



IMS Global Learning Consortium Announces Breakthrough Education Industry Standard for Digital Learning Content

Leading Publishers and Learning Management System Providers Commit to Support of Common Cartridge Standard

Lake Mary, FL – 9 October 2006 – The IMS Global Learning Consortium announced today that a new standard for digital educational content and e-Learning systems will soon be available in products in the marketplace. Digital educational content, learning management systems, and learning software tools incorporating the new Common Cartridge interoperability standard will be available from some IMS members as early as the Spring of 2007. Demonstrated in June of 2006 by IMS Contributing Members ANGEL Learning, Blackboard Inc, McGraw-Hill Education, Pearson Education, and the University of Michigan (the Sakai Project), the specifications will soon be released to the IMS Developers Network.

ANGEL, McGraw-Hill, Pearson, and Sakai have committed to product availability in the Spring of 2007. ANGEL and Sakai have also committed to providing functionality to allow creation of Common Cartridges from within their course management platforms, allowing faculty-created content to be exchanged among systems.

“We see Common Cartridge as a breakthrough in meeting the interoperability requirements of institutions such as ours,” comments John Harwood, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning with Technology at Penn State. “For the first time both publisher-created digital assets and faculty-created digital assets can be exchanged among learning management platforms and we have an open standards-based interface to integrate the wide variety of custom learning tools available.”

The IMS Common Cartridge specification combines three of IMS’s most widely adopted specifications, Content Packaging, Question/Test Interoperability, and Metadata, with the IMS Tools Interoperability Protocol, which enables standards-based data exchange between learning management platforms and standalone learning tools, such as adaptive tutors or assessment engines.

“Pearson Education has worked closely with IMS and the educational community to produce the Common Cartridge open standard because we believe interoperability is of significant value to faculty”, says Jim Behnke, Chief Publishing Officer of Pearson Education’s Higher Education, International, and Professional Group. “We are pleased that the educational community now has an open standard that combines content packaging and metadata with the essential education requirements of assessment and interaction with innovative learning tools.”

“Meaningful standards emerge when there are three conditions: a pain point to resolve, the commitment of specification designers to develop a solution, and a deadline to realize tangible results,” states Chris Vento, Senior Vice President of Technology and Product Development at Blackboard. “The IMS Common Cartridge specification is a great example of how the market need and the commitment were in place. Without the IMS providing a collaborative environment for the working group and defining hardfast project scope and milestones, nothing would have happened. Blackboard is proud to co-chair, contribute, and collaborate with this diverse and committed IMS working group to develop the initial IMS Common Cartridge specification.”

“The textbook industry has evolved to support a few common trim sizes for books and the bookstores have built shelves to fit them. The Common Cartridge is a similar convention applied to e-Learning content,” comments Ray Henderson, Chief Products Officer for ANGEL Learning.

"The hoped for outcome is that it will shift investment from content conversion to content innovation, and further accelerate the maturation of the industry."

"We believe that the Open University and similar institutions around the world will benefit greatly from the Common Cartridge standard," comments Joel Greenberg, Director of Strategic Development, Learning and Teaching Solutions at the Open University. "As initiatives such as OpenLearn migrate open educational resources to Common Cartridge format, the adoption of high quality online courses will be enhanced worldwide."

"The Common Cartridge standard will have a profound impact on exchange of content within a large system using multiple platforms such as ours," comments David Ernst, CIO of the California State University System. "Learning products that comply with the standard will allow us to create and exchange educational content within the system and through repositories, such as Merlot."

The organizations that have indicated support for the Common Cartridge standard include ANGEL Learning, Apple, Blackboard Inc, the California State University System, Canon Learning, Desire2Learn, Digital Spirit, eCollege, Elsevier Inc, Georgetown University, GTCO Calcomp/InterWrite, Harcourt Education, HarvestRoad, Horizon Wimba, Houghton Mifflin Company, IBM, Indiana University, Lason Inc., Learn eXact LCMS by Giunti Interactive Labs, LearningMate, Microsoft, McGraw-Hill Education, Moodle, the Open University, Oracle, Pearson Education, Pennsylvania State University, the Sakai Project, Sun Microsystems, Thomson Learning, Tribal Technology, University of British Columbia, University of Michigan, uCompass, and Unicon.

About IMS Global Learning Consortium

IMS/GLC is the leading advocacy group encouraging the growth and impact of learning technology worldwide. IMS/GLC is a global, nonprofit, member organization that provides leadership in shaping and growing the learning industry through community development of standards, promotion of innovation, and research into best practices. For more information visit www.imsglobal.org.

For More Information

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