



E-systems development within Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs)

*A report detailing the current levels of
activity and options to avoid duplication
across the sector*

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*Jason Reed, Yorkshire & Humber East LLN
with David Sowden, Yorkshire & Humber East LLN*

Summary

This study has been compiled on behalf of the LLN National Forum in order to aid practitioners as they make decisions about e-systems development.

Due to the individuality of each LLN and their e-systems development, it has not been possible to identify any specific LLN-led developments which should be shared 'across the board'. Instead, this paper provides an overview of all developments to date and should be seen as a reference point for any LLN practitioner wishing to develop e-systems. Once potential opportunities for sharing have been identified, it will then follow that individual LLN practitioners enter dialogue regarding development processes and associated costs.

The main recommendations for the development of e-systems are:

1. LLNs should build on existing developments and adopt an individual approach to sharing of developments
2. LLNs should build infrastructure through utilising XCRI-CAP
3. HEFCE should provide national support for the development and implementation of 'data standards'. LLNs can have an important voice in this process.

The authors, whilst focusing on the e-systems development to date have been conscious of the arena in which LLNs are operating and have also highlighted an urgent need for LLNs to consider the sustainability of their 'products'. A further recommendation identifies collaboration as the key to developing a sustainable plan for the operation of current e-systems.

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Objectives

Lifelong Learning Networks (hereafter referred to as LLNs) are HEFCE-funded partnerships of colleges and universities which focus on progression into and through vocational education. They aim to create new learning opportunities, forge agreement across institutions on how qualifications are valued, and enable people to understand how they can progress through the Higher Education system.

In April of 2008, CHERI produced the Interim Evaluation of LLNs. Within the evaluation, a small number of areas of consideration were identified. One of these was the extent to which individual LLNs were developing web-based products without maximising the opportunities for sharing such developments across LLNs and other agencies.

‘There are also issues of potential duplication of effort among LLNs, although because most sites are still at a developmental stage or have just been launched, it is not possible to determine the extent to which one LLN’s online services developments might meet the needs of another’¹.

This problem is intensified because of the different LLN funding periods; early LLNs have been funded since 2005, whilst the most recently approved LLN was awarded funding in early 2008. As identified in the Interim Evaluation, this has reduced the potential for sharing development (in terms of both costs and ideas) from the beginning.

‘LLNs, through HEFCE and the national forum, should explore the extent to which web-based developments might be rationalised across the initiative and with other relevant stakeholder bodies’ developments (e.g. SSCs and LSC)’²

This study was commissioned in response to the above recommendation. However, it should be noted the scope of the study is narrower than previously planned and does not consider in detail ‘other relevant stakeholder bodies’. It is hoped that the further study being carried out by JISC (referred to below) will undertake to capture this.

This report is intended to enable people, especially those working within LLNs to achieve the following outcomes:

- Identify existing applications they might be able to use
- Identify potential partners to collaborate with
- Identify possible opportunities for sustainability

It provides the reader with an understanding of:

- What systems are being used by LLNs
 - The typical costs of developing them
 - The typical benefits (perceived) from them
- Different approaches towards e-systems development by LLNs
- What might be involved if they choose to start a development process
- Who to contact for further discussion
- How people are viewing sustainability
- Other initiatives taking place

¹ P.20 CHERI Interim Evaluation of Lifelong Learning Networks, April 2008

² P.7 (lesson f) CHERI Interim Evaluation of Lifelong Learning Networks, April 2008

Approach

The approach has been developed to achieve a useful summary in a short period of time. The report writers are conscious of an in-depth report being conducted by JISC independently³ that is expected to provide analysis of all systems across LLNs.

HEFCE commissioned the LLN National Forum to take forward this study. The Forum, through the e-systems workstrand has worked with colleagues drawn from number of LLNs who have an understanding of both the technical aspects and the overall agenda in which LLNs are working.

Telephone interviews were conducted to understand the general perspectives of LLNs. In addition some of the major projects that have been developed where targeted and face to face interviews were conducted.

Initially it had been hoped to perform a comparison of features and benefits of different solutions that are live or in development. However, as each individual LLN has differed in it's approach to e-systems and the requirements for solutions are varied, it was decided to focus mainly on a small number of LLN developments. As there are very few defined prices for purchasing any of the systems it was not possible to provide practitioners with a cost benefit analysis.

The overviews provided in the appendices summarise information collected from the LLNs and all comments are based on the information provided by the interviewee rather than any third party opinions.

Assumptions

Use of report

LLN practitioners may use the report to make a decision about if and how to proceed with e-systems. They are unlikely to be able to select a system without further detailed review having understood their own specific needs and the finer details of the systems on offer.

HEFCE will find this report useful to inform their strategic planning.

³ Evaluation and review of technical developments to support lifelong learning 22/09/08 - 12/03/09

Summary of e-system usage across LLNs

Overview

During the interviews it was clear that all the LLNs share a passion for their work in this area and they are focused on delivering value for their stakeholders. Particularly there was a lot of focus or interest in developments that will benefit the learner. However there is no general consensus on what a LLNs involvement should be in developments.

All interviewees were aware of the importance of e-systems to the future of education however the major differences in perspective were on the following questions:

- Should LLN's develop systems?
 - If they do should they only do it in collaboration with partners or other agencies?
 - What systems should be developed?
- Should systems developed by LLN's be commercial?
 - Who owns the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)?
 - Does government (HEFCE) funding make them freely available?
- How can e-systems be sustained beyond the life of the LLN?

The data gathered relating to these questions is reviewed in the following sections:

- Approach towards e-systems
- Commercial approaches
- Sustainability

General observations

- Not many systems are live.
 - Live systems have been so for a few months or may be in pilot stages
 - Most LLNs have had basic websites in place for most of their funding period
- The benefits of collaboration were identified as:
 - Learning from each other⁴
 - Particularly from mistakes
 - Reducing duplication of effort by using existing developments was a desire that was expressed by all LLNs⁵
 - Benefits of sharing code may lead to building on each other's developments
- In some regions other agencies, beyond LLNs, are involved in developing e-Systems and sometimes these have been integrated into LLN developments. Developments between regions vary (e.g. AimHigher in the East Midlands are developing a progression solution, which is not replicated in other regions)
- LLNs recognise and are often frustrated by the duplication of similar systems however this is in tension with the need to meet the needs of the learner locally by developing an application for a particular category

⁴ This was mentioned on 8 occasions

⁵ This was mentioned on 23 occasions

Definition of e-systems in use in LLNs nationally

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

Definition

Need	e-system
Enhance the learning process, increasing the availability of a range of resources.	<p>A virtual learning environment (VLE) is a set of teaching and learning tools designed to enhance a student's learning experience by including computers and the Internet in the learning process. The principal components of a VLE package include curriculum mapping (breaking curriculum into sections that can be assigned and assessed), student tracking, online support for both teacher and student, electronic communication (e-mail, threaded discussions, chat, Web publishing), and Internet links to outside curriculum resources. In this report 'VLE use' is that used by the LLN to host and manage some form of online learning in some cases taster courses.</p> <p>In this report 'VLEs referred to' are used by the LLN to host and manage some form of online learning.</p>

e-learning content

Definition

Need	e-system
The creation of media rich e-learning content to enhance the learning experience.	<p>e-learning content is a resource, usually digital and web-based, that can be used and re-used to support learning. Learning content and objects offer a new conceptualisation of the learning process: rather than the traditional "several hour chunk", they provide smaller, self-contained, re-usable units of learning.</p> <p>They will typically have a number of different components. At their core, however, will be instructional content, and probably assessment tools. A key issue is the use of metadata.</p> <p>In this report it describes learning content that has been created by an LLN.</p>

Student Access Portal/Website

Definition

Need	e-system
Learners require a range of different web based resources to be easily available	<p>A web portal is a site that provides a single function via a web page or site. Web portals often function as a point of access to information on the World Wide Web. Portals present information from diverse sources in a unified way. Apart from the search engine standard, web portals offer other services such as e-mail, news, links to VLE's, and other features. Portals provide a way for institutions to provide a consistent look and feel with access control and procedures for multiple applications, which otherwise would have been different entities altogether. For the purpose of this report some websites that don't handle identity management have also been included.</p>

e-Portfolio/ Personal development planning (PDP)

Definition

Need	e-system
Learners require access to suitable tools to store and reflect on their personal education and career progression.	e-Portfolio/PDP is the most controversial area to define. PDP is a structured and supported process to assist learners in arranging their own personal educational and career progression this is often stored within an e-Portfolio. For the purpose of this report it covers anything that is used by the learner to manage their learning history, goals, digital identity etc.

Course Finders

Definition

Need	e-systems
To give users the potential to quickly access information on the full range of learning opportunities available.	There are many solutions that enable a learner or employer to search for courses based on their own criteria. These may link to institutional prospectuses.

Information, Advice and Guidance - IAG

Definition

Need	e-systems
Evidence shows that learners require help to make sense of the wealth of information available and choices open to them.	Any e-system solution or tool that relates to providing Information, advice and guidance to the learner regarding courses, qualifications and careers. Also included diagnostic tools to assist the learner select possible careers.

Progression

Definition

Need	e-system
To illustrate the developing and complex array of progression routes	Any e-system solution or tool that maps progression routes between courses and qualifications. This is sometimes expressed in terms of possible routes as well as agreed routes

Website

Definition

Need	e-system
The most effective channel to ensure that information and resources are update and relevant.	The homepage of the LLN listed on the National forum's webpage (http://www.lifelonglearningnetworks.org.uk/network-finder/)

CPD Directory

Definition

Need	e-system
To ensure employers and employees have access and knowledge of new and emerging education and learning developments.	An online tool that lists courses available specifically aimed at developing the professional skills of those involved in education and most likely not qualification based.

Internal Collaboration Tools

Definition

Need	e-system
LLN require tools to enable them to collaborate with their partners	This area converts tools that enable: sharing documents, collaborating on projects remotely and document repositories.

It should be noted that tools can address one or more of the needs identified, e.g. a tool, which links available courses (course finder) to progression routes and supporting IAG.

In addition, it should also be noted that a range of other applications exist outside the main categories listed above. This category is varied, but includes such things as: systems to support credit accumulation; a community forum for arranging exchange visits between FE and HE; APEL tools and an online validation programme for Foundation Degrees.

Data tracking is an important and challenging area for LLNs, much of which is beyond the scope of this report. However the possible linkages between data sharing and e-systems should not be overlooked. This is highlighted in the recommendations.

Category		VLE		e-Lrning		Std Prrl		e-prtl		Crse Fndr	IAG		Prgrsn		Wbst		CPD		Intrnt		
	Approach	Stage	Cmmercl	Stage	Cmmercl	Stage	Cmmercl	Stage	Cmmercl	Stage	Cmmercl	Stage	Cmmercl	Stage	Cmmercl	Stage	Cmmercl	Stage	Cmmercl	Stage	Cmmercl
LLN																					
NEHSN	D	N		N		N		N		L	C	L	C	L	C	L		N		N	
HWLLN	D	L	O	L	O	L	O	L	O	L	O	L	O	L	O	L		N		N	
Leap Ahead	I	N		N		N		L	C	D	O	D	O	D	O	L		N		N	
YHELLN	D	P	O	P	O	D	O	P	O	L	O	L	O	L	O	L		P	O	L	C
MOVE	D	N		N		D	O	D	O	L	O	L	O	L	O	L				N	
BBCSLN	D	N		N		N		N		P		P		P		L		N		N	
LLLLN	P	N		N		N		D		P		N		N		L		N		N	
Coventry & Warks	I	N		N		N		N		N		P		N		L		N		N	
CHL	D	N		N		N		D		P		P		P		L		P		N	
Cheshire & Warrington	I	N		N		L	O	L	O	L	O	L	O	D	O	L		P		N	
GMSA	D	N		N		N		D	C	L	C	L	C	L	C	L		N		N	
GMWL	D	L		N		L	O	L	O	L	O	L	O	D	O	L		N		N	
Higher Futures	I	N		N		D		N		D		D		D		L		N		D	
Higher York	D	N		P		L		N		L		L		L		L		N		N	
Lancashire LLN	P	N		N		N		N		N		N		P		P		P		N	
NALN	P	N		N		N		N		D		D		D		L		N		N	
SLN	D	N		L	O	D		N		L	O	P	O	P	O	L		L		L	C
Kent & Medway	I	N		N		D		P		D		D		D		L		P		N	
Progress South Central	I	N		N		D		P		D		D		D		P		N		N	
HI-LLN	I	N		N		D		P		D		D		D		L		N		L	
Skills SC	P	N		N		N		N		D		N		D		L		N		N	
SE London	P	N		N		N		N		N		P		N		L		N		L	
South London	P	N		N		N		N		N		N		P		L		N		P	
South West	P	N		N		N		N		N		D		N		L		N		N	
Staffs	I	N		D		N		P		P		D		N		P		N		N	
The Creative Way	D	N		N		L	C	P		L	C	L	C	L	C	L		N		L	C
Vet Net	D	N		N		N		N		L		L		P		L		P		L	
West London	I	N		D		N		N		L		N		N		L		N		N	
West Yorks	D	N		N		N		N		N		L	C	N		L		D		D	
WVLLN	D	P		P		D		D		P		P		P		L		N		P	

Key

Stage

Approach

Cmmrcl

N

P

D

L

No Plans

Planned

In Development

Live

N

P

I

D

No Deveopment

Support Partner projects

Develop and integrate

Develop separate system

Not Applicable or Unkno

Open Source

Commercial

Key					
Stage	N	No Plans			
	P	Planned			
	D	In Development			
	L	Live			
Approach	N	No Deveopment			
	P	Support Partner projects			
	I	Develop and integrate			
	D	Develop separate system			
Cmmrcl		Not Applicable or Unkno			
	O	Open Source			
	C	Commercial			

Table 1 - Summary of e-systems (information correct at 1 September 2008)

Approaches towards e-systems

LLNs have taken different approaches to the development of systems. Some have concentrated their efforts on supporting partner institutions developments, whilst others have developed their own. The different approaches have been classified as:

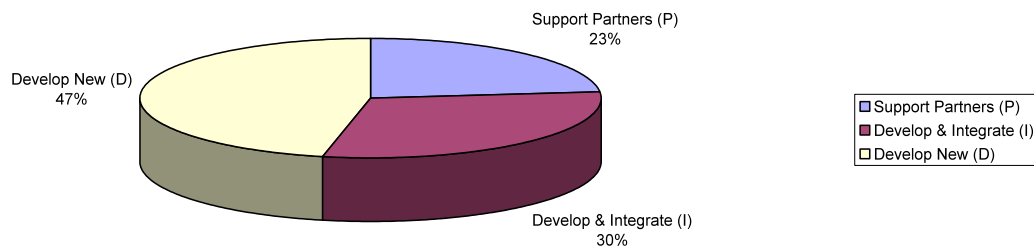
- Support Partner Development Projects(P)
- Develop and Integrate into partner systems (I)
- Deliver systems directly(D)

After each approach a summary of reasons provided by LLN's is listed for

- Why? (the approach was selected)
- How? (the method used)
-

Support Partner Development Projects (P)

Chart 1 - Development Approaches



Why?

- Not part of their business plan to develop own systems
- Belief that these areas are being covered by other agencies
- The LLNs role - not to deliver but to enable partner institutions to deliver adding value
- Sustainability - partners will maintain and develop applications once LLN has gone

How?

The LLNs that have taken this approach tend to use some of their budget to support Partners or gain external funding for specific joint projects. The projects are locally based and some of the projects that have been developed may involve collaboration between multiple partners.

Develop and Integrate into partner systems⁶ (I)

Why?

- There is a belief that there are gaps in terms of what should be provided for the learner and what is currently available

⁶ In addition to core HE and FE partners this could include other agencies such as: SSCs, LSCs, AimHigher etc

- Sustainability - The LLN acts to develop a solution with the partner(s) maintaining and developing applications once the LLN has gone

How?

- Developing e-system content (e-learning, progression or IAG objects) for partners to embed in their sites but have not delivered anything directly to the learner
- Developing systems that can be plugged in (re-skinned) into partner's portals

Deliver new systems directly (D)

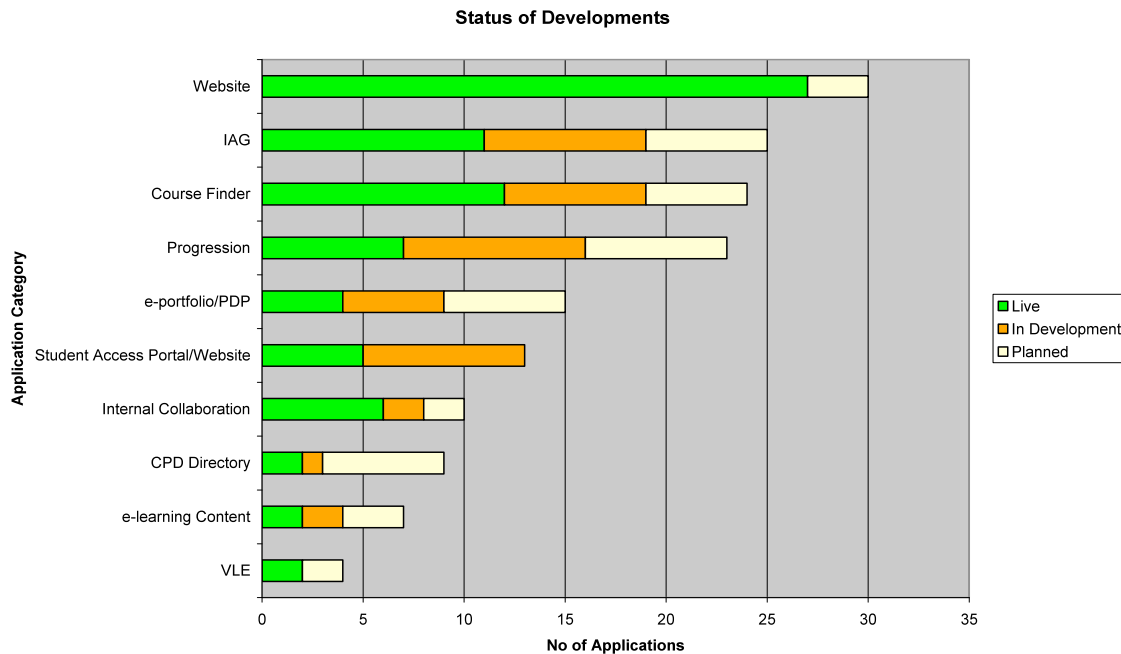
Why?

- Gaps have been identified that require solutions
- A separate solution is considered best
 - Provides impartiality
 - Lack of will by other agencies to develop
- The brand can be marketed

How?

- Online solutions have been developed using external development partners
- Internal development teams have produced new systems

LLN Development of e-systems



The above chart shows the developments where LLNs have plans, developments or live solutions against a particular category.

The main observation is that development preference overall is on those that enable/encourage access to learning rather than e-systems that are involved in the process of learning (VLE, e-learning content and to a lesser extent e-portfolio/PDP). In general, LLNs feel that this area is within the remit of individual partner institutions.

Commercial approaches

A number of LLNs are developing commercial systems. Some practitioners had very strong conflicting opinions on this area which centred around Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and the use of government funding.

Views expressed supporting developing systems commercially are:

- The aim of charging commercially is to create an income that will sustain future developments
- The IPR belongs to the LLN (or is jointly held with the developer) as they have commissioned the development
- HEFCE haven't defined that a commercial can't be taken
- No one is aiming to charge the learner (some e-portfolio solutions on the open market do offer this directly to learners)

Views expressed by those against the commercial approach are:

- Government funding makes them public developments and therefore freely available
- The IPR belongs to the public they are therefore "Open Source" and the source code should be freely available

Sustainability⁷

How can e-systems be sustained beyond the life of the LLN?

In general, LLNs would like to sustain most of the current activities once the core funding has ceased, inevitably this means that some areas are prioritised above others and has lead to a limited amount of innovation in this area (for some LLNs). Some LLNs have intentionally not developed their own e-systems due to the nature of the current HEFCE funding and others have moved from an open source approach to a commercial model.

Approaches being considered:

Income from solutions

- Selling the software
 - As a solution to
 - Recruitment agencies
 - As a service to
 - LLNs
 - Private training providers
 - Partner Institutions
- Selling expertise in implementing systems
- Advertising
 - Aimed at demographics of users
 - Possibly not allowed by partner institutions to maintain impartiality

Developing larger partnership

This approach is working together as a regional group to engage other agencies in sustainability

E.g. In the South East the LLNs have a collectively committed budget and have also been successful in gaining funding from the RDA and LSC to sustain developments further as LAWIS.

Incorporating with other agency developments

In this case, either as a deliberate initial decision or a change of approach, the e-systems developed are incorporated into another agencies solution

E.g. NALN are passing their developments to the sector skills council to incorporate into a national system called “Creative Choices” and Staffordshire, Shropshire, Stoke on Trent and Telford are working with Aim Higher incorporating their developments into ALPs.

Incorporating systems into partner institution infrastructures

Some LLNs have arranged for their solutions to be hosted by partners in the long term

E.g. HWLLN and YHELLN are gaining agreement from host institutions to sustain and support the applications beyond the LLN. MOVE are hoping to gain support from the Association of Eastern universities

⁷ 16 of those surveyed explicitly mentioned the need to ensure that systems are sustained

The development process

Some substantial developments have been made by LLNs in terms of:

- Financial commitments
- Time commitments
- Scope and ambition

The development process has varied depending on choices made by different LLNs

Choosing software tools

The LLNs have not typically selected the software tools that are used to develop their systems but rather decided what they want the system to do and then selected the people to work with. The software tools have typically been chosen by their development partners. Tools used:

- Open source (Java & LAMP)
- Shared code used from previous JISC projects
- Microsoft products
- Other web design tools

Open source projects have had some distinct advantages and disadvantages

- No purchase cost of existing source code
- Existing infrastructure to build on (e.g. IONETWORK)
- Difficulty in finding development partners who can support the software
- Difficulty in recruiting people who are experienced (e.g. YHELLN recruiting overseas worker)
- There may be a need to significantly adapt base code
- The real costs of Open Source for some LLNs outweighed the benefits

Choosing external development partners

This is a critical part of the development process. All development projects have had their challenges and having a trusted partner who fits with the organisation's approach is really important.

- Often there is a preference for partners within the locality (to enable frequent face to face meetings)
- Dependence on a partner
 - How will people deal with the situation if a company went out of business?
 - Source Code
 - LLNs have mitigated against this by having access to the source code in some cases
 - Hosting
 - LLNs in some instances have hosted on PI or other agencies servers

Challenges in development process

- Partner Institutions - a lot of LLNs found that it was sometimes difficult to engage with institutional IT teams to share data and collaborate. Often this has been overcome by persistence and where relationships are in place with institutional teams. The process is easier when a knowledgeable IT expert is available to engage with the institutional team.
- Linking to other agencies for data
- Scope creep - some creative development partners have not managed changes to their solutions that well and this has proved challenging for LLNs when trying to deliver a stable solution. This can be a particular challenge with shared projects where updates are routinely applied
- Internal developers - some projects have used internal development teams and may have people available within an organisation. There has been a particular challenge in recruiting developers experienced in Open Source products.

Additional funding

Some of the most substantial projects have received additional funding from other sources (e.g. JISC, partner institutions etc) to support them.

Standards

One emerging standard that was mentioned by a number of LLNs in the survey was XCRI-CAP (eXchange of Course-Related Information - Course Advertising Profile). A number of the developments that relate to course information are using it and most intend to use it. Some of the LLNs were using IONETWORK which is an infrastructure for collecting course information based on XCRI-CAP.

XCRI-CAP is a way of labelling course data and is relevant to any LLN, which is deploying a Course Finder tool. The concept is that institutions will make a copy of their course information available in this format so that it can be collected (or sent to) a third party. Potentially this means that LLNs, and other organisations, can use the course information from their institutions to populate Course Finders and other tools. If the data is held by all institutions in this format then it will enable a current national catalogue of courses to be available to any tool that requires it.

To implement this in practice an LLN will need to:

1. Store course data in an XCRI format
2. Receive data from their institutions in XCRI format

Rather than changing the database behind an existing Course Finder (or expecting a partner institute to change), database exports that map to XCRI field or a simple software tool to translate can be made (e.g. YHELLN have an XCRI based Course Finder in Pilot and the data from their test partner institute is provided in a template file that has been exported to by the institute's IT team.) JISC have provided funding to support a number of LLNs to do this. Whilst there is no actual charge, a degree of support is needed in terms of staff time to implement this. It is also useful for LLNs and and/or institutions to have access to consultancy services.

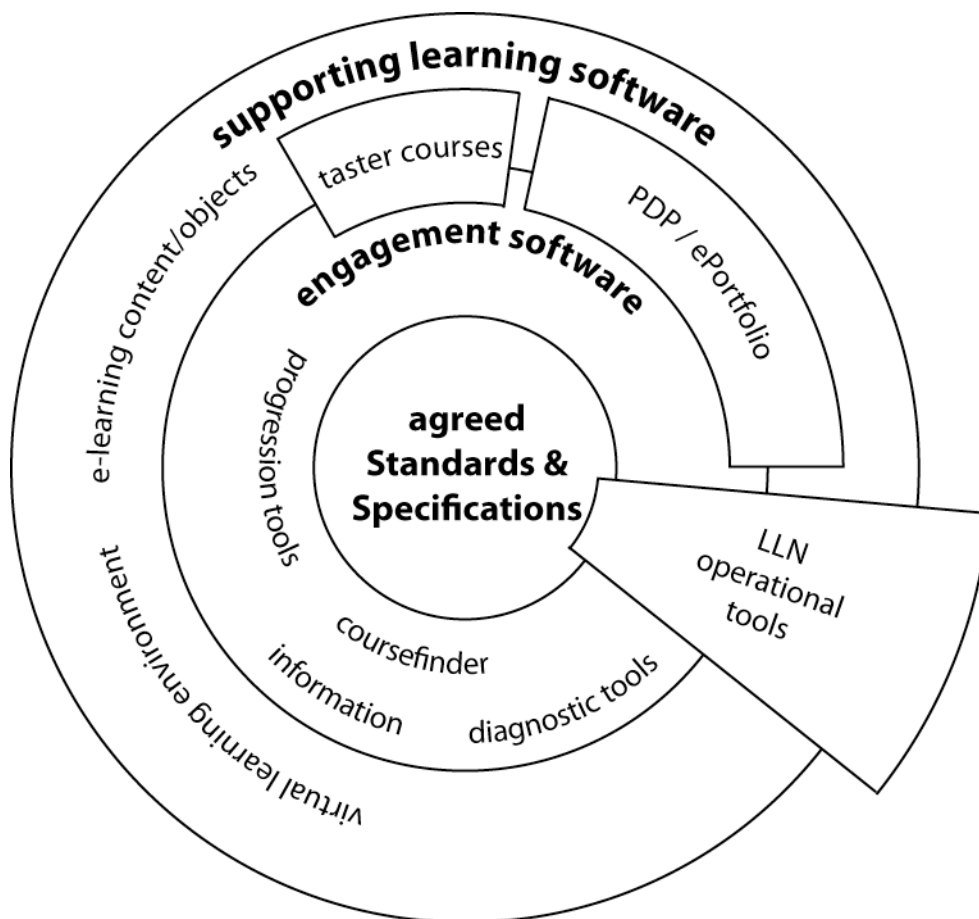
Recommendations

Based on developments across LLNs and good practice the following tools should be given consideration as priorities for development:

- Course finder facility which utilises national standards
- Learner information including a progression element

In all cases, LLNs should refer to tools already developed before embarking on developing their own solutions.

The authors recognise that there may be further developments which fall outside of the core foci (referred to as 'peripheral tools') and may be identified by individual LLNs as areas which need to be addressed depending upon the tools already provided by partner institutions and other agencies.



The use of recognised and agreed standards and specifications is central to the recommendations. These will allow LLNs to develop compatible systems to assist the engagement of learners and employers throughout England. Fundamentally, methods to automate and simplify the sharing of data will allow, for example;

- the movement of learners within/between LLNs
- access to course/module information within/amongst LLNs

- the storage and access to student data
- the tracking of individuals using their own personal digital identity.

It is recommended that the development and sharing of e-systems that inform and engage users should be seen as a priority.

It is also recognised that many LLNs have been involved in the creation of systems that overlap into the area of e-learning content development and the use of VLEs. These systems in the majority of cases assist in the area of engagement, allowing learners, for example, to sample modules.

1. e-system development

Recommendation 1 - In order to maximise resources and avoid unnecessary duplication across LLNs, networks should research existing developments on a 'case by case' basis.

Substantial investments have been made in tools that support the aims of the LLNs. A number of interviewees identified that it would have been beneficial if HEFCE had been more directive about developments initially perhaps even identifying certain LLNs to develop specific applications (or modules of code) that could be connected together.

Any new developments need to add value and be sustainable. The different approaches to sustainability already taken provide some useful ideas particularly:

- Ensuring that enduring commitment and ownership of e-systems exists
- Developing partnerships for long term sustainability

LLNs in general have developed applications where gaps have been identified. Some evidence of this is seen in the decisions made by all not to duplicate existing systems developed by partner institutions. LLNs are aware of systems being delivered by Partner Institutions that directly supported learning in the VLE and e-learning content categories. In fact where developments in those areas have been made they have been done in a complementary way either adding to existing systems or providing a solution in a way that adds value to existing developments⁸. Across LLNs, many Course Finder, IAG and Progression tools have been developed. These developments were started due to specific needs not being met locally by the existing tools available.

Because there are such a wide range of tools available covering different aspects it makes sense for any LLN planning to deploy a tool in one of the above areas that they select one of the existing systems:

- Save on costs of development
- Quicker to go live
- Reduces risk of development process
- Adds value to what already exists

LLNs considering new developments should review what has already been developed and see if they utilise it and contribute to sustaining it. The recommended process for selection

- Define desired outcomes
- Review existing tools in relevant categories by contacting LLNs, and then either
 - Develop on existing open source project (if resources available)
 - Contribute to another LLN open source development
 - Pay commercially for new system

It would be worth investigating whether solutions that are institutional hosted by an existing LLN could be used as a service if they meet the need of a particular LLN.⁹

⁸ E.g. Wider Horizons VLE providing "taster" courses that lead on to full programs

⁹ E.g. iCaboodle student access portal hosted at University of Hull

Recommendation 2 - LLNs should build infrastructure through utilising XCRI-CAP

There is not a recommendation for a complete rationalisation of the systems that are currently available from this report.

It seems unlikely, at this stage that a recommendation for everyone to use a particular system would be of value. Substantial commitments have been made to existing projects and the value gained would be outweighed by the cost of making the change.

The Course Finder and associated tools are really a specialised form of online search. A review of the development of the online search market in general shows that the dominant market leader, Google, didn't even exist until search was well established. Yahoo (currently number two in search) was an early leader and others such as Alta Vista no longer exist. An example of current specialised online search is the proliferation of insurance comparison sites. There are a number of key points to learn from this:

- Anyone can create an online search tool
- At no point will anyone own 100% of searches
- Users choose to access search from a point that fits their needs (One LLN interviewee mentioned that research showed that 60% of students currently use Google to find courses)

It might be quite valuable for the learner to be able to find courses from a particular site that is aligned with their locality or sector preference.

One of the challenges that has been expressed is that often the tools provided are too limited in both geographical or sector coverage. Providing access to a complete set of courses available would alleviate this problem, however this is impractical for one LLN to achieve on a national basis.

There does exist a valuable opportunity to rationalise the data that underpins course information nationally by sharing the data that is collected regionally. A number of LLNs have already adopted the emerging XCRI-CAP standard and it would make sense for others to do this. This will enable the sharing of underpinning course data through a system that allows the exchange of course information¹⁰ This would benefit LLNs who have invested in developments by providing more content for their users, it would also put in place an infrastructure that could be utilised (also contributed to) by other agencies such as: professional bodies, UCAS and Hot Courses. This will be a significant contribution to the future of education in the UK.

The recommendation would require the following:

- New LLN developments with course information are based on XCRI-CAP
- Existing LLN developments with course information move to XCRI-CAP and automation of collection of data
- HEFCE support for the development of a national course infrastructure based upon XCRI-CAP

Recommendation 3 - HEFCE should champion the implementation and adoption of national and international standards within England, which would be beneficial not only for the learner but also for all the institutions involved.

Several government initiatives outside the HE sector require local authorities to facilitate data sharing between schools and FE Colleges, and other agencies such as Connexions and central government.

The 14-19 reform programme will require organisations to work collaboratively in partnerships. This, as well as the nature of the new Diplomas, will mean that data sharing will be a crucial factor in relation to the delivery of these reforms and the monitoring of performance.

¹⁰ E.g. a tool like IONETOWRK/IONW2

Effective data sharing is essential to successfully track and support the progress of learners. For Further Education alone, the implementation of the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) will oblige colleges to access both credit level details of qualifications and Learner Achievement Records. Both the Diploma and the QCF recording systems will be facilitated by the Unique Pupil/Learner Number which will be issued to all Diploma and FE students from September 2008. This number will be issued by MIAP (Managing Information Across Partners), an initiative that includes ambitious plans to facilitate the sharing of data across all education sectors and the agencies that support them.

- The effective sharing of learner data, such as those represented by the data standards from the Schools Interoperability Framework, the XCRI initiative or IMS Global, can facilitate the effective exchange of various forms of information. The growing body of knowledge about how these data specifications and standards are implemented in HE and FE and the precise means of exchange in a variety of contexts is being contributed to by national and international initiatives.
 - Clearly the widespread adoption and implementation of the Unique Learner Number (ULN) would have many advantages and benefits for both the learner and partners within LLNs. Adoption will allow numerous business improvements throughout the sector, streamlining the collection, handling and sharing of information on learning and achievement.
- Alongside the implementation of the national ULN, the development and establishment of a national specification to support the way that learner information and data is stored on management information systems (MIS) would be advantageous. Consideration should be given to the activities within the Rome Student Standards and Systems Group (RS3G) and CEN (European Committee for Standardisation). As they investigate the development of standards and specifications based on the emerging OSCI-2 (Online Services Computer Interface).

Learner entitlement should be defined e.g.

A learner should be entitled to a standard range of flexible e-systems solutions and tools wherever they are located in England. (i.e. a learner in Truro should be entitled to the 'same/similar' e-systems solutions and tools as, for example, a learner in Bolton)

The learner/user needs stable accessible e-systems that enhance lifelong learning and these should be publicised in a formal, national statement of entitlement.

2. e-system sustainability

Recommendation 4 - LLNs should collaborate with others to develop a plan for current e-systems

As a result of concerns about sustainability some LLNs are developing a commercial model to support their developments into the future. This is a contentious issue and the recommendation to HEFCE is for future projects it is made clear at the outset whether commercial developments are acceptable or not. Currently it is not practical (could potentially lead to litigation) to stop the commercial developments. The ownership of IPR is an unclear issue and would require significant legal work, however in future it could be clarified at the beginning of projects.

What is clear is that currently, in practice, none of the LLNs have a solution that is supported purely by commercial finance. The recommendation is to LLNs that regardless of whether they are taking a commercial approach or not they should collaborate with others to ensure that the investment they have made is not lost when the LLN project finishes.

It is really important that each LLN selects some method to ensure that the applications and the value created isn't lost. It may be that the cost of maintaining data means it is impractical for another organisation to sustain; however at the very least the learning from the project needs to be passed on.

Section 2: Data Reference Section

This section contains a summary of data usage for each category. Also it contains references to the e-system information stored in the appendices and linked by bookmarks.

Summary of e-systems from LLNs visited

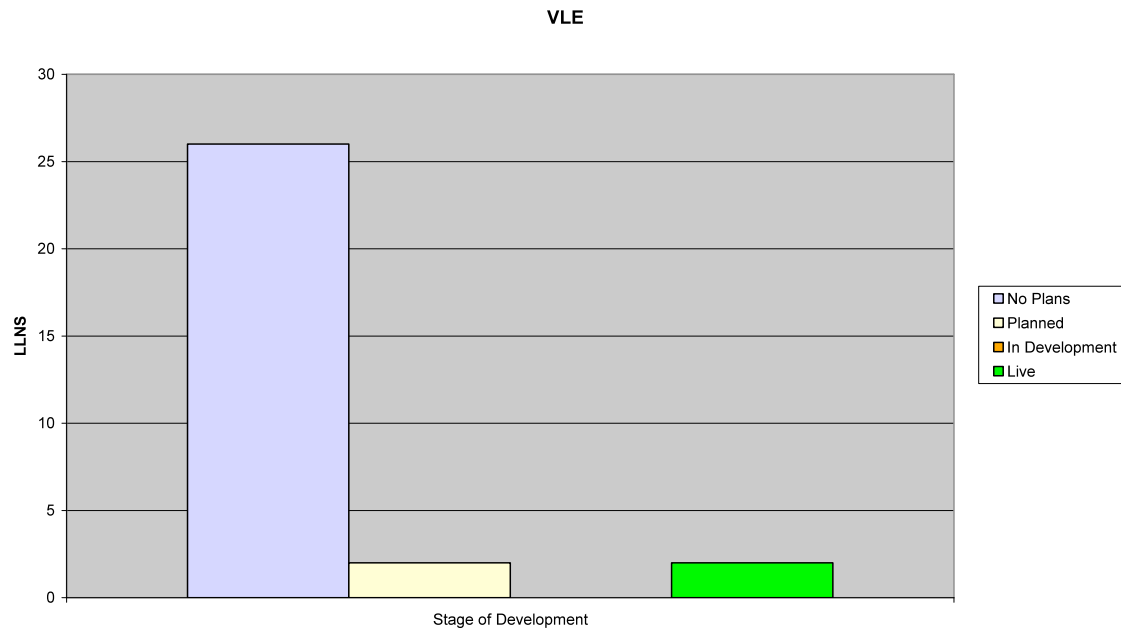
The following is a list of the e-systems that were identified during visits to 7 different LLNs. The full profiles can be found in the appendices.

e-system	Page
Wider Horizons	44
Discover (MOVE)	66
Learner Services (MOVE)	64
JOSEPH (Leap Ahead)	61
e-Portfolio partnerships (Leap Ahead)	57
Advance (GMSA)	55
Pathways (GMSA)	50
Project Me (GMSA)	52
Learning Opportunities (SLN)	75
Sussex Routes (SLN)	72
Iwant2B (NEHSN)	69
iCaboodle (YHELLN)	48

VLE

Definition

A virtual learning environment that is used by the LLN to host and manage some form of online learning



Data Summary

- Very few LLNs actually have a VLE solution
- A lot of the LLNs did have a VLE in their original business plan but have moved away from it over time
- The concept that there will be one central VLE being used by everyone to host online learning has been dismissed by all the LLNs
- Many LLNs are using Partner Institution VLEs
- Most Partner Institutions are using Moodle as a VLE platform

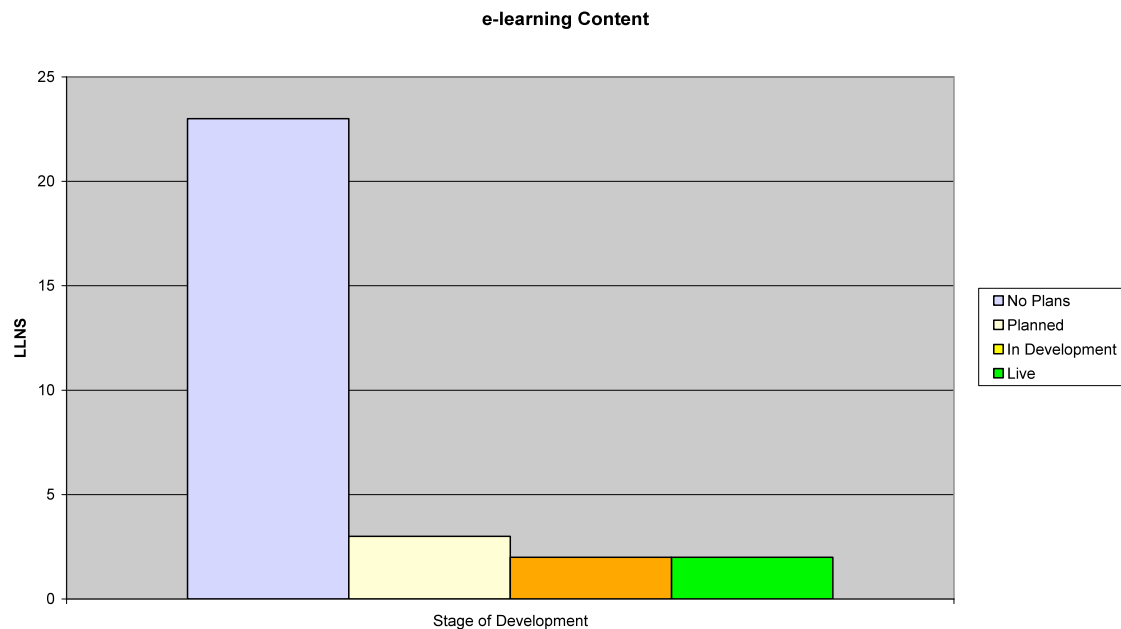
VLE use across LLNs

LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
HWLLN	L	O	89
YHELLN	P	O	123
Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire LLN	L		101
Western Vocational	P		121

e-learning content

Definition

This area describes learning content that has been created by an LLN to be used as part of an e-learning experience.



Data Summary

- A lot of LLNs are funding the development of content by Partner institutions
 - This is often just relevant to a particular course
- None of the LLNs have made this the major focus of their e-system initiatives

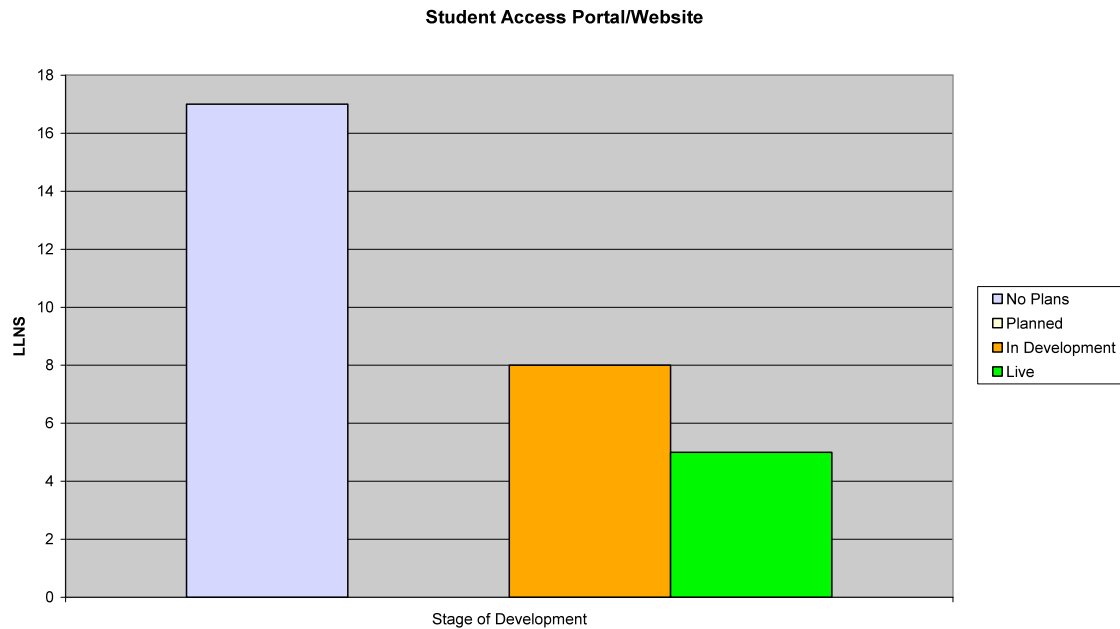
e-learning content across LLNs

LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
HWLLN	L	O	89
YHELLN	P	O	123
Higher York	P		127
SLN	L	O	79
Staffordshire, Shropshire, Stoke on Trent and Telford	D		115
West London	D		119
Western Vocational	P		121

Student Access Portal/Website

Definition

This is an online solution that enables the learner to gain access to a variety of learning tools. For the purpose of this report some websites that don't handle identity management have also been included.



Data Summary

- Sometimes this may just be an area incorporated into an LLN website
- Many LLNs have avoided this area due to the concern about hosting after the initial funding period.

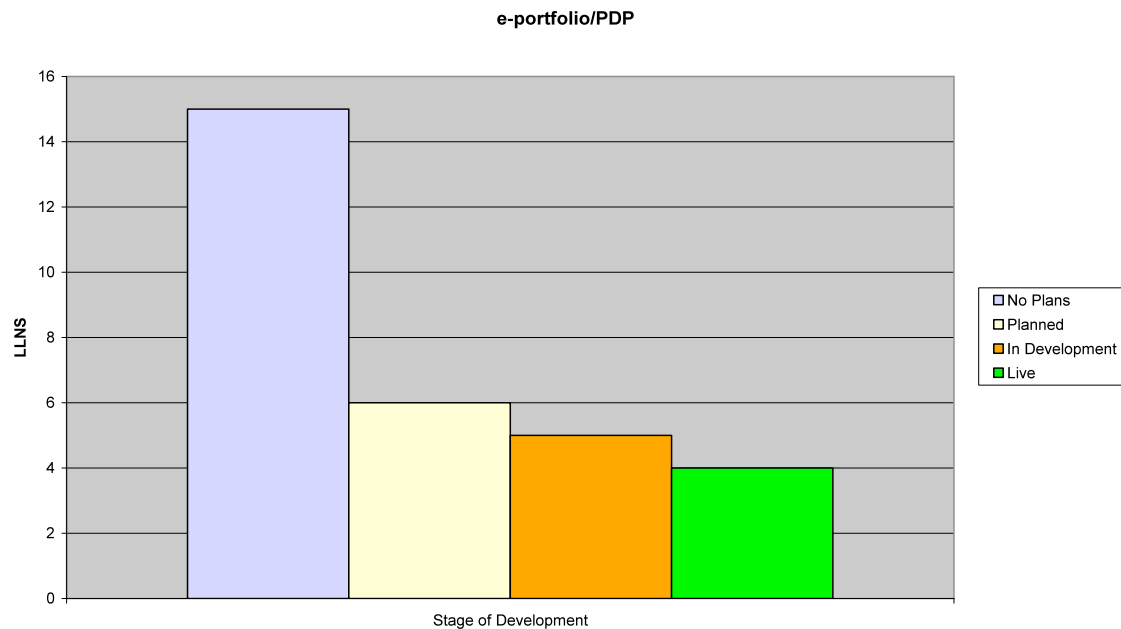
Student Access Portals across LLNs

LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
HWLLN	L	O	89
YHELLN	D	O	123
MOVE	D	O	109
Cheshire & Warrington LLN	L	O	141
Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire LLN	L	O	101
Higher Futures	D		98
Higher York	L		127
SLN	D		79
Kent and Medway	D		92
Progress South Central	D		147
Progress2Succeed	D		96
The Creative Way	L	C	105
Western Vocational	D		121

e-portfolio/PDP

Definition

e-portfolio/PDP is the most controversial area to define. For the purpose of this report it covers anything that is used by the learner to manage their learning history, goals, digital identity etc.



Data Summary

- A lot of different applications exist
- It is difficult to transfer data from one e-portfolio to another
 - The standards for e-portfolios are not that clear
- Levels of adoption in partner institutions is quite varied
- Some e-portfolios are becoming increasingly feature rich personalised learning systems

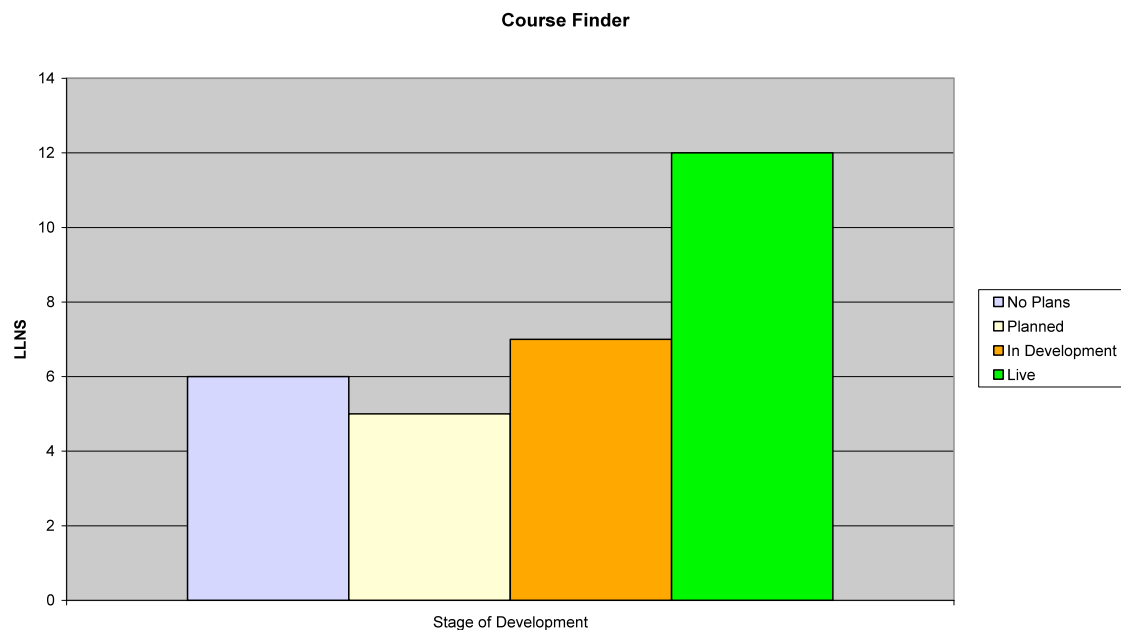
e-Portfolios/PDP across LLNs

LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
HWLLN	L	O	89
Leap Ahead	L	C	144
YHELLN	P	O	123
MOVE	D	O	109
LLLLN	D		132
Cumbria Higher LLN	D		87
Cheshire & Warrington LLN	L	O	141
GMSA	D	C	134
Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire LLN	L	O	101
Kent and Medway	P		92
Progress South Central	P		147
Progress2Succeed	P		96
Staffordshire, Shropshire, Stoke on Trent and Telford	P		115
The Creative Way	P		105
Western Vocational	D		121

Course Finders

Definition

These are many solutions that enable a learner or employer to search for courses based on their criteria. This provides a quicker and more comprehensive way of finding course information. These may link to institutional prospectuses.



Data Summary

- This area is one of the most popular for developments
- The scope of these solutions vary
 - Often limited to curriculum areas
 - Always limited to geography¹¹
- Learners will be expecting to be able to look at all their options and may find it irritating to be limited to geography or to a certain “curriculum” area.
- Difficult to track learners who have gone onto courses as a result of a Course Finder
- Some concerns have been expressed about the resources needed to really make this work.
 - A person will want to be able to look across all geography and sectors
 - Should link to 14-19 data
 - Some people took a very simplified approach because of these concerns above
 - Some have widened data used and are looking for national sources as a result of concerns above

¹¹ What about people who live on LLN borders? was a common point mentioned explicitly on 4 occasions

- There is a big challenge about getting data into these systems
 - Often teams of people need to be employed to get the information (sustainability issues are raised and the aim is often to try to get PIs to manage their own data)
 - XCRI as a means of exchanging course information is growing in popularity
 - IO Network¹² is in use in the North West and YHELLN areas
 - Difficulties with institutional data not always being kept up to date
 - PIs typically feel uncomfortable about sharing data
- UCAS is a large source of course information
 - still doesn't have part-time info (LLLLN are involved in plans to change this)

Course Finders across LLNs

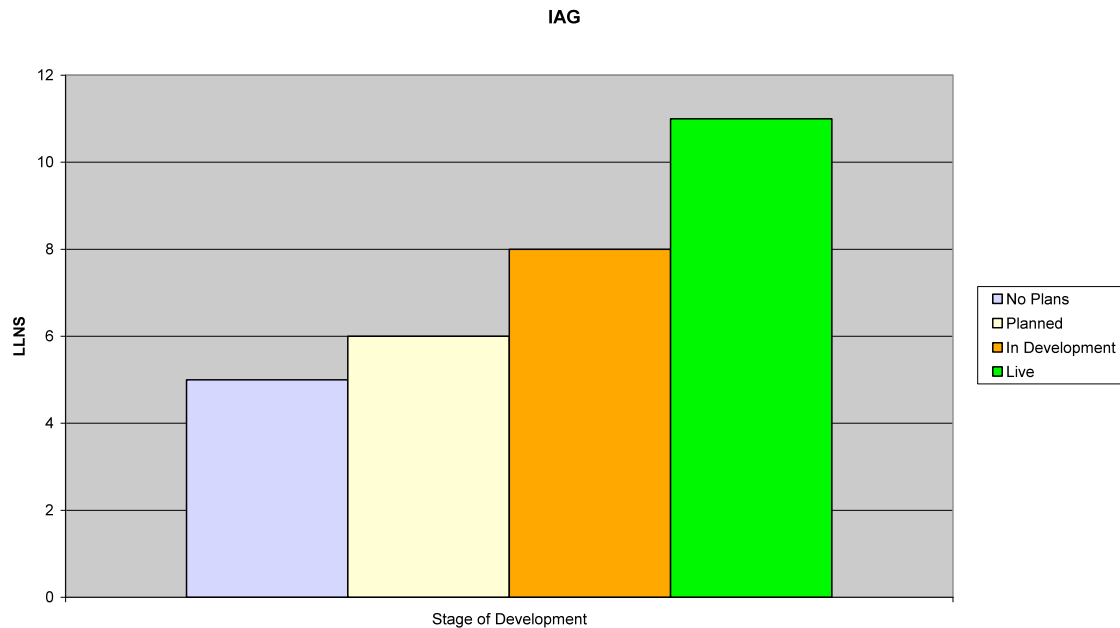
LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
NEHSN	L	C	129
HWLLN	L	O	89
Leap Ahead	D	O	144
YHELLN	L	O	123
MOVE	L	O	109
BBCSLLN	P		84
LLLLN	P		132
Cumbria Higher LLN	P		87
Cheshire & Warrington LLN	L	O	141
GMSA	L	C	134
Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire LLN	L	O	101
Higher Futures	D		98
Higher York	L		127
National Arts Learning Network	D		94
SLN	L	O	79
Kent and Medway	D		92
Progress South Central	D		147
Progress2Succeed	D		96
Skills for Sustainable Communities	D		136
Staffordshire, Shropshire, Stoke on Trent and Telford	P		115
The Creative Way	L	C	105
Vet Net	L		117
West London	L		119
Western Vocational	P		121

¹² IO Network and IONW2 are system that hold course data and can replicate information across regions and contain agents that can pull data in an XCRI format from institutions

IAG

Definition

Any e-system solution or tool that relates to providing Information and Guidance to the Learner regarding courses, qualifications and careers



Data Summary

- This area has been the most popular area for e-system developments across the LLNs¹³
- The approach has often been to incorporate IAG into a Course Finder tool
- A lot of sign posting to other sources of IAG has been done
- It has been recognised that it is of value to an IAG professional to have something that indicates where available resources are and this has been produced sometimes as an online link site and sometimes as hard copy
- The challenge has been raised about unbiased IAG and not just promoting

¹³ 25 out of 30 have at the very least plans to be involved in some development

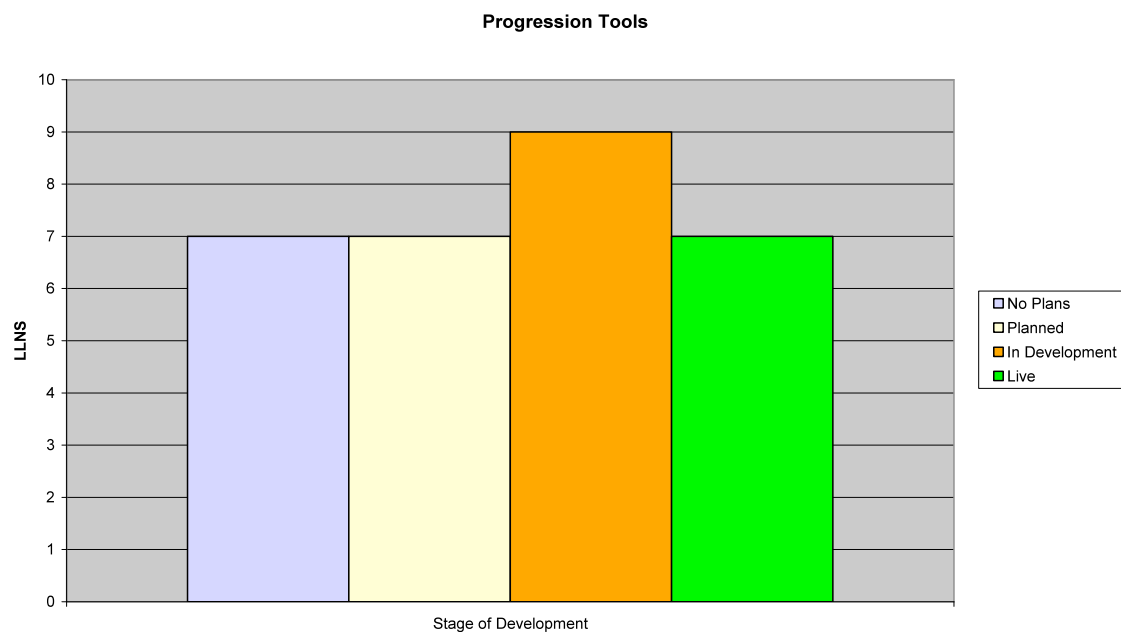
IAG across LLNs

LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
NEHSN	L	C	129
HWLLN	L	O	89
Leap Ahead	D	O	144
YHELLN	L	O	123
MOVE	L	O	109
BBCSLLN	P		84
Coventry and Warwickshire	P		103
Cumbria Higher LLN	P		87
Cheshire & Warrington LLN	L	O	141
GMSA	L	C	134
Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire LLN	L	O	101
Higher Futures	D		98
Higher York	L		127
National Arts LLN	D		94
SLN	P	O	79
Kent and Medway	D		92
Progress South Central	D		147
Progress2Succeed	D		96
South East London	P		111
South West	D		138
Staffordshire, Shropshire, Stoke on Trent and Telford	D		115
The Creative Way	L	C	105
Vet Net	L		117
West Yorkshire	L	C	140
Western Vocational	P		121

Progression

Definition

Any e-system solution or tool that maps progression routes between courses and qualifications. This is sometimes expressed in terms of possible routes as well as agreed routes



Data Summary

- Some LLNs are providing a document that outlines progression agreements in place
- Some LLNs are interested in mapping out potential progression routes in an online navigator while this is considered impractical by others

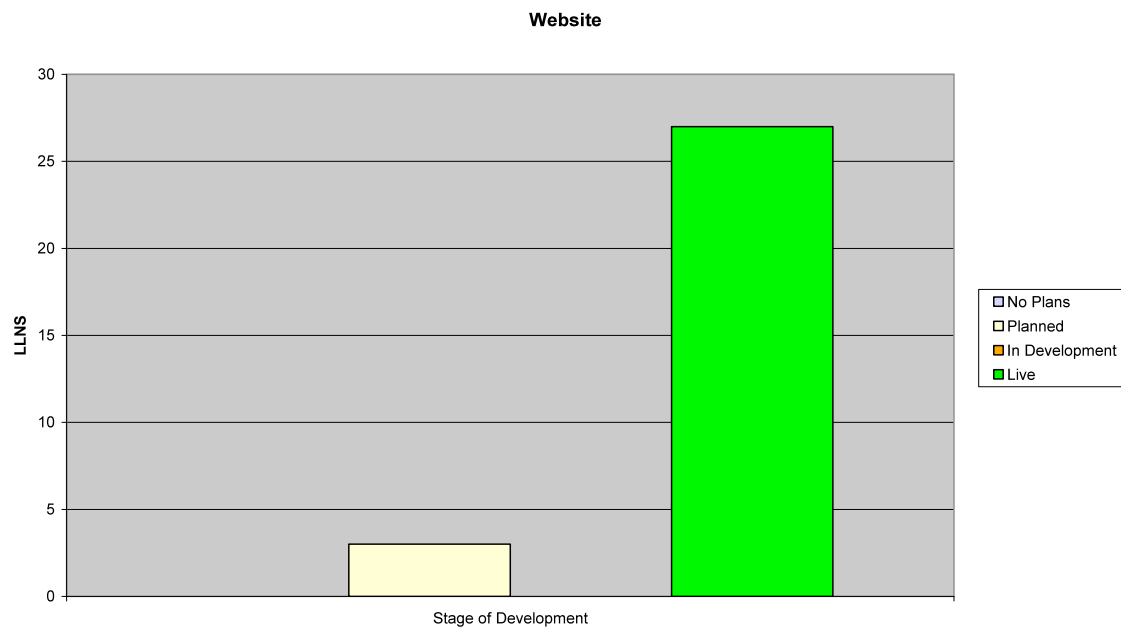
Progression across LLNs

LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
NEHSN	L	C	129
HWLLN	L	O	89
Leap Ahead	D	O	144
YHELLN	L	O	123
MOVE	L	O	109
BBCSLLN	P		84
Cumbria Higher LLN	P		87
Cheshire & Warrington LLN	D	O	141
GMSA	L	C	134
Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire LLN	D	O	101
Higher Futures	D		98
Higher York	L		127
Lancashire LLN	P		107
National Arts LLN	D		94
SLN	P	O	79
Kent and Medway	D		92
Progress South Central	D		147
Progress2Succeed	D		96
Skills for Sustainable Communities	D		136
South London	P		113
The Creative Way	L	C	105
Vet Net	P		117
Western Vocational	P		121

Website

Definition

The homepage of the LLN listed on the National forums webpage (<http://www.lifelonglearningnetworks.org.uk/network-finder/>)



Data Summary

- All LLNs have websites or are planning websites to inform their partners and stakeholders
- Some of the LLNs provide student, employer or practitioner areas
- Most LLNs have taken the view that they are not promoting the LLN specifically
- Some LLNs are using the website to promote lifelong learning to the learner and have sections allocated to them

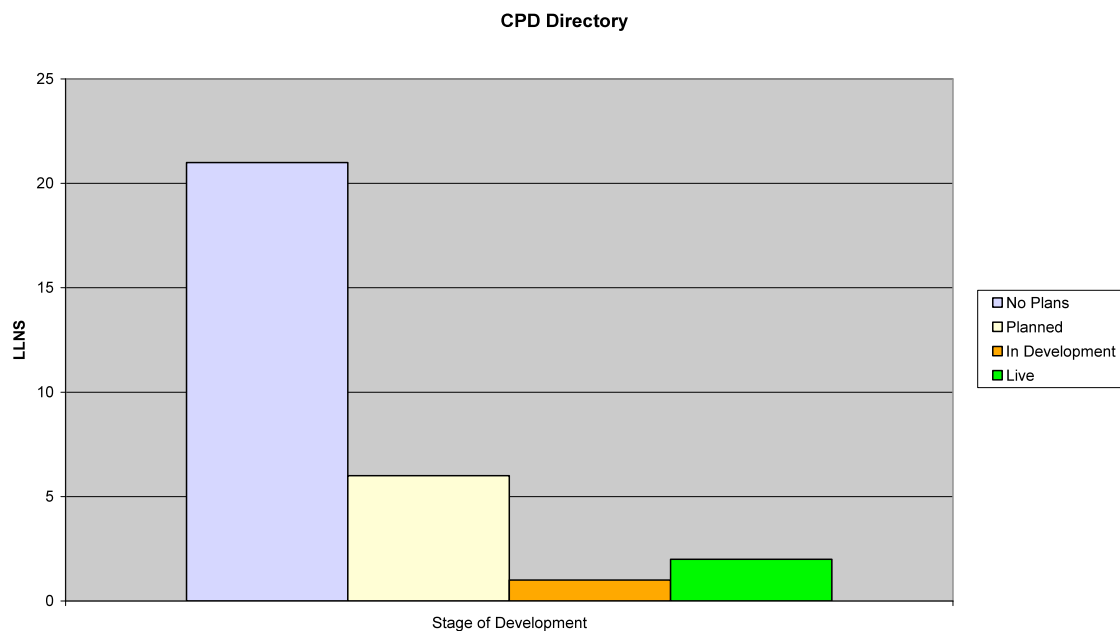
LLN Website

LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
NEHSN	L		129
HWLLN	L		89
Leap Ahead	L		144
YHELLN	L		123
MOVE	L		109
BBCSLLN	L		84
LLLLN	L		132
Coventry and Warwickshire	L		103
Cumbria Higher LLN	L		87
Cheshire & Warrington LLN	L		141
GMSA	L		134
Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire LLN	L		101
Higher Futures	L		98
Higher York	L		127
Lancashire LLN	P		107
National Arts LLN	L		94
SLN	L		79
Kent and Medway	L		92
Progress South Central	P		147
Progress2Succeed	L		96
Skills for Sustainable Communities	L		136
South East London	L		111
South London	L		113
South West	L		138
Staffordshire, Shropshire, Stoke on Trent and Telford	P		115
The Creative Way	L		105
Vet Net	L		117
West London	L		119
West Yorkshire	L		140
Western Vocational	L		121

CPD Directory

Definition

An online tool that lists courses available specifically aimed at developing the professional skills of those involved in education and most likely not qualification based.



Data Summary

- Not many LLNs have deployed this type of tool
 - Often considered that institutions are doing this already
- In some cases institutions are using paper based approaches
- Shared CPD across institutions not easily accessed

CPD Directories across LLNs

LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
YHELLN	L	0	123
MOVE	P		109
Cumbria Higher LLN	P		87
Cheshire & Warrington LLN	P		141
Lancashire LLN	P		107
SLN	L		79
Kent and Medway	P		92
Vet Net	P		117
West Yorkshire	D		140

Internal Collaboration Tools

Definition

This area covers tools that enable: sharing documents, collaborating on projects remotely and document repositories.

Data Summary

- Some LLNs are particularly widespread geographically
- These tools have proved highly beneficial to those who have used them
- They have generally been found late on in the lifetime of the LLNs

Internal Collaboration Tools across LLNs

LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
YHELLN	L	C	123
Higher Futures	D		98
SLN	L	C	79
Progress2Succeed	L		96
South East London	L		111
South London	P		113
The Creative Way	L	C	105
Vet Net	L		117
West Yorkshire	D		140
Western Vocational	P		121

Other

Definition

- Other applications that may have been or be in development outside the main categories listed. This category is varied, but includes such things as: systems to support credit accumulation; a community forum for arranging exchange visits between FE and HE; APEL tools and an online validation programme for Foundation Degrees.

Other applications across LLNs

LLN	Stage	Commercial	Summary Page
Leap Ahead	D		144
YHELLN	D		123
BBCSLLN	P		84
Cumbria Higher LLN	P		87
GMSA	D		134
Kent and Medway	P		92
Skills for Sustainable Communities	L		136
West Yorkshire	L	C	140

Summary of questions Questionnaire template

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	LLN name		
Director		Interviewee	
System		Categories covered	
Current Stage (life cycle)		Live Date (E for estimated)	
Standards/Development Platform		Commercial Status/ Intellectual Property	
Financial Costs (E for estimated)		Funding sources	

OVERVIEW

Description	
<i>A brief summary of the system</i>	
Identification of Need	
<i>How was the need identified?</i>	
Benefits	
Benefit <i>Including target user groups: Learner, employer, partner, stakeholder</i>	Measure <i>How benefit is it to be measured?</i>

FEATURES

Key features
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
Links to other external systems
Identity management
Development approach
<i>A summary of approach taken and rationale? Including selecting external or internal resources, development platforms etc...</i>

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
<i>Equipment purchased or rented</i>	<i>Name, cost and time of external development resources</i>	<i>Name, cost and time of internal resources development and other</i>
Other information		
Total duration	Problems encountered	
<i>Start date to end date</i>	<i>Challenges during development or identified risks</i>	

Sustainability approach
<i>A summary of approach taken and rationale</i>

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
Equipment purchased or rented	Name, cost and time of external development resources	Name, cost and time of internal resources development and other
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
Start date to end date		Challenges during development or identified risks
Benefits Realised		
For live systems identify the benefits that have been realised and current usage (number of users etc....)		
Availability to other LLNs?		
What would need to happen to make this tool available to other LLNs? Cost implications, practical issues, interest level?		
Other Comments		

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Sussex Learning Network		
Director	Chris Baker	Interviewee	Sarah Hardman
System	Learning Opportunities	Categories covered	IAG
Current Stage (life cycle)	Live	Live Date (E for estimated)	March 2008
Standards/Development Platform		Commercial Status/Intellectual Property	Open Source available to other LLNs
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	££75k	Funding sources	LLN

OVERVIEW

Description	
<p>Online IAG services for the learner that can produce paper based information packs to support them as they plan their learning. There is specific IAG for the locality and also generic IAG for vocational HE. This tool can be useful to the employers as well as the learners. There is also a separate website attached for course search.</p> <p>The system contains subject specific information corresponding to the learning lines of the 14-19 diploma. It is a personalised service with a powerful free text search that utilises keywords. The tool is also backed up by real guidance professionals when required. Quality control contact people who are users to follow up their experience.</p>	
Identification of Need	
<p>Institutions were in principle willing to refer opportunities to each other. Sometimes the knowledge about FDs possessed by course senders at the PI was not full.</p> <p>They formed an IAG working group to identify what gaps existed in provision. They realised that adult learners couldn't access information they need and some information was particularly difficult to find and the hours when enquiries could be conducted was limited. It made sense to create a system where someone at work could send an email in their lunch hour, for example, with more privacy than a phone call might afford.</p> <p>PIs including OU have identified that their enquiries are coming increasingly via e-mail rather than the telephone. This informed the SLN decision to provide e-mail access to guidance.</p>	
Benefits	
<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Measure</i>
Enabling people to know what is available and what information means.... P/T F/T	Number of hits can be tracked
A guide for the application process	Enquiries made from a particular link
They can look around and overcome barriers	Downloaded packs (considered the most useful indicator)
They can challenge information if things aren't up to date	When Post Codes are added to the system then some GIS analysis can be performed

FEATURES

Key features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search facility Allows learner to find progression from - "Where am I now?" Allows learner to find progression from - "Where I want to be"

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows progression agreements that are in place and therefore “guarantees” of interviews or offers can be shown. The user can print a certificate that confirms that upon application they will be offered a guaranteed interview or offer of a place
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
Post code search (this will be developed later); developing course search beyond FDs/HND/HNC, too much information
Links to other external systems
<p>It does link out to relevant points in other systems and sources that can provide other guidance.</p> <p>They had considered linking to course description data from PIs however the data does tend to change and sometimes information can be inconsistent and they didn’t want to create an additional layer and another point of potential inconsistency.</p>
Identity management
<p>They don’t have or believe they need a secure area. They wanted to make it easy access for users and felt that registration might put some potential users off. The application can save the info needed for the information pack to the local pc. It does allow the user the opportunity to create an account if they want. The account would just be useful if they needed access from different locations.</p>
Development approach
<p>If it is there already don’t duplicate it!</p> <p>Initially they gathered information from partners including Sussex careers, open university, careers services, connexions and next step. They agreed priorities for the site including consolidating exiting information and avoiding giving different advice.</p> <p>They then created a concept for users to test in the development process.</p> <p>They use mystery shoppers to visit PIs and follow up people’s experience following interest in courses. This caused some anxiety initially for PIs as they feared that feedback might unsettle their staff, however it has been managed well and left a positive impact on the PI staff.</p> <p>They followed the “3 click rule” they wanted people to find information that they need quickly.</p>

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	£25k on website	£50k
Other information		
Total duration		Problems encountered
The solution started September 2006 has had a phased implementation, the first phase coming online in March 2007 and the latest phases March 2008		The challenge of delivering on the promise of helping the learner to uncover opportunities. There was always a risk that they wouldn’t meet the expectations of the learner. The tool predicts what the learner wants and therefore there is a challenge of it aligning. They also need to check the right users are using it.

Sustainability approach

Learning at Work Information Service in the South East is being developed it has 40k funding from each of the South East LLNs

Other contributors are: LSC 90k and SEEDA (RDA) 90k.

This will create a team that will be together for another 2 years until the end of 2010. The next 6 months will focus on further new developments to incorporate the wider region and to enable a post code search. Beyond that the focus will be on longer term sustainability which is ultimately likely to mean needing the PIs to subscribe.

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	£700 / month based on an average of 2 days work per month	Ultimately it will need someone centrally based to bring together the different institutions to work together
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
They won't be setting any replacement plans until the next 2 year project is underway		It might be difficult if a large number of LLNs choose to take on their solution as with limited resources they might struggle to support them. This would be a challenge as it will be important to maintain the consistent value of the service provided.
Benefits Realised		
<p>They are averaging about 4000 hits per month. A more significant factor is about 316 personal packs are being downloaded on average per month over the last 4 -5 months.</p> <p>Very small numbers have e-mailed advisors the feedback has been excellent when followed up with 100% of them feeling that their issues have been addressed.</p> <p>The course search feature that is part of the system gets about 4 -5000 searches per month. It contains all FDs and diplomas available in Sussex. The PIs have committed to providing a 48 hour response to any FD enquiries.</p>		
Availability to other LLNs?		
The system is available from SLN perspective and they are quite happy for their developments to be shared. As a result of this they have asked the development company to put together a price for implementing it with other LLNs		
Other Comments		
<p>In the interest of achieving consistency for learners they would like to explore ways of connecting systems together. They have already had some conversations with GMSA about the potential for their web developers to link up.</p> <p>Initially they thought that content would have been the all important factor of the project. However although content is important they discovered that the actual ability to search and easily navigate is the key factor. All of the content that is produced is available elsewhere and so it is only really a success if it is easier for the user to navigate the information via the tool.</p>		

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	HWLLN		
Director	Debbie Lambert	Interviewee	Viv Bell
System	Wider Horizons	Categories covered	VLE, e-learning Content, Student Access Portal, e-portfolio, Course Finder, IAG and Progression
Current Stage (life cycle)	Live	Live Date (E for estimated)	May 2008
Standards/Development Platform	Open Source Moodle, uPortal was considered but idea was dropped early on as it seems too complicated/expensive to develop, but we still have it on our servers in case we change our minds. with some web development done on the web with PHP using a bespoke CMS	Commercial Status/ Intellectual Property	This is available to be replicated by other LLNS
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	E £130K	Funding sources	LLN (HEFCE) and University of Worcester

OVERVIEW

Description	
This solution is an online environment to support the learner. The VLE element of the system is used to engage learners by providing taster courses that help them to understand better what is on offer within the region.	
Identification of Need	
Initially the University of Worcester Vice Chancellor had a vision to develop a system that would be a “regional VLE”. The desire was to have a system that came online at the same time as the new library (a unique sharing of a public and university library). Information and learning services within the University had been tasked with the project and the LLN identified it would be a great legacy for the LLN to be part of the development of an online regional information service	
There was some evidence that some of the partners had difficulty using the University’s own VLE, due to technical reasons, which also underlined the value of a shared VLE.	
Benefits	
Benefit	Measure
Learner can chose the right course for them	.
Learners are engage in learning new skills via Wider Horizons.	Who has been on the system how often and for how long; evaluation forms that are completed (some courses)
Regional discussions and activities can be facilitated	Forum activity levels

FEATURES

Key features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Online Taster Courses - these are essentially cut down versions of the real courses that are on offer at institutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion Forums ▪ Course Finder tool ▪ IAG - Careers, Institutions, Learning ▪ Links to other tools and information (ALPs, Learn Direct etc....) ▪ My Horizons - profile based on “easy portfolio” developed by Solihull college (open source)
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ XCRI - currently bidding for funding now have funding for mini project to start October 2008 ▪ Regional employers section (would like to add it) ▪ Progression Tool - Overall there is no progression tool. In their view this has to be developed carefully as it can be quite frustrating for a learner to discover no paths are identified in their interest area ▪ They intend to add in all level 4 provision
Links to other external systems
They do plan to link to other external sources of data, however they recognise there may be technical challenges
Identity management
They plan at some future point to talk to Kidderminster College, who have some expertise in Shibboleth, to review single sign-on at a later point
Development approach
<p>They chose not to go for an unusual platform that would require unusual skills or learning of a bespoke CMS. They are employing a developer who will develop content and also help partners to develop content. There is a basic CMS which can be used to upload to the website.</p> <p>They chose Moodle as 8 out of 10 of the local partners were using it. They wanted to keep the site with a “local flavour” and focus on what was available in the local counties.</p> <p>The approach has been to develop the system to a point where they feel comfortable it is working well enough to market it extensively to the learners.</p>

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
£7k	£3k	<p>They are employing a Learning technologist to develop content. This was seen as a cheaper option as giving funding to partners to develop information for the portal would be more expensive. Money is coming from content development allocation in original budget. Half-time appointment for one year.</p> <p>Total £36,000 to</p>

		develop empty system
Other information		
Total duration		Problems encountered
Started April 2007 - Launch planned November 2008, Sign off March 2010		Some video formats didn't work that well It was quite a long process to agree deployment within the University Infrastructure.
Sustainability approach		
<p>The main objective is to get everything set up so that it is ready to hand over to whoever will sustain it in the future. They can be supported by the newly formed marketing group that contains 3 marketing managers from partners.</p> <p>Possible sources of revenue identified so far:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce could gain employers input • Advertisers • Possible rental of space in VLE • Students could register for courses on line using pay pal or something and they could get a referral fee • Private training providers may pay a fee to register courses <p>The system will be maintained by the University of Worcester's Information Learning Services team. FE institutions can Upload to Moodle as 8 out of 10 are using Moodle.</p>		

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
<p>Server cost £3,000</p> <p>Equipment will need replacing and possibly space expanding in the future.</p> <p>No other equipment necessary</p>	<p>£6,000 has been spent with Kidderminster College who specialise in setting up Moodle and they are providing 3 years support. Rob Gwilliam the web developer has a maintenance contract for the website for 3 years. This agreement were paid for as part of original quotes for all the web development work. Full amount to him was £7,000</p>	<p>Developer and Information Learning Services ILS at UW look after the systems support side of the development. They don't get any money for this as they are joint partners in the project.</p>
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
Expected to be constantly in development		
Benefits Realised		
<p>3 courses have been completed 3 more are in the pipeline and a further has been suggested.</p> <p>Content developer to collect lots more (target is a taster for all FDs in the region)</p> <p>Sharing information between stakeholders has improved, new links have been formed and relationships built between partners.</p>		
Availability to other LLNs?		
They could help people to build a similar solution in a secure way and also to avoid		

problems that they encountered. It would cost to engage the resources to be involved however this would be a fraction of the cost of the investment that HWLLN have made. The software is open source and available to others to use.

They also are willing to setup a taster course for other LLNs on Wider horizons to try things out.

Other Comments

A sample area can be easily set up and links to Moodle can be sent to a person to upload content.

They recognise that there will be wider horizon students and also “not yet students” who are reviewing their futures.

Progression needs to be developed between offerings and also larger regional opportunities beyond the borders of HWLLN by developing communication

The general public sometimes feel excluded from University they want to open it up through Wider Horizons and the new library initiative.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Yorkshire & Humber East Lifelong Learning Network - YHELLN		
Director	Jenny Shaw	Interviewee	David Sowden
System	Identity supporting personalised progression spaces (ISPPS) - iCaboodle	Categories covered	Student Access Portal
Current Stage (life cycle)	Live -Pilot	Live Date (E for estimated)	E March 2009
Standards/Development Platform	Open Source	Commercial Status/ Intellectual Property	Open Source
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	E £350k	Funding sources	JISC (HEFCE)

OVERVIEW

Description	
The system provides an identity management solution for the user enabling them to access learning tools available to them from a wide variety of sources in a single place.	
Identification of Need	
Initially in the YHELLN business plan an MLE manager role was identified with the aim of creating a central VLE for the sub-region. YHELLN decided that a VLE might not be the best approach and following scoping exercises they identified that a portal would be the best way forward not duplicating anyone else's approach.	
Benefits	
<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Measure</i>
Learner can access all their information in one place (saving time and adding value) Partner doesn't have to develop their own portal Learner can freely move between institutions in the sub-region	

FEATURES

Key features
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Single-sign on▪ Customisable for user▪ Access to the tools they are interested in (available as widgets)▪ Access to library information▪ Access to local information▪ "Re-skinned" for each partner institution
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
Links to other external systems
links to external tools

Identity management
Built in links to systems from institutions to verify student identity.
Development approach
Initially the understanding was that JISC projects had to be developed using open source technologies. This led to the selection of u-portal as a technology and the decision to recruit two programmers to support the University of Hull's "e-sig" team.
YHELLN considered contracting a company to support the development when they found it difficult recruiting however finding a company also proved hard. In the end they have recruited an overseas worker to assist in the development of the application.

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
£8.5k	Initially use of Moodle Rooms (based in the US) was considered, however this has changed and developers have been sourced in France.	
Other information		
Total duration		Problems encountered
Project was due to start Sept 2007 but actually started March 2008 due to difficulties in recruitment		Finding Programmers
March 2009		
Sustainability approach		
iCaboodle is being hosted within “e-Sig” at the University. This means that the system can be sustained beyond the life of YHELLN.		

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
Benefits Realised		
Availability to other LLNs?		
The system is available to other LLNs. YHELLN are able to hand over source code and offer support in people replicating the system.		
The principle cost in addition to time will be the cost of the servers. The system is being hosted by the University of Hull and if people wanted to use the servers they would have to agree this directly with the University.		

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	GMSA		
Director	Cath Walsh	Interviewee	Roger Clark and Gill Scott
System	Pathways http://pathways.gmsa.ac.uk/	Categories covered	Course Finder, IAG and Progression
Current Stage (life cycle)	Live	Live Date (E for estimated)	2008
Standards/Development Platform		Commercial Status/ Intellectual Property	IPR belongs to GMSA/IDAHO and the system will be available as "Software As A Service"
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	E £50k	Funding sources	HEFCE

OVERVIEW

Description	
<p>This started as a tool that showed progression agreements that were in place. It has now expanded to include a full range of courses classified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conditional Offer (place offered based on conditions) ▪ Invitation to interview (guaranteed interview) ▪ Application Welcome (the type of qualification is typically accepted at next level) <p>The system tracks destination courses and feeder courses and it has an extensive database of courses that produce a short description and this links to partner institution course information. It has a direct enquiry service for learners to contact to admissions staff in institutions and these are tracked centrally.</p>	
Identification of Need	
In consultation with a wider group of stakeholders	
Benefits	
Benefit	Measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learner can identify progress routes available to them for learning ▪ For "feeders" it will provide a useful IAG tool they can use to fulfil the need to provide IAG ▪ It is a recruitment tool for the destination partners ▪ Learners can enquire directly to the admissions and this enable the offer within Pathways 	They can measure the use of site

FEATURES

Key features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data kept up to date (Currently this involves lost of administration time but the plan is for the institution to do it) ▪ Can be used as a service (uses Web Services and xml) ▪ Enquiry service that enables and tracks offers made through Pathways ▪ Provides learner with information about the paths that are available for the qualifications they have or are in the process of learning ▪ Grade profiles (allows the user to input expected grades and then calculates offers) ▪ Post code oriented

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows results to be filtered
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relating progress to vocational opportunities (careers) - This will be developed as time goes on Not mapping diplomas (other organisations are mapping diplomas to A levels)
Links to other external systems
Identity management
Development approach
<p>They found that as they set out on the development process their perspectives have changed due to raised awareness and understanding. They have developed progression agreements while the system has been developed.</p> <p>A major issue highlighted by user feedback is that the options were too limiting, it just showed follow on course to a creative arts BTEC when someone might want to see what other alternatives they might have. They continue to adapt to informal feedback they receive.</p>

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	Mainly developed externally	Internal resources required to manage data.
Other information		
Total duration		Problems encountered
Sustainability approach		
The intention to sustain the solution moving forward is to engage one of the stakeholder groups in subscribing to it as a service.		

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
Benefits Realised		
The system is in use and statistics have been collected - to be confirmed by GMSA		
Availability to other LLNs?		
<p>This tool could be made available to other LLNs on a "Software as a service" subscription basis or possibly under license. The IPR is shared with development partner IDAHO.</p> <p>IDAHO would effectively make a clone system (hosted by IDAHO) available to another LLN to use as a service.</p>		
Other Comments		
They are starting to develop IAG tools based around job types to link into GMSA pathways. The idea is to use case studies as much as possible. The approach has been to develop them one at a time rather than try to attempt to create a very large project to develop them all at once.		

GENERAL INFORMATION			
LLN	GMSA		
Director	Cath Walsh	Interviewee	Roger Clark
System	Project ME and IONW2	Categories covered	e-portfolio/PDP, Course Finder
Current Stage (life cycle)	LIVE	Live Date (E for estimated)	October 2008 - - Tools developed
Standards/Development Platform	Open source, Java and LAMP	Commercial Status/Intellectual Property	Open source IO Network Project me could be available to others with some consultancy cost
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	E £300k	Funding sources	LLN

OVERVIEW

Description	
<p>This is building on the SOLVS project and infrastructure of the North West's IONETWORK. This is a network based solution that contains course data from institutions from across the region and other learner based applications.</p> <p>Project ME (GMSA retained IPR) storing reflections and learning history and containing Personal Development Planning tools is being deployed in two areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 GM Learning providers network (Level 3 and above) 2 Advance Media apprentices (To support them in their apprenticeships) 3 The Manchester College, recently formed and biggest FE provider in Europe <p>A Course Finder (search tool) To search all the courses available across the region</p>	
Identification of Need	
<p>There was recognition from dealing with learners in work that they have a more fragmented link with institutions and they wanted to help people to manage this.</p> <p>This was confirmed in consultation with the partner institutions</p>	
Benefits	
<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Measure</i>
<p>"Learner managing their own learning"</p> <p>Building community</p>	<p>Course information sharing occurring - displays the widest benefit</p> <p>Ultimately the bodies that are using the tools wanting to continue to use it will demonstrate the benefit.</p>

FEATURES

Key features
<p>IONW2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A scalable infrastructure ▪ Coherent Information ▪ Replaces endless sources of data ▪ Interconnects easily with other nodes

Project Me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides one place for the learner to manage their learning Movable information when the move Understand how to sell their selves Understand what options are open to them
Course Finder(search tool) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables potential learner to search all that is available in the area.
Features not developed (considered out of scope) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner achievement repository (e-portfolio) - something to advertise their selves. CV service blog server Online applications
Links to other external systems
Identity management
e-mail address based log-in can automatically be transferred across all the nodes.
Development approach
The have engaged with BLISS based in Bolton who are working on the front end to develop the usability and remove any “lumpiness”

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	Approximately £80 -100k	Some internal posts funded by the project - about £200k over time?
Other information		
Total duration		Problems encountered
September 2006 - Live during 2008		<p>The danger of scope creep. On occasions the development enlarged in areas that although adding features led to an overall reduction in usability.</p> <p>The major challenge was amount of effort that needed to be invested to make sure it was not too complex</p>
Sustainability approach		
It is currently hosted and they are looking for another funding source to continue. Possibly groups that are currently using it may fund the future development.		

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	The costs of hosting and the source code maintenance	
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems

Benefits Realised
Availability to other LLNs?
The applications they have built on IONW2 could be delivered on a “Software as a service” basis.
Other Comments
<p>The development of the IONETWORK is a work in progress, there is opportunity for further development and the potential of the underlying course infrastructure is “yet to be fully realised”.</p> <p>They could develop more learner achievement information particularly with MIAP ID management based on the unique learner number.</p>

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	GMSA		
Director	Cath Walsh	Interviewee	Roger Clark
System	GMSA Advance	Categories covered	Other - Credit accumulation
Current Stage (life cycle)	Planned	Live Date (E for estimated)	E August 2009
Standards/Development Platform	Unknown	Commercial Status/Intellectual Property	IPR retained by GMSA
Financial Costs (E for estimated)		Funding sources	HEFCE

OVERVIEW

Description	
Bringing together credits gained from different modules potentially at different institutions accumulating them into a single qualification. The aim to engage better with employers and people in employment to enable the recognition of their learning.	
Identification of Need	
Through consultation with GMSA partners.	
Benefits	
Benefit	Measure
Recognise people's learning	The amount of people who are able to use the accreditation framework to gain qualifications

FEATURES

Key features
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Accumulate credits that they have studies from modules▪ Recognise qualifications▪ Enable learner to design their own programme of study▪ Extending XCRI to map to module level
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A common application process that the learner can use▪ Identifying routes that people could take through the modules - it would be too complicated
Links to other external systems
Identity management
They are interested in looking at a sub-system for ID management. They want to avoid using Shibboleth which they have previously had a bad experience with.
Development approach
They are planning to engage with a local software development partner. They anticipate that technology will not prove the main challenge but rather the complexity of the problem and engaging with Partner Institutions. “ The biggest challenge for this particular tool is actually beyond the technical considerations and relating to the need to be able to deliver a framework through negotiation and facilitation with institutions”

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	Currently tendering	They have a programmer employed until August 09
Other information		
Total duration		Problems encountered
January 09 start April 09 test release August 09 live	Getting people to provide access to their courses particularly from other PIs Getting a development partner who can help them develop the “advanced technologies” required
Sustainability approach		
In order to be sustainable PIs need to buy in and also employers need to be able to see the value of modules that are available. It is hoped that HEFCE’s framework for sustainability will provide some opportunities to develop this further.		

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
Benefits Realised		
Availability to other LLNs?		
This could be available to other LLNs on a “software as a service” model or possibly under license		

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Leap Ahead		
Director	Mike Braund	Interviewee	Kirstie Coolin Stuart Wood
System	e-portfolio partnerships	Categories covered	e-portfolio
Current Stage (life cycle)	Live	Live Date (E for estimated)	May 2008
Standards/Development Platform	iwebfolio, Pebblepad	Commercial Status/ Intellectual Property	Willing to share ideas and research
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	N/A	Funding sources	HEFCE

OVERVIEW

Description	
<p>Rather than a system this is a service that is provided by the LLN to partner institutions to raise awareness and enable them to assess the benefits of using e-portfolios. Once the requirement has been identified by the partner institution then they will work with the institution to support them through a piloting phase and any potential implementation.</p> <p>Their aim is to develop capacity with institutions to support work based vocational learners and provide a tool that links the employer, the learner and the institution in one place.</p>	
Identification of Need	
<p>They have identified the need for e-portfolios from research and speaking to institutions and employers. As the project has progressed they have identified specific needs from forums and ongoing meetings.</p> <p>They have also spoken to some private training providers, often the challenge with the private providers is that they want to upload specific competencies for entire NVQs. Often this is not the best approach as existing tools exist provided by awarding bodies.</p>	
Benefits	
Benefit	Measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer able to track learner activity and progress The learner can be linked with their CPD Learner can have access to their learning progression Learner owned e-portfolio that they can share with different people for different purposes Tracks their progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of all pilots and more detailed evaluation of a chosen sub-set.

FEATURES

Key features
<p>e-portfolio software</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upload digital items Presentation function to present to audience or send link for a particular purpose Security (to a level) Driven by learner activity (Pebblepad) or Driven by tutor's courses (iWebfolio) <p>e-portfolio service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising of possible use of e-portfolio solutions Training

<p>The opportunity for an institution to try the software without having to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Justify cost of licenses (they can use them for free until July 2010) ▪ Learn new skill set (training provided) ▪ Engage with IT (hosted via web) ▪ Capacity building for those involved <p>Template design Support</p>
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VLE ▪ Not a competence based NVQ portfolio (The ones created by existing awarding bodies that are pre-loaded with a framework for a single purpose are more appropriate)
Links to other external systems
They currently have none; however they are reviewing the possibility of developing links to Moodle and are talking to e-portfolio suppliers about the possibility.
Identity management
The e-portfolio software use their own credentials for each user
Development approach
<p>They decided to join into existing solutions that existed in the channels rather than develop a new software solution. iWebfolio had offered to give them 1000 free licenses to pilot and this was later matched by Pebblepad.</p> <p>Leap Ahead attended the East Midlands e-fair that JISC run to promote the project, set up forums, met with institutional partners, and engaged partners at sector meetings. This attracted interest and they engaged with the enthusiastic people who showed interest in starting a pilot. This was considered a much better approach than trying to engage an entire institutions user population all at once. They have then worked with the pilot enthusiasts to develop the use of e-portfolios for their specific purposes this has led to a wide variety of projects. The Leap Ahead team have then worked to enable the users by training, support and in some cases by developing templates.</p> <p>They have created an e-portfolio forum that essentially is a regular meeting to share experiences and learn from practice.</p> <p>They have 30 pilots ready to start in the autumn term the total number of users on e-portfolios will rise to 600.</p>

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
none	<p>Training costs</p> <p>No s/w development</p>	<p>Internal time promoting systems, training and customising software in some cases</p> <p>50%? Have spent a lot of time promoting and supporting the pilots. To give out licences in bulk and provide minimal support would not result in quality evaluation</p>

Other information	
Total duration	Problems encountered
January 2008 was the start of initial conversations and within 3 months they had their first pilot.	Resources - people not committing time to the project to move from the familiarity of a paper based solution.
Sustainability approach	
<p>They will have distributed learning about e-portfolios</p> <p>Institutions will make the decision to use them or not on a continuing basis. What Leap Ahead will have developed is the knowledge, capability and experience within the institutions to move forward. They have also developed a community of practice that can hopefully support one another to sustain developments.</p>	

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	<p>The cost of an annual license for e-portfolios is approximately £15-20/user/year. The solutions are used as a web application although Pebble Pad can potentially be installed on internal servers if required.</p> <p>Training from Pebblepad has been held (£300 per day approx) and we have 5 days training from iWebfolio (not including expenses)</p>	
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
The expectation is that these tools will grow in use		Access to PCs for potential e-portfolio users and also technical ability
Benefits Realised		
<p>Some pilots are already live and they have evidence that the e-portfolios are being used and that content is being shared. Currently around 300 users, potentially 600 by the end of 2009.</p> <p>They have had some feedback from one particular pilot that the sector skills council have initiated with plumbers. This project is about skills recognition and it enables plumbers to benchmark their skills against the NVQ level 2 competencies to review any gaps in their skills that they would need to fill in order to reach NVQ level 2 standard</p>		
Availability to other LLNs?		
They are willing to share research and learning with other LLNs. They have a paper at the Maastricht e-portfolio conference. They are also considering running another event next year to share ideas with other LLNs		
Other Comments		
<p>Standards</p> <p>They have looked at IMS but it has been agreed by most to be too cumbersome for use in general. Some e-portfolio providers had used it originally but found it too cumbersome on the whole.</p> <p>There is also a UK Learner Information Profile (LEAP) standard</p>		

Based on the ATOM (RSS feed standard approach a number of organisations are in discussion about the production of a new standard LEAP 2.0, this will be a more flexible approach that allows for more general categorisation to enable people to move between e-portfolio tools and also develop CPD (probably linking to HR xml)

LEAP is very much in the development stages (and Leap Ahead are involved). They hope to use this to demonstrate interoperability between some of our regional systems.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Leap Ahead		
Director	Mike Braund	Interviewee	Kirstie Coolin Stuart Wood
System	JOSEPH	Categories covered	IAG, Course finder, Progression
Current Stage (life cycle)	In Development	Live Date (E for estimated)	E January 2009 Pilot
Standards/Development Platform	Microsoft .Net	Commercial Status/Intellectual Property	Developed for JISC and therefore must be Open Source
Financial Costs (E for estimated)		Funding sources	JISC

OVERVIEW

Description	
<p>The system is a “Careers Education Information Advice (CEIAG) Guidance Tool” focused on enabling a person to review a particular career path, understand learning opportunities that relate to that path and build an action plan for the future.</p> <p>It brings together information about careers available, courses and the state of the labour market.</p> <p>Initially this is aimed at young people who are interested in engineering. The system draws information from Passportfolio bringing in their qualification history. The tool links to My Choice Notts (Area prospectus) progression pathways (HE progression developed by Aim Higher).</p> <p>The plan for the future is that different sectors and also adults could be incorporated into this tool.</p> <p>A JISC project run by the Centre for International ePortfolio Development (project managed by Sandra Winfield). The technology will feed into and be adapted for the LLN.</p>	
Identification of Need	
Benefits	
<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Measure</i>
Learner understands career options	Number of action plans created Number of users
Learner understands information about the labour market	
Learner enabled to make a decision to follow a career or not (may realise it isn't for them)	
Pre-interview tool	

FEATURES

Key features
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Automatically imports information from PassportfolioContains Careers informationContains Course InformationLabour Market informationSector specificsCareer Guides

Features not developed (considered out of scope)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharing information with an advisor (may be developed later) ▪ Developing information resources not done as time consuming rather uses existing information
Links to other external systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pass Portfolio ▪ Area Prospectus ▪ Progression Pathways ▪ Possibly Learn Direct Job Profiles ▪ Possibly NEBA materials
Identity management
Automatically creates ID for users of the Pass Portfolio system. If the user has no Pass Portfolio ID then it allows them to create a new ID for the system.
Development approach
<p>The decision was made to use internal resources to develop this and build upon their links with the local providers of information through “My Choice Notts” and “progression pathways”.</p> <p>Engineering has been identified as a priority area and was chosen for the pilot.</p> <p>They have focused on developing HCI to make the interface as intuitive as possible.</p> <p>They may link this to an e- portfolio</p> <p>They are developing and getting some feedback and testing in September</p>

DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT		
Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
Other information		
Total duration	Problems encountered	
Sustainability approach		
The solution is being hosted on the connexions server and once the CMS is developed people could create their own instances of the solution. The plan is to use XCRI format which hopefully will open the possibility to be used in other environments beyond Leap Ahead		

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
Other information		
Life expectancy	Anticipated problems	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At least 4 years (2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keeping information resources that are available up to date ▪ Making the Content management system effective (in terms of matching peoples expectations) ▪ Challenges of data protection 	

Benefits Realised
Availability to other LLNs?
Other Comments
Pulls in data from area prospectus and also PASS portfolio

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	MOVE		
Director	Robin Smith	Interviewee	Mark Leyland
System	Learner Services (ePortfolio)	Categories covered	Student Access Portal, e-portfolio
Current Stage (life cycle)	On Hold	Live Date (E for estimated)	
Standards/Development Platform	Open Source tools	Commercial Status/ Intellectual Property	Open Source
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	E £10k	Funding sources	LLN

OVERVIEW

Description	
This tool comprises of a simple e-portfolio and advanced e-portfolio based on a previous JISC project and a model developed by the University of Minnesota.	
Identification of Need	
Initially the concept had been to develop learner tracking using this as a solution.	
Benefits	
Benefit	Measure
The solution would enable the learner to keep all of their information in one place	Usage
The LLN would be able to track learners	

FEATURES

Key features
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Allows learner to upload files (including media)▪ e-mail a link to interested parties to view portfolio▪ Access from people is tracked and the owner is informed▪ Text message notification can be set up, to inform user when portfolio is accessed▪ Guided wizards are available in a simple version of the product for those who need it.
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
The intention was to develop the learner's access to other information such as career related information and partner information
Links to other external systems
Identity management
Development approach
The tool was taken from a previous project called the EELLs project. The initial solution was developed and piloted with potential users.
Moving forward the plan would be to involve a wider group of users.

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software	Internal Resources

	Development	
	E £10k	
Other information		
Total duration	Problems encountered	
2006 start		
Sustainability approach		
This solution is on hold and currently won't be sustained. Move would be very interested in enabling others to take this project forward.		

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
Other information		
Life expectancy	Anticipated problems	
	No one to host it moving forward.	
	There is a need to make it robust, it is not quite ready to go live	
Benefits Realised		
Availability to other LLNs?		
It is available and is about 80% complete. It would be good from Move's perspective if someone was interested in developing it further.		

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	MOVE		
Director	Robin Smith	Interviewee	Mark Leyland
System	Discover	Categories covered	IAG, careers, courses and progression routes finder in MOVE employment sectors
Current Stage (life cycle)	Live with partners	Live Date (E for estimated)	1 st October goes live with learners
Standards/Development Platform	CAP XCRI	Commercial Status/Intellectual Property	Open Source IPR - uncertain
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	E £70k	Funding sources	LLN

OVERVIEW

Description	
Contains a course catalogue that uses information available from partners. The tool is a IAG, careers, courses and progression routes finder in MOVE employment sectors	
Identification of Need	
Initially the need was identified that impartial detailed information relating to sectors was hard to find and from Mark's own previous experience of making a career change. The concept was then tested out with partners and stakeholders: partner institutions, the NHS, sector skills councils and stakeholders in the cultural sector.	
Benefits	
Benefit	Measure
Learner can find out how they can move into their chosen career	MOVE do use website metrics to track success but believe this only shows part of the picture and other metrics give a truer evaluation:
Employers also are able to check out pathways available	MOVE is looking for feedback from users. They have feedback boxes on the site and also they ask for feedback from partners and stakeholders.
	MOVE Discover will have links from other's websites as a source of quality information.
	Another LLN, YHELLN, have taken up the same technology for their solution

FEATURES

Key features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows progression pathways and courses available for a chosen career Shows available progression pathways Allows applications to courses to be made from via links to institution's websites Links to job description sites (manually updated) Allows administrators to manage tags that relate to job descriptions and progression Very little requirement to create content, as signposts to other website's content. MOVE selects most appropriate resources.

Features not developed (considered out of scope)
Automated career data collected from career advice agencies - not out of scope - further funding and a cooperative data supplier required
Video information for careers to support a learners exploration of a career
Direct feed from PIs using XCRI (In progress). Currently data is contained and maintained in an access database held by Move called CIPR (Course Information Progression Report), 12 staff are involved in maintaining it. The intention is to move this to an agent that pulls information directly from institutions
Links to other external systems
They would like to link to 14-19 Prospectuses regionally and Next Step, NHS Careers and any other useful sources e.g. sector skills councils.
Identity management
Development approach
What seemed to be most important was to enable the individual to work backwards and see the learning paths to the career they aspire to.
MOVE took the view that people would probably be able to work out their level of current qualifications and how they might be able to progress from that point.
Once MOVE had seen a demonstration of a new style interface from their development partner Phosphorix and they realised how they could use it as an interface for moving through Career/Course pathways.

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
Currently hosted on servers that are based at the University of Hertfordshire	Phosphorix E £70k	
Other information		
Total duration	Problems encountered	
2006 to DEC 2008	Engaging partner institutions can sometimes be difficult. Often representatives of an institution can express interest in the solution, however when the internal staff responsible for supporting the implementation are contacted they can be less enthusiastic.	
Sustainability approach		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ MOVE have used the funding they had for this project and are very interested in the open source possibilities for another organisation/stakeholder to take it on.▪ Skills for health expressed an interest in embedding Discover in Skills academy East.▪ Move is basing the data held on XCRI so that it can be transferred into other solutions. Their intention is to support the adoption of XCRI as a standard and embed it in more PIs over the next year of the LLN.▪ Automating careers and course information will cut down on the cost of administering the project going forward and create more options for sustainability.▪ The Association of Universities in the East of England (AUUE) are discussing how Discover can be supported in the future.		

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	<£1k per month	
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
The system started development in 2006 and unless it is sustained it will have to end July 2009		
Benefits Realised		
<p>One institution are looking to use discover as a way of managing their courses from a marketing perspective.</p> <p>The system has received positive feedback and caused organisations like the AUEE to consider how they can best collaborate on regional course/progression information</p>		
Availability to other LLNs?		
The solutions has been developed in open source tools and would be available for other LLNs to use if they have a development partner with the appropriate skills		
Other Comments		
<p>Mark had the experience of wanting to change career from accountancy to web development and couldn't find one place to get all the information he needed. When he went to a careers advisor they weren't able to give him advice either. His experience was that looking at the web didn't produce accurate results.</p> <p>What they wanted to create was a system not unlike Google that they had populated containing relevant advice and guidance for the individual or IAG professional.</p> <p>The key selling point for Discover is the innovative use of the mind map approach to present the user with information at a relevant level without overwhelming them with too much text. Feedback of this approach has been extremely positive and is already being used by others.</p>		

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	NEHSN		
Director	Adrian Parry	Interviewee	Colin Wilkinson
System	iwant2b	Categories covered	IAG, Course finder Progression
Current Stage (life cycle)	Live	Live Date (E for estimated)	December 2007
Standards/Development Platform	XCRI (currently adapting)	Commercial Status/ Intellectual Property	IP belongs to NEHSN and trademark registered. Working towards self-funding model
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	E £250k & ongoing costs	Funding sources	HEFCE

OVERVIEW

Description	
<p>iwant2b helps the learner to define their career aspiration, creates a profile and then identifies a learning pathway and all requirements to progress on that pathway.</p> <p>The system is aimed at young and old, employed and unemployed learners</p>	
Identification of Need	
<p>In the business plan they had decided to develop a progression mapping tool. The members of the network researched other tools (ALP, SEMTA) that were available and felt that there wasn't an existing tool that went through the whole learning route.</p> <p>They took the conceptual idea to council meetings, network meetings, sector skills councils, professional bodies and other stakeholders. Using this feedback they developed the business case and functional requirement specification to move forward.</p>	
Benefits	
Benefit	Measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing the learner with the whole solution from career aspiration through to qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some qualitative aspects are hard to measure e.g. the learner's reflections and changed perceptions People signing up on courses. Difficult to track as the Institutions don't necessarily collect the data about where the enquiry came from They can measure click through rates Possibly may develop with UCAS the ability to apply online

FEATURES

Key features
<p>" Works out where you want to go and how to get there"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IAG helping the learner move from generic to specific career aspirations Identifies a personal progression plan based up information gathered about the learner's qualifications and experience Identifies programmes on offer and entry requirements involved Informs the learner of possible progression routes across all Network member institutions

The tools main value comes from the way that all the aspects link together into one tool
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV online (in development for September 2008) Finding careers based on salary surveys (possible addition) wewant2b a possible tool for employers that will help them follow up appraisals by linking generic job role information to learning opportunities
Links to other external systems
<p>Links to partner institution sites at the relevant point where course information is held (This is kept updated by an internal team and the plan is to automate data collection at some point in the future)</p> <p>Some data is also pulled into the system from partner sites</p>
Identity management
The system has its own security. It may be linked in the future to other systems.
Development approach
<p>They had a rigorous selection process to identify a suitable partner to collaborate with them. They wanted a creative partner to work with them as they didn't fully understand what the final system was going to do. They created a tender specification and sent it out to a number of potential partners.</p> <p>They assessed the tenders base on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well they addressed the specification The financial cost The ability of the organisation to deliver the outcomes demonstrated by experience Demonstrating that they are open to new ideas and different approaches <p>Some of the organisations who tendered had significant education experience but just didn't address the specification well.</p> <p>Although it wasn't a criterion it has proved useful that the organisation selected has a base on campus.</p> <p>The focus was on the "right solution for the learner" and not on technologies to be used</p> <p>The organisation selected was THAP (http://www.thap.co.uk/)</p>

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	External development costs form part of the overall costs	Staff and partner time was involved in developing the solution
Other information		
Total duration	Problems encountered	
10 months development period	<p>Getting data from external bodies like the LSC</p> <p>Getting the data structures established that would provide the maximum functionality</p> <p>Taking time to break the project down into phases took time but benefited the</p>	

	development process
Sustainability approach	
<p>The main two approaches are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To sell online advertising (This would not be to educational/training providers in principle as it compromises the impartiality of the IAG) To gain subscriptions from private training providers (some have already indicated a willingness) <p>NEHSN are actively seeking opportunities to support sustainability.</p>	

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
Estimated at around £1500/ month		There is a requirement for approximately 2 members of staff
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
At least 5 years before any major redevelopment and the aspiration that the system will remain in ongoing development		Acquiring funded to support ongoing development
Benefits Realised		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3866 users (2165 who were unique) The number of users is growing exponentially and currently running at approximately 700 in a month The site is being promoted through partners, connexions, schools and colleges all over the region Another big benefit is that it is prompting stakeholders to consider other possible holistic solutions 		
Availability to other LLNs?		
Commercial system. This system is free to the user, and could be made available in other areas through LLNs by negotiation. This would have a cost implication		

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Sussex Learning Network		
Director	Chris Baker	Interviewee	Sarah Hardman
System	Sussex Routes	Categories covered	Progression
Current Stage (life cycle)	Live	Live Date (E for estimated)	April 2008
Standards/Development Platform		Commercial Status/Intellectual Property	Open Source
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	E12k	Funding sources	LLN

OVERVIEW

Description	
A searchable database of progression agreements available in Sussex	
Identification of Need	
<p>Colleagues who had been involved in IAG wanted an electronic rather than a paper directory approach towards mapping progression agreements</p> <p>They considered it would be best to have an online system that is easy to use and maps it all</p>	
Benefits	
<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Measure</i>
Identify routes open to the learner	No of applicants that sign up as a result of progression agreements. SLN is added into a reference to indicate it has come by this route. They are talking to UCAS to agree on a consistent box to use for reference.
Enable institutions to use for advisory purposes	
Good marketing tool for PIs offering FDS	
	Quality of e-mails received and advice given

FEATURES

Key features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Search facility ▪ Allows learner to find progression from - "Where am I now?" ▪ Allows learner to find progression from - "Where I want to be" ▪ Shows progression agreements that are in place and therefore "guaranteed" offers can be shown. ▪ The user can print a certificate that confirms they have been offered a guaranteed entrance place
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
<p>Full progression routes (this was considered to be too complicated).</p> <p>They were concerned about creating something that might give the impression of covering all routes but actually be limited by curriculum areas. It might imply to the person that they can't make progression outside the system.</p> <p>Online direct application process or expression of interest.</p> <p>This has not been developed as it would duplicate the UCAS process and might give the wrong impression to the student, a direct application to UCS wouldn't be used as it might bypass the students viewing of key information about the institution where they want to study.</p>

Links to other external systems
Links to other relevant sites like UCAS and partner institutions colleges and other local places of resource
Identity management
Development approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DOT where selected as the development partner following a successful development of the website for the University of Sussex. They liked the idea of using a local company and therefore investing in the local region. ▪ DOT demonstrated a strong ability to understand the requirements of the SLN and also they had a number of existing projects that showed their capability to deal with complicated search technology in a way that creates a really simple tool for the user ▪ They focused on developing a good balance between: a minimal number of screens and long lists. ▪ The style was aimed at being “Funky but not too young” as the subject areas/type of course were NVQ 3-4. ▪ A flow chart was made of the workflow and logic tested with users before a prototype built

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	E £12k	
Other information		
Total duration		Problems encountered
November 2007 - April 2008		<p>The risk is the potential for mistakes that a guarantee can be made that doesn't exist</p> <p>Predicative typing could be a danger that someone ends up with the wrong information from a similar sounding course</p>
Sustainability approach		
LAWIS project will maintain it and it will be reviewed in 2010		

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	Included in support for Learning Opportunities	
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adding new agreements maintaining quality and accuracy ▪ Maintaining when existing agreements need to be updated or removed
Benefits Realised		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Users have increased significantly following marketing materials being deployed to public access points, PIs and connexions ▪ Staff development with key providers has been provided to avoid any misunderstanding of agreements 		

Availability to other LLNs?
They have created a model to engage with the developer that they have made a price for

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Sussex Learning Network		
Director	Chris Baker	Interviewee	Sarah Hardman
System	Learning Opportunities	Categories covered	IAG
Current Stage (life cycle)	Live	Live Date (E for estimated)	March 2008
Standards/Development Platform		Commercial Status/Intellectual Property	Open Source available to other LLNs
Financial Costs (E for estimated)	££75k	Funding sources	LLN

OVERVIEW

Description	
<p>Online IAG services for the learner that can produce paper based information packs to support them as they plan their learning. There is specific IAG for the locality and also generic IAG for vocational HE. This tool can be useful to the employers as well as the learners. There is also a separate website attached for course search.</p> <p>The system contains specific 14-19 information relating to the learning diploma. It is a personalised service with a powerful free text search that utilises keywords. The tool is also backed up by real guidance professionals when required. Quality control contact people who are users to follow up their experience.</p>	
Identification of Need	
<p>Institutions were in principle willing to refer opportunities to each other. Sometimes the knowledge about FDs possessed by course senders at the PI was not full.</p> <p>They formed an IAG working group to identify what gaps existed in provision. They realised that adult learners couldn't access information they need and some information was particularly difficult to find and the hours when enquiries could be conducted was limited.</p> <p>OU have identified that their enquiries are coming increasingly via e-mail rather than the telephone. This informed the SLN decision to provide e-mail access to guidance.</p>	
Benefits	
Benefit	Measure
Enabling people to know what is available and what information means.... P/T F/T	Number of hits can be tracked
A guide for the application process	Enquiries made from a particular link
They can look around and overcome barriers	Downloaded packs (considered the most useful indicator)
They can challenge information if things aren't up to date	When Post Codes are added to the system then some GIS analysis can be performed

FEATURES

Key features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free text search that takes peoples questions and gets them relevant answers. (This has developed over time to improve results) Contains funding information and sector information

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IAG professionals are available to be contacted ▪ Links to FD course search tool ▪ Links to Sussex routes and also Keyroutes for progression information ▪ Allows the user to print an information pack that stores all the information that they have uncovered on their search. The pack can be edited with pages being removed as appropriate. It includes things like prompt sheets to help the person in their application ▪ They provided 3 ways to navigate - Left hand menu, follow headlines within the page and the search feature.
Features not developed (considered out of scope)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Post code search (This will be developed later) ▪ Developing course search beyond FDs, too much information
Links to other external systems
<p>It does link out to relevant points in other systems and sources that can provide other guidance.</p> <p>They had considered linking to data from PIs however the data does tend to change and sometimes information can be inconsistent and they didn't want to create another point of inconsistency.</p>
Identity management
<p>They don't have or believe they need a secure area. They wanted to make it easy access for users and felt that registration might put some potential users off. The application can save the info needed for the information pack to the local pc. It does allow the user the opportunity to create an account if they want. The account would just be useful if they needed access from different locations.</p>
Development approach
<p>If it is there already don't duplicate it!</p> <p>Initially they gathered information from: Sussex careers, open university, careers services, connexions and next step. They set providers targets to agree, consolidating exiting information and avoiding giving different advice.</p> <p>They then created a concept for users to test in the development process.</p> <p>They use mystery shoppers to visit PIs and follow up people's experience following interest in courses. This caused some anxiety initially for PIs as they feared that feedback might unsettle their staff, however it has been managed well and left a positive impact on the PI staff.</p> <p>They followed the "3 click rule" they wanted people to find information that they need quickly.</p>

DEVELOPMENT

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
£25k on website	£50k	
Other information		
Total duration		Problems encountered
The solution started September 2006 has had		The challenge of delivering on the promise

a phased implementation, the first phase coming online in March 2007 and the latest phases March 2008	of helping the learner to uncover opportunities. There was always a risk that they wouldn't meet the expectations of the learner. The tool predicts what the learner wants and therefore there is a challenge of it aligning. They also need to check the right users are using it
Sustainability approach	
South Eastern futures is being developed it has 40k funding from each of the South East LLNs	
Other contributors are: LSC 90k and SEDA (RDA) 90k.	
This will create a team that will be together for another 2 years until the end of 2010. The next 6 months will focus on further new developments to incorporate the wider region and to enable a post code search. Beyond that the focus will be on longer term sustainability which is ultimately considered to mean needing the PIs to subscribe.	

MAINTENANCE

Costs		
Hardware	External Software Development	Internal Resources
	£700 / month based on an average of 2 days work per month	Ultimately it will need someone centrally based to bring together the different institutions to work together
Other information		
Life expectancy		Anticipated problems
They won't be setting any replacement plans until another 2 years have elapsed and		It might be difficult if a large number of LLNs choose to take on their solution as with limited resources they might struggle to support them.
		This would be a challenge as it will be important to maintain the consistent value of the service provided.
Benefits Realised		
They are averaging about 4000 hits per month. A more significant factor is about 316 personal packs are being downloaded on average per month over the last 4 -5 months.		
Very small numbers have e-mailed advisors the feedback has been excellent when followed up with 100% of them feeling that their issues have been addressed.		
The course search feature that is part of the system gets about 4 -5000 searches per month. It contains all FDs and diplomas available in Sussex. The PIs have committed to providing a 48 hour response to any FD enquiries.		
Availability to other LLNs?		
The system is available from SLN perspective and they are quite happy for their developments to be shared. As a result of this they have asked the development company to put together a price for implementing it with other LLNs		

Other Comments
<p>In the interest of achieving consistency for learners they would like to explore ways of connecting systems together. They have already had some conversations with GMSA between web developers.</p> <p>Initially they thought that content would have been the all important factor of the project. However although content is important they discovered that the actual ability to search and easily navigate is the key factor. All of the content that is produced is available elsewhere and so it is only really a success if it is easier for the user to navigate the information via the tool.</p>

Appendix 2

Summary of all LLN developments

The comments in the following sections are the interpretation of the views of the interviewees from the LLNs and do not contain any external analysis.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Sussex Learning Network	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01273 873398	They have decided to focus on enabling the learners (particularly local learners) to connect to Partner Institutions. They have created a website that provides information and support for learners (provide a contact point for learners) and all other stakeholders. They wanted to provide links to, and fill gaps in, existing provision
Director	Chris Baker	
Interviewee	Sarah Hardman	
e-mail	sarah.hardman@brighton.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			Partner institutions have their own e.g. Moodle.
	e-learning Content	Live	Open access	Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are drawing together existing content, e.g. OU's openings courses. An OU project enables material to be developed in a Wiki style and once approved content can be fixed. Currently being stored on OU website.
Learner Opportunities	Student Access Portal	No Plans			The decision was to provide separate applications that all link together. This enables the individual to access the tools they want.
	e-portfolio &	No plans			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This not an objective for the LLN or a particular identified

	Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools				<p>need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They believe that this is something that partner institutions will do directly.
	Course Finder	Live	Open source	Learner	<p>Searches databases of foundation degrees, HNDs and HNCs available in Sussex</p> <p>Course search tool http://www.foundation-degrees-in-sussex.com/</p>
	IAG	Live	Open source	Learner, Employer	<p>Learning opportunities is the central point linking together various sources of information and the opportunity to contact an IAG specialist directly.</p> <p>http://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/learning-opportunities</p>
	Progression	Live	Open Source	Learner	<p>Sussex Routes</p> <p>This tool enables the learner to identify local progression agreements based on either what qualifications they have or they want to have.</p> <p>An SLN code is used to track the application to an institution.</p> <p>http://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/sussex-routes</p> <p>Also Key Routes is available to give more general information</p>
	Website	Live		Stakeholder, Partners, Employers and Learners	<p>www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/ includes different zones for different groups</p> <p>Employer Zone on website provides information on different sectors and helps them to identify the future workforce and work based learning opportunities.</p>
	CPD Directory	Live			<p>An events diary is kept on their practitioner zone showing events being delivered by the LLN and also PIs can upload information</p>

	Internal Collaboration Tools	Live			BaseCampHq is being used to collaborate on projects, they decided to use it due to challenges of remote collaboration. http://www.basecamphq.com/
	Data Stored				Learner tracking They are tracking anyone who is on a progression path and also ASNs using standard MS Office tools
	Other	Student Network site		Current students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ They have created a student network site. This has been developed by students for students in an interesting pilot project. ▪ The students have been engaged as consultants to deliver the work. The idea of the site was to engage learners who don't typically have the chance to engage with one another due to being vocational learners and not being in college very often, and / or to provide work experience for learners on relevant vocational courses e.g. journalism, web design etc. ▪ There is definitely a learning benefit for the students who have been developing the site. ▪ They have been involved in interviewing local celebrities and creating case studies

Future Plans (not covered)
<p>The South East regional plan has involved the regional LLNS, the LSC, the RDA and the OU to develop sustainable solution called the Learning at Work Information Service (LAWIS)</p> <p>They are bidding to create a centre for work and learning from employer engagement funds. They will produce a database of all modules that are part of FD degrees as part of that.</p> <p>They will also continue to develop the employer zone on their site as they seek to fill a gap as the training brokers take on new responsibilities to broker HE qualifications for employers in addition to their existing roles</p>
Sharing Data
They are willing to share data and they are interested in data on learners. Particularly they would like to learn where people have successfully

done different things to attract people to sign up to progressions agreements.

They are interested in broader looks at LSC data across the UK to see how progression is developing

Benefits of collaborating with other LLNs

1. Supports learners who live on the boundaries between two LLNs

2. The opportunity to develop consistent support across LLNs. In their view it is great that different LLNs have the opportunity to develop different approaches to systems however the challenge is that someone could move from 1 LLN region and be very confused by the way that systems operate differently and also the different information that is available.

They believe that there is a clear need for LLNs to champion the development of e-systems which are naturally beyond the interests of any individual Partner Institution

Any other comments

Computing and e-learning is one of the SLN's curriculum streams, led jointly by the OU and the University of Sussex. They have a number of initiatives:

- They are promoting the availability of existing materials (e.g. the OU's Openings courses). These are predominantly "bite sized" learning. They have identified the potential for learners to be overwhelmed by the volume of information being sent out, and that a smaller amount of information available online might be more valuable
- They have been experimenting with Second Life to create interactive content that allows people to practice their skills in a virtual environment particularly where it is preferable for the person due to the potentially hazardous environments they could be entering, the need for confidential review or lack of opportunity to practice. Some examples include dealing with hazardous substances and Police service training for challenging situations like hostage negotiations
- A separate University of Sussex project has created a virtual campus using Second Life. This seems to be of particular potential advantage to people who are distance learners enabling them to have a better experience through a real time sense of presence of other members of the class while watching a presentation from a lecturer and interacting with them (asking them questions using tools like Skype). Also the students can look at the library catalogue and also have a walk around campus to see what it looks like prior to enrolling.
- Sharing developments is quite key for areas. They are happy to share developments that have been created. Their perspective is that it is public money that is being used to make developments and a greater Return on Investment can be achieved by re-using their developments
- Practitioner Zone provides information to Partners, originally they had considered enabling some interactive features but the general preference was to keep the site focused on providing information as they preferred to meet face to face. One idea had been to add the ability for people to make comments on information (bit like the wall feature in Facebook). The possibility is there for partners to make it available as part of their intranets also.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	BBCS LLN	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	0121 622 6384	<p>e-systems haven't been a particular focus area of the LLN however they have encouraged partners to move beyond paper based systems to using IT systems when appropriate.</p> <p>They have funded partner institutes who have identified particular development projects e.g. An IAG system project is being piloted with Walsall college, and Walsall and Aston have produced e-learning maths support for engineers</p> <p>Could potentially have done more capacity building if they had have been asked to do a couple of central projects course finder and info portal for engineering</p>
Director	Patrick Highton	
Interviewee	Paul Kitchen	
e-mail	p.kitchen@bcftcs.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			They are funding an on-line a Construction FD but as yet it is not available to be seen.
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			.
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans			.
Le arner	Course Finder	Planned			A simple tool is planned that will allow the user to select training required by course area and then e-mail providers to respond to the

					user with a quote The tool will use aim higher to provide course area data
	IAG	Planned			They have the aspiration to create some form of diagnostic tool in this area
	Progression	Planned			They have the aspiration to create a simple tool just naming the institutions and the courses that they have progression agreements with
	Website	Live			www.bbcstiln.ac.uk
	CPD Directory	No Plans			Investigating providing a route into accredited and none accredited courses which possibly may be accessible online
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			
	Data Stored				
	Other	Planned			They intend to create an engineering portal linking to partners and other sources of information and putting it all in one central location

Sharing Data
Sharing information is of interest, the national meetings have been useful particularly he has found the research group helpful for pulling information together.
Benefits of collaborating with other LLNs
Learning from each other and not wasting money on “re-inventing the wheel”
Any other comments
“There needs to be plans beyond LLNs: The regional meetings need to continue in the future to support and develop links.

Further promotion and training on how to use applications like Wider Horizons to develop capacity building and not lose out on what has been gained by LLNs which is truly transformational”

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Cumbria Higher Learning - www.cumbriahigherlearning.ac.uk	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01768 893687	They are eager to deploy e-systems and are currently planning further developments. They are very interested in utilising existing systems that are already developed and could be tailored.
Director	Jane Inman	
Interviewee	Jane Currie	
e-mail	Jane.currie@cumbria.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			Partner Institutions already have them. Moodle is widely in use with colleges.
	e-learning Content	No Plans			A Staff development programme will be delivered to engage colleges in working with HEIs to develop content
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			
	e-portfolio/ Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	Live by end of 2008			PebblePad http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/ is being distributed to partner institutions
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Planned			Possibly create a "Course Finder" tool for FDs, may use existing tool or may just create links on website
	IAG	Planned			Career advice tools from Move may be used
	Progression	Planned			Something similar to GMSA tools are desired
	Website	Live			A new website is under development
	CPD Directory	Planned			They are looking to develop or find a suitable existing tool

	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			Shared directory used at host institution
	Data Stored				
	Other	Planned			Interested in GMSA Advance tool

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	HW LLN	Overall Approach to e-systems The LLN's objective is to develop widening participation and it was coupled with the University of Worcester's desire for a regional VLE. The development of a regional VLE is possible due to this additional partner funding and a role was identified from the beginning for a learning technologies co-ordinator.
Telephone	01905 542072	
Director	Debbie Lambert	
Interviewee	Viv Bell	
e-mail	v.bell@worc.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	VLE	Live	Available to others to replicate development	Learner
	e-learning Content	e-learning Content	Live	Available to others to replicate development	Learner
	Student Access Portal	Student Access Portal	Live	Available to others to replicate development	Learner
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	Live	Available to others to replicate development	Learner
Learn er Oppor	Course Finder	Course Finder	Live	Available to others to replicate	Learner

				development	
	IAG	IAG	Live	Available to others to replicate development	Learner
	Progression	Progression	Live	Available to others to replicate development	Learner
	Website	Website	Live	NA	Stakeholders Partners
	CPD Directory	CPD Directory	No Plans	NA	NA
	Internal Collaboration Tools	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans	NA	NA
	Data Stored	Data Stored	NA	NA	NA
	Other				

Future Plans (not covered)

Implementation of XCRI for some courses (all of UW and Kidderminster College to start)

Sharing Data

- They are interested in sharing data and publish their research findings on their LLN website. They are really happy for other LLNs to use the research as long as it is referenced.
- They would be interested in any data about what qualifications students have when they enter the first year of the degree and any other student tracking information. They also have some student data to share.

Benefits of collaborating with other LLNs

- Learning from each other's experiences mistakes and successes is perceived as the key benefit.

- Understanding and sharing what is being done so that people don't "re-invent the wheel"

Any other comments

They would be interested to understand how other LLN's are engage with employers

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Kent & Medway	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01634 883060	They have developed their website as practitioner tool and have been wary of investing too much money in development due to sustainability challenges beyond the LLN lifetime. They have funded some projects that were of interest e.g. Social networking site for Care managers (This has been active during application process with interesting results). Some work with the OU using second life to provide IAG. They are investing in the South East initiative which will create a sustained solution for the South East called "Learning at Work Information Service" (based mainly on Sussex LN solutions).
Director	Hugh Joslin	
Interviewee	Hugh Joslin	
e-mail	h.d.joslin@gre.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			Partner Institutions all have their own VLEs
	e-learning Content	No Plans			They have funded 1 unit of an FD to have e-learning content included
	Student Access Portal	In development			Included in South East Initiative "Learning at Work Information Service"
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	Planned			Possible development within "Learning at Work Information Service"

Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	IAG	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	Progression	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	Website	Live			www.gohigher.org.uk/ Learner zone from site will connect to “Learning at Work Information Service”
	CPD Directory	Planned			Short course and CPD directory will possibly be included on website
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			They use discussion forum on website and communicate through e-mail. They did experiment with Google groups at one point.
	Data Stored				<p>They are comprehensively storing and analysing data about learners.</p> <p>GIS tools are being used to report on demographics</p> <p>They have South East LSC level 3 learner data and they track their progress into universities.</p> <p>Data from HESA is being use to identify progression of learners into all universities across the UK</p> <p>They also maintain their own learner database tracking LLN learners (from short courses etc) linked to HEI reports</p>
	Other	Planned			They are interested in developing an Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) tool

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	NALN	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	0207 5148506	They have taken a view following a HEFCE report that there may be some duplication between the LLN work and sector councils and so they have joined with the cultural sector skills council to incorporate their work into a project called “Creative Choices”. This will ensure sustainability beyond the LLN.
Director	Mark Crawley	
Interviewee	Maria Oliver	
e-mail	m.b.oliver@arts.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans			
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	In Development			Two tools are in development to provide search for: 1. FDs articulating with top-up provision 2. CPD courses for Art and Design graduates. NALN is negotiating handing over these resources to Creative and Cultural Skills Sector Skills Council as part of their developing “Creative Choices” website at http://www.creative-choices.co.uk/
	IAG	In Development			A website has been developed called

		/Piloting			<p>www.artanddesignadvice.org - this is a social networking site designed for those interested in studying art and design and provides peer-led IAG. This approach was selected following research with current students.</p> <p>This will be handed to Cultural Sector Skills Council as part of “Creative Choices”</p> <p>NALN recognises that “Creative Choices” is being developed as the IAG resource for the creative and cultural sector. The current website focuses on leadership and management but information on all-through progression is being developed.</p>
	Progression	In Development			A progression tool is being developed to show how FDs and “top-up” courses articulate with each other as discussed above
	Website	Live			<p>http://www.naln.ac.uk/</p> <p>Blogs and discussion boards were implemented not really used, people have preferred face to face and e-mail</p>
	CPD Directory	No Plans			
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			
	Data Stored				
	Other				

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	HI LLN (Progress2Succeed)	Overall Approach to e-systems Not a large amount of resource was allocated to it in the business plan and they are instead taking part in the South East initiative to build on the work done by SLN. They have created a fund where partners can bid for money to support specific projects
Telephone	023 8031 9642	
Director	Jon Bramley	
Interviewee	Jon Bramley	
e-mail	Jon.bramley@solent.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			A project may possibly commence as a result of a partner bid for support.
	Student Access Portal	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	Planned			Possible development within “Learning at Work Information Service”
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	IAG	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	Progression	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	Website	Live			This will be implemented early with a September 2008 deadline www.hi-lln.co.uk

	CPD Directory	No Plans			
	Internal Collaboration Tools	Live			Forum on website to share documents
	Data Stored				
	Other				

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Higher Futures	Overall Approach to e-systems They are enthusiastic about the concept but major investment in and development of web or IT based systems was never a strategic priority. The input required in terms of finance and time means that it isn't viable. They have not wanted to duplicate what partners and other organisations have been doing leading to confusion for the learner. Anything they do has to add value. The big challenge with all LLN developments is sustainability. No partners have expressed interest in taking on long term support for new IT systems.
Telephone	01709 722824	
Director	Rob Harrison	
Interviewee	Jackie Powell	
e-mail	j.powell@shu.ac.uk	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			Initially this was included in the business plan. They decided not to do it as they identified that the costs to implement a regional system would be significant and most of the Partner Institutions have their own solutions and would see little benefit. This change was discussed with HEFCE in March 2007.
	e-learning Content	No Plans			Some e-learning is included in the FDs they have created. It is quite possible that further e-content would be included in future curriculum development projects.
	Student Access Portal	In 01709 722824 development			Student section on website in development.
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans			Many institutions have solutions and therefore they decided not to create a new one. They possibly may look at solutions for employed learners.
	Course Finder	In Development			They have developed a course finder based on the local area.

		- Live October 2008			<p>This is utilising “Building Pathways” a previously developed system and is being built internally. They have discussed options with external companies and looked at other LLN systems but concluded that internal development would be a more cost effective for their purposes</p> <p>The student will be able to link from the course they are now on to potential paths.</p>
	IAG	In Development - Live October 2008			They are building a lot of IAG into the systems and making clear that it covers local information and referring learners to internal advisors and UCAS.
	Progression	In Development - Live October 2008			They are building into their “Course Finder” links highlighting paths from one qualification to another.
	Website	Live			http://www.higherfutures.org/ This is still growing
	CPD Directory	No Plans			They would have a challenge about finding resources to do this
	Internal Collaboration Tools	In development			The website will incorporate a Wiki function to enable shared development of plans and ideas between partners
	Data Stored				Others are welcome to use any data they have
	Other				

Any other comments

They have concerns about the value of Course Finder applications and the amount of money being invested in it. Small local ones may work best but they might be too focused on marketing local institutions rather than providing impartial IAG. Large scale solutions they consider will struggle to have the depth of information already available on UCAS. In their view the most usable database for course information is held by UCAS for level 4 and upwards, because all full-time HE providers must submit information to UCAS.

However UCAS does not currently cover part-time courses. There are longstanding plans to do so but universities have been reluctant to commit to this.

The UCAS website is soon to be redesigned, and UCAS is working with some LLNs (Higher Futures and Linking London) on a pilot scheme to see what might be of most use to the part-time and employed learner constituencies. Such a scheme would have sustainability as the UCAS resource is the most widely used by IAG practitioners for HE progression.

Other applications are being developed in their locality - the adult area prospectus. Nationally Supporting Professionals in Admissions (SPA) are developing a solution for vocational and work based learners. This all leads to a concern that the learner may get confused by number of systems that are, to some extent, doing the same thing. The learner may not know where to look; recent research conducted showed that 60% of school leavers were using Google to search for courses.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Greater Merseyside & West Lancashire	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	mallong@edgehill.ac.uk	They decided to develop e-systems as part of the North West Regional LLNs Group and Garfield Southall from Cheshire and Warrington LN has taken a lead on the JISC funded developments. Their solutions are from the SOLVS project with the evaluation report being confirmed at a meeting on the 18 th September. This project will give them a wide range of solutions for their learners.
Director	Gary Mallon	
Interviewee	Gary Mallon	
e-mail	0151 906 9896	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	Live			<p>SOLSTICE, a £5 million HEFCE funded Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning based at Edge Hill University and the LLN have created 3 Learning Hubs at LLN partner colleges, Knowsley Community College, Riverside College and Wirral Met. College.</p> <p>Each hub has appointed a SOLSTICE Associate Fellow.</p> <p>An aim is to deploy technologies to support the transition of vocational learners into HE study within the widening participation agenda.</p> <p>Contact: Professor Mark Schofield - 01695 58 4101</p>
	e-learning Content				<p>Fast Forward Bridging Programme - to enable vocational learners to progress on to HE</p> <p>Bill Johnson, Edge Hill University is the contact, 01695 650906</p>
	Student Access Portal	Live			SOLVS

	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	Live			SOLVS
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Live			SOLVS
	IAG	Live			SOLVS
	Progression	In Development Live 2008			SOLVS
	Website	Live			www.merseyandwestlancslln.ac.uk Live, linked to homepage sites of Radio City Talk, 105.9 fm and Magic Radio 1548 under headings of “It’s never too late to learn”
	CPD Directory	No Plans			
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			
	Data Stored				
	Other				

Any other comments

- The LLN has SOLSTICE hubs and SOLSTICE Fellows in 3 FE partner colleges
- The Fast Forward Bridging Programme is an e-learning LLN programme delivered at Edge Hill University

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Coventry & Warwickshire	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	02476 792283	<p>They decided to take the approach of not developing their own solutions but rather adding value to what is already available in the sub-region from partners and other agencies. They therefore have looked at using existing websites and making them better through planned developments like the creation of IAG objects.</p> <p>They particularly identified that applications could prove irritating to potential users who have wider interests when limited to the LLN's focus on specific sectors. A view supported by Connexions.</p> <p>They also are aware of sustainability challenges that having their own separate tools might present - confirmed by the interim report on LLNs.</p>
Director	Tony Doran	
Interviewee	Tony Doran	
e-mail	t.doran@coventry.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			Partner Institutions have their own VLEs
	e-learning Content	No Plans			Currently part funding development of an FD, delivered by distance learning, and would support new partner projects. Plan to look at creating shared on-line learning objects with Partners
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			
	e-portfolio (repository for history and goals)	No Plans			Made unsuccessful bid to JISC but have decided not to pursue the development of e-portfolios further as there has not been a great demand from partners.
Learner Opportunities	Personal Development Plan (PDP)	No Plans			Talking to local Aim higher about plans for PDP across the sub-region
	Course Finder	No Plans			
	IAG	Planned			There is a plan to develop IAG objects that can be incorporated into partner institution and sub-regional portals

	Progression	No Plans			Looking for ways to work with partners and stakeholders to incorporate progression agreements into existing websites. (Potentially the area prospectuses)
	Website	Live			www.cwlln.org
	CPD Directory	No Plans			
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			
	Data Stored				Database of learners and tracked activities
	Other				

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	The Creative Way	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	07809195091	All of the e-system resources have been committed to developing the website as a learner facing tool. They worked with a web design team to develop an infrastructure they can add to that links: careers courses and people. User feedback and testing is taking place with a view to phase 2 development starting shortly.
Director	Liz Pearson	
Interviewee	Liz Pearson	
e-mail	l.pearson.uel.ac.uk	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			Funding some partner projects
	Student Access Portal	Live	Commercially available	Learners	Website targeted primarily at students. it has been a major investment. http://www.creativeway.org.uk/ Students are primary target group - site also designed for parents, tutors, advisers and employers.
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	Planned		Learners	Part of Phase 2 provisionally planned for 08/09. This will be a different type of e-portfolio - a learner's virtual space - visual design based.
Learner Oppor	Course Finder	Live		Learners	This is part of the website; the learner can search by course and careers.

	IAG	Live		Learners	Advice and Guidance is a major part of the website
	Progression	Live		Learners	The website shows progression opportunities in terms of the course information. Phase 2 site development planned to highlight specific progression agreements.
	Website	Live		Partners Stakeholders	The about us link on the website leads to information for the partners and stakeholders
	CPD Directory	No plans			Events are published when run, however this area is not a significant part of the plan
	Internal Collaboration Tools	Live			University of East London have allowed VPN access for all the LLN staff. This is very useful as the staff are geographically dispersed and so they need to connect remotely.
	Data Stored				Research findings are published on the site. Learner tracking is in development, typically MS Office tools are used
	Other				

Any other comments

Tracking learner progression across network is a much more complex task than tracking ASNs

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Lancashire	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01772 8944137	They are in the initial set-up phase at the time of the report - a director has been recently appointed but has not yet taken up the post. They are not committing creating new systems their selves and haven't allocated a large budget to e-systems in their business plan. They will review what is already available and in general look to maximise the use of existing tools.
Director	To be appointed	
Interviewee	Ken Phillips	
e-mail	kmphillips@uclan.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			Universities have well developed VLEs already
	e-learning Content	No Plans			There might be some development for specific projects
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			Possibly they will create a simple portal that links to partner sites and other points of information
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No plans			They will review current projects and draw on best practice in this area
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	No plans			
	IAG	No Plans			They have discussed this in detail. They are committed to not duplicating what Aim Higher provide or the service provided by Lancashire County Council. These tools are independent of institutions.
	Progression	Planned			They are planning to deploy a progression tool and will review the tools available and pick the best one. They have the report from the May 2008 - Higher York workshop

	Website	Planned			They plan to provide access to LLN information for partners and stakeholders.
	CPD Directory	Planned			
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			
	Data Stored				
	Other				

Any other comments
They are not planning to promote the LLN to students directly.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	MOVE (The LLN for the East of England)	Overall Approach to e-systems MOVE have focused on a learner centred approach, helping the learner to find the learning routes to their chosen career rather than tracking learners (which had been their early approach). It is expected that Discover will support advisors signposting learners to trusted resources. MOVE's approach is to get 1 or 2 key users of a solution to lead the way for the rest of the target user group. They have used an "iterative development process developing multi-work packages" This has enabled them to adjust the development throughout by working with real prototypes as they have gone along.
Telephone	01480 467073	
Director	Robin Smith	
Interviewee	Mark Leyland	
e-mail	mark.leyland@move.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			
	Student Access Portal	On Hold	Open Source - available	Learners	They had planned to use a project called Learning Services for this area
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	On Hold	Open Source - available	Learners	They had planned to use a project called Learning Services for this area
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Live	Open Source - available	Learners	Discover
	IAG	Live	Open Source - available	Learners	Discover
	Progression	Live	Open Source - available	Learners	Discover

	Website	Live		Stakeholders and Partners	http://www.move.ac.uk/
	CPD Directory	Planned			They have early discussions with LANTRA for professional training
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			
	Data Stored				
	Other				

Sharing Data

They potentially could share data. The data they hold is related principally to careers, regional courses and local progression agreements

Benefits of collaborating with other LLNs

The benefits identified by MOVE are:

- Learning from each other's experiences
- Feedback for each other on pilots
- Saving money on open source projects

If all of the LLNs could develop in a collaborative way using open source it would be ideal. This would allow them to creatively move in different direction but at the same time provide open source code that could be built upon.

Any other comments

Feedback on Discover has been really positive when it has been shown to Sector skills councils, institutions and other stakeholder groups. It would be a real shame if they ideas aren't taken forward to ensure that it is available as a tool for people to use.

They have a massive challenge as a result of having so many partner institutions with 11 universities and over 30 colleges

Learning Services is the tool that would have been used for student access and e-portfolio areas.

In 2006 they were aiming to develop a portable learner tool to track their learning. The tool is 80% complete. However they changed direction realising that this was not the most effective use of resources to focus on Discover.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	South East London	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	0207 848 4544	They don't want to duplicate what is already in existence and they would rather use something that is established and publicly available to ensure a good quality service that is widely-accessible to potential users and sustainable after the lifetime of the LLN.
Director	Karen Morse	
Interviewee	Candy Kobrak	
e-mail	candy.kobrak@kcl.ac.uk	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			May include in this facility in later phase of website
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans			
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	No Plans			
	IAG	No Plans			Will include access to information resources (such as electronic versions of any leaflets) aimed at learners in 2nd phase of website
	Progression	No Plans			
	Website	Live		Partners and Stakeholders (1 st phase) Plus learners in 2 nd phase	Minimal website currently in place 1 st phase of new website launching 20 th 29 th September with many more features. 2nd phase planned to be launched in New Year. www.sellln.org.uk

	CPD Directory	No Plans			
	Internal Collaboration Tools	Live			Google Groups being used as temporary measure and a secure area on website will be used
	Data Stored				Spreadsheets are used to track ASNs Working with the University of Greenwich on a system to monitor and track learners
	Other				

Any other comments
They started 18 months ago and they have not been looking at new developments following a HEFCE moratorium on developing new system.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	South London	Overall Approach to e-systems e-systems is not a focus for the LLN, it was not part of bid and in the bid the LLN was clear that they wouldn't be investing in e-systems on a large scale. However if opportunities exist to get involved with other developments they are prepared to take them on.
Telephone	020 8547 8792	
Director	Denise Cooper	
Interviewee	Denise Cooper	
e-mail	D.Cooper@kingston.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			They are funding some projects that include some elements of e-learning
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans			
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	No Plans			They are "piggy backing" on the "Choices" project by identifying their progression agreements. https://mychoicelondon.co.uk/eilp/ldnEilp/Home.aspx
	IAG	No Plans			
	Progression	Planned			They will fund some development to the existing "Choices" to develop access to more information for learners
	Website	Live		Partners and Stakeholders	This is their Partner facing site and it contains a repository of information. http://www.southlondonlpe.co.uk/ They have also set up a separate website to promote an event "Reach Higher" www.reach-higher.co.uk
	CPD Directory	No Plans			
	Internal	Planned			They are exploring ways of sharing material they have developed

	Collaboration Tools				
	Data Stored				Learner information is stored in Ms Office
	Other				They have a part of their site dedicated to sharing information with other LLNs in London

Any other comments
The LLN has found the National Forum useful and also information connected to the research stand.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Staffordshire, Shropshire, Stoke on Trent, Telford LLN	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01785 353315	They consider that the only way to reach people outside colleges is by electronic means. Their approach has been supporting the development of areas within the FE Colleges, HE and workplace that can be sustained beyond the LLN.
Director	Jill Ward	
Interviewee	Jill Ward	
e-mail	jill.ward@staffs.ac.uk	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			The Institutions have their own solutions. They would however support developments if requested.
	e-learning Content	Live and in development			They are developing some content as part of a blended learning package. Examples are: "Skills for HE", a module for brokers to understand HE and also some engineering course materials.
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			It is perceived this will be done within institutions
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	Planned			They are planning a pilot with creative and media that will cut across HE and FE. HE institutions in the area tend to have them but FE institutions are less likely.
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Planned			They are funding development working with Aim Higher to enhance the existing ALPS database.
	IAG	In Development			They are developing content to add to other tools that are available.

	Progression	No Plans			Adding progression agreements into ALPS
	Website	Live			http://lnstaffordshireshropshire.org/
	CPD Directory	No Plans			They are reviewing this area
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			There has been a real challenge working across institutions in their area.
	Data Stored				
	Other				

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	VETNET	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01908 363447	They have focused on developing a tool for courses and information for their sector (www.cave.ac.uk). Beyond this they do support partners in initiatives and they will consider further developments during the life of the project.
Director	Sarah Field	
Interviewee	Sarah Field	
e-mail	sfield@vetnetlln.ac.uk	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			They have supported partner activity in this area
	e-learning Content	No Plans			This is an area that a partner is exploring
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans			
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Live	Open Source	Learners	Course and careers information. This site is also aimed at careers advisors www.cave.ac.uk
	IAG	Live	Open Source	Learners & Partner	Covers animal related careers, they are going to add content to it on a continuing basis

					www.cave.ac.uk
	Progression	Planned		Learners & Partners	There will be a spreadsheet that will be added to the website later on that outlines their progression agreements
	Website	Live		Partners and Stakeholders	www.vetnetlln.ac.uk
	CPD Directory	Planned			This will be included in cave site later on
	Internal Collaboration Tools	Live			The project team access an extranet that is a secure part of their website
	Data Stored				Learner tracking information is managed using MS Office tools
	Other				

Any other comments
They have been established for one year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	West London	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	0208 2312065	West London's approach has been to work with e-systems that currently exist and to support partner organisations to modify their existing systems to avoid duplication and unsustainable e-system developmentsg existing systems. They have taken this approach as they are conscious they are only a 3 year project and e-system projects are high cost with a high failure rate.
Director	Graeme Hall	
Interviewee	Elaine McDonnell	
e-mail	Elaine.mcdonnell@westlondonlln.org	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			The LLN are working with partners who have their own VLE
	e-learning Content	In development			Work is being done by a member of the LLN team to develop content for partners
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			Project website contains an area aimed at learners
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans			They have created information on the web about "best practice" use of e-portfolios. They have also supported a project at Brunel where e-portfolio development and supportuse is one element
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Live			They have an online FD directory that listssearches all West London FD details within the target sectors
	IAG	No Plans			Information is provided for learner via the website. They are planning a project with other London LLNs for providing part-time course information via UCAS and exploring pan-London how the LLNs can add

					value to other careers websites
	Progression	No Plans			Progression agreements are available via the website
	Website	Live		Partners, employers & learners	Extensive information is provided and the site is interactive containing blogs and videos
	CPD Directory	No Plans			
	Internal Collaboration Tools				Based at same institution and so use the local network
	Data Stored				Learner tracking using MS Office and HESA data
	Other				Access DB - is used for contact management and tracking interactions with employers and partners

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Western Vocational	Overall Approach to e-systems Their aim has been to develop a website (Lifepilot) focused at adults in the workforce to boost their confidence as potential learners capable of progressing into H.E. The target group would not naturally look to H.E. for career advancement/change. They decided to research the need thoroughly and they ran a number of focus groups with different audiences and that has informed the content.
Telephone	01793 328821	
Director	Steve Dear	
Interviewee	Janet Lonsdales	
e-mail	j.lonsdale@bath.ac.uk	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	Planned		Learner	They are planning to incorporate a specific guidance tool - ELLI (Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory).
	e-learning Content	Planned		Learner	They are working with the Open University to incorporate open learning materials focused on personal development, learning/study skills and subject tasters.
	Student Access Portal	In Development	Planning to collaborate with other LLNs	Learner	They are developing a website called Lifepilot which will undergo a period of testing Sept - Dec 08, due to go Live January 2009. They have had conversations with other LLNs to discuss how they can collaborate.
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	In Development		Learner	They are developing a Lifepilot personal profile. This is a tool for self-reflection/analysis of strengths and skills and how they could be used in a future job and for training in H.E. The interactions and activities will build confidence, knowledge of the HE world, modes of learning etc and enable adults to seek further information by knowing what questions to ask and where to look. Development also includes an APEL tool with supporting information to create an APEL portfolio.
	Course Finder	Planned			The site will signpost learners to institutions rather than having a

					course database. Career headlines are provided.
	IAG	Limited plans			Technically they are only providing information and advice on Lifepilot (not Guidance)..... informing and encouraging people to reflect. Information about APEL will be part of the website to help someone understand how they might gain recognition for their experience and create an APEL portfolio.
	Progression	Planned			The benefits of Progression Agreements, transferability will be explained.
	Website	Live		Partners and Stakeholders	www.wvlln.ac.uk
	CPD Directory	No Plans at this stage			
	Internal Collaboration Tools	Planned			Links to partner sites/tools and potential collaboration with other LLNs
	Data Stored	In development			Possible tracking of APEL users. The infancy of Lifepilot and outcomes of LLN collaboration may influence future tracking
	Other				

Any other comments

First phase development nearing completion - as this website matures and patterns of usage are established, further functionality will be developed.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Yorkshire & Humber East Lifelong Learning Network - YHELLN	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01482 466 630	YHELLN have decided to develop e-systems that support the PIs and not to be involved in delivering any teaching and learning directly. Sustainability has been a key focus with the portals they have developed to be hosted by the University of Hull moving forward. They are also focusing on developing tools that can be embedded into portals. The intention has not been to duplicate what exists but to incorporate what exists, alongside new tools, into a “slick” experience for the user.
Director	Jenny Shaw	
Interviewee	David Sowden	
e-mail	d.sowden@hull.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	Planned			Had set one up originally using Blackboard. Soon they will have access to a Moodle system. This will probably be used to give access to learning about LLN tools.
	e-learning Content	Planned			Planning to take paper based tools such as how to set up progression routes and create e-learning content
	Student Access Portal	In Development		Learner, Partners	iCaboodle (ISPSS). This tool provides student access to resources and can embed other tools. iCaboodle is being “re-skinned” to fit the requirement of Partner Institutes (PIs)
	e-portfolio (repository for history and goals)	Planned		Learner	This is a lower priority area for the LLN and not one that they have totally “bought in to”

Learner Opportunities	Personal Development Plan (PDP)	Planned		Learner	The plan is to create an Action Planner. They are considering tools like 'Tencompetencies' for use.
	Course Finder	Live - pilot		Learners. Partners, Employers	This is planned to contain all the courses from PIs and will use data held in XCRI-CAP format automatically updated by agent. The courses used a "mind map" interface. The solution is built on the Move Discover project http://yhelln.ionetwork.ac.uk/coursefinder/
	IAG	Live - pilot		Learner	This tool is a development of established OS software. Within the LLN people have different views on whether this should it start search with career or course http://yhelln.ionetwork.ac.uk/coursefinder/
	Progression	Live - pilot		Learner	This tool is a development of established OS software. The progression element is built into the interface. The plan is to also create another interface that enables a person to visually see the paths available to them http://yhelln.ionetwork.ac.uk/coursefinder/
	Website	Live			This is built on MS SharePoint and the intention is that web parts can be embedded www.yhelln.ac.uk
	CPD Directory	Live- Pilot			YHELLN has a CPD Notice board that contains some CPD course information from their network. http://yhelln.ionetwork.ac.uk/courseportal/
	Internal Collaboration Tools	Live			Currently BT workspace is being utilised, the intention is to replace this with the use of their SharePoint site www.btworkspace.com

	Data Stored				Learner information is being tracked using MS Office tools
	Other				<p>e-Approvals -developing an application that the University of Hull can use to support their programme validation and approval process.</p> <p>SkillsXchange - to support developing skills in the Creative Arts sector the plan is to develop a system that enables people in the sector to understand who is available</p>

Future Plans (not covered)
They are focusing on developing sustainability through the adoption of the software they have developed. A strategic lead has been appointed to develop a sustainability plan.
Benefits of collaborating with other LLNs
Developing a community that shares ideas and hopefully creates a central approach towards development.
Personal Inspiration from other people's work
Any other comments
<p>Direction from HEFCE would be helpful particularly if they support a particular system or standard</p> <p>YHELLN has a view that generally managing Digital Identity will become increasingly important and replace e-portfolio.</p> <p>Typical Open Source is an issue licenses may be cheaper but the cost of people to do it finding programmers etc.</p> <p>The data is important Developing Standards, having assistance and support to implement moving forward would be useful. Central investment to define PDP standards in a logical way would be useful.</p> <p>People create the results not the technology, sustaining learning for the benefit of the learners.</p> <p>Several government initiatives outside the HE sector require local authorities to facilitate data sharing between schools and FE Colleges, and other agencies such as Connexions and central government.</p>

The 14-19 reform programme will require organisations to work collaboratively in partnerships. This, as well as the nature of the new Diplomas, will mean that data sharing will be a crucial factor in relation to the delivery of these reforms and the monitoring of performance.

There are local level and national level requirements for data and both need to be addressed to deliver the 14-19 reforms effectively. The Department of Children, Schools and Families are trying to resolve the issues and how the use of Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) and Unique Pupil/Learner Number (ULN) will assist in this area.

Effective data sharing is essential to successfully track and support the progress of students. For Further Education alone, the implementation of the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) will oblige colleges to access both credit level details of qualifications and Learner Achievement Records. Both the Diploma and the QCF recording systems will be facilitated by the Unique Pupil/Learner Number which will be issued to all Diploma and FE students from September 2008. This number will be issued by MIAP (Managing Information Across Partners), an initiative that includes ambitious plans to facilitate the sharing of data across all education sectors and the agencies that support them.

Many YHELLN institutions already share data via services with awarding bodies for the elements of the administration of their programmes. The rollout of the 14-19 Prospectus will require area and regional collaborations to signpost possible progression routes.

YHELLN development of e-systems requires:

Also the effective sharing of course advertising profiles, especially in YHELLN priority areas, which depends on up to date information been available in a standard specification. There is a recognised business case for the implementation of XCRI-CAP specifications which have/are being trialled by the LSC in London, Hot Course and UCAS.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Higher York	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01904 876350	
Director	Jessica Grant	
Interviewee	Claire Newhouse	
e-mail	contactus@higheryork.org	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			Partners already have their own VLEs
	e-learning Content	Planned			They are investigating developing some content for enterprise and employability skills, drawing upon experience of partners.
	Student Access Portal	Live			http://www.studyork.com/students/
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans			
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Live			Course listings are available on the website covering all HE available in York http://www.studyork.com/students/course_finder/
	IAG	Live			A lot of information about being a student in York and information on how to apply and make a decision has been placed on http://www.studyork.com/students/
	Progression	Live			Pages with details of programmes highlighted in the Progression Leaflet e.g. www.studyork.com/apprentice

	Website	Live			www.higheryork.org
	CPD Directory	No immediate plans			
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			Document repository on website with information about LLN activities
	Data Store				Learner tracking and progression between institutions
	Other	Under development			Student forum pages

Any other comments

The main focus for the website has been IAG. This has been implemented in e-systems by providing an overview of information on a website about: partners, the experience of studying in York and courses available. The aim is for the site to enable potential students to make a decision aided by having all the information about York in one place. The site also acts a form of support for current students during their time as a student in York.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	North East Higher Skills Network	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01642 342947	“Systems that will work well and give the learner what they want” has been the approach towards developing e-systems. Their approach towards selecting an internal system was to find something that provided the required functionality and also could be deployed quickly.
Director	Adrian Parry	
Interviewee	Colin Wilkinson	
e-mail	Colin.Wilkinson@tees.ac.uk	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No plans			This has not been the focus of NEHSN, although iwant2b does record accomplishments of a learner.
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Live	Commercial system. This system is free to the user, and could be made available in other areas through LLNs by negotiation. This	Learners (employers)	The solution is being adapted to XCRI standards and NEHSN are actively seeking partners for a national roll-out. Links progression from Level 2 and Level 3 up to all HE provision in the region http://www.iwant2b.org/

			would have a cost implication.		
	IAG	Live	Commercial system. This system is free to the user, and could be made available in other areas through LLNs by negotiation. This would have a cost implication.	Learners (employers)	<p>The solution is being adapted to XCRI standards and NEHSN are actively seeking partners for a national roll-out.</p> <p>Links progression from Level 2 and Level 3 up to all HE provision in the region http://www.iwant2b.org/</p>
	Progression	Live	Commercial system. This system is free to the user, and could be made available in other areas through LLNs by negotiation. This would have a cost implication.	Learners (employers)	<p>The solution is being adapted to XCRI standards and NEHSN are actively seeking partners for a national roll-out.</p> <p>Links progression from Level 2 and Level 3 up to all HE provision in the region http://www.iwant2b.org/</p>
	Website	In Development Due to go live August 2008	No	Learners, employers, partners and stakeholders	<p>“Must have something of value for everyone”</p> <p>A members area is under development</p>
	CPD Directory	No Plans			
	Internal Collaboration Tools	Live	Commercial 3 rd party product		<p>Customisable and user friendly A CRM package from “Really simple systems” has been utilised. This costs approximately £6000 per annum for 20 users and is really easy to use and customise http://www.reallysimplesystems.com/</p>

	Data Stored				Learner tracking using MS Office tools
	Other				

Future Plans (not covered)					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing a sustainable income model for iwant2b ▪ Possibly developing a solution for employers to manage learning from appraisals (wewant2b) 					
Sharing Data					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharing data would be at the discretion of the institutions. ▪ NEHSN have found that sometimes institutions are reluctant to share data due to potentially competitive issues. The Strategic Development Fund (SDF) providing money to institutions for employer engagement seems to have exasperated the situation. 					
Benefits of collaborating with other LLNs					
Hopefully collaboration will enable NEHSN to learn from other LLN's approaches and therefore gain benefits and avoid pitfalls					
Any other comments					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is not a valuable approach for every LLN to set up their own systems that duplicate other developments ▪ A nationally centred approach towards developing one standard system for each area would be the most valuable approach. ▪ MS Office tools are also used internally for tracking ASNs etc... 					

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Linking London	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	0203 0738388	<p>The LLN have taken the view that they will be driven by the needs of the IAG and Progression experts to identify solutions that are valuable to the partner institutions for the long term. They want to identify the specific problems and then find solutions, using existing tools if possible.</p> <p>The process they are adopting is to analyse applications that are already available commercially for the different categories of solutions and then provide information and make recommendations to partner institutions.</p>
Director	Sue Betts	
Interviewee	Peter Nguzo	
e-mail	p.nguzo@linkinglondon.ac.uk	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			Very interested in “e-learning community” tools that use second life and other virtual worlds.
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	In Development			<p>MyPlan is being developed by the Birkbeck Knowledge Lab</p> <p>This is a solution that will enable an individual to map out their entire life with academic progress along the way mapped against a timeline. The application will display actual life history and also enable the individual to map future life goals and linking to academic courses that they may want to take at different times in their career.</p>
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder				Currently in discussion with UCAS and other LLNs in London concerning extending the UCAS service to cater for part-time and distance-learning provision in London and beyond.
	IAG	No Plans			

	Progression	No Plans			
	Website	Live			www.linkingleondon.ac.uk
					Developed Content Management System (CMS) internally using PHP
	CPD Directory				
	Internal Collaboration Tools				
	Data Stored				
	Other				

Benefits of collaborating with other LLNs

- Understanding what other solutions are available to inform the options of partner institutions
- Taking one common approach with solutions to maximise the benefits for the learner
- Currently in discussion with UCAS and other LLNs in London concerning extending the UCAS service to cater for part-time and distance-learning provision in London and beyond.

Any other comments

London is a very complicated geographic area for LLNs with a high concentration of institutions in a compact area.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	GMSA	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	0161 921 8040	<p>They have been on the leading edge of developments as one of the earliest LLNs. Initially they were part of the SOLVS group developing IO Network across the North West with a view that if an underlying common data infrastructure could be used for lots of different purposes via distributed services that link together.</p> <p>In the light of the change in funding they have decided to change their approach to try to develop a way of commercially utilising their developments. They are now using the underpinning infrastructure of IONW2 with Project Me tools on top. They are then developing their own GMSA pathways tool and also GMSA Advance</p>
Director	Cath Walsh	
Interviewee	Roger Clark	
e-mail	Roger.Clark@gmsa.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plan			
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	In Development	Sell as "Software as a Service"	Learners and employers	Project ME - October 2008 PDP tool
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Live	Sell as "Software as a Service"	Learners and employers	Pathways http://pathways.gmsa.ac.uk/gill.scott@gmsa.ac.uk and Project Me

	IAG	Live	Sell as "Software as a Service"	Learners and employers	Pathways http://pathways.gmsa.ac.uk/gill.scott@gmsa.ac.uk
	Progression	Live	Sell as "Software as a Service"	Learners and employers	Pathways http://pathways.gmsa.ac.uk/gill.scott@gmsa.ac.uk
	Website	Live		Stakeholder and partners	
	CPD Directory	No Plans			
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			
	Data Stored				
	Other	In Development	Sell as "Software as a Service"		GMSA Advance - Credit Accumulation and Transfer. Learners design own programme of learning from modules offered by multiple HE providers

Sharing Data
There isn't considered to be a real benefit in doing it right now. Some way of looking to sharing a way of data management seems more important to them.
Benefits of collaborating with other LLNs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not making the same mistakes and benefiting from each others experience. This would enable each other to benefit from the learning process and generate more coherent data. ▪ A more joined up approach would be of great benefit particularly to people who live on the edge of different LLNS.
Any other comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A more modular approach towards development across the LLNs would have led to sharing which would have proven valuable. Certainly employing a common data structure will be helpful in developing a common way to communicate and share for the future. ▪ They feel that their actions are now being driven by the current funding regime which requires that they look for a way to create a sustainable income stream for further development. ▪ The development partner they engaged is called IDAHO and they have produced a number of applications for education including a careers tool.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Skills for Sustainable Communities	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	0116 2523693	Optimising systems that exist already by adding value to them rather than setting up new systems. If something additional is needed then they will explore it.
Director	Jenny Rice	
Interviewee	Rose Robinson	
e-mail	Rer7@le.ac.uk	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			They are funding some partner projects. A foundation degree repository for learning materials is being created to be hosted by a partner
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			Access will be through partners
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans			Some research has been conducted with partner institutions. Nearly all have some e-portfolio tools. They are interested in sponsoring further research and may supply a tool to apprentices.
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Development			A course finder, including progression pathways, called "Shaping your future" is being developed by Aim Higher for the East Midlands and they will feed into that it. 22 October is the date of the launch event
	IAG	No Plans			Research has been done and links have been brought together to create a signposting leaflet, a "mini directory"
	Progression	Development			See Course Finder

	Website	Live			Aimed at partners
	CPD Directory	No plans			Doing events for partners. Regular partnership forums.
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			Standard documents on website
	Data Stored				Some research that could be shared
	Other	Development			They have created a community website for partners to register opportunities for staff exchanges between HE & FE (view resources, observe lessons, share knowledge and expertise).

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	South West	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01202 961242	The LLN decided not to use resources to develop solutions that could not be sustained beyond the network. They are conscious of many local initiatives: e.g. there is a JISC “PDP” initiative in the region. In the view of South West LLN JISC projects should provide the infrastructure and the question always needs to be asked who will maintain it? The experience of the LLN team has been that online solutions that don’t involve a partner or stakeholder organisation don’t tend to be maintained. The LLN would like to encourage others to review their sustainability strategies.
Director	Belinda Payne	
Interviewee	Belinda Payne	
e-mail	bpayne@bournemouth.ac.uk	

Summary

Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			The LLN has supported developments of other partners and stakeholders. Some partners are more involved in e-learning than others.
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			The LLN have worked with grad south west website, to enable people to use the IAG content they have developed.
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans		Learners	They are collaborating with an existing JISC project that incorporates PDP online
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	No Plans			They sign post people, guide people into and through HE, No need
	IAG	In Development			They are facilitating the development of tool kits in a wide range of areas hosted by different stakeholders
	Progression	No Plans			They have a broad progression agreement scheme rather than specific identified routes

	Website	Live		Partners, Stakeholders, Employers, Learners	New content on the site is still being added. In addition to the groups on the left there is a practitioner's area. They are currently exploring where the material will go after the network closes
	CPD Directory	No Plans			They communicate with partners and sign post people to relevant CPD events
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			They use e-mail and standard tools
	Data Stored				Learner Tracking - This is being done in the record systems of Pls. (Should be reflected in HESA return.)
	Other				

Any other comments
<p>Their target is working with employers and work based learners and they have facilitated developments between members of the wider stakeholder group.</p> <p>Information that is currently maintained by an LLN may go out of date very quickly once the LLN project completes</p>

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	West Yorkshire	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01484 471107	They have developed systems in areas where they can add value and impact on the operation to make it easier or better. Developments have been operationally driven in response to identified problems or where something new can be done.
Director	Stephen Challenger	
Interviewee	Joanne Lambert	
e-mail	j.lambert@hud.ac.uk	

Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			They are exploring some opportunities around e-portfolios and e-learning developments with partners for new FDs
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			They might review this in the future
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	No Plans			They are considering e-portfolios as part of future developments
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	No Plans			They have just won a 10k project to look at the implementation of XCRI in the University of Huddersfield. They will look to link into Hot Courses and UCAS though rather than develop a new tool.
	IAG	Live	Commercially available (At a basic development cost to other LLNs)	Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IAG NOW is deployed to PIs to support their Careers Advisors. ▪ It enables them to manage and track their interventions with a particular student. ▪ They are looking to sell it commercially outside the LLN community. ▪ They have had discussions with other LLNs
	Progression	No Plans			They did investigate some tools, however they decided it

					would prove to resource intensive to sustainably manage
	Website	Live			www.wylln.ac.uk
	CPD Directory	In Development			They are providing information via the website and using Ning
	Internal Collaboration Tools	In Development			They will use Ning to fulfil any collaboration requirement
	Data Stored				Learner tracking information is managed online in a bespoke application that is secure (SSL).
	Other	Live		Partners & Stakeholders	IAG Now also has an application to manage ASN information. Institutions upload CSV file into the system, it creates return and tracks progress into HE

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Cheshire & Warrington	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	01244 512211	The philosophy is that “e-systems are the backbones of LLNS”. Following on from an initial bid to show opportunities available to vocational learners they have developed a range of solutions based on open source projects with the aim to create a student market place to share services.
Director	Jenny Bubb	
Interviewee	Garfield Southall	
e-mail	garfield.southall@btinternet.com	

		They decided to be part of the IONetwork infrastructure and use XCRI as a standard. They are focused on adding value and using any tools that will enable them to “increase the richness of the learning experience”. (They have incorporated experience gained from projects such as SLeD http://www.elearning.ac.uk/features/sledproject)
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Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial /Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plan			
	e-learning Content	No Plan			
	Student Access Portal	Live			SOLVS 1 st Phase complete for 14-19 access
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	Live			SOLVS They have been using PDP to aid with self reflection and planning. This can even help people make choices about starting a course. E.g. a person might understand the challenging situations in a nursing career prior to starting a course
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	Live			SOLVS This includes the ability to make online course applications
	IAG	Live			SOLVS Also they have experimented with using second life as an IAG tool
	Progression	In Development Live 2008			SOLVS
	Website	Live			www.lifelongcw.org

	CPD Directory	Planned			Could potentially use the SOLVS software
	Internal Collaboration Tools				
	Data Stored				
	Other				Sharing and collaborating experiment using second life is being piloted. Being able to prove the identity of users is likely to be quite key.

Future Plans (not covered)
<p>As the LLN funding will be ending they are trying to identify a route to sustain developments moving forward. They would like to do additional developments such as: linking to 14-19 courses, extending the XCRI framework, enabling employers to add vacancies and adding in career profiles.</p> <p>Their ultimate aim is to create “the Piccadilly Circus of everyone involved in lifelong learning”.</p>
Sharing Data
<p>Sharing XCRI course data would be interesting particularly because it would provide a benefit to people who live in places that border on multiple LLNs.</p>
Benefits of collaborating with other LLNs
<p>By collaborating LLNs can stop too many instances of re-inventing the wheel without stifling creativity. This will enable LLNs to build on other developments by working together to get things defined.</p>
Any other comments
<p>Some added features could be developed at a cost and from their perspective moving to a payment model would present a challenge in administrative and ethical terms.</p> <p>SOLVS has learner managed security</p> <p>Their Definitions:</p> <p>An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a tool that a tutor and student use to develop a plan around a specific course.</p>

Personal Development Plans (PDP) are pre-defined sequences that help the learner to reflect and plan throughout their involvement in a particular course from initial interest to graduation.

e-portfolio is an online repository managed by the learner containing their learning information that they can share with other people.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Leap Ahead	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	0115 95 16976	Leap Ahead have decided to promote the use of software applications that will support the learner. They have made the decision to utilise existing applications and to either enhance the applications or enable people to utilise them effectively through training and support. They have done a number of awareness raising activities to engage with people. They are developing a new project which will link into other regional
Director	Mike Braund	
Interviewee	Kirstie Coolin Stuart Wood	
e-mail	Kirstie.Coolin@nottingham.ac.uk	

		<p>applications.</p> <p>Also developing technical interoperability projects, such as an XCRI and interoperability between ePortfolio systems.</p>
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Summary					
Area	System Category	Stage of Development	Commercial / Open Source	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
Learning	VLE	No Plans			There may be some integration between VLEs and e-portfolios at some point
	e-learning Content	No Plans			Some people may be utilising e-portfolios by placing content within them. There is eLearning content being developed in the curriculum areas of LEAP AHEAD which is outsourced to/by the partners
	Student Access Portal	No Plans			
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	Live	They are happy to share their process and approach with other LLNs	Learners and Employers	They are utilising existing products i-webfolio and Pebblepad as e-portfolio solutions. Some pilots have been started. In September there will be over 600 users involved in pilots the vast majority using Pebblepad
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	In Development			JOSEPH This is an online application that enables a young person who is interested in Engineering to find information about the career possibilities
	IAG	In Development			JOSEPH
	Progression	In Development			JOSEPH
	Website	Developed		Stakeholders and partners	This has been developed externally
	CPD Directory	No Plans			

	Internal Collaboration Tools				
	Data Stored				
	Other				

Future Plans (not covered)					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The JOSEPH tool will have a Content Management System developed for it. This will allow the tool to be adapted to fit other areas and be “re-skinned”. ▪ An XCRI project is being started to examine different ways of using the standard to integrated existing course information. The first stage will involve two local learning providers to take a feed from their information into the area prospectus (My Choice Notts) and progression pathways systems. These systems cover all the courses available in the area 					
Sharing Data					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data is being collected in a database concerning the results of the pilots for e-portfolios that are taking place. The intention is to create an evaluation website that will make the data available to people. 					
Benefits of collaborating with other LLNs					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interested to understand how other LLNs are progressing. ▪ The benefit is for the learners by understanding opportunities that might exist in neighbouring areas ▪ Sharing expertise although this might be limited due to not many other LLNs having a learning strand. 					
Any other comments					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kirstie wanted to confirm that existing developments weren’t on hold until the publication of the report. ▪ The e-portfolio products i-webfolio and Pebblepad are being utilised to engage learners and employers. The employer engagement is due to a lot of the learning hat is taking place is work based learning and therefore the employers get to review progress of the individuals. 					

GENERAL INFORMATION

LLN	Progress South Central	Overall Approach to e-systems
Telephone	0118 3782330	e-system development is not a significant part of their business plan. They are going to use their website to present information to their partners. They are part of the South East Initiative LAWIS to engage with students. They are only 6 months old and may pursue other developments as needs are identified.
Director	Fay Croft	
Interviewee	Fay Croft	
e-mail	f.croft@reading.ac.uk	

Summary

Are a	System	Stage of	Commercial	User Groups	Name, URL and Other Comments (<i>general comments and any key features</i>)
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	Category	Development	/Open Source		
Learning	VLE	No Plans			
	e-learning Content	No Plans			
	Student Access Portal	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	e-portfolio & Personal Development Plan (PDP) Tools	Planned			Possible development within “Learning at Work Information Service”
Learner Opportunities	Course Finder	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	IAG	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	Progression	In development			Included in South East Initiative “Learning at Work Information Service”
	Website	Live (September 2008)			Partner information IAG, Progression and project information. Sector Information
	CPD Directory	No Plans			A lot of partners are developing their own in-house solutions. Some masters courses will be included in LAWIS for the construction sector.
	Internal Collaboration Tools	No Plans			No need for that within their LLN due to the team size
	Data Stored				Student tracking

	Other				

XCRI-CAP

Overview

The XCRI **Course Advertising Profile** is an open specification for producing and aggregating collections of courses offered by providers

How XCRI-CAP works

The technical architecture of XCRI-CAP is a very simple web-based approach. Universities, colleges and training providers each offer an XML document describing their courses. Aggregators (such as discovery and guidance services) periodically poll each provider to obtain the latest version of their course catalog using a standard request. The aggregator combines the results to create a catalog to use for searching and for adding features

By offering a single XML-based catalog, providers avoid the costs of manual data-entry into multiple systems. By making their offerings visible on the web in an easy-to-process, open fashion, providers open the door to new web-based services being created that help market their offerings or add value in other ways.

XCRI-CAP is not sector-specific, and is being adopted by both Higher Education and 14-19 providers.

Providers

An XCRI-CAP provider is an organisations that offers information about their courses using the XCRI-CAP XML specification. Providers create XCRI-CAP catalog documents by collecting together their courses and offerings and describing them in a single XML document, typically served from their organisation's website. A single XCRI-CAP catalog can be used to supply course information to multiple aggregators.

Aggregators

An XCRI-CAP aggregator is an organisation that collects together XCRI-CAP catalogs offered by one or more providers.

Aggregators can offer a range of services, including enabling users to find learning opportunities on a regional, sectoral or national level, offering advice and guidance, or supporting personalised lifelong learning.

Open Process

XCRI is an open, community-driven process supported by the Joint Information Systems Committee of the UK Higher and Further Education funding councils. XCRI is focussed on creating practical specifications that are validated with real systems and data in institutions today, but which drive improvement and new opportunities for the future. XCRI are now engaged with standards organisations to ensure a viable future for XCRI-CAP.

Preparing for XCRI-CAP

for the internal delivery units in an organisation, value is generated by XCRI-CAP in the form of **internal efficiency gains** as a result of the **business process improvements** implemented to support readiness for exposing course data for external audiences using XCRI

Providing XCRI-CAP

value is generated in the form of **strategic capability** as the institution better understands the nature of its offering portfolio when combined into a single XCRI catalog,, leading to opportunities for improved **quality assurance, standardisation, and consolidation of duplicate offerings**

Aggregating XCRI-CAP

value is generated for the provider in the form of **cost savings on data input** from the use of XCRI by aggregators. For the aggregator, value comes from the **availability of additional providers** in the market, and from shifting some responsibility for QA of basic data from its central process to the provider

Going further

value is generated for the provider in the form of **new business opportunities and revenue-sharing partnerships** that result from opening up the data network using XCRI. For the aggregator, the availability of the provider data via XCRI enables **new added-value business models** that build upon the provider's offerings.

Find out more

You can find a lot more information on XCRI and XCRI-CAP from our website at <http://www.xcri.org>

Appendix 4 - Glossary

APEL Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

CAP Course Advertising Profile

CHERI The Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (Open University)

CPD Continuing Professional Development

GIS Geographic Information Systems (an information system for capturing, storing, analyzing, managing and presenting data which is spatially referenced)

HCI Human Computer Interaction (provides an organisation for all those working on human-computer interaction-the analysis, design, implementation and evaluation of technologies for human use)

HEFCE The Higher Education Funding Council for England

IAG Information, Advice and Guidance

IONETWORK Software developed by software developers Phosphorix that uses a hub and spoke network of servers to collect course information in XCRI-CAP format.

JISC Joint Information and Systems Committee

LAWIS Learning at Work Information Service (service provided by the four Lifelong Learning Networks in the South East)

LSC Learning and Skills Council

MIAP Managing Information across Partners (streamlines the collection, handling and sharing of information for learning and achievement in education and training organisations)

PDP Personal Development Planning-

PI Partner Institution

Portlets Pluggable user interface components that are managed and displayed in a web portal.

QCF Qualifications and Credit Framework (intended to be a simple and rational organising structure for units and qualifications that is capable of supporting the award, accumulation and transfer of credit achievement over time)

RDA Regional Development Agency - their mission is to spread economic prosperity and opportunity to everyone in the nine regions of England.

SSC Sector Skills Council

SOLVS Supporting Ongoing Learning in Vocational Settings (project supported by 3 LLNs in the NorthWest region)

Web Parts A web part is an ASP.NET server control which is added to a Web Part Zone on Web Part Pages by users at run time. Web Parts are an integrated set of controls for creating Web sites that enable end users to modify the content, appearance, and behaviour of Web pages directly from a browser.

XCRI JISC-funded project to establish a specification to support the eXchange of Course-Related Information

Appendix 5 - List of Lifelong Learning Networks

LLN	Abbreviation (if applicable)
Birmingham, Black Country & Solihull	BBCSLLN
Cheshire & Warrington	
Coventry and Warwickshire	Coventry & Warks
Cumbria Higher Learning	CHL
Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance	GMSA
Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire	GMWL
Higher Futures	
Higher York	
Hereford & Worcester	HWLLN
Kent and Medway	
Lancashire	
Leap Ahead	
Linking London	LLLLN
MOVE	MOVE
National Arts	NALN
North East Higher Skills Network	NEHSN
Progress South Central	
Hampshire & Isle of Wight	HI-LLN
Skills for Sustainable Communities	Skills SC
Sussex Learning Network	SLN
South East London	SE London
South London	
South West	
Staffordshire, Shropshire, Stoke on Trent and Telford	Staffs
The Creative Way	
Vet Net	
West London	
West Yorkshire	West Yorks
Western Vocational	WVLLN
Yorkshire & Humber East	YHELLN