widgets 1.0: APIs and Events](#). Widgets are fully-fledged client-side applications that are authored using Web standards. The APIs and Events specification defines a set of APIs and events for the Widgets 1.0 family of specifications
- W3C published [SKOS Simple Knowledge Organization System Reference Recommendation](#) on 18 August 2009. SKOS is an application of RDF intended to build a bridge between the world of knowledge organization systems - including thesauri, classifications, subject headings, taxonomies, and folksonomies - and the linked data community, bringing benefits to both. The Semantic Web Deployment Working Group also released a [SKOS Primer](#) user guide for those who would like to represent their concept scheme using SKOS

## About ITinteroperability

This newsletter is an output of the [Technical Standards and Specifications: Development and Deployment for the Digital Education Revolution \(DER\) Project](#) - funded by Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations(DEEWR).

The Link Affiliates team who contribute to the newsletter are part of the [Australian Digital Futures Institute \(ADFI\)](#) at the [University of Southern Queensland \(USQ\)](#). To keep up to date with Link Affiliates activities go to:

- [Link Affiliate website](#)
- [Link Affiliates blog](#)
- [Link Affiliates Twitter](#)

Please send feedback and suggestions for news items to:  
[linkaffiliates@usq.edu.au](mailto:linkaffiliates@usq.edu.au)

Unless specifically indicated, the views expressed in this newsletter are the personal opinions of the contributors and may not represent the opinion of the University of Southern Queensland or any associated projects or funding bodies - please refer to the [Policies/Disclaimers](#) page.