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SHELL Project: Briefing Paper 3

(Southwest Hosts Enhancing Lifelong Learning)

THE SHELL PROJECT

The SHELL Project is funded by JISC to develop the integration of technologies across HE, FE and other organisations. Collaborating institutions include the University, partner colleges and schools.

The Shell project has three primary objectives:

- to produce a framework for the transfer of student-related data between institutions using developing IMS standards;
- to use this framework for secure, reliable transfer data between partnership colleges and the University of Plymouth, achieving a single-registration process for partnership students; and
- to use the framework to create a multi-institutional Learner Record for long-term access by learners.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Institutions benefit from more efficient administrative processes.

Students benefit, particularly those that pursue education at a number of different stages of their life or move from one institution to another whilst pursuing a course of study.

The JISC community benefits from the development work carried out by SHELL.

PROJECT PROGRESS

The Hub and Learner Record database are currently being hosted by the University. Devices (called ioAgents) to communicate with the hub have been installed at four FE colleges, three schools and the University.

Data is currently being transferred from three of the FE colleges to the Learner Record database and to the University. Transfer from other colleges is expected before the end of October.

The student portal provides access to a record of lifelong learning. This is scheduled for completion at the end of October and student groups involved in the initial design are to be invited to be part of a group to be given early pilot access to the portal.

Version 1.2 of the ioNetwork software (see overleaf) is now available as open source for the education and not-for-profit sectors. The code can be accessed by registering on the site www.ioAgent.org.

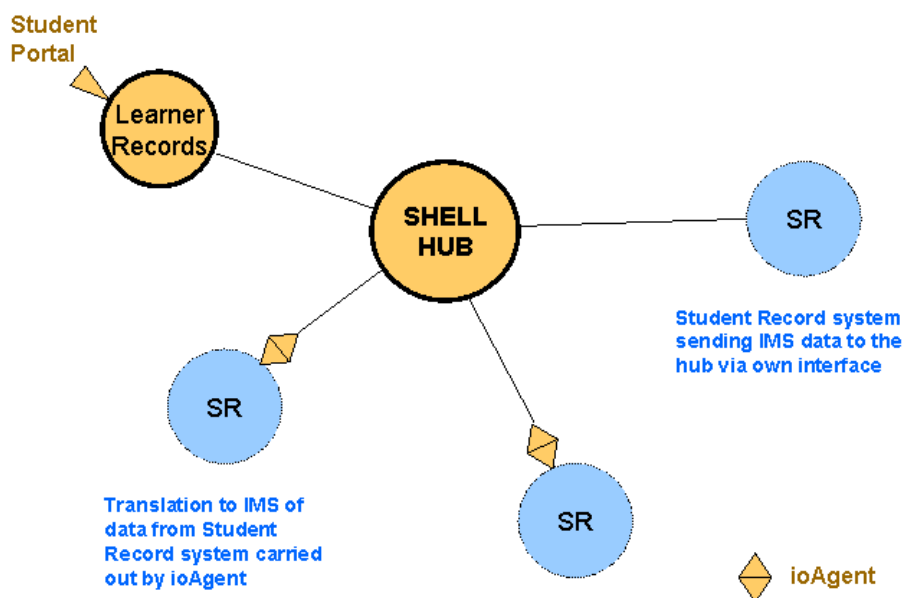
This paper updates and supersedes information contained in previous Briefing Papers

SHELL ARCHITECTURE

The SHELL project is developing and implementing a mechanism (using IMS specifications) for the automatic transfer of data between student records systems and the learner record database. In addition to improved administrative efficiency, this will allow students to have permanent internet based access to their learner record. Such learner records are multi-institutional, based on learner information contributed by all consortium institutions, including details of qualifications and modules from courses both completed and in progress. Subsequent developments to the portal will focus on and support the needs of the lifelong learner: for example, students will be able to select appropriate areas of the record for printing, or may be able to send details by email directly from the portal (e.g. to a prospective employer).

An infrastructure called an 'ioNetwork' [interoperability network] has been developed by Phosphorix and the University of Plymouth with support from ETL Solutions in order to provide this framework. The infrastructure consists of a hub, a Learner Record database, a portal for access to Learner Records and ioAgents to send/receive student-related data in IMS form to and from the hub.

ioNetwork Infrastructure



FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The Centre for Recording Achievement is in the process of specifying a UK version of IMS LIP (UKLeap) and this specification, along with the IMS Enterprise specification produced by a previous JISC programme, is to be incorporated into a test-bed version of ioNetwork funded separately by JISC.

As a basis for regional funding (JISC 7/04: Regional e-Learning Pilot Projects around Distributed Learning), a broadly-based consortium is being formed to support significantly wider rollout of the ioNetwork infrastructure with associated wider access by learners.

REFERENCES

www.shellproject.net The SHELL project website

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=programme_buildmle_hefe JISC - "MLE's for lifelong learning."