

Meeting Minutes May 29, 2006

Subject: Working Group "IT/Architecture"

To: All working group members,
project management

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Wiki: <http://www.edutech.ch/wiki/pmwiki.php>

Date: May 29, 2006 **Time:** 14:15 - 17:00 **Place:** University of Bern

Participants:

Franziska Schneider	FS	UZH
Luca Botturi (via Breeze)	LB	USI
Markus Künzli	MK	FHNW
Martin Sutter	MSu	SWITCH
Patrick Jermann	PJ	EPFL
Patrick Roth	PR	UniGE
Thomas Piendl	TP	ETHZ
André Redard	REA	at rete ag

Absent:

Christoph Glanzmann	CG	UniBE
Dieter Glatz	DG	UniBAS

#	Subject	I ¹ T D	Who	Date
1. Introduction				
1.1	Minutes of the last meeting: All participants agree with the minutes.	D	all	
1.2	Patrick Jermann gives a short introduction to the topics of this meeting. Based on the findings of all working groups, the project mgmt team has identified three "hot topics" which should be discussed during this meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content management: three of the four working groups indicate a special interest in the area of content management. The question is if the requirements can be better met by a repository or by a content management system? Integration of LMS with other tools: SWITCH provides a slide which shows the landscape of the actual and future SWITCH services. Which of these SWITCH services (and tools, not provided 	I	PJ	

¹ I : Information / T : To-Do / D : Decision

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3.4	<p>Search engine:</p> <p>In addition to metadata, a search engine should index all the content. Since content is available in many different formats, a search engine which can index also complex formats (e.g. pdf, ppt, etc.) is required (e.g. Google search appliance or the OSS search engine Swish²).</p>	I		
3.5	<p>Content migration:</p> <p>While the repository has to be open for storing content in as many formats as possible, it will only support the conversion into a few nationally standardized formats.</p> <p>Important formats are HTML, PDF, MS Office, SCORM, QTI (quizzes).</p> <p>While SCORM defines the behavior of content, it is a useful format for an LMS. IMS LD is better suited for sharing content in a repository.</p> <p>The question is how often content has to be migrated from one LMS to another. The participants believe that this is a one-shot problem (convert it once to a nationally standardized format).</p>	I I I	all LB all	
3.6	<p>Access rights:</p> <p>The repository should allow to give access to the public but also to restrict access to members of the owner's institution (university, lab) or a (virtual) group of named persons (peers).</p> <p>The OLAT repository supports three different roles: owner, author, guest with different access rights. Authors are allowed to extract and download content while guests can only view content. This might be a suitable model for access roles in a national repository.</p>	I I	PR, TP FS	
3.7	<p>Architecture:</p> <p>The participants favor the implementation of a distributed repository. Universities could use their own repository or a national repository hosted by SWITCH. SWITCH would define the interfaces between the local and national repositories. The participants believe that the quality of content is better when content is stored in a local repository owned by the author's university than if everybody can store content in a central repository.</p> <p>Harvesting of content directly and automatically out of the various LMSs doesn't seem to be feasible (complex interfaces, poor metadata, etc.).</p>	I	all	
3.8	<p>Implementing a repository:</p> <p>There are three different ways to implement a repository:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) take a complex system and adopt it to one's own needs (rip it down) b) take a simple system and add missing functionality c) start from scratch 	I	all	

² see <http://swish-e.org/index.html> for further details

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	It is currently not determinable which would be the most promising approach.			
4. HELPLine Service				
4.1	<p>CCSP do not have all the skills needed to develop complex content or to solve every problem with their LMS(s). Therefore, CCSP would like to have the ability to contact experts at SWITCH.</p> <p>SWITCH doesn't create content and, therefore, doesn't have those specific skills. But SWITCH could host tools (e.g. forums, faq), organize community building events or link to experts.</p>	I	PR	
		I	MSu	
4.2	<p>Forums already exist, and events have been organized in the past:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCIL (Swiss Center for Innovations in Learning)³ has organized events • SVC has organized the SVC days • FNL (Forum New Learning)⁴ provides a forum and many links to pedagogical and technical information • edutech provides valuable information about e-learning technologies <p>Some shortcomings of these initiatives might be that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problems cannot wait for six months until the next event happens • meeting from time to time at events is not enough to build a community which can also help solving everyday problems • self-organizing forums don't help to build a community and do not guarantee to get a quick answer to a problem • CCSPs are primarily focused on solving the problems of their teachers and not to provide their knowledge to other institutions <p>For some of these initiatives, financing of their future activities is not granted.</p>	I	all	
4.3	<p>Tasks of an e-learning HELPLine:</p> <p>An effective e-learning HELPLine would require an organization committed to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building up a community • organizing workshops and similar events • providing answers to everyday problems in "real-time" • providing tools to communicate within the e-learning community (forum, chat, etc.) • engaging moderators 	D	all	

³ <http://www.scil.ch>

⁴ <http://www.fnl.ch>

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	It is obvious that a single organization cannot solve all problems but it should know the experts and should be able to link the requester with the expert (guaranteed, not just on occasion).			
4.4	There should be dedicated communites/ HELPlines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers: help to find content, to create content, ... • for technical people: solve technical problems, ... 	D		
5. Integration of commonly used tools				
5.1	<p>The question is if there is a need for integrating an LMS with the tools provided by SWITCH.</p> <p>Collaboration and videoconferencing tools are already used in the context of e-learning (e.g. by Vetsuisse or between the University of Lausanne and Geneva).</p> <p>Some LMSs provide similar features as SWITCH's services; but for most LMSs, better integration (e.g. launching or joining a video conferencing session directly out of the LMS) would be a real benefit, especial if single sing-on is solved.</p>	I	all	
5.2	<p>Ease of use:</p> <p>As it has been said already in the repository section, the ease of use is key for the integration of an LMS with surrounding tools ("plug and play", "one-click approach").</p>	I	all	
5.3	<p>Identity and role management:</p> <p>For single sign-on and role management, AAI has a key position.</p> <p>The role of a user should be transported between the integrated systems, e.g. a tutor in an LMS becomes the moderator within a video conferencing session.</p> <p>In the future, the e-portfolio (students information, credits, booked modules, etc.) could become an IMS standard ("IMS-Learner"). The secure transport of this kind of information could become a new requirement for AAI.</p>	I	all	
5.4	<p>Priorities:</p> <p>SWITCH has limited resources and therefore cannot integrate all tools at once. First, SWITCH should integrate their own services with major LMSs; secondly, SWITCH could integrate LMSs with other important tools used by universities.</p> <p>In order to prioritize the integration of their services, SWITCH should make a poll among the CCSP to find out their requirements.</p>	D	all	

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6. Next steps				
6.1	<p>The project management team will again create an overview of the results of all working groups as soon as all groups have met a second time.</p> <p>For the next phase, it was planned to test LMS products. Due to the results of the working groups, it might be more reasonable to continue with a concept phase.</p> <p>The project management team will inform the working groups how to proceed as soon as possible.</p>	I	MSu	

In addition to these minutes, PJ has taken notes during the meeting, see http://www.edutech.ch/wiki/uploads/SWITCHHelp/WG_IT_Arch_Notes_060529.pdf