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A EUROPEAN MODEL FOR LEARNER COMPETENCIES

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AGREEMENT

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English version

A European Model for Learner Competencies

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Foreword

This CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA) provides a European data model and guidelines for expressing, referencing and capturing measurable characteristics of simple and complex competencies.

The CWA also includes case studies for the description of existing maps and taxonomies of competencies and presents possible mappings of the "European Framework for Transparency of Qualifications" elements to the resulting data model.

The development of models for European Competencies as part of future international standards is urgently required. In order to avoid that European education providers will have to develop their own line of services, platforms and courseware concepts in contradiction to International Standards to cope with European privacy or security demands.

The decision for this work item was taken by the Learning Technologies Workshop at the 15th meeting on July 07/08, 2003. Work on the CWA started at the 17th meeting in January 2004 by its editor, Ms. Cleo Sgouropoulou of the National Technical University of Athens, Greece.

The document has been developed through the collaboration of a number of contributing partners, representing a wide mix of interests, from universities to commercial companies representatives. The names of the individuals and their affiliations that have expressed support for this CWA is available from the CEN/ISSS Secretariat.

The final review/endorsement round for this CWA was started on 2005-06-16/17 and closed on 2005-07-15.

The final text of this CWA was submitted to CEN for approval and publication in 2005-09-06.

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Comments or suggestions from the users of the CEN Workshop Agreement are welcome and should be addressed to the CEN Management Centre.

Introduction

Every organisation or enterprise engaged in the fields of formal education, technical, vocational or corporate training, staffing or workforce development implements or uses competency definitions and structures.

Moreover, several entities have already undertaken the design and implementation of digital repositories in order to support the storage, search, retrieval and management of such definitions, thus dealing with issues ranging from learning resource discovery to accreditation and skill gap analysis. However, these systems cannot exchange information in an effective way, as they use different information models or assumptions.

The development and usage of a universal competency definition model to allow the creation, exchange and reuse of competency definitions among interoperable systems is imperative for the support of intra and inter-organisational / entrepreneurial activities. At the same time, competency definitions constitute fundamental entities for reference by other widely adopted Learning Technology standards or specifications. Apart from the definition, other competency data need to be examined and accommodated in other information models, as appropriate, in order to provide coverage to the entire competency problem space.

Within a European context, the single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competencies (Europass) adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union defines new information models for the description of skills, academic and vocational qualifications, experience of trans-national mobility, thus setting further referencing requirements to well-defined, persistent competency definitions.

This CWA deals with the elaboration of an application profile of the IMS Reusable Definition of Competency or Educational Objective (RDCEO) specification in order to facilitate the creation of competency repositories within a European context, provides guidelines and recommendations for the use and extension of complementary specifications for expressing competency data and discusses other relevant standardisation activities.

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