IMS Global Announces Education Community Supported Innovation Challenge for Learning Apps, Tools and Platforms

The inaugural Connected Learning Innovation Challenge is an open competition to encourage innovative educational applications based on open standards that can connect seamlessly to campus systems and to each other

Lake Mary, Florida, USA – October 10, 2013 – Today's faculty, students, and parents have access to a growing number of digital apps, platforms, tools, and resources. The challenge is that these educational apps, tools, and platforms are not easy to connect into the software systems that are central to teaching and learning, typically a learning management or instructional management system, or to each other. As a result, faculty and students are forced to innovate "outside" of the institutional enterprise. And, the number of innovative apps, tools and content that can be connected into the academic enterprise are severely limited with the available IT support resources.

IMS Global Learning Consortium is leading a community effort to enable and encourage "plug and play" integration of innovative apps, tools and content built on open standards, APIs, and services. During the EDUCAUSE annual conference, IMS Global is launching a collaboration with partners InCommon and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative designed to engage the education community in developing a shared vision to define and build a new IT architecture that allows applications to be easily integrated in support of connected learning.

The launch of the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge includes the first in a series of app challenges to encourage the development of innovative, open educational apps, platforms, and tools to enable connected learning. IMS will also be establishing a leadership and support community for institutional participants who are interested in getting involved. Entries for the inaugural app challenge can come from any institution or product organization worldwide. Entries must be submitted no later than February 1, 2014. Winners will be announced April 1, 2014 and each will be honored with a Learning Impact medal and $1000 award during the 2014 Learning Impact Leadership Institute May 5-8 in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. For more information on the community and the challenge please visit the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge web page at http://www.imsglobal.org/leadingchange/.

Initial corporate support for the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge has been provided by Cengage Learning, Ellucian, Follett, Instructure, McGraw-Hill Education, Oracle, Pearson, and VitalSource. Institutional advocates who have come forward in a short amount of time to support the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge include Lone Star Community College-University Park, Penn State University, Tennessee Board of Regents, UCLA, University of Maryland-Baltimore County, University of Michigan, and the University of San Diego. We fully expect additional supporters, including more existing IMS members, to become involved as institutional advocates and corporate supporters.

Statements of commitment to participate and support the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge:

"At Cengage, we believe standards play a very important role in breaking silos and allowing students and instructors to mash up their learning experience, leveraging the diversity of interactive content and learning tools that the market has to offer," said Claude Vervoort, Senior Architect at Cengage Learning, a charter sponsor of the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge program. "We realize the benefits and also the challenges of creating an open and connected learning environment. We are deeply involved in building on the successes of LTI to create a framework where tools and content can easily be discovered, deployed and in which outcomes can be meaningfully interpreted. As a concrete step in that direction, we are excited about the apps that will surface through this first app challenge." www.cengage.com

"With the most widely-adopted mobile platform in higher education, we understand the power of community," said Wayne Bovier, Vice President, Product Management at Ellucian. "A little healthy competition from this Innovation Challenge is a great initiative to encourage development of new, innovative apps for teaching and learning. The 600 colleges and universities worldwide that have chosen Ellucian Mobile benefit from the standards that that help make app development easier, more flexible, and more durable."
www.ellucian.com/mobile

"Follett's mission is to empower educators with the technology and services that drive student success. We are proud to support the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge in driving innovations that enable educators to seamlessly access and implement new technologies," said Liz Pisney, Director Product Management at Follett.
www.follett.com

"Educational technology is becoming a more universal aspect of the learning experience, but the ed-tech ecosystem has a long way to go before the experience is truly seamless. By encouraging open app development on a common standard, we can help students focus on learning instead of jumping through hoops from app to app. We'll keep pushing from the Canvas side, but it's great to see support from so many other groups in this endeavor, said Brian Whitmer, Co-Founder and Chief Learning Officer, Instructure. www.instructure.com

"When thinking about interoperability and its impact on efficiency, it's important to recognize that institutions do not have the luxury to spend months trying to get educational applications to work together. Students come to campus and expect things to work, and to work flawlessly. Without an education framework based on open standards, it is a challenge to meet the learning needs of student's in today's world. Lone Star College has signed on as an early advocate of the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge because we feel it is in the best interest of our students to move education towards an open ecosystem to improve student outcomes." said Shah Ardalan, President, Lone Star College-University Park. www.lonestar.edu

"We are really excited to be sponsors of the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge. The Connected Learning Innovation Challenge demonstrates the power of open standards that enables us all to work collaboratively to apply the best thinking and the most advanced technologies to enhance learning. The winners of the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge will put these standards into practice by creating connected apps and development tools, clearly demonstrating the benefits of this IMS-led project for the educational community," said Stephen Laster, Chief Digital Officer of McGraw-Hill Education. www.mheducation.com

"We've seen the pace of innovation in education change—it had to—not just in order to take advantage of what technology enables, but also to keep up with students' expectations and needs," said Mark Armstrong, Vice President of Oracle Higher Education Product Development. "We strongly encourage the use of standards to remove barriers to interoperability, which open the doors to an ecosystem of innovation. Oracle's support of the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge is a tangible way we're striving to make it easier for everyone to develop apps, and easier for institutions to share those apps for the benefit of everyone." www.oracle.com

"Pearson is committed to improving achievement, access and affordability in higher education, by developing collaborative learning technologies and supporting interoperability between existing systems that enable educators and students to stay connected, improve learning experiences and reduce costs," said Michael Chai, Chief Digital Officer at Pearson North America. "We welcome the opportunity to foster continued advances in education technology through our support of the IMS Connected Learning Innovation Challenge."
www.pearson.com

"Being connected is the keystone of the IMS community. Nowhere else can educational institutions and suppliers innovate and benefit together. The Connected Learning Innovation Challenge is yet another opportunity to utilize agile technology to enhance learning in timely and cost effective ways," said John Harwood, Associate Vice President, Penn State University. www.psu.edu

"Technology is at the core of connected learning, but all too often it is difficult for faculty to make productive use of digital apps. The Connected Learning Innovation Challenge is an outstanding initiative that the TBR is pleased to support. It is my hope that more colleges and universities will get involved to encourage the development and adoption of open digital apps to better support students and faculty as connected learners and instructors," said Robbie Melton, Associate Vice Chancellor of Mobilization Emerging Technology at the Tennessee Board of Regents. www.tbr.edu

"UMBC is joining the Connected Learning Innovation Challenge because we believe that it is essential to get vendors, institutions, and the open source community adopting a common set of standards to build the learning ecosystem. My hope is that by joining with IMS, my institution can be an early adopter and help lend support for the creation of innovative learning applications," said Jack Suess, Vice President Information Technology and CIO, University of Maryland, Baltimore County. www.umbc.edu

"As a longtime supporter and leader of using the interoperability standards behind IMS, Vital Source is pleased to support the IMS Connected Learning App challenge, " said Rick Johnson, Vice President, Product and Sales Engineering, Vital Source Technologies, Inc. "Today's learning environments are all about getting ready access to the data and tools that are needed by both the instructors and learners and letting them create new things with them. Creating an ecosystem that enables access to individual items that can be simply wired together will bring capabilities that were simply unavailable in the classroom before. Enabling commercial and OER content to be available in those environments is what Vital Source is all about." www.vitalsource.com

About IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS Global)
IMS Global is a nonprofit organization that advances technology that can affordably scale and improve educational participation and attainment. IMS members are leading suppliers, institutions and government organizations that are enabling the future of education by collaborating on interoperability and adoption initiatives. IMS sponsors Learning Impact: A global awards program & conference to recognize the impact of innovative technology on educational access, affordability, and quality. For more information visit imsglobal.org.

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