



# *Towards SIF-AU*

## *IDEA 2008 – Interoperability Workshop*

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# Overview

- The Problem
- What is SIF
- Why SIF
- Towards SIF-AU
- The relationship with SIF and SIFA
- Progress to date
- Next steps

# *The Problem...*

*With increasing dependence on information systems to support learning and teaching...*

- Proliferation of products and vendors
- Complex and changing needs for data exchange
- Need to combine flexibility at the school level with interoperability system-wide

# *What is SIF?*

- A set of specifications to allow vendor products to work together at the school and school system level
  - XML specification for modelling educational data
  - Infrastructure specification to support sharing that data between applications
- Currently up to version 2.2
- Details at: [www.sifinfo.org](http://www.sifinfo.org)

# *What is SIF?*

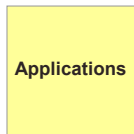
- Originated in US school system
- Implemented by UK government
- Joint effort by all Australian school systems to develop an Australian implementation.

# Components of SIF



## Zone Integration Server

- Software
- Routing
- Access Control



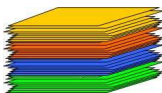
## Applications

- Existing Software Programs



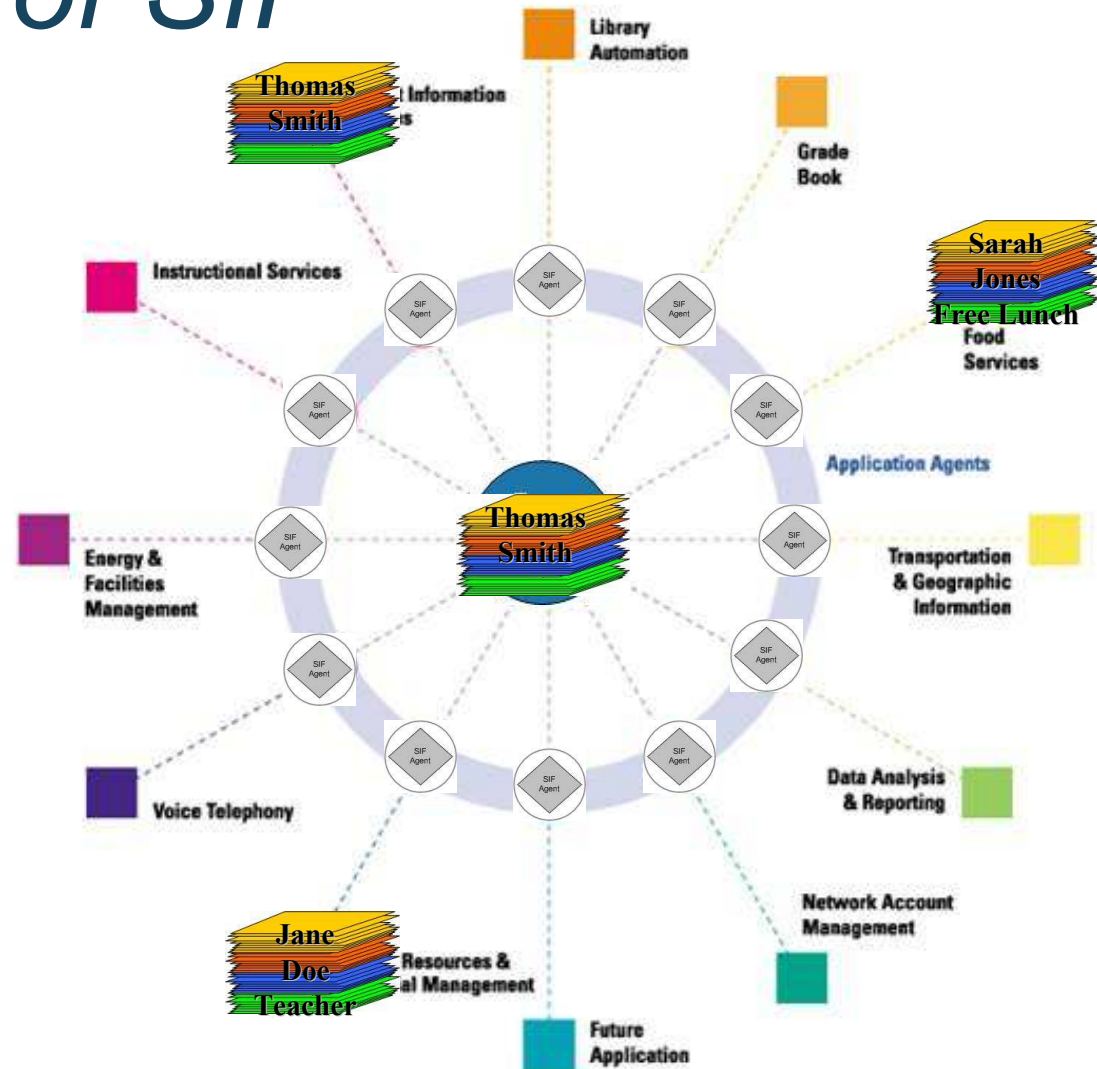
## SIF Agents

- Communicate with ZIS
- Assemble and process messages
- Aware of Applications Business Logic



## Data Objects

- Sets of information
- XML
- e.g. Student Demographics

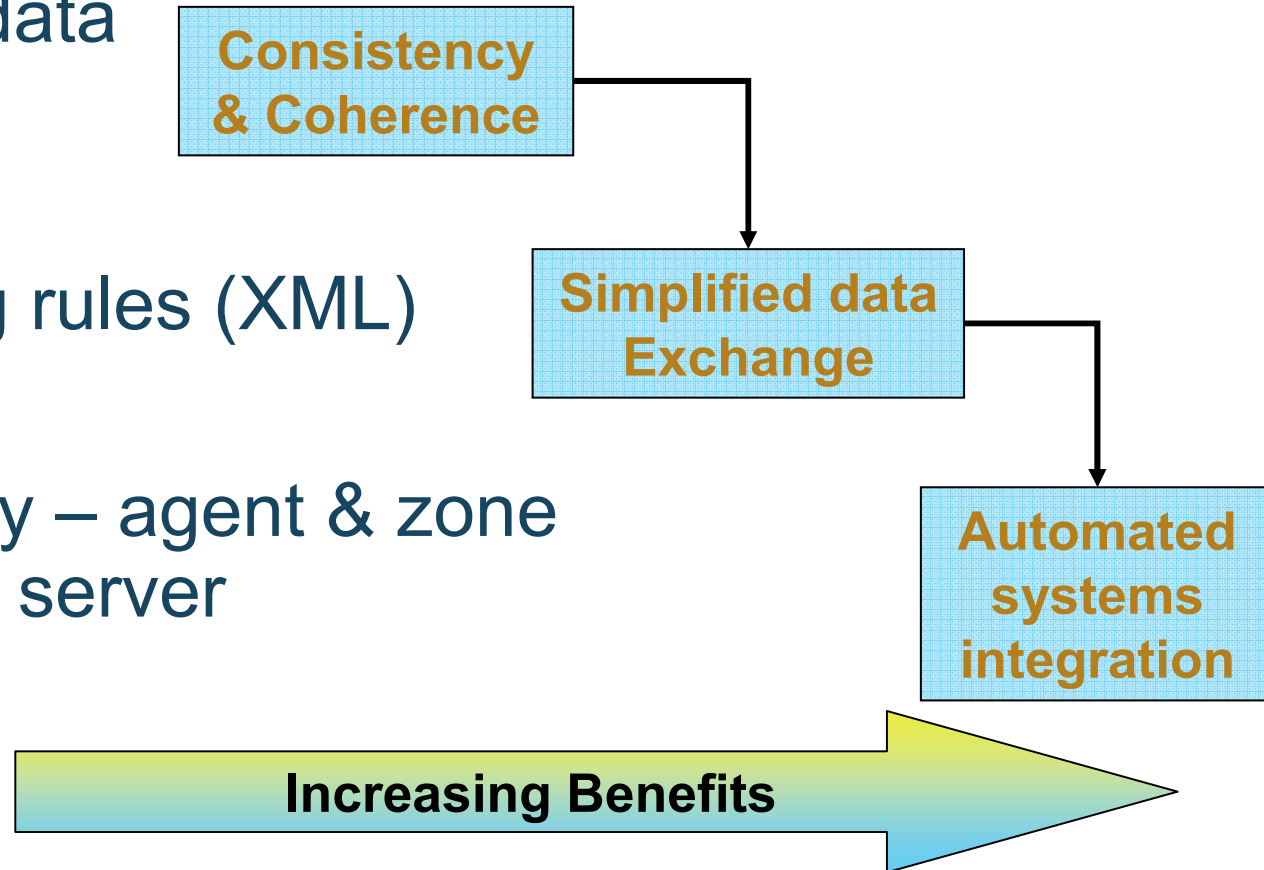


# *Key Features*

- End to end solution
- Assured Messaging
- Highly secure and robust
- Data objects designed to solve a “business problem”
- Software Kits for Agent Development
- Each additional Agent increases benefit everyone using SIF

# Potential value of SIF

- Common data definitions
- Messaging rules (XML)
- Technology – agent & zone integration server



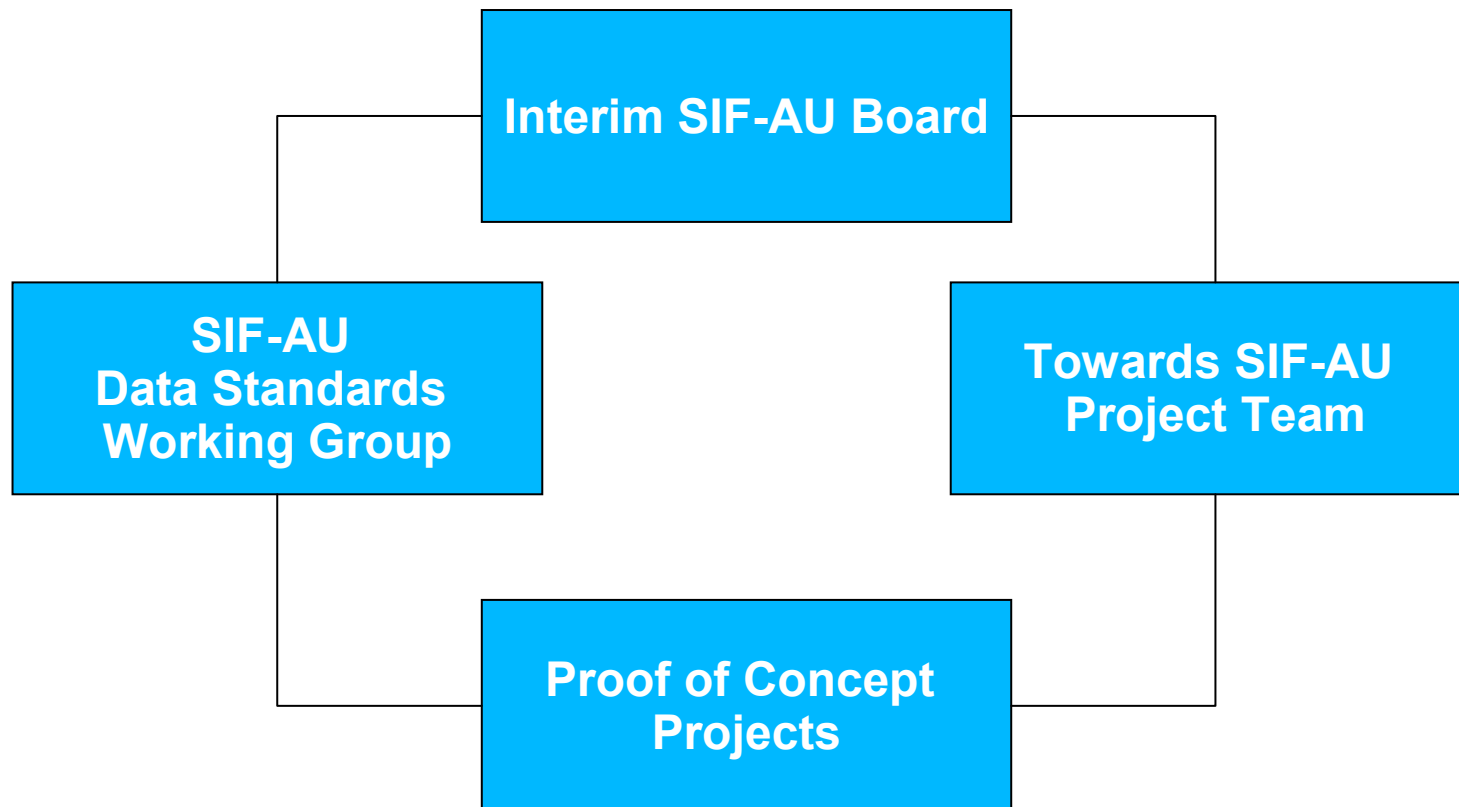
# *Why SIF?*

- SIF is a practical solution to the interoperability problem
- Maximises opportunity to link diverse products.
- SIF is a mature standard that can be customised to Australian requirements
- Established certification process
- Offers good return on investment for vendors

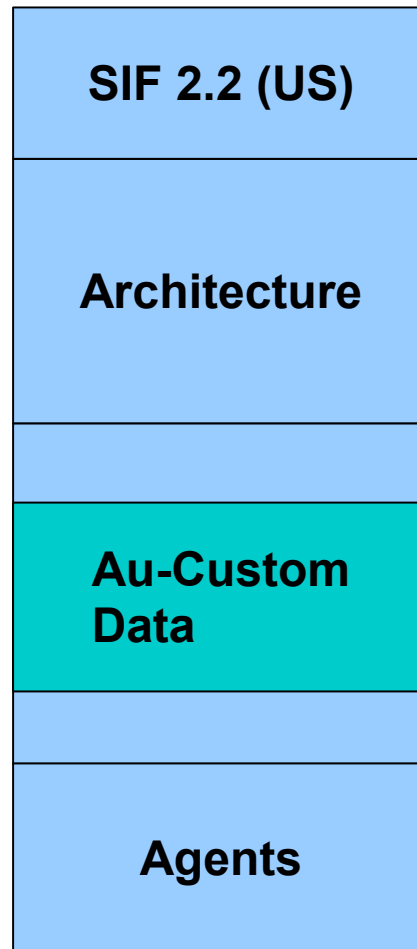
# *Towards SIF-AU*

- Education CIO's forum established project “*Towards SIF-AU*”
- Funded to
  - Develop AU Governance Structure
  - Propose Australian Data Objects and Processes
  - Build proof of concepts
  - Engage Vendors and partners
- Component of AICTEC interoperability agenda

# *SIF-AU interim governance*



# *Relationship of SIF-AU to SIF*



# *Certification of software agents: Leveraging SIFA infrastructure*

## **Global Certification Program (SIFA)**

### **SIF Global Messaging Infrastructure**

**SIF Global Common Data Set** **SIF Local Data Set(s)**



# *Towards SIF-AU: Progress to date*

# National Data Definitions

March 2007:

- CIO's endorse investigation of Australian SIF.

August 2007:

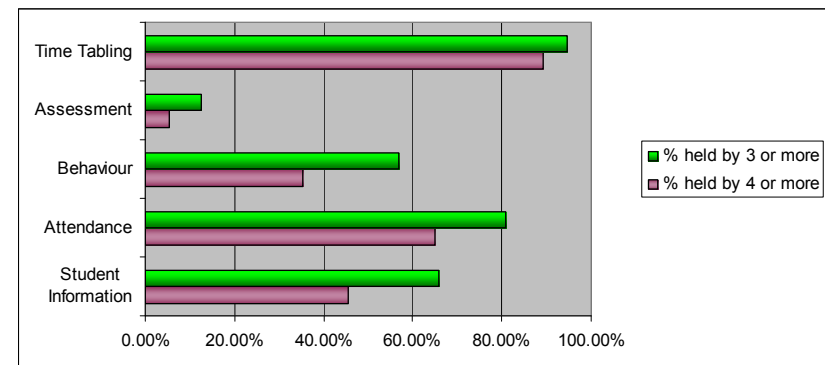
- ICT in Schools Taskforce agrees on priority information areas  
**Student Information, Attendance, Behaviour, Assessment, Time Tabling**

Sept 2007 – Feb 2008

- SIF Consortium & National Data Definitions Working Group formed
- Initial data mapping against SIF Objects – all jurisdictions
- Core data set finalised

Feb – July 2008

- CIOs endorse draft core dataset
- Core dataset - broad consultation



Alignment of student data

# *Towards SIF-AU*

## Governance

- Sept 2008: Interim SIF-AU Board established
- Commenced investigations into options for a SIF-AU Legal entity
- Report to AICTEC

## Objects and Processes

- 14 Nov 2008: SIF-AU Data Standards Working Group to meets to initiate object creation and verification processes.

## Vendor Engagement

- Website established to provide information to vendors and interested parties: [www.au.sifinfo.org](http://www.au.sifinfo.org)
- Register of interested parties
- Planning vendor information sessions and events

## Proof of Concept Projects

- First proof of concept project nominated (Victorian Student Register)

# *Next Steps*

- Finalise SIF-AU governance arrangements
- Finalise SIF-AU object specification
- Operationalise object certification process
- Engage vendors through information sessions, events and proof of concept projects
- Deliver and evaluate proof of concept projects
- Ongoing liaison with other education & training sector stakeholders

# *Contact Us*

## *Towards SIF-AU*

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*Following slides are for  
additional information*

# *SIF Components*

- **SIF Data Objects**
  - Sets of information shared by software applications using the rules of the SIF Specification
- **SIF Agents**
  - A software program (written by a vendor and certified by SIFA) that serves as the intermediary between the software application and the SIF Zone
- **Zone Integration Server**
  - A software program that serves as the central communications point in a SIF Zone
  - Communications can be horizontal i.e. to achieve application interoperability or vertical i.e. to achieve reporting.
- **Applications**
  - Software program implemented within a school or centrally. (eg. Ultranet, Timetabling, Attendance)
  - When a software application with a SIF Agent sends out a message to the ZIS, the ZIS forwards that information onto the applications that are listening for this information. Messages can be sent as a result of an event i.e. event based, or sent as
  - The information is routed through the application's agent. SIF Certified software applications and agents do not talk to each other directly; each application talks to its agent and it talks to the ZIS, which handles all further communication.
- **Messages**
  - Event – Real time (Add, Change, Delete )
  - Request/Response – Load or Synchronise , report/analyse
  - Are defined as part of the SIF Data Object.