IMS Global Learning Consortium Announces Major Developments in Open Standards for Interoperability of Electronic Assessments

IMS APIP and QTI standards are enabling major national and state testing programs worldwide to achieve the cost and response time advantages of digital assessment

Lake Mary, Florida, USA – 19 February 2013 – The IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS Global) today announced substantial progress toward the adoption of IMS technical standards for next generation electronic assessment. The cost and time delays of paper-based testing are rapidly becoming a thing of the past thanks to the IMS Accessible Portable Item Protocol (APIP) v1.0 and the Question and Test Interoperability (QTI) v2.1 standards. New resources are now available for the assessment community to understand and adopt the APIP v1.0 and QTI v2.1.

IMS APIP is a standard for the digital interchange of assessment content and results. APIP also describes digital delivery options for a range of common accessibility needs. Use of APIP enables assessment materials to be exchanged digitally among a wide variety of products, such as item/test authoring products, item banks, and test delivery systems. The APIP work has been supported by ACT, CETE (University of Kansas), CTB McGraw-Hill, Data Recognition Corporation, ETS, Measured Progress, NWEA, Pacific Metrics, Pearson, WIDA and U.S. assessment leaders from Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Utah, and Wisconsin. The state-led APIP end user workgroup has produced a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to help introduce the purpose and scope of APIP. The FAQ is available here as well as link to pose new questions to keep the list active and growing: http://www.imsglobal.org/apip/apipfaqs.html

During recent IMS Quarterly Meetings, some of the suppliers involved in the APIP workgroup, including CTB McGraw-Hill, ETS, and Measured Progress demonstrated early implementations of systems that successfully create, edit, and store APIP items and tests. A recording of the demonstration between ETS and Measured Progress is available on the APIP website here: http://www.imsglobal.org/apip/index.html

CTB, ETS, Measured Progress, and Pacific Metrics are preparing their system implementations to apply for APIP conformance certifications via the official IMS certification process. IMS anticipates additional supplier certifications to follow, thus enabling interoperability between and across these different implementations. Products that have achieved conformance certification for IMS standards are contained in the official list at http://imscert.org.

IMS has been collaborating with the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF Association and the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to enable a mapping from the U.S. Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) to IMS APIP and to SIF. These mappings will be released in CEDS 3.0 (see https://ceds.ed.gov) and IMS will be publishing additional materials to make the translation from CEDS to APIP easier for developers.

In related news, IMS QTI v2.1 has formally been approved by the IMS Contributing Membership as a Final specification. QTI v2.1 is the foundation for APIP interoperability of items and tests that do not take advantage of APIP's accessibility features. Thus, the first step for suppliers to implement APIP is to understand and implement a profile (subset) of QTI v2.1 Thanks to the dedication and hard work of BPS Bildungsportal Sachsen GmbH, Cito, College voor Examens, JISC CETIS, KERIS (Korea Education & Research Information Service), University of Glasgow, University of Pierre & Marie

Curie, and University of Southampton for seeing this specification work to completion. Conformance certifications procedures for QTI v2.1 have been completed by IMS and are now available for the first time in the long history of QTI. IMS Global has made available a Primer on IMS Assessment Conformance and Certification to guide suppliers and users in terms of the relationship between QTI v2.1 and APIP, including conformance certification profiles. Please see http://www.imsglobal.org/apip/IMSAssessmentPrimerv1p0.html To claim QTI conformance from this point in time forward, products must complete the IMS testing process and receive the IMS certification.

Now that QTI v2.1 is complete and APIP v1.0 nears formal approval, continued specification development and management of the conformance program falls to the IMS Assessment Accredited Profile Management Group (APMG). This combined group of end user organizations and interested organizations will meet regularly to support the adoption and evolution of the QTI/APIP work. To participate in this activity, we invite you to join to the QTI/APIP Alliance: http://www.imsglobal.org/apip/alliance.html

About IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS Global) www.imsglobal.org

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.