

## e-Framework Update June 2009

*The e-Framework for Education and Research is an [international initiative](#) that provides information to institutions on investing in and using information technology infrastructure. It advocates service-oriented approaches to facilitate technical interoperability of core infrastructure as well as effective use of available funding.*

*This newsletter will inform and update you about the e-Framework developments and related activities. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please log-in to the e-Framework [subscriber list](#) and unsubscribe.*

*The views expressed in papers and individual contributions are the views of the contributor and may not reflect the views of the e- Framework Partnership.*

## News from the Initiative

### e-Framework mission statement and profile

The e-Framework Partnership for Education and Research has adopted a [new Mission Statement and Profile](#).

### Review of e-Framework Technical Model and Approach

In June the e-Framework Partnership begins a major review of its work on service-oriented approaches to software design. Ian Dolphin provides the background to this development:

The e-Framework grew from early attempts to explore the promise of service oriented approaches to software design in the context of learning and teaching. Whilst this promise seemed considerable - offering significantly greater flexibility in the development and delivery of services to support learning and teaching, together with the potential to re-use smaller software components and thus reduce initial and maintenance costs - it became rapidly obvious that efforts could not be confined to learning and teaching if the maximum benefits were to be obtained. The e-Framework therefore set out to map a coherent approach to the design of service oriented systems to support not just learning and teaching, but the additional, intertwined areas of systems to support research and administration.

Rather than basing the e-Framework approach around what has become known as 'capital letters SOA', the full realisation of a Service Oriented Architecture, the e-Framework consciously took a service oriented approach, mindful that institutional and other systems would take time to transition to such a state.

The design of service oriented systems, however, requires a degree of up-front analysis which is both time consuming and expensive. Early efforts in service orientation in education were likely to take place in silos - teaching and learning, research, administration, and libraries (an area which clearly crosses the first three, but remains, in many senses, distinct) - which in general often had a poor record of communicating with one another in a meaningful manner. The approach developed by the e-Framework therefore had the objective of being as neutral as possible; capable of being applied or mapped to by development efforts in any of these distinct areas of development, across national boundaries, and at differing scales of deployment. The intention was, and remains, to capture the early efforts of education's transition to service oriented systems in a way which would facilitate sharing.

Alongside the development of the technical approach, then, was the development of an international knowledgebase. This knowledgebase contains design artefacts, based on the e-Framework technical approach, which captures experience from a variety of innovative software development projects and activities in differing contexts across the partnership.

The early experience of both the approach and the experience of its application has resulted in the articulation of an e-Framework Technical Model. This model aims to make the approach more comprehensive and more comprehensible; to show how the different e-Framework documentary design artefacts relate to inform the design of systems.

This work has taken time and effort to realise. It has been intimately intertwined with the experience of the education sectors in the United Kingdom, Australia, The Netherlands and New Zealand. With the production of the overarching technical model, a knowledgebase with over fifty documentary artefacts, and a further fifty in review, and widespread experience of use of the technical approach, it's time to pause and take stock.

From June 2009, the e-Framework Partnership will be conducting a review of its work to date, and seeking to validate (or otherwise) the service oriented approach it has developed. We will be seeking feedback from those engaged in innovation activity, software development, and service delivery across the partnership from a variety of contexts. Key issues the Partnership will seek to address as part of this process include:

Is the central objective of the e-Framework - the creation of a meta-approach which provides a neutral means to articulate the design of software services - a valid, feasible and useful objective?

Does the technical model the e-Framework has developed provide a coherent overview of the e-Framework approach? How might it be improved, and what other factors should be taken into account?

Are the documentary design artefacts in the e-Framework service knowledgebase useful for those developing or re-factoring software services? Are there specific areas of work or contexts where they are of greater value than others? How could they be improved? What do they not capture which would be useful to capture in a standardised format?

The progress of the review will be reported in future newsletters.

## Around the Partnership

### New Dutch Programme Manager e-Framework

Recently Frans de Liagre Böhl joined SURF as Programme Manager Information Infrastructure, with a focus on standards and application profiles for information exchange. Within the e-Framework Partnership he will take a seat in the Strategy Board as the replacement for his predecessor Eric Kluijfhout.

### JISC engages sector with the new flexible service delivery programme

JISC has received expressions of interest from a number of universities and colleges to join the Strategic Technologies Group (STG) as part of the [new Flexible Service Delivery \(FSD\) programme](#). The FSD is a JISC strategic initiative to deliver the benefits of interoperability of information and reuse of services as a key means to address the cost pressures faced by further and higher education institutions. The STG will commence work on 6 July.

### JISC-CETIS SOA Pack

This [online resource](#) aims to help universities and colleges seriously consider the potential benefits and challenges of implementing SOA for their specific institution learn about technical options currently available, and to provide advice on design and implementation. Designed to compliment the SURF Foundation publication "Manager Guide to SOA", it is made up of various evolving chapters, including a briefing for Vice

Chancellors and other senior managers, a briefing for Directors and Heads of IT Services, and how to establish readiness for approaching ICT developments in a service oriented way.

## Committee of Enquiry into Changing Learner Experience publishes report

The JISC-initiated Committee of Enquiry into the Changing Learner Experience, chaired by Sir David Melville, reported on May 12th. The [committee report](#) presents detailed findings and recommendations on the use of social web technology in Higher Education.

## Dutch Architecture Core Group

A newly established architecture core group will ensure that activities deployed by SURF meet the needs of its member organisations. Performing as a sounding board for the architecture development sessions, the group will work on the development of a Community of Practice on architecture. Participants in the group will post issues they think worthwhile to share with colleagues on the [SURF community portal \(SURFspace\)](#) or on the [Community of Practice on Architecture website](#).

## Keynote speaker Malcolm Read at IMS conference

Malcolm Read, Executive Secretary of the Joint Information Systems Committee, provided a keynote speech at the IMS Learning Impact Conference in May, entitled "Open Educational Resources: an international infrastructure". His [presentation](#) is available for download from the [IMS website](#).

## Knowledge Exchange activities planned

[The Knowledge Exchange \(KE\)](#) initiative, in which e-Framework partners JISC and SURF participate with Danish and German organisations, will issue a study on the potential economical impact of the Open Access approach. At a workshop in Brussels on 22 June the outcomes will be discussed with stakeholders and European Commission staff.

KE is also working on repository projects such as Enhanced Publications and CRIS-OAR interoperability. New activities will be deployed concerning a URN-NBN persistent identifier infrastructure, usage statistics on online resources, roadmap approaches for research data and virtual research environments. Finally a working group on the Libraries in the Digital Age has been established.

## Other News

### SOA and TOGAF: Can TOGAF bring structure to your architecture efforts?

Can SOA – an architectural style – and The Open Group Architectural Framework (TOGAF) work well together? Zapthink takes a quick tour through the TOGAF 9 Architecture Development Method (ADM), released earlier this year, and [reports](#) whether SOA practitioners should be interested in TOGAF.

The [Open Group SOA/TOGAF Practical Guide](#) is available from the Open Group Web Site.

### Fedora and DSpace merge

Fedora Commons and the DSpace Foundation, two of the largest providers of open source software for managing and providing access to digital content, will merge their organisations.

For more information: <http://duraspace.org/pressrelease.html>

### Bamboo project update

Project Bamboo has brought together many dozens of researchers over the last year to begin to answer the question: How can we advance arts and humanities research through the development of shared technology services?

Steve Bennett from the Systemic Infrastructure Initiative (SII) funded [RUBRIC – e-Framework Project](#)\* and Gavan McCarthy of the University of Melbourne e-Research Scholarship Centre ([eSRC](#)) attended the fourth workshop of [Project Bamboo](#) in Providence, Rhode Island in April. Project Bamboo, being funded by the [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#), aims to greatly improve humanities research through the development and sharing of digital technologies. In particular, it aims to establish a set of shared services and tools hosted by participating universities. It is also gathering user requirements from humanities researchers in the form of “scholarly narratives” and “recipes” which describe solutions to these needs and will motivate development of services. Bridging the gap and facilitating discovery of services and tools by researchers is a "[Services Atlas](#)".

Workshop Four marked a turning point from discussion and exploration towards planning the implementation. Participants expressed a desire to

commence analysis of the collected narratives, to produce the requisite recipes and service descriptions. The project had not employed a coherent framework for service description and analysis. The e-Framework with its principled binding of services analysis to business requirements is well positioned to offer a structured approach to the problem of interoperability of services, tools, content and business processes within the digital humanities sector.

Steve is working with the eSRC to document narratives from the eSRC and contribute them to Project Bamboo and in parallel, develop e-Framework Service Usage Models ([SUMs](#)) that will be available to the ESRC, the e-Framework, the Australian humanities e-research community and to Project Bamboo.

The e-Framework is exploring ways of engaging with the Project Bamboo effort.

A discussion draft on Bamboo forward planning is available from the [Project Bamboo website](#).

\* Funded by the Australian Commonwealth Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) under the Systemic Infrastructure Initiative (SII) as part of the Commonwealth Government's Backing Australia's Ability - An Innovation Action Plan for the Future (BAA)

## Recent Events

### SURF and JISC workshop on 'Doing Enterprise Architecture'

This SURF-JISC workshop brought together IT and business managers from the UK and the Netherlands HE communities to share experience, knowledge and questions on 'Doing Enterprise Architecture'. The Dutch *InHolland University* and the *University of Amsterdam*, for example, addressed issues on how governance and architecture influence each other in the central information management activities, and how architecture should not be seen as just a project in order to ensure embedment in the organisation.

Presentations of case studies from UK and Dutch HE earlier adopters on using the Enterprise Architecture (EA) approach to support innovation and change, and the challenges and how to overcome them are available. To view, log in to the ENTERPRISE-ARCHITECTURES list and click on the Files Area link. (You need to be registered on the JISCMail EA list to access the documents. To register send an email to [listserv@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:listserv@jiscmail.ac.uk) with "Subscribe Enterprise Architectures" in the body text area, then follow the reply mail's instructions.)

To access the ENTERPRISE-ARCHITECTURES list, visit [JISCMail site](#).

The workshop summary will be placed on the [Flexible Service Delivery website](#).

## TOGAF architecture framework

SURF promotes the use of ArchiMate®. This language to describe architecture has been taken on by an international organisation, the Open Group, which specialises in an architecture framework called TOGAF. The Open Group conference in London end of April highlighted the new version of TOGAF. Presentations offered deeper understanding of TOGAF9, Business Analysis, Enterprise Architecture (EA) within the governance and ArchiMate®. More information and presentations can be found [here](#).

## Forthcoming Events

### EUNIS 2009 conference 22-26 June, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

This [annual conference](#), organised by EUNIS (European University Network Information Systems), will present an overview of IT-related developments in European higher education. The programme includes some architecture and SOA presentations. This conference provides good coverage of developments in the eastern and southern European countries.

## Get Involved

To keep up-to-date with e-Framework activities visit the [e-Framework community wiki](#).

To share your own experiences and let us know the topics that you would like us to explore, email Bas Cordewener: [cordewener@surf.nl](mailto:cordewener@surf.nl)

Follow the [e-Framework on Twitter](#).