IMS Global Learning Consortium Announces Public Review Period of Basic Learning Tools Interoperability Standards

Education global market leaders have pledged overwhelming support to provide seamless support for interactions among web-based learning applications and content as a service

Lake Mary, Florida, USA – 16 February 2010 – The IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS GLC) today announced the public review of the first phase of the Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) standards to allow open and seamless integration of educational web applications. Called "Basic LTI or BLTI," this first standard addresses the most common roadblocks to achieving a seamless experience for teachers and students. BLTI replaces the proliferation of vendor-specific APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) across learning/course management systems, course authoring apps, collaboration apps, e-Book apps, homework apps, assessment apps, e-Portfolio apps, etc.

Release for public review indicates that IMS GLC has conducted extensive prototyping and testing among the industry leaders, developed open source code to aid implementation, and developed initial conformance testing support. Public review will remain open for a time to be determined by the Common Cartridge/LTI Accredited Profile Management Group in IMS GLC. Basic LTI development has been spearheaded by Dr. Charles Severance, IMS Affiliates Coordinator, author, professor in the School of Information at the University of Michigan, and former Executive Director of the open source Sakai learning management system project.

"We are very pleased with the unprecedented support for BLTI and LTI in the educational community," said Dr. Rob Abel, Chief Executive Officer of IMS GLC. "These standards are a radical departure from prior educational content standards. The basic assumption of BLTI and LTI is that the online teaching and learning experience is a rich mash-up of web-hosted applications that seamlessly interact and are also integrated with the educational enterprise. There is no doubt that the unparalleled adoption of these standards indicates that the next phase of learning and course management is coming fast. "

The following organizations have indicated they are supporting or intend to support the Learning Tools Interoperability family of standards: ASPECT, Blackboard Inc., CaféScribe, Cengage Learning, Compass Knowledge Group, CourseSmart LLC, Daidalos B.V., Desire2Learn Incorporated, Elsevier Health Sciences, Etudes, European Schoolnet, Follett, Giunti Labs, IMathAS, Jenzabar, Learning Objects Inc. Campus Pack Fusion, LearningMate Solutions Private Ltd., McGraw-Hill Education, Melete, Moodle, National Research Council of Canada (Institute for Information Technology), Nisai Virtual Academy, The Open University, Pearson, Penn State University, Sakai, SigongMedia Co. Ltd, SunGard Higher Education, Sungkyunkwan University, Ucompass.com, Unicon Inc., Univeritat Oberta de Catalunaya, University Koblenz-Landau, University Maryland University College (UMUC), University of Michigan, Wimba, Xyleme Inc..

Statements of Support:

"This is an important milestone for the e-learning community, and we are pleased to have partnered with the IMS team in this effort which can have a significant, real world impact for institutions," said Ray Henderson, president of Blackboard Learn. Blackboard, as co-chair of the LTI working group, is committed to making tools for learning easy to integrate into Course Management Systems. "Today, Blackboard and WebCT clients can take advantage of a Building Block and Powerlink at the OSCELOT community (http://www.oscelot.org) developed by Stephen Vickers at the University of Edinburgh and support from the Blackboard Platform Evangelism Team. We remain committed to pushing forward on this and other open educational standards in partnership with IMS for the benefit of our customers and the learning community at large."

"Pearson supports Basic LTI and our Third Party Interoperability (TPI) framework leverages LTI to enable external applications to seamlessly integrate with Pearson applications," said Jim Behnke, Chief Learning Officer with Pearson. "These standards offer educators significant advantages when adopting and deploying Pearson's widely used teaching and learning applications, including the discipline-specific MyLabs and Pearson LearningStudio. We're honored to have played an active role in developing the LTI and Basic LTI standards, which reflects our commitment to interoperability standards in education."

"We are thrilled with the release of BLTI," said Annie Chechitelli, Vice President of Product Management at Wimba. "As a co-chair of the full LTI working group, Wimba understands its power to impact the entire learning community. Now institutions can reduce support and training costs, solution providers like Wimba can reduce development costs, and ultimately - teachers, administrators, and students - benefit from a richer and more cost-effective ecosystem."

"The University of Michigan (U-M) has been using IMS Basic LTI in production for over a year, and it has allowed U-M to integrate a wide variety of campus servers and services into our enterprise LMS system (CTools). Instead of having to rewrite these popular services as Sakai tools, U-M can easily integrate them into CTools by using IMS Basic LTI." - John Leslie King, Vice Provost for Academic Information, University of Michigan

"We congratulate IMS Global Learning Consortium on the public release of Basic LTI, and are excited to see the growing range of integrated applications that are becoming possible for our partners and clients" states Jeremy Auger, COO, Desire2Learn Incorporated. "It has been great working with the IMS team to test and demo these integrations, and we look forward to joint webcasts with IMS in March as part of our continuing commitment to the support of standards and extensibility."

"Our adoption of Basic LTI allows other systems to take advantage of Campus Pack Fusion's social media tools, seamlessly and without special customization. This benefits our users by providing more freedom to assemble the technologies they desire in a reliable manner, and allows Learning Objects to focus on evolving Campus Pack Fusion. We look forward to wide industry adoption of LTI." - Hal Herzog, VP of Product Strategy

"The Sakai community is extremely pleased to see the Basic LTI specification moving forward. We believe educational institutions will need the option to create best-of-breed solutions by integrating multiple applications, whether those applications are deployed in the enterprise or running in the cloud. LTI promises to make those integrations very easy and we intend to implement it in our forthcoming 2.7 release and as a fundamental part of Sakai 3." – Michael Korcuska, Executive Director, Sakai Foundation

"We are very happy to have Basic LTI support in the latest release of Etudes and Melete. Basic LTI allows innovative teachers to experiment with new tools and ideas and provides a way to integrate high quality publisher content into Etudes." - Vivie Sinou, Executive Director,
Etudes, Inc.

"The IMS Global Learning Consortium is making great strides in developing open standards and interoperability specifications for learning applications, and we are proud to support the Learning Tools Interoperability Project Group," said Robert A. Maginn, Jr., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at Jenzabar. "The IMS Basic LTI guidelines allow faculty members to choose from a wide range of compatible learning tools and instructional materials that extend the power of learning platforms. Jenzabar has embraced the IMS Basic LTI tools and resources to enrich our collaborative learning environment, e-Racer, and provide new efficiencies to students and faculty."

"We are pleased to be working with the IMS Global Learning Consortium and industry colleagues on developing effective standards and protocols for learning tool interoperability," said Bill Rieders, Executive Vice President of Global New Media, Cengage Learning. "Cengage Learning is committed to offering innovative educational materials that improve learning outcomes, and we believe that this process will help the industry to move quickly and seamlessly toward the next generation of effective learning solutions."

"We at CourseSmart have been enthusiastic supporters and adopters of IMS GLC Learning Tools Interoperability initiative. We believe that educational improvement doesn't stop at providing every student with high-definition, lightweight and searchable eTextbooks. LTI further enables educational excellence by enabling transparent but secure integration with other great educational technologies to create compelling, cross-media mashups of content including assessments, interactive video, audio, and outcomes. We look forward to using LTI to help our various stakeholders achieve this vision." - Sean Devine, CEO of CourseSmart, LLC

"We are very happy about the advances in Basic LTI and looking forward to using this standard for integration across campus portals, learning management systems, and other enterprise systems in higher education." – John A. Lewis, Chief Software Architect, Unicon, Inc.

"Giunti labs witnesses increasing Common Cartridge and LTI requests from its publishing and educational customer base and plans to incrementally add such features to its eXact packager Authoring tool and Harvestroad Hive DR and learn

eXact LCMS platforms. A Common Cartridge export feature is already piloted in our eXact packager authoring suite including exporting to Common Cartridge packaging format with QTI assessments and external linking to Publishers online resources." – Fabrizio Cardinali, Chief Executive Officer of Giunti Labs

"ASPECT is a Best Practice Network, funded in part by the European Commission, that supports the take-up of open standards in eLearning. The Aspect consortium is keen to explore the potential of the BLTI specification. Its use in the next version of the Common Cartridge specification will enable ASPECT members to enrich their eLearning content with exciting new forms of interactivity." - David Massart, ASPECT Project Manager, European Schoolnet

"We believe that the release of LTI will give software vendors the opportunity to focus on their strengths, while it gives the educational market more freedom of choice in fulfilling their ICT strategy." - Remi van Zelst, Commercial manager Daidalos

"BLTI is a significant step towards simplifying student and teacher experiences as they navigate the complex application environment that underlies learning and teaching today." - Ganesh Kumar, VP Technology Solutions, LearningMate

"As a vendor dedicated to open XML formats and ease of interoperability, Xyleme fully supports dynamic e-books enabled by the IMS Common Cartridge and LTI standards. In fact, Xyleme was an early adopter of the ePub standard for educational publishers and we will continue our strict adherence to IMS and other critical learning standards." Mark Hellinger, President & CEO of Xyleme

About IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS GLC)
IMS Global Learning is a nonprofit member organization that strives to enable the growth and impact of learning technology in higher education, K-12, and corporate education worldwide. IMS GLC members are leading corporations, higher education institutions, school districts and government organizations worldwide that are enabling the future of education by developing interoperability standards and adoption practices for educational and learning technology. IMS GLC also sponsors Learning Impact: a global awards program and conference that recognizes the impact of innovative technology on educational access, affordability, and quality. For more information, visit www.imsglobal.org. For inquiries about LTI or Basic LTI, including advice for end-user institutions and school districts, use the web form here: http://www.imsglobal.org/contactus.cfm