At DevLearn ‘09, LETSI Demos Tomorrow’s Software Standards Today

This first-of-its kind public event by LETSI showcases interoperability standards that bring online education into the Web era

San Jose, Calif. (PRWEB) November 9, 2009 -- At 5 p.m. local time Tuesday, November 10th, in the Valley Room at San Jose’s Fairmont Hotel, a group of companies aim to speed up the slow moving world of software standards. They will discuss their approach and demonstrate running code at a meeting of the International Federation for Learning, Education, and Training Systems Interoperability, LETSI, which is being held in conjunction with the eLearning Guild’s annual DevLearn conference at the Fairmont.

Interoperability standards from international standards organizations like the IEEE and ISO have a real economic impact in the education world. Major education projects, often government funded, typically specify compliance with those standards in order to reduce costs, assure durability, and avoid vendor lock-in. But the traditional standards cycle is too slow -- all existing elearning standards have their roots in the pre-web world of client-server software. As educators around the world explore new ideas and techniques, integration costs will prohibit the spread of prototypes and beta products unless they can rely on broadly adopted interface standards.

Case in point: Existing standards for how a student’s online learning activity communicates with the learning management system (LMS) tracking his progress are based on protocols developed 20 years ago. At Tuesday’s meeting, the volunteers who participated in LETSI’s first project will demonstrate, with running examples, the potential of a modern approach.

Participating Companies

Booz Allen Hamilton and Rustici Software have instrumented their LMS products for web service communications.

Imedia.it, the Southwest Research Institute®, Engineering and Computer Simulations, OutStart, Intelligent Automation, and Booz Allen Hamilton are modifying existing courses and, in some cases, their technology to use the new communications framework.

Each will demonstrate delivery of elearning with runtime communication across platforms (e.g., LMS, browser, PC desktop, mobile) and with non-browser content like simulations, games, virtual worlds, and intelligent tutors.

LETSI Commentary

“Over the last 10 years, the web has changed our lives – the way we shop, the way we read, and even the way we date,” notes Avron Barr, LETSI’s Communications Chair. “But education and job training have been slow to adopt new technology. One barrier to innovation is the lack of modern interoperability standards.”

“OutStart is an aggressive supporter of standards that help the industry move learning from an era of proprietary platforms to one where content works across multiple systems and is delivered from many sources,” said Massood Zarabian, president and CEO of OutStart. “The LETSI initiative’s laser-beam focus on agility and time-to-value can create great benefit to vendors and users alike.”
Mike Rustici, CEO of Rustici Software and organizer of the LETSI demos at DevLearn explains that “By moving to web services, LETSI envisions a future learning environment supporting mobile, multi-player, immersive, and collaborative learning activities distributed across multiple systems.”

“The technology is there. To overcome institutional inertia and market Balkanization, new systems must interoperate easily with legacy systems. LETSI has explored an approach that could speed up the standards process and also provide an interim solution for early adopters,” said Don Holmes, CEO of Imedia.it in Houston and Chairman of the IEEE Learning Technology Standards Committee.

“LETSI’s software-first process, open-to-the-public working groups, and no-strings-attached licensing policy are designed to address real interoperability issues in the critical formative years – expediting the market introduction of new ideas and techniques,” points out Chuck Allen, Principal Consultant, HRInterop, LLC, and founder of the HR-XML Consortium, Inc.

About LETSI

LETSI was formed in 2007 by a handful of organizations committed to supporting innovation and open standards for the next wave of online learning tools. LETSI turns the standards cycle around: after an open requirements gathering phase, a small group of LETSI volunteers starts the specification development process by testing their evolving solution in their own systems.

Adobe Systems, Booz Allen Hamilton, the IEEE Computer Society, and the Korean Institute for Electronic Commerce are LETSI’s 2009 sponsors. LETSI is collaborating with international standards bodies, including IEEE and ISO, to help them produce more mature standards faster – in time for broad adoption of new technologies.

Additional resources:

Booz Allen Hamilton, McLean
Engineering and Computer Simulations, Orlando
Imedia.it, Houston
Intelligent Automation, Inc., Rockville
OutStart, Boston
Rustici Software, Nashville
Southwest Research Institute®, San Antonio

###
Contact Information
Avron Barr
LETSI
http://www.letsi.org
+1.732.465.5855

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