

Meeting Minutes April 19, 2006

Subject: Working Group "Organization / Finance"

To: All working group members,
project management

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

Date: April 19, 2006 **Time:** 14:15 - 16:15 **Place:** CRUS, Bern

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|----------------------|--------------------|-----|------------|
| Participants: | Benedetto Lepori | BL | USI |
| | David Aymonin | DA | EPFL |
| | Eva Seiler | ES | UniZH |
| | Jacques Monnard | JM | UniFR |
| | Martina Harrer | MH | UniSG |
| | Patricia Gamberoni | PG | HES-SO |
| | Sonja Gisler | SG | PHTH |
| | Urs Gröhbiel | UG | FHNW |
| | André Redard | REA | at rete ag |
| Absent: | Christian Schmid | CS | BFH |

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| 1. Introduction | | | | |
| 1.1 | <p>Urs Gröhbiel presents the project goals, scope, the proposed proceeding and the expected results (see slides).</p> <p>The project organization based on 4 working groups may lead to overlapping or controversial requirements, but allows that all parties (different universities, different groups within universities) can bring in their needs.</p> <p>The involvement of working groups during the test phase is not defined yet, but is possible.</p> <p>The infrastructure slides show that the scope of this project is not only to evaluate an LMS but to define a national service which may comprise other systems like collaboration tools, repositories, etc.</p> | I | UG | |

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

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| 2. General statements / questions about the project | | | | |
| 2.1 | Is it possible that SWITCH provides "only" support, but doesn't operate a system? → Originally, the project scope was to evaluate an open source e-learning platform, but the kind of service is open. | I I | JM UG | |
| 2.2 | Should the national services defined in this project cover only open source systems or can they also contain services for commercial systems (e.g. WebCT Vista)? → The main focus of this project is on OSS. | I I | ES UG | |
| 2.3 | How will the cooperation work between the CCSPs and SWITCH? → It is in the scope of this working group to define which service should be provided by SWITCH and which services will provided locally by the CCSPs. | I I | ES UG | |
| 3. National OSS LMS | | | | |
| 3.1 | Today, most universities have a well-established LMS infrastructure in place (UniZH: OLAT, UniSG: LMS from IBM; PHTG: Ilias, USI: Moodle, etc.). 7x24 hour operation and technical support may be an issue for small institutions due to budget / resource restrictions; but in general, the operation of these platforms is now a standard service of the IT departments. Today, there is no (or limited) interest to migrate the local LMS to an OSS LMS service provided by SWITCH. In 5-10 years, there might be some interest for a national LMS service, due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> economical constraints "end of life" of the LMS platform used today | I | all | |
| 3.2 | The University of Zurich is interested to establish OLAT as the OSS LMS service provided by SWITCH, also earlier than within 5-10 years. | I | ES | |
| 3.3 | Today, USI has about 500 courses on Moodle. OSS LMS have the advantage of low entrance. Most courses use only basic LMS features like document sharing or discussion forums. More sophisticated courses, e.g. the SVC courses, have been created within WebCT Vista. The two platforms can fulfill today's requirements of USI. | I | BL | |
| 3.33. | One advantage of a local LMS is that it can be tightly coupled with local administrative systems (e.g. student administration). For a national platform, it would be difficult to provide this kind of integration. UniSG and USI have already implemented such interfaces. UniZH would like to improve the integration of OLAT and SAP Campus Management in the future. | I I | MH BL, ES | |
| 3.43. | When preparing for exams, students have to be able to access the same content as has been presented during the lecture, not only the current version. Therefore, versioning is important. In a shared envi- | I | MH | |

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| | ronment, it might be more difficult to guarantee the availability of a specific version than in an LMS controlled by one organization. | | | |
| 3.53. | Not only the teachers, but also the students influence which LMS is used: students want to have all content in one system (easier to retrieve information if all information is stored in one place, only one user interface to learn). | I | MH | |
| 4. Repository | | | | |
| 4.1 | For all participants, the exchange of content between organizations is an open issue. There are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal issues (copyright, licenses, etc.) • technical issues (conversion of content, storing and retrieving of content, Digital Rights Management DRM technologies, etc.) • standardization issues (SCORM, meta data, etc.) • financial issues (pricing, accounting, billing) | I | all | |
| 4.2 | Migration of courses is feasible, but time-consuming, as the migration of courses within UniZH has shown. Therefore, interoperability and commitment to standards is important. A migration from the courses now in Vista to the (future) OSS LMS hosted by SWITCH should be considered. | I I I | ES all ES | |
| 4.3 | SWITCH as a neutral provider would be in a good position to provide a national e-learning content repository. Re-use of content stored at SWITCH would reduce the "not invented here" syndrome. | I | JM, ES | |
| 4.4 | It has to be considered that SWITCH is today a provider of network and IT services, not a content provider. Providing e-learning content requires other skills than IT know-how (e.g. skills of librarians or publishers). | I | BL | |
| 4.5 | One driver for content sharing are the master study courses of universities of applied sciences. For large universities, there is also need for cooperation, mainly between small institutes. | I | all | |
| 4.6 | It is important that a repository stores e-learning content in a modular way. Often, only parts of courses are reused, not whole courses. | I | all | |
| 5. E-learning platform and libraries | | | | |
| 5.1 | There are several aspects where library systems and e-learning platforms can profit from each other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library catalogs could be used to store also information about e- | I | all | |

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² <http://www.exlibrisgroup.com>: With MetaLib, an institution can manage today's hybrid information resources – be they local or remote – under one umbrella. Such resources include, for example, catalogs, reference databases, digital repositories, and subject-based Web gateways. Using the MetaLib portal, library patrons can conduct a MetaSearch™ across heterogeneous resources or link to the resources' native interface

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| | <p>learning content (pilot at UniZH).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Libraries have good knowledge about indexing of content which could help creating repository metadata E-learning platforms have an interest to provide dynamic bibliographies related to the content of courses. There is an interest for meta-search engines, providing access to e-content stored in databases, e-journals, e-learning repositories, etc. There are pilot installation of MetaLib from Ex Libris² | | | |
| 5.2 | One difference of library systems and repositories might be that a library stores only the final version of a book or a journal while a repository should also support the management of different versions of content and the conversion between different formats. | I | DA | |
| 6. Centralized versus decentralized services | | | | |
| 6.1 | <p>SWITCH is in a good position to provide hosting services, to develop and support interfaces to centralized tools like videoconferencing or e-collaboration or to develop content migration tools or a repository.</p> <p>The development of interfaces to local tools, like e-mail, groupware, student administration, etc. should remain in the responsibility of the universities.</p> <p>User support, training, etc. should be provided by the CCSP because they know their users, have a good understanding of their needs and can provide on site assistance.</p> | I | all | |
| 7. Integration with other tools | | | | |
| 7.1 | Integration with videoconferencing and other services already provided by SWITCH would be useful. | E | all | |
| 7.2 | Integration with research project databases: It would be interesting to have access to newest research, but these databases are often very complex. Therefore, integration with a national e-learning service is not feasible. | E | all | |
| 8. Finance | | | | |
| 8.1 | <p>It is difficult to determine the operational cost of e-learning services provided by universities due to the lack of a detailed cost accounting.</p> <p>UniZH has estimated yearly cost of CHF 50.- per student. Since development costs for OLAT are already fully amortized, this figure contains only running costs. Therefore, UniZH is also able to offer OLAT services to other universities at an attractive price.</p> <p>SWITCH as a neutral institution should offer the OLAT services to the institutions, so all can profit from this same economic advantage.</p> | I I I | all ES ES | |
| 8.2 | UniZH is willing to pay a fee for the national WebCT Vista service based on service usage (number of inscribed users), but not for all students of UniZH. | I | ES | |

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| 9. Related initiatives | | | | |
| 9.1 | <p>The working group should have a closer look at the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SESAM: Initiative of the "SSAB - Schweizerische Stiftung für audiovisuelle Bildungsangebote"³ • educa.ch⁴, a portal to information about the Swiss education system contain also e-learning content | T | all | next meeting |
| 10. Next steps | | | | |
| 10.1 | Review minutes of all groups and send feedback via the mailing list or discuss new ideas on the project wiki | T | all | next meeting |
| 10.2 | <p>Next Meeting:</p> <p>The project management team will discuss the results of the four working groups and the further proceeding in the first week of May. The next meeting of this working group should be held mid-May (see doodle.ch for more details).</p> | | | |

To Do

| Nr. | from | Subject | Who | Date | Status |
|-----|---------|---|-----|--------------|--------|
| 1 | 19.4.06 | Have a closer look at related initiatives mentioned in 9.1 | all | next meeting | new |
| 2 | 19.4.06 | Review minutes of all groups, send feedback and discuss new ideas on wiki | all | next meeting | new |

³ <http://www.ssab-online.ch>

⁴ The project is a collaboration of the Federation and the Cantons. They are represented by the OPET (<http://www.bbt.admin.ch/>) and the EDK (<http://www.edk.ch/>) and implemented by the CTIE (<http://www.sfib.ch/>).