



The e-Framework for Education and Research

The e-Framework is an initiative by the U.K's Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), Australia's Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and partners to produce an evolving and sustainable, open standards based, service oriented technical framework to support the education and research communities.

The e-Framework supports a service oriented approach to developing and delivering education, research and management information systems. Such an approach maximises the flexibility and cost effectiveness with which systems can be deployed, both in an institutional context, nationally and internationally.

The e-Framework allows the community to document its requirements and processes in a coherent way, and to use these to derive a set of interoperable network services that conform to appropriate open standards. By documenting requirements, processes, services, protocol bindings and standards in the form of 'reference models' members of the community are better able to collaborate on the development of service components that meet their needs (both within the community and with commercial and other international partners). The 'e-Framework' also functions as a strategic planning tool for the e-Framework partners.

The initiative builds on the e-Learning Framework and the JISC Information Environment as well as other service oriented initiatives in the areas of scholarly information, research support and educational administration. A briefing paper that provides an overview of the e-Framework and how the partners intend to use it can be found in the resources section.

The e-Framework Partnership intends to operate in accordance with the following guiding principles:

1. The adoption of a service oriented approach to system and process integration
 - A service-oriented framework provides significant benefits to stakeholders including policy makers, managers, institutions, suppliers and developers and is a business driven approach for developing ICT infrastructure that encourages innovation by being agile and adaptive.
 - A service-oriented framework currently provides the best means of addressing systems integration issues within institutions, between institutions and across the domains within education and research.
 - The definition of services is driven by business requirements and processes.

- The factoring of the services is a key to the effectiveness of the framework.
 - A high level 'abstract' service definition should not duplicate or overlap another service.
 - An abstract service definition is a description of a service that is independent of the language or platform that may be used to implement the service.
 - The e-Framework activities will strive for technical excellence and adoption of co-developed good practices.
2. The development, promotion and adoption of Open Standards
 - Open Standards are key to achieving integration between systems, institutions and between domains in the education and research communities.
 - Open standards are defined for the e-Framework as those standards that are developed collaboratively through due process, are platform independent, vendor neutral, extensible, reusable, publicly accessible, and not encumbered by royalties.
 - In order to achieve impact open standards require international collaboration and consensus.
 3. Community involvement in the development of the e-Framework
 - Open and transparent processes are essential for the development of the e-Framework.
 - Collaboration between technical and domain experts, practitioners, developers and vendors will be essential to the evolution and uptake of the e-Framework approach.
 - Capacity and capability need to be developed in communities to enable effective use of the e-Framework.
 4. Open collaborative development activities
 - In order to support the on-going e-Framework evolution, results will be made publicly available.
 - Engagement with communities of use will be essential in the development of the e-Framework.
 - Sustained international development of the e-Framework cannot be undertaken by a single organisation and collaboration between organisations is required.
 - Where possible and appropriate, Open Intellectual Property licensing approaches (such as open source, creative commons, royalty free patent licences) will be adopted.
 5. Flexible and incremental deployment of the e-Framework
 - The e-Framework supports and promotes flexible deployment by stakeholder institutions.
 - The e-Framework facilitates incremental deployment and change.
 - The e-Framework will accommodate both open source and proprietary implementations.
 - Institutions will decide whether to use open or closed source implementations in deploying the e-Framework

The e-Framework's founding organisations, DEST and JISC, have devised a temporary model for the management of and engagement with the e-Framework designed to support the incubation and nurture of the e-Framework, throughout the critical early years of development. The governance and stewardship structures will be iteratively

refined as part of the e-Framework work plan. In the first year the development of the e-Framework will be driven by the priorities of the Collaboration Partners and the work plan will be tailored to their programmes and projects. The first review of the Governance and Stewardship Model will be conducted by the Collaboration Partners in February 2006.

In this initiation phase, some, if not most of the work associated with The e-Framework will primarily be generated within the JISC and DEST existing structures and their funded work programmes and projects. Some of aspects of the work will be undertaken in joint JISC DEST groups, both those formally established and described in the Governance and Stewardship Model and "ad hoc" working groups that develop as required to address particular priorities and identified areas of common interest.

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