



STATUS REPORT AND UPDATE

Friday, 26 July 2002

THE WEEK THAT WAS - This has been a busy week in a busy month. On Monday I was invited to participate in Washington DC in the formation of the NCES Forum Performance Indicators group that will eventually become a formal Task Force of the NCES Forum. This group will be working on the specific details of the measures used by districts and states to report progress and success in NCLB. The NCES Forum met this week, all the states were there, and there were many very interesting presentations. This is an exciting time in public education.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION - Work continues on the OpenVES Sandbox Linux and W2000 systems, databases and directories. Of the 37 services to be installed we are just about 20% of the way. We have DNS servers up and running, are testing Web Servers, and Web Services. The focus from the beginning is on availability, reliability, security, and graceful degradation of service around potential failures. We have installed some high powered XML transaction appliances which will make it possible to support thousands of secure XML transactions concurrently, which will dramatically improve performance for XML based applications. We were just notified of our Sun equipment ship date in early August. We will work with the Sun Enterprise 3500 we have, while we wait for the rest of the systems to arrive, and are very excited to have a ship date so we can plan the hardware and software installations and get these machines ready for development and integration. We are especially eager to start configuring and testing the distributed appliances for states and districts.

WEB SITES AND PUBLIC RELATIONS - The first iteration of www.openves.org is up and running. The second iteration, with much added content, will be up this weekend or on Monday. We will be forced to switch over from one server and network to another twice in the next 60 days, so there may be some DNS propagation delays. These changes are necessitated by infrastructure upgrades at TEK2000 in the Berkshires and our eventual move to Boston. Four other associated websites are being cued up to come on line during the next six weeks. Each plays a different role in the OpenVES deployment plans for next year:

- **EdXML.org** - will be the flagship site for our PK12 Standards initiatives - In addition to news and other documentation we will be providing a public pk12 requirements portal, an XML schema repository and registry for DTDs, controlled vocabularies and markup languages, and a taxonomy, RDF, and Topic Map registry for collection, aggregation, and publication of pk12 relevant materials from around the world.
- **XLINKS.net** - will be the demonstration and information site for the content repository, and the distributed metadata and persistent URL technology to be deployed in the OpenVES environment. The site will also provide a resource management web services pilot application.
- **EdUDDI.org** - will be a full service UDDI registry and test bed for an initial set of OpenVES web services to be deployed in conjunction with the eLearning Platform. Vendors, Content Publishers and other Education Providers are invited to participate in pilots and beta tests when the registry is active in September. Interested parties should contact us now to make plans.
- **pk12.com** - will be a non-profit edCommerce site and will pilot alliance, syndication programs, and a virtual e-Mall. It is our plan to extend this functionality to schools that wish to put student enterprise programs and stores online. We are seeking alliances with distributors of educational products for participation in pk12.com.

Our next round of press activity will be in conjunction with the startup of school in September, and again in November with vendors in conjunction with the startup of multi-state activity.

edXML, STANDARDS, AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY - This week we participated in the IMS Developer Network conference call in which Mark Norton provided an excellent update on ongoing IMS groups and activities. There is encouraging news and rapid progress on a number of work items of great importance to the pk12 community of practice. The OASIS preliminary organization phase will end shortly with the formation of the edXML Technical Committee. That will raise the public profile considerably and should let us articulate better the role of edXML within

the pk12 community of practice, and our continuing advocacy and support for the ongoing activities at IMS, SIF, DCMI, OAI, and ADL. Next week is Plugfest 6 in Washington DC, where we will see some of the state of the art in SCORM eLearning implementations. Then, and I am really looking forward to this, Extreme Markup (XML), in Montreal. This conference is where the future of XML gets invented.

It is also on the agenda for next week to resume discussions with key representatives of pk12 and standards groups in the UK, Europe, Australia and Canada regarding federated content repository protocols, the OpenVES xLINKS distributed metadata proposal, exchange of RSS news feeds, and other potential collaborations. We expect those conversations to continue into September when there will be an opportunity to meet face to face. An itinerary is being planned to visit CETIS staff in Glasgow, and meet with the Scottish k12 public education authority, attend the IMS meeting in Sheffield UK, hop over to Paris for the meeting of The Valkenburg Group (EML), participate in the PROMETEUS meeting, and wind up visiting the CEN/ISSS Learning Technology Workshop meetings.

We continue to reach out to the grass roots, open source schools, and developer communities. Our goal is to link up those working at the state level on free, open, public, infrastructure in OpenVES, with those at universities like Jim Laffey at the University of Missouri (shadowNet), Steven Narmontas at Western new England College (Manhattan), Gregory Marks (MERIT) in Michigan, and Robert Stephenson at Wayne State University (Harvey Project), and the school district and school developers doing very creative things in Linux for teachers and students. With help from RedHat and Sun Microsystems we hope to bring these constituencies together in the Fall to talk about openness, a common architecture, standards, and to figure out how to sustain a meaningful collaboration.

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT, RESOURCES, AND PUBLICATIONS - Work continues on the "content enabled" workspace projects: MyDay and MyWorld. These are interdisciplinary, pk12 resources, organized and classified by learning standards designed for classroom use and individual subscription. Negotiations are underway with a number of web content providers to classify, catalog, mirror and integrate their content into the OpenVES platform. A series of five books will be released over the course of the next year describing the OpenVES eLearning tools, technology, implementation strategies, and architecture. These books will tell the story of the last four years, when public educators set out to build this technology and re-envision public education. Two themes that run throughout the books, and are intertwined with one another are Radical Pedagogy (RP) and Xtreme Learning (XL). The books are intended to provide templates, blueprints, patterns and best practices for those who are serious about re-engineering education now. The set of books will be released in both print and ebook format and will be accompanied by a poster/schematic and a multimedia CD-ROM. A grant is being sought to make the full set of books available to every school district in the nation.

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY - Current development is in "XP stealth" mode to maximize productivity and minimize interruption, but I can tell you that an early implementation of the Netherlands Open University Educational Modelling Language (EML) forms the basis of the eLearning portal infrastructure and that it is pervasively XML and XSLT based. I can also say that we have a prototype online assessment documentation system and assessment rendering engine successfully rendering 1/3 of the IMS QTI 1.2 item types. Work on Instructional Planner, Competency Model, Individualized Learning Planner, and Portfolio are underway or in testing for delivery at the Reference schools in the Fall, and to other schools in OpenVES states in January 2003. These tools will be accompanied by a diagnostic assessment battery consisting of several thousand adaptive test items in Mathematics and English Language Arts. As soon as the edXML site is online we will start posting tutorials on the "deep classification" model for curriculum, a set of state learning standard, assessment, and accountability ontologies, and the proposed subject taxonomies and content topic maps for Mathematics and English Language Arts, which we are using.

OpenVES REFERENCE SCHOOLS - Boston's TechBoston Academy (Mary Skipper's new school) and Sheffield's Mount Everett Regional School (Glen Devoti and Paul O'Brien's amazing school) are the two OpenVES Reference schools. Meetings and discussions with administrators and staff have been ongoing through the Summer and will expand to include interactions with teachers as soon as they are ready. We are looking to support these schools with a small but growing set of fully integrated eLearning tools and infrastructure and to pilot the very important strategies needed to succeed at the "transparent edge". This will involve the wireless Laptop program at TBA and a wireless handheld program at MERS. Conversations are underway, or will soon be underway to identify and sign on a select group of additional schools for the Spring, which will include an innovative school from the Navajo Nation, a school for the deaf, a Charter school, and a DOD EA school.

OpenVES STATES – I had a good meeting with VES Massachusetts this week, and will be working with Erik Johnson of Sun Microsystems to ramp up conversations with other states to tie down their participation in Pilots and Prototypes for next Fall. Visits and meetings with states and large school districts are being scheduled. I need to reconnect with Washington State. Beginning in August we should be able to start reporting names of States committed to the project. We invite any states receiving this email update to contact us for more information on the Fall program, as it takes a while to get the message out to everyone. You may also visit www.openves.org to find out more about what we are up to.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS - Conversations continue with the vendor partners who are contributing almost \$ 2 million in hardware, software, and cash to make the OpenVES Sandbox a reality. We are hoping to add a number of additional vendor contributors to this important group. A set of new conversations has started with universities active in pk12 education with the goal of creating strategic partnerships, funding opportunities, and content dissemination in the OpenVES pilots. In August, a set of meetings will be held with major education publishers to identify common ground and plan strategic pilots and prototypes for next year. A second set of conversations has started with small, but very exciting, publishers of unique educational content and resources. We will be looking for ways to showcase their products and to make them available to schools in the states participating in the OpenVES Sandbox.

HELP AND SUPPORT NEEDED - We welcome any vendor, publisher, non-profit, school or library interested in openness, collaboration, and sharing to join with us in this exciting work. We invite foundations, vendors, and other organizations interested in supporting sustainable pk12 initiatives to "imagine the possibilities" with us. We are also mounting a search for an Executive Director to help lead this important project.

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This is an initial mailing to those who have expressed interest in the past in the work of VES or OpenVES. If you are not interested in receiving future updates on OpenVES activity, reply to this email with the subject: "**Stop, Already!**" and your name will be removed from the list.