

COLIS DEMONSTRATOR PROJECT PRESS RELEASE

After several months of intensive negotiation, agreements have been signed with a number of partners to establish the COLIS Demonstrator Project. The purpose of the Project is to investigate and demonstrate strategies for the incremental development of levels of technical interoperability in learning space application integration.

The primary goal in 2002, as proposed in the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) funding contract for the IMS Australia – Collaborative Online Learning and Information Services (COLIS) – Testbed, was to develop a distributed systems framework for online learning and information services which would demonstrate the following:

- Linking of learning management systems to library e-services.
- Incorporation of specified levels of digital rights management.
- Seamless movement between applications using a single sign-on, incorporating directory services.
- Implementation of specified components of the IMS Digital Repositories Working Group framework, including OAI harvesting and the SRW and Z39.50 query search protocols.
- Specified components in the life cycle management of learning objects.

Specifications and findings developed during the course of the COLIS Demonstrator Project will be open source documents, available for general dissemination by DEST and by the COLIS partners.

The partners in the Project are Computer Associates, Fretwell-Downing Informatics, IPR Systems, WebCT, and WebMCQ. The Testbed site will be hosted by the CSIRO/Macquarie Internet Innovation Centre at Macquarie University. While these are our initial partners, one of the intentions of developing open source documents will be to allow institutions to have the flexibility to substitute any company of preference which offers a service or product which can be demonstrated to be interoperable with some or all of the components.

The interaction between the partners in the COLIS project has been a learning experience in its own right. Understanding the implications of interoperability in the learning/information space is still in its embryonic stages, particularly with reference to the management, delivery and use of learning objects.

The demonstrated outcomes of this first stage of project development are necessarily limited, but they should provide a useful knowledge-base for further development and for much broader collaborative activity between institutions and with industry partners.

We anticipate that the Demonstrator Project will be completed by the end of September 2002. It will then be available for demonstration and comment from October to December 2002.

An update will be issued in October at the conclusion of the development stage of the Project. A demonstration session will be organised for COLIS partners and participants in the COLIS industry workshops on a date to be arranged in late October.

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Director, IMS Australia

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