

Meeting Minutes May 22, 2006

Subject: Working Group "Pedagogy"

To: All working group members,
project management

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Date: May 22, 2006 **Time:** 10:00 - 13:00 **Place:** Lucerne

Participants:

Andréa Belliger	AB	Unilu
David Krieger	DK	Unilu
Per Bergamin	PB	Fernfachhochschule (IFeL)
Andrea Helbach	AH	ZFH
Thomas Korner	TK	ETHZ
Heinz Küng	HK	PHZ
Catherine Marik	CM	UNIL
(for Pieter van Dijken)		
Michael Rolli	MR	UniBE
Rolf Brugger	RB	edutech
Daniela Isch	DI	at rete ag

#	Subject	I ¹ T D	Who	Date
1. Introduction				
1.1	RB: Based on the results from all working groups so far, it looks like there is no interest for a nationally hosted LMS. However, content repository and integration appear to be interesting topics that may be discussed further. The group is asked to give their opinion on these ideas, but also to elaborate on any other topic they consider important.	I		
1.2	Project management has produced a list of all requirements that were named by the working groups (App3_Requirements_specification.xls) and has added a column with questions. The group members are asked to specify and comment on the requirements as requested and send their feedback directly to Rolf Brugger.	T	all	June 2
2. Topic 1: National LMS				
2.1	The question is whether anybody is interested in having a second national LMS service based on OSS.	I		

¹ I = information, T = to do, D = decision

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	<p>HK: Not interested, because setting up an OSS LMS is no big deal from a technical point of view.</p> <p>TK: Ditto. In addition, agreeing on a single OSS would be a problem.</p> <p>MR: Not interested, because the organizations already have their own LMS, and their migrating to another one seems rather unrealistic.</p> <p>PB: Not interested, because central hosting does not make much sense with OSS (no license costs, easy to handle)</p> <p>AH: Ditto, because there is no demand.</p> <p>CM: Every faculty of UNIL is independent and there is no policy which strives for standardization; CM would need feedback from her colleagues first, but most probably they are not interested either.</p>			
2.2	There is no need to host an OSS LMS at the national level.	D	all	
2.3	<p>AB: In the last meeting, OSS was considered a possible means of applying pressure and creating market power over commercial providers.</p> <p>PB: It is also possible to do that with local installations. Also, local LMS give greater flexibility to react to new requirements.</p>	I		
3. Topic 2: Community of practice				
3.1	<p>PB: A nationally supported community of practice would be good; the SWITCH service could include coordination, market observation, and issuing recommendations regarding standardization.</p> <p>TK: Is market observation really necessary? There is already a lot of information available in the internet.</p> <p>PB: Agreed, but coordination is necessary to make sure the information finds its way to those who need it. Switzerland is lagging behind with respect to established information channels.</p> <p>TK: The fact that it is too late for discussing national LMS because the decisions have been made a long time ago shows that it would pay to try to reach a common view regarding standards at a very early stage.</p> <p>RB: The original idea of the rectors for this project was to create synergies. This plan appears to be conflicting with the organizations' views, because many of them obviously don't want to be coordinated in such a way.</p> <p>AH: It depends on what is understood by „coordination“. It has to be clear what the aim is and who or what is being addressed. As not every organization has set up an adequate information management, more efforts in this direction would be useful. Networking would make sense. The interaction with existing communities would have to be looked into; unnecessary consumption of resources has to be avoided. CH-specific structures need to be taken into account.</p>	I		

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	<p>DK: The need for exchange must be felt at the basis. An organized, supported community of practice with an incentive system would make sense: official membership, e.g. with a commitment to active contributions in return for funding of projects. Clearly defined guidelines would be required.</p> <p>TK: A funding model similar to that of the SVC would be good (i.e. the institution has to contribute 50%).</p> <p>AB: Also the requirement of having project partners would be good.</p>			
3.2	<p>TK: Apart from big existing or new communities within the universities, there are also communities about LMS which are not exclusively for universities. The question is whether "our" community should become a part of one of these communities.</p> <p>AB: Communities come into being based on specific issues. Therefore it needs to be clarified what such communities focus on.</p> <p>PB: The community of practice we have in mind will hardly remain restricted to universities, especially in view of the vertical integration currently taking place.</p> <p>DK: The Swiss Confederation probably wouldn't mind such an opening since their aim is to foster and optimize the development.</p>	I		
3.3	MR: What would be helpful would be support for national groups that can ad hoc participate in projects which are of use to some members.	I		
3.4	<p>AH: Have there been considerable changes since last year's platform survey?</p> <p>RB: The development was not monitored; however, a tendency towards OSS can be made out. The data of the survey is available on edutech's website ("Survey 2005").</p>	I		
3.5	The group recommends establishing of a community of practice. SWITCH should support the organizations in their own integration and development activities regarding their local LMS. Also, SWITCH should support the community members by funding their development projects.	D	all	
4. Topic 3: Integration support				
4.1	The overview slide of SWITCH services shows possible additional services that SWITCH could provide in addition to existing and planned services. The slide is meant as input for discussion.	I		
4.2	<p>The group feels that there is no need for additional tools/services because the state of the art is covered today by the existing and planned SWITCH services.</p> <p>However, should any ideas pop up for additional tools/services that SWITCH should provide, they can be sent directly to the project management.</p>	D T	all all	June 2
4.3	AH: How will the future services be financed?	I		

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	<p>RB: All SWITCH services are included in the usual service charges based on the agreed tariff scheme. There will be no separate charge for the new services in question.</p>			
4.4	<p>HK: Even if a specific central LMS is not recommended, it has to be understood that there is an explicit commitment to OSS. The Swiss Confederation should therefore support local efforts.</p> <p>DK: There should be a general policy recommendation saying that whenever possible, OSS should be the preferred choice for additional tools/services</p> <p>PB: Agreed, especially since the advantage of OSS is not only the costs, but also the possibility to exert influence.</p> <p>HK: It doesn't make sense to support proprietary systems.</p> <p>TK: However, OSS must not override quality! It should only be the preferred choice if the quality is comparable to that of commercial products.</p>	I		
4.5	<p>RB: Is there a general interest in support with the integration of local LMS or other e-learning software installations into existing or new SWITCH services?</p> <p>MR: Yes, because integration is quite an issue at UniBE, also with regard to software for administrative tasks (credit point handling etc.). It would help to have professional support.</p> <p>RB: Something like e.g. a national Moodle expert who is familiar with integrations?</p> <p>TK: It would have to be something similar to the way AAI support is handled; e.g. integration of video conferencing with various LMS.</p> <p>AB: Can such a setup work with OSS? E.g., AAI still doesn't work with Blackboard.</p> <p>TK: A central approach is possible with AAI, but not with OSS: the critical mass of projects that can be financed would not be reached. In the long run, it's cheaper to build up know-how within a group and make it available to each other.</p> <p>AB: Acquiring know-how should happen locally, not (only) at SWITCH; SWITCH should only be responsible for the coordination.</p> <p>PB: The central approach is unrealistic because it would take a huge team of experts that couldn't be financed. Dealing with issues within the community would be a better solution.</p> <p>DK: It's a question of funding: experts would have to be able to give hands-on support at the individual locations. Regarding integration support, the organizations should be in control of what is being done.</p> <p>MR: There are people with know-how, but nobody knows how to find them. What is needed is the connecting of people, including the provisioning of their manpower.</p>	I		

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	<p>TK: The role of SWITCH could be to register experts and finance projects.</p> <p>DK: The handling must be as simple and unbureaucratic as possible. Procedures like the SVC submissions are tedious. Membership at the community of practice should be sufficient.</p> <p>PB: We should learn from the mistakes with SVC („there’s money available, so let’s do something with it”). The attitude should rather be: Which problems do we want to have solved (as was the case with AAI)?</p>			
4.6	<p>AH: In-house problems exist when internal departments set the priorities differently (e.g. AAI, which still can’t be implemented at ZFH): the one responsible for e-learning may see the advantages, but IT primarily sees the problems with the integration.</p> <p>Therefore, building up accompanying structures is a crucial topic that needs to be addressed.</p>	I		
4.7	<p>Services that SWITCH should provide regarding integration:</p> <p>Help to arrange contacts between service providers and clients. Means: establish a list of existing services (“yellow pages”) and support and animate a community of practice.</p> <p>Finance development and integration projects in an unbureaucratic way, based on a matching funds model.</p>	D	all	
5. Topic 4: Repository				
5.1	<p>DK: Would it make sense to have SWITCH operate a national repository? Would there be a connection to the community platform, or are these two independent things?</p> <p>TK: There is no connection, because the groups of people being addressed are not the same. A repository is for teachers, while the community is for organizations.</p> <p>DK: Is this separation of these groups desired? Shouldn’t the idea be to bring authors and users closer together?</p> <p>TK: Connecting them would be good, but it is doubtful whether a central repository would have a positive effect. Collaboration between universities is very difficult, and exchange of content not necessarily desired. Furthermore, there is already plenty international choice.</p> <p>AH: It’s a question of perspective. Usually one works with those one knows and who have the same mindset. Yet in the future we could show the teachers where to look in the first place.</p> <p>PB: A central repository would be nice to have, but it is not crucial. Technical standards and standards for data exchange would be more important.</p> <p>MR: The (ideal) target state would be good, but getting there involves too many problems (money/time).</p> <p>AB: Only research and development in this direction is desirable.</p>	I		

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5.2	<p>AH: Cooperation is not only an issue with the development of content, but also afterwards with its promotion. Cost/benefit need to be taken into account. An organizational structure would be needed to get help with such questions. Further strategies in this area are required.</p> <p>PB: Good products don't need extra marketing efforts. Such activities are rather a waste of money - cf. publishing houses.</p> <p>AH: A comparison with publishing houses is not valid. In our case, target groups are not addressed properly: the teachers' targets are the students, rather than the marketing of the content. Therefore, it should be defined who is to be addressed. The question is, how can we provide an infrastructure that allows people to find the right contacts for content development?</p> <p>TK: CH is too small; it is unlikely that several teachers would want to deal with the same topic online at the same time.</p>	I		
5.3	<p>AB: What is the status of Ariadne?</p> <p>RB: It is being used less and less.</p>	I		
5.4	Even if generally reusability of content is desired, a central repository is not considered helpful to this end.	D	all	
6. Requirements listed on Blackboard				
6.1	<p>AH: The discussion has focused too much on technical details, whereas pedagogical scenarios have been neglected. Therefore, the list posted on Blackboard needs to be looked at as well.</p> <p>AH will distribute the list with comments from the discussion first to RB, then to all.</p>	T	AH	May 29
6.2	PB: A committee should be appointed that issues recommendations regarding standards (technical and pedagogical).	I		
6.3	Further exchange of opinions will probably be necessary because the documents (e.g. compilation of requirements with additional questions) were not available in advance.	I		

To Do

Nr.	from	Subject	Who	Date	Status
1	May 22	Send specifications of listed requirements to RB	all	June 2	new
2	May 22	Send suggestions for additional tools/services to be provided by SWITCH to project mgmt	all	June 2	new
3	May 22	Distribute the list of WG Ped requirements with comments from the discussion first to RB, then to all.	AH	May 29	new