

Newsletter No 3 – March 2006

The e-Framework for Education and Research is a joint initiative of JISC (UK) and DEST (Australia)

For any questions or proposed input into future newsletters please email [The Editor](#)

Board Meetings in Australia

During late February and early March members of the JISC-DEST Cooperation Partnership Board met in various locations in Australia. One of the key outcomes included a restatement of the key high-level messages associated with the e-Framework:

The primary goal of the e-Framework is to facilitate technical interoperability within and across education and research through improved strategic planning and implementation processes.

This goal is to be guided by five principles:

1. A service-oriented approach to system and process integration
2. Development, promotion and adoption of Open Standards
3. Community involvement in development of the e-Framework
4. Open collaborative development activities
5. Flexible and incremental deployment

The context in which the e-Framework operates is the technical infrastructure that supports the communities active in education and research: teaching and learning, research, IT services, library, and administration.

Technical infrastructure is defined at an abstract level as including applications, services and the network.

The e-Framework defines, analyses, and documents Services.

Australian Research Infrastructure Roadmap

On 28 February 2006, the Minister for Education, Science and Training, The Hon Julie Bishop announced the release of the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) [Roadmap](#) which identifies areas in which Australia should aim to develop, or further develop research capability through significant infrastructure investment. NCRIS is a major initiative under the Government's Backing Australia's Ability - Building our Future through Science

and Innovation. It aims to bring greater strategic direction and coordination to national research infrastructure investments.

DART

The [DART project](#) or “Dataset Acquisition, Accessibility and Annotation e-Research Technology” is a newly funded project managed by Monash University in conjunction with James Cook University, the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Enterprise Distributed Systems Technology, and the University of Queensland.

The DART project is a significant and strategically important project of interest to many institutions who are taking up the challenge of e-Research. This project will provide solutions to deal with the lifecycle of research – from lab book to formal outputs to teaching. In doing so it will draw on differing needs and discipline perspectives of a range of research communities by pulling together expertise in marine science and sensor grids, expertise in distributed systems, database research and large data set management, and grid computing research.

Disruptive Technologies?

Keeping up-to-date and well-informed about technology can be very challenging, and this is certainly one of the concerns of the e-Framework. In a recent workshop at Warwick University the central question explored was “managing disruptive technologies”. The e-Framework and Web 2.0 technologies were the two focal points for discussion. Presentation materials are available from: <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/web-focus/events/workshops/ucisa-ukoln-cetis-2006/handouts/>

However, while terminology such as “disruptive technologies” has become fairly common judging whether a technology is disruptive or enabling is very much a contextual matter. It will be important for the development of the e-Framework to see no particular technology as either intrinsically disruptive or enabling. The focus is more on services – defining, analysing, and documenting them.

JISC Conference – March 14

This year’s [JISC Conference](#) programme will be built on the theme of Supporting Education and Research. Keynote speakers include Dr Liz Beaty, Director of Learning and Teaching, HEFCE and Clifford Lynch, Executive Director, Coalition for Networked Information. The conference will reflect the breadth of JISC activities in providing guidance, advice and opportunities for the use of ICT in education and research.

Delegates will be given opportunities to learn about the full range of JISC’s work by participating in seminars, debates, workshops and demonstrations. In the exhibition area, a range of JISC services as well as corporate companies, agencies and associations will be able to provide you with advice and guidance on a range of support and resources available to your institution.

Jon Mason and John Paschoud will team up and provide a presentation on the current state-of-play with the e-Framework and how institutions can use it to plan and design their next generation of system to support research, learning and their supporting administration process.

JISC Announces new Access Management System

Through its Core Middleware program JISC has been devoting funds toward the development of a next generation access management system based upon Internet2 technologies such as Shibboleth. There is a planned launch in September 2006 of the new UK Access Management Federation for UK higher (HE) and further (FE) education institutions. Educational institutions throughout the UK will be invited to join the UK Federation and adopt new technology such as Shibboleth. This will provide institutions with a route to single sign-on to resources for users through the implementation of federated, devolved authentication. [Read More ...](#)

OSS Watch and Project Sustainability

Whether it is in the context of Open Source Software development or not sustainability of strategic projects is a crucial issue facing funding agencies such as JISC and DEST. What makes a project sustainable? This question will be explored in depth at a [forthcoming conference](#) to be held in Oxford, UK, 10-12 April.

Innovating e-Learning 2006: Transforming Learning Experiences

Make a date in your diary for **[Innovating e-Learning 2006: Transforming Learning Experiences](#)**, an online conference based around the work of the e-Learning and Pedagogy and Innovation strands of the JISC e-Learning Programme which will be held on 27 – 31 March 2006. Explore some of the key issues relating to e-learning under three themes:

Designing for Learning, introduced by Professor Diana Laurillard, Chair of Learning with Digital Technologies at the London Knowledge Lab.

Learner Experiences of e-Learning, introduced by John Stone, Chief Executive, Learning and Skills Network (LSN).

Innovating e-Learning Practice, introduced by Professor Stephen Heppell, Learn3K Research Centre, National College of Ireland.

JORUM DRM Report

The Jorum Digital Rights Management Report has now been made available. It

provides an update of the review of digital-rights management requirements and issues for Jorum that was published as part of the Jorum scoping and technical appraisal. It can be found at <http://www.jorum.ac.uk/publications>

Standards Watch

Not really a standard but if you are interested in what OASIS is saying about Reference Models and Service Oriented Architectures then the latest draft (February 7, 2006) of its [Reference Model for Service Oriented Architectures](#) is worth a read:

"It is based on unifying concepts of SOA ... [but] is not directly tied to any standards, technologies or other concrete implementation details. It does seek to provide a common semantics that can be used unambiguously across and between different implementations."

"A reference model is an abstract framework for understanding significant relationships among the entities of some environment. It enables the development of specific architectures using consistent standards or specifications supporting that environment. A reference model consists of a minimal set of unifying concepts, axioms and relationships within a particular problem domain, and is independent of specific standards, technologies, implementations, or other concrete details... The purpose of a reference model is to provide a common conceptual framework that can be used consistently across and between different implementations and is of particular use in modeling specific solutions." (Section 1.1)

Vendor Event in June

During recent meetings in Australia the JISC-DEST Cooperation Partnership Board determined what the criteria for engagement of commercial suppliers would be for the event that is being planned for June 2006. The aims and objectives for the event are:

1. to share information with a limited number of commercial suppliers about the e-Framework for Education and Research and, in particular, to provide an update on progress;
2. to elicit responses from the commercial organisations about how they might engage profitably with the e-Framework

Attendance numbers will be limited to about one hundred in order to make the event manageable. Given the potential sensitivity of an invitation-only event, the Board agreed to the following criteria by which commercial organisations would be invited. This approach fits with the intention to develop a JISC policy on engagement with the commercial sector which is currently at the planning stage.

1. Major commercial suppliers to the JISC and DEST's education and research communities
2. Commercial suppliers with a national/international profile and/or reputation
3. Commercial suppliers with a portfolio of products of particular relevance to education and research
4. Commercial suppliers with a significant research and development capacity
Commercial suppliers who have made a demonstrable commitment to open standards
5. Commercial suppliers who have previously expressed an interest in the e-Framework.

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