

Some thoughts on joint project of MUCI and CINECA

Janina Mincer-Daszkiewicz
31 September 2008

1. The main (short-term, one year perspective) purpose of the project
 - a) To design support for student mobility by electronic exchange of data between Polish universities using USOS produced by MUCI and Italian universities using ESSE3 produced by KION.
 - b) To implement and deploy some prototype solution. At least two universities should be engaged in deployment, e.g. University of Warsaw and Bologna University.
 - c) To reference and eventually adopt the MLO (Metadata for Learning Opportunity) and ELM (European Learner Mobility) standards.
 - d) To popularize the prototype among prospective collaborators, like the major university consortia (Ladok, HIS, OCU, FS, AMUE, SURF and more...) and other providers (unisolation, Digitary, Sygma, Oodi, Studielink, Sungard, Oracle, Tribal..)
 - e) To present the idea at the next Eunis conference.

2. Some general remarks
 - a) Our main stakeholders are employees of university International Relation Offices.
 - b) We should start with gathering their opinion on what is the most cumbersome part of data exchange involved in student mobility.
 - c) We should start with something small but really needed by stakeholders. The success would be if they will be eager to start using the new functionalities.
 - d) We have to remember that if the solution is supposed to work for many universities in the future it shouldn't be too difficult from the organizational point of view to start cooperation. On the other hand we should also have in mind security and trust issues (that may require making use of electronic signatures).
 - e) The final solution should work in a possibly distributed way – meaning that it should be relatively easy for two universities to start cooperating (after making some formal agreement).
 - f) The software should be as generic as possible. It means that we cannot assume any particular system for student management to be run on any of the involved sites. It also means that probably the safest solution is to send data in some generic XML format, which will be parsed and interpreted locally by each involved site. It will be responsibility of each institution which wants to join the project to develop software for local translation to/from XML to local database format.
 - g) At the moment the more popular means of data exchange are emails, which deliver unstructured data, difficult to browse and archive.

3. Some initial requirements analysis

Stakeholders interviews brought up the following points:

- a) List small set of personal data of initially qualified students coming from the partner university for short-term studies. This list usually evolves over time and has to be

- resent. It happens that a few separate lists are being sent from the partner university and altogether the number of students exceeds the number of places agreed upon in the mobility agreement. This is the responsibility of IRO to merge the lists and cut of extra students.
- b) Complete set of personal data of finally qualified students – students are usually asked to fill in some on-line web form. They make a lot of literal mistakes, which might be avoided if authorized data was sent from one institution to another.
 - c) Transcript of records of the student going abroad – students applying for studies abroad are asked to deliver complete transcript of records.
 - d) Learning agreement – during the application process so called learning agreement is being negotiated between the student, coordinator from the home institution and coordinator from the partner institution. This LA will eventually become transcript of record from the next point.
 - e) Transcript of records (initially having status of LA) of the student coming back to home university.

Summary: Data we want to exchange is:

- a) Record of personal data
First name, second name, family name, date of birth, place of birth, unique code of the country of citizenship, unique identifier inside the country of citizenship, unique identifier of the home university, name of the department at the home university, permanent address (street, number of house, number of flat, ZIP code, town, country), address for correspondence (as for permanent address), email
Optional data: planned date of arrival and departure, Socrates code of the studied discipline.
- b) Record of courses, grades, ECTS points of a particular student, unique identifier of the home university, unique identifier of the course, name of the course, ECTS points, total number of hours (lectures, classes, laboratories, projects etc.), grade in ECTS scale (A, B, C, D, E, F), grade in local scale.

Remark: There is a need to send such data in both directions, possibly more than once.