IMS Global Learning Consortium Announces Agreement with ISO/IEC on Emerging Metadata Standards for Learning Accessibility and Personalization

ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 36 is Working in Close Collaboration with IMS Global to Make "Access for All" a Reality in Digital Learning

Lake Mary, Florida, USA, 6 March 2008. Today the IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS GLC) announced signing of a formal agreement between the IMS GLC and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) to distribute and coordinate development of the IMS Access for All accessibility standards for digital learning. The purpose of this formal agreement is to ensure that documents developed by IMS GLC are recognized as serving a source for the development of ISO and IEC standards. An immediate result of this international agreement is that of the transformation of the IMS "Access for All" specifications into formal international standards.

The new standards are currently being balloted by ISO/IEC JTC 1 (Joint Technical Committee on Information Technology Standards) as a multipart ISO/IEC standard under the overall title of ISO/IEC 24751 "*Individualized Adaptability and Accessibility in e-Learning, Education and Training*." The specification documents developed by IMS GLC serve as the foundation for Parts 2 & 3 while the Part 1 *Framework Model* was developed as a bilingual English/French standard based on IMS work in cooperation with ISO/IEC JTC1/SC36 experts (and the support of Canadian federal government via Industry Canada).

The ISO/IEC 24751 multipart "Access for All" standards define metadata that enables matching of digital learning resources and experiences to the needs and preferences of the learner. While it represents a breakthrough for learners with disabilities, it also applies to each and every person in terms of capturing their individual preferences in the digital learning experience.

Under the agreement, IMS GLC and ISO/IEC JTC 1 SC36 will work in an ongoing collaboration to keep the ISO/IEC standard synchronized with both other ISO standards development as well as with ongoing work being performed in IMS GLC.

"JTC1/SC36 is very pleased with the process of collaboration with IMS GLC in which a high quality standard produced by IMS GLC was successfully internationalized by SC36 with the potential to reach to a broader international community," commented Bruce Peoples, Chair of ISO/IEC JTC1/SC36 and Research Scientist at Raytheon Corporation. "This type of close collaboration can be difficult to achieve in practice and it is apparent that we have created a very good model for ongoing evolution of this standard and the internationalization of other IMS GLC standards for the benefit of the global community."

"Workgroup 7 of JTC1/SC36, convened by Erlend Overby of Norway, as well as the IMS Access for All team deserve great praise for their devotion to improving digital learning for people with disabilities and for us all," said Rob Abel, CEO of IMS Global Learning. "This success highlights achievement of one key objective of IMS GLC, which is to develop documents which serve as the basis for international "ISO" standards, working in conjunction with ISO/IEC JTC1/SC36. In IMS Global we look forward to continuing to move tangible progress forward by tying this work closely with emerging digital learning content and application standards, such as Common Cartridge, Learning Tools Interoperability, and Learning Information Services."

"We are very grateful to the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre (ATRC), University of Toronto, WGBH Boston, Industry Canada, IBM, Open University United Kingdom, Department of Education Science & Training Australia, Korea Education Research and Information Service (KERIS), ANGEL Learning, the California State University system office, and others who have been supportive of and are currently supporting this effort," said Madeleine Rothberg, co-chair of the IMS Access for All workgroup, and Project Director at the WGBH Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM). "We are especially grateful to ISO/IEC project editors Jutta Treviranus, University of Toronto, Liddy Nevile, Sunrise Research, and Andy Heath, Axelrod Access for All, for their tireless technical and leadership contributions. Dr. Jake Knoppers, Chair of the Canadian National Body in JTC1/SC36, and M. Janice Pereira were also instrumental in guiding the progress of the agreement between IMS and ISO/IEC as well as the development of Part 1 and the transformation of the IMS Access-for-All documents into Parts 2 and 3 as required to serve as ISO standards.."

"Access for All enables human diversity in digital learning, using a 'one size fits one' approach it supports each learner in reaching their full potential," comments Jutta Treviranus, Director of the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre, University of Toronto, where the specifications were first prototyped in an Industry Canada funded program called "Web4All", then tested and refined in a learning object repository project called "TILE" and broadly implemented as a Web service called "TransformAble" in the Sakai learning content management system. "The specifications are being actively applied in our new FLUID project to facilitate more sustainable and creative approaches to accessibility and to support greater usability in academic software."

"Access For All has been targeted at the digital learning community, however, it has the potential to set the stage for a broader flexible web infrastructure where information could be delivered in a form that best fits a user's needs. The business opportunities would be significant when you think about making it easier for all users to complete an on-line transaction," commented Rich Schwerdtfeger, Distinguished Engineer IBM Accessibility Architecture and Strategy.

IMS Global Learning Consortium is featuring a track on Personalized Learning and Inclusive Design at the Learning Impact conference, May 12-15 in Austin, Texas, USA. For more information, see http://www.imsglobal.org/learningimpact2008/agenda.html

IMS Global is supported by over 110 organizations, including leading educational product suppliers and publishers, leading institutions of learning, and leading government organizations. Current Contributing Members of IMS GLC are listed at http://www.imsglobal.org/members.html .

About IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS GLC)
IMS Global Learning is a global, nonprofit, member organization that strives to enable the growth and impact of learning technology in the education and corporate learning sectors worldwide. IMS GLC members provide leadership in shaping and growing the learning industry through community development of standards, promotion of innovation, and research into adoption practices. For more information, including the world's most comprehensive set of learning technology interoperability standards, information on the annual Learning Impact conference and awards program, and free community resources for learning technology leaders, visit www.imsglobal.org.

About ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 36
With representation from 32 countries and several internationally recognized organizations in standardization, SC36 brings together strategic, technical and subject matter experts. These all bring to bear their collective knowledge, experience and abilities on the use of information and communications technologies in the field of learning and education and training. The vision of SC 36 is to provide a unified set of IT international standards and guidance widely accepted by the intended class of users in the learning, education and training market. SC 36 promotes international consensus in standards development and adoption of quality standards that meet the stakeholders' needs. Find more detailed information of the work of the group in the report on http://www.elsacc.ca/en/ For further information about ISO/IEC JTC1 SC36 visit: http://jtc1sc36.org/

The following links provide additional information related to Access for All:

IMS Access for All Metadata specifications:
http://www.imsglobal.org/accessibility/index.html

IMS Guidelines for Developing Accessible Learning Applications:
http://www.imsglobal.org/accessibility/accessiblevers/index.html

Tracking information on progress of ISO IEC JTC 1 Standard 24751:
http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=41521

Specifications for Accessible Learning Technologies (NCAM SALT site):
http://ncam.wgbh.org/salt/

Information on the work of ISO/IEC WG7, Culture, Language, and Human Functioning Activities:
http://jtc1sc36.org/Workgroups/Work%20Group%20Seven

The Inclusive Learning Exchange at the ATRC, University of Toronto:
http://inclusivelearning.ca/tile/

The Web4All and TransformAble projects at the ATRC, University of Toronto
http://web4all.atrc.utoronto.ca/, http://culturall.atrc.utoronto.ca/

The FLUID project: Designing software that works for everyone:
http://fluidproject.org/

Accessibility at IBM:
http://www-03.ibm.com/able/access_ibm/index.html

ANGEL Learning supports Access for All:
http://www.educause.edu/PressReleases/1176&ID=1537

The EU4ALL project is implementing the ISO Individualized Adaptability and Accessibility in e-Learning, Education and Training standard matching also to W3C device profiles standards.
http://www.eu4all-project.eu/