IMS Global, Mozilla Foundation, and LRNG Announce Next Steps to Accelerate the Evolution and Adoption of the Open Badges Standard

Mozilla Foundation and Collective Shift/LRNG to Transition Management of the Popular Open Badges Project to IMS Global to Ensure Long-term Support and Sustainability

LAKE MARY, Florida (PRWEB) October 28, 2016 -- IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS Global/IMS), the world leader in EdTech interoperability and innovation, the Mozilla Foundation, and Collective Shift/LRNG announced today an agreement for IMS Global to become the organization responsible for advancing the development, transferability, and market adoption of the Open Badges specification beginning January 1, 2017. As an open-governance, member-based standards consortium, IMS Global is committed to furthering the adoption, integration, and portability of digital badges to meet the needs of learners, educators, and employers.

“IMS is the smart choice for the next step in the evolution of the Open Badges initiative,” said Mark Surman, executive director of the Mozilla Foundation, who serves on the Badge Alliance Steering Committee along with Dr. Rob Abel, CEO of IMS Global, and Connie Yowell, CEO of Collective Shift/LRNG. “The IMS community shares the values of openness and collaboration that have driven this project since its launch in 2011.” Both the Mozilla Foundation and LRNG will become IMS Contributing Members to help lead and support the evolution of the Open Badges standard.

“I look forward to working with the IMS member community to build on the momentum gained by Mozilla and Open Badges contributors, as well as address some of the challenges identified, such as articulating the value of digital credentials,” said Connie Yowell. “IMS is bringing together the wide range of stakeholders dedicated to working together to accelerate progress.” Open Badges started as a Mozilla-led project funded by the MacArthur Foundation that included the creation of the Badge Alliance community to help organize adoption. The work of the Open Badges community will continue via IMS Global, facilitated by a revamped website featuring both technical evolution and badge adoption community activities.

“The IMS community is a very good fit for this effort because of our leadership in the education technology market, our collaborative K-20 and EdTech supplier member network, and our existing investments in enabling better digital credentialing, specifically our focus on Open Badges extensions for education, the extended transcript, and competency-based education,” commented Dr. Rob Abel. “Working closely with Mozilla Foundation and LRNG over the last year has confirmed that this move should help to accelerate development of the open badges product ecosystem.”

IMS is inviting Open Badges contributors, who have invested their time and talent in this movement, to join a new Open Badges Community Council. The Community Council will be a channel to showcase thought leadership around Open Badges and provide guidance to IMS activities. IMS will also be forming an executive leadership council for IMS member organizations that are actively contributing to market development and adoption. During the transition, the Open Badges community is actively working towards the release of Open Badges 2.0, the most significant upgrade to the specification since its release, which will make it possible to address dozens of high priority use cases identified by key stakeholders.

Comments from Leading Open Badges Ecosystem Organizations
City & Guilds
“By adopting the Open Badges standard and combining it with our expertise in accreditation and assessment, we can help even more people validate their skills and competencies,” said Chris Jones, chief executive, City & Guilds Group. “Open standards will be essential in creating a global and interoperable ecosystem that will allow us to be part of something truly game-changing. We are delighted that IMS will be driving the standard forwards and believe this will help deliver a step change in delivering global adoption. Through Digitalme, City & Guilds Group’s role will focus on high-quality, relevant and trusted credentials which make the biggest difference in individual’s life and career.”

Concentric Sky
"I believe the Open Badges standard has the power to help catalyze significant advancements in education technology,” said Wayne Skipper, CEO of Concentric Sky and head of the open source project Badgr. “IMS Global’s focus on interoperability makes it the perfect home for the standard and I’m excited to continue our work together with IMS to build a robust ecosystem for portable digital credentials.”

Credly
"In the marketplace for knowledge and skills, digital credentials are emerging as the currency of choice. A crucial input to the development of any currency is the adoption of standards across industries and applications," said Jonathan Finkelstein, founder and CEO of Credly. "As early advocates of credential and badge standards, Credly is pleased to see the Open Badges specification find a new home, and to build on contributions to the ecosystem with partners like IMS Global, LRNG, and Mozilla."

D2L
“Badging and digital credentialing is an important part of building the future of learning and assessment, and the evolving world of capturing skills, achievement, and experience,” said Jeremy Auger, chief strategy officer, D2L Corporation. “IMS Global is the perfect choice for the ongoing stewardship of Open Badges, bringing a world-class collaborative approach to drive buy-in, adoption, and success for the standards under their care.”

EDUCAUSE
“This is a most welcome development,” said Malcolm Brown, director, EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative. “IMS Global has been experiencing increasing success and exercising conspicuous leadership in the development and adoption of open standards for education. Badging will continue to gain in importance in educational contexts as we pursue new options for recognizing educational achievement. So it comes as terrific news that IMS will be carrying forward the important work initiated by Mozilla with respect to the Open Badges specification.”

IBM
"I see Open Badges as an increasingly valuable tool to recognize demonstrated knowledge and skills in the 21st century,” said David Leaser, senior manager for the IBM Open Badge Program. “IMS Global is a trusted partner in this new ecosystem, and this transition ensures the long term success of Open Badges. Badge issuers, earners, and employers will benefit tremendously from this move.”

Pearson
“Pearson Acclaim has been an active participant in the Open Badges community since 2011, pledging support for the standard as founding members of the Badge Alliance when it launched in 2014,” said Jarin Schmidt, director, Acclaim Services, Pearson. “The Acclaim platform is Open Badges compliant and we continue to advocate for open, verified, learner-controlled credentials as we work with the world's leading learning organizations to grow the use of Open Badges. We are excited to support IMS Global as it ushers in a new era
of leadership for the community and we look forward to further collaboration to enhance the technical specifications to advance the Open Badges ecosystem.”

For more information see the Open Badges Transition FAQ.

About IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS Global)
IMS Global is a nonprofit organization that advances technology to affordably scale and improve educational participation and attainment. IMS members are leading suppliers, institutions and government organizations that are enabling the future of education by collaborating on interoperability and adoption initiatives. IMS sponsors the Learning Impact Leadership Institute, a global program focused on recognizing the impact of innovative technology on educational access, affordability, and quality while developing the people and ideas to help shape the future of educational technology.

About Mozilla Foundation
The nonprofit Mozilla Foundation believes the internet must always remain a global public resource that is open and accessible to all. Our work is guided by the Mozilla Manifesto. The direct work of the Mozilla Foundation focuses on making the health of the internet a mainstream issue. We do this by connecting open internet leaders with each other and by mobilizing grassroots activities around the world. The Foundation is also the sole shareholder in the Mozilla Corporation, the maker of Firefox and other open source tools. Mozilla Corporation functions as a self-sustaining social enterprise – money earned through its products is reinvested into the organization.

About Collective Shift/LRNG
Collective Shift is a nonprofit dedicated to redesigning social systems for the connected age. Building on over a decade of research, Collective Shift launched LRNG initiative in 2015 to close the equity gap by transforming how young people access and experience learning and the available paths to success. Using an online platform as an infrastructure, LRNG is building an ecosystem of learning that combines in-school, out-of-school, employer-based and online learning experiences into a seamless network that is open to all youth. LRNG is designed to help youth to identify emerging passion areas, engage in online or local experiences related to their interests, produce and share work, and develop marketable skills. When young people successfully complete learning experiences called playlists, they earn digital badges.
Contact Information
IMS Global
IMS Global Learning Consortium
http://www.imsglobal.org
+1 407.362.7783

Online Web 2.0 Version
You can read the online version of this press release here.