

Cover Sheet for Proposals (All sections must be completed)	JISC Capital Programme					
Name of Capital Programme: e-Learning						
Name of Lead Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University						
Name of Proposed Project: Interoperability Network North West (ioNW2)						
Name of Project Partners: Cheshire and Warrington LLN; GMSA LLN; Merseyside and West Lancs LLN; Phosphorix Ltd (a technology-focussed collaboration of the LLN partner institutions)						
Full Contact Details for Primary Contact: Name: Cath Walsh Position: Director, Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance Email: cath.walsh@gmsa.ac.uk Address: 1st Floor, Tesco House 149/153 Oxford Road Manchester M1 7EE Tel No: 0161 921 8043 Fax No:						
Length of Project: 2 years						
Project Start and End Dates: October 2006 to September 2008						
Total Funding Requested from JISC: £200,000						
Funding Broken Down over Project Years: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2006-7</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£125,558</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2007-8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£74,442</td> </tr> </table>			2006-7	£125,558	2007-8	£74,442
2006-7	£125,558	2007-8	£74,442			
Total Institutional Contributions: £55,600						
Outline Project Description The project will create e-administration infrastructure and tools to support vocational learners who will be undertaking learning activities administered by the three fully funded Lifelong Learning Networks in the North West of England. The project work will be fully embedded into the activities of the LLNs. The work builds on the distributed e-learning pilot projects and the open-source, service-oriented, ioNode interoperability technologies. The overarching aim of the project is to set up an interoperable, standards-based network of institutional nodes connecting the institutions involved in Lifelong Learning network activities in the northwest with management interfaces and tools supporting the administrative needs of LLN activities.						
I have read the Circular and associated Terms and Conditions of Grant at Appendix B (Tick Box)	YES ✓	NO				

Introduction

This project builds on the work done in the Learning Matrix (LMX) project, one of the distributed e-learning pilot projects in the northwest region. The partners in this proposed project include the three fully funded Lifelong Learning networks (LLNs) of the region and Phosphorix Ltd. who developed the open-source software at the heart of LMX. The proposal is oriented towards improving interoperability between institutions involved in the LLNs and is a technology-focussed collaboration of the institutions comprising the LLNs.

The overarching aim of the project is to set up an interoperable network of institutional nodes connecting the institutions involved in Lifelong Learning network activities in the northwest with management interfaces and tools supporting the administrative needs of LLN activities.

Background

The LMX project set out to pilot an approach that would be able to support subsequent lifelong learning networks in the region and nationally. Working with Phosphorix Ltd., the previous work done by the SHELL project (MLE programme) was considerably extended and subsequently incorporated into the work of other projects in the distributed e-learning programme (EELLS in particular). The components of the completed system together enable an interoperability network (ioNetwork) reaching out to a group of HE/FEIs and composed of nodes associated with each institution (ioNodes) networked over VPN into a hub-satellite configuration.

The functionality within the ioNetwork is designed to allow sharing of information about courses and learners between institutions, which is an issue of immediate and pressing concern for the lifelong learning networks in the partnership.

Administering Lifelong Learners

Although each LLN in this partnership has its own character there are some administrative and management issues common to them all, and shared with LLNs in other regions. The approaches and software developed in LMX were designed to provide solutions to some of these. The areas listed below will be addressed by this proposed project.

1. Lifelong Learning and Learner tracking

The LLNs in the partnership have a common set of problems in the area of tracking students over the partner institutions in their LLN groupings. In the GMSA LLN, for example, the lead institution is Manchester Metropolitan University who are responsible for making returns to HESA accounting for the additional student numbers (ASNs) administered by the LLN. There are 23 institutions involved, and learners may be undertaking courses at any of these. There are additional complications, for example courses are sometimes franchised for delivery at another institution and a learner might well be undertaking course components at more than one institution.

The problems of managing data in these scenarios are quite difficult. Institutions' systems are very different and they are not geared up for data sharing. There are problems of attaching a learner's data to one identity across all the systems, and similarly for courses and modules that may belong to one institution but be delivered by several.

2. Interoperability with institutional data sources

The sharing of data between institutions is a pivotal concern but data managers in institutions are understandably cautious about opening their systems up to potentially damaging data flows from sources external to their systems. This is particularly the case for data entering the systems. An examination of the scenario given later in this bid proposal makes it clear that there has to be some approach to linking data in different institutions relating to courses, learners and learner study histories.

3. Representation of skills in Course information

Learners need to be able to understand the structure of cross-institutional provision and administrators need to be able to identify the credits obtained. A particular issue for work-based

learners and their employers is the representation of information about skills. Work-based learners are often going to be interested in acquiring and developing skills related to their individual work context but this information may not be consistently available in existing course information. Ideally a learner should be able to key in a skill or range of skills into a search and see the courses and modules related to them.

Summary of proposed work

The Learning Matrix project developed potential solutions for these problem areas. The software covers a wide range of functions working together to provide standards-based interoperability between institutions facilitating the kinds of administrative activity required to support work-based lifelong learners.

This proposed project work builds on and extends this existing work and will:

- Package the existing code and improve documentation so that the task of adding an institution into an interoperable network is simplified.
- Gather detailed requirements about the administrative tasks that need to be accomplished, add any additional ioNetwork webservice necessary for these tasks and adapt the administrative interface giving access to the ioNetwork services.
- Continue the work done in the LMX project to allow institutional data managers to capture external data and share information contained in local IMS databases via their institutional ioNetwork nodes
- Investigate the methods that could be used to incorporate metadata about skill content into course/module descriptions
- Implement the interoperability network (Interoperability Network North West) across institutions involved in the three LLN partners, and monitor its use in administering their learners

A Scenario

The LLN administrative context

All additional student numbers (ASNs) allocated to the GMSA (Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance) Lifelong Learning Network for distribution to member institutions are routed through MMU, and MMU is responsible for the HESA return.

A Credit Framework and the associated modules (Unit Bank) provide small (CPD type) elements of learning, which can ultimately be built up to the level of a specific award (e.g. Cert HE or Foundation Degree). They also allow individual programmes to be delivered within the GMSA LLN which comprise units delivered at, and validated by, a number of institutions.

The GMSA Hub hosts the Unit Bank (where course offerings are described in XCRI) and therefore acts as the indexing system for all module level information in terms of mapping individual college/university data (and codes) to MMU codes. Each institution has an administration interface to the ioNetwork where they can select courses they are validated to offer and add the extra information about where and when it will take place.

The learner perspective

Paul is a technical assistant working for an independent TV production company. He has a level 3 NVQ in electronics, but is now working exclusively in postproduction. He has decided to upgrade his qualifications in this area, and has done some research on the GMSA website, from this he has decided to apply to the Certificate of Higher Education in Postproduction delivered jointly by City College and MANCAT. Having registered and entered personal data on the GMSA Learner Portal site, Paul can easily make an online application to the part time route of the programme by adding some more specific data to his personal information already entered and mapped to a GMSA unique student identifier. The application is then automatically forwarded directly to MANCAT (who are the lead institution).

MANCAT are then able to process Paul's application, and decide to offer him a place. Paul's details stored on the GMSA Hub are used to partially pre-complete MANCAT enrolment, other details being added in the usual way. When all the enrolment process is complete at MANCAT, this data is sent through the ioNW2 admin interface to City College who can then enrol Paul

onto their systems, whilst keeping his details mapped to the GMSA unique identifier. Paul receives notification and sees his course enrolment listed in his "my courses" area of the portal.

When Paul successfully completes the programme, achievement data is sent initially from MANCAT and City College to Salford, and then onwards to MMU through the GMSA Hub. During this process Paul's achievement data is captured within the Hub and stored in Paul's personal record where Paul can see it and use it to prepare CVs or e-portfolios.

Paul continues to work successfully in postproduction for a number of years, but gradually moves into a supervisory role. At a point five years after completion of the Cert HE, Paul decides to add to this achievement by putting the 120 credits already gained towards a 240-credit foundation degree. MMU have in the intervening period validated a 'Shell Scheme' Foundation Degree based around a GMSA Foundation Degree Framework.

Paul logs on to the learner portal, where he can check his online transcript. He is also able to identify the new Foundation Degree as his target award, and at the same time choose a menu of suitable modules from both MMU and Salford. He is able to make an application for the part time FD programme directly from the GMSA Portal, and his details (including an e-transcript) are forwarded directly to MMU through the ioNW2 portal. MMU are then able to make a decision on Paul's application (including the 120 credits advanced standing from previous study), and having accepted him, are able to forward his data through the ioNW2 administration interface to all the module providers.

Project timeframe

The proposed project will begin in October 2006 and continue for two years until September 2008. The second year of the project will follow learners through using the systems put in place by the project.

How the project will contribute to the programme

The project will contribute to the broad outcomes of the capital programme by developing services and applications for use at a regional level, building knowledge and skills in these new technologies and approaches, and by testing a model for other regions. The project is directly supporting the work of the three LLN partners who are facilitating access to level 4 courses in the region by work-based and vocational learners. Lifelong Learning Networks in other regions will face a similar range of problems and issues. The work done in the project will make it easier for the tools to be deployed in other regions.

Key strategic aims of the e-learning programme are addressed in that the project will facilitate progression and the provision and support of work-based and vocational learning because it will be used to administer and manage learners participating in the programmes of the LLN partners.

The technology used by the project will use a distributed, service-oriented approach with particular emphasis on management and administration tools relevant to lifelong learning.

The project will work in collaboration to further articulate the JISC/DEST e-framework, and particularly contribute to the further development of the XCRI schema for sharing information about modules and courses.

Project description

The overall aim is to consolidate and enhance the ioNetwork software suite so that it can be more easily taken up by institutions and configured into networks servicing Lifelong Learner activities, and then to deploy the technologies across the institutions involved in the work of the three Lifelong Learning Networks.

Objectives:

1. To enhance the set of software tools with management interfaces that will provide the functionality needed to track learners through learning episodes

2. To investigate how information about the skills addressed by a course can be represented within the XCRI schema, and incorporate data preparation tools for this aspect
3. To continue work to allow interoperability between institutions' management systems and ioNetworks, and to build a pool of expertise
4. To package and document the software set so that it can be more readily installed and updated by institutions, and configured into network arrangements.
5. To monitor and support institutions in putting the interoperable network, Interoperable Network North West, in place and in using its functions to administer learners.

Overview:

Phase 1 – Requirements gathering and packaging

- Working with LLN managers and others involved with learner administration, generate specifications for learner administration management interfaces to ioNetwork services for subsequent implementation by developers.
- Working with LLN managers, Sector skills experts, XCRI project and developers, investigate requirements and strategies for skills representation in metadata. Agree and implement a “first approximation” approach
- Working directly with selected institutions' IT services, investigate interoperability solutions for the variety of data management technologies in use.
- Ongoing technical work on simplifying ioNetwork node installation and improving documentation.

Phase 2 - Rollout

- First trial of packaging and documentation with selected institutions for evaluation and adjustments
- Wider rollout across NW institutions and start of interoperation connection work with institutional data systems where possible

Phase 3 – Usage of system with learners across the network

- Monitoring of the system in use in the different LLN contexts
- Evaluation reporting

Technologies

The technology employed will build on the work already done within the Learning Matrix project and projects in other regions that have also been working within the same technological framework (EELLS, PDP4LIFE). This technology, being developed by Phosphorix Ltd on an open-source maturity model, is open-source, java-based and standards oriented. It takes a service oriented approach with Webservices/SOAP as the primary implementation technology. Nodes (ioNodes) deploying the technologies are linked into an interoperable network operating over VPN referred to as an interoperable network (ioNetwork).

The technology set has several components the main focus here being the secure messaging framework built on ebXML. It supports learner information in IMS LIP/UK LEAP, and includes functionality for describing learning opportunities (courses) in XCRI format, and support for enrolment. There are also webservices to aid in the transfer of data from institutional databases to the interoperable network of nodes.

The work in this proposal will contribute to the further development of these technologies, and will be available to the JISC community as open-source software.

Workpackages

The workpackages described here relate to the objectives listed above and provide more detailed information about the tasks that will be undertaken.

Workpackage 1: ioNode packaging and documentation

Contributors: Selwyn Lloyd, Roger Clark, Paul Mahoney, Phosphorix developers, IT support technical staff in UCLAN network of collaborating colleges and LLN institutions.

Nature of tasks:

This workpackage will help in taking the ioNetwork software along a path to maturity. The work relates only to the components of the system that allow an institution to become part of the ioNetwork and use its webservices to share data via the standards previously mentioned. In the first stages configuration tasks relating to components will be analysed and simplified where possible. Scripts to accomplish installation tasks will be created and tested. Documentation for installation, configuration and updating will be written. The resulting packages will be sufficient for someone with the necessary background familiarity and expertise in Java technologies and the Unix platform to build and configure an ioNode and make it available as part of an ioNetwork.

The progress of this work will be monitored and shared through a blog on a website built to promote and support an open-source community of developers and users of the ioNetwork software. Documentation, scripts and component packages will be available for testing and comment as the work proceeds.

In the next stage, after the work above has stabilised, there will be a testing phase. UCLAN is part of a long-standing grouping of colleges who would like to explore the potential of a Learning Matrix type of system. They will be used as a proving ground for the installation and documentation packages produced, while being carefully monitored and given assistance. The issues and problems emerging will feed into a second round of improvement in the packaging and documentation.

The last stage will be the phased roll-out of the functioning ioNetwork North West to participating LLN institutions.

Workpackage 2: Management and Administrator interfaces to tools

Contributors: LLN managers, FE and HE admissions managers, Selwyn Lloyd, Roger Clark, Mark Stubbs, Phosphorix developers,

Nature of tasks:

The work here is to identify the tasks that LLN administrators will need to carry out with regard to tracking and related issues, create additional webservices if needed and design interfaces to accomplish these tasks within the ioNetwork framework.

The first stage is requirements gathering from those who will be involved in administration activities within the LLNs. The developing requirements will be made available to all LLNs across the country. A set of scenarios will be used as the focus for this work, and the detailed final scenarios, UML diagrams etc. will be made available to the JISC community and LLN community.

Requirements gathering will then lead to prototyping of administration interfaces, feedback and re-implementation in the XP development cycle used by Phosphorix.

Workpackage 3: Representation of Skills within XCRI

Contributors: Mark Stubbs, Simon Grant, Selwyn Lloyd, employment sector consultant experts

Nature of tasks:

Simon Grant has done considerable work on skills and skills frameworks, and potential of existing standards specifications to carry this kind of information. Marks Stubbs is manager of the XCRI project as well as having operational responsibilities in the Greater Manchester LLN. The purpose of this workpackage is to devise practical solutions in this area serving the needs of learners and employers while respecting the limitations of current provision in institutions.

There is work being done in this area of skills representation and how such information about skills frameworks might be carried in schema such as RCDEO and Topic Maps.

While the aspirations here are limited, it is expected that this exercise will still yield valuable insights and pointers for further work on skills frameworks and skills representations, and these will be fed back into current discussion through JISC and relevant CETIS special interest groups. The work will contribute to the XCRI e-Framework reference model.

It is expected that progress will be made and that additions to the XCRI preparation interfaces implemented as a result will allow skills information to be included in course descriptions to some extent.

Workpackage 4: Interoperation with institutional data

Contributors: Phosphorix Ltd, Institutional IT support staff and Data managers, LLN managers

Nature of tasks:

Data managers in institutions are understandably cautious about opening their systems up to potentially damaging data flows from sources external to their systems. This is particularly the case for data entering the systems. The approach adopted in the Learning matrix project was to offer an institutional ioNode under the control of the institution and to encourage them to interface to it through webservices in whatever ways they felt comfortable with. The approach was tested at Liverpool Hope University where IT services staff used webservices developed for the purpose by Phosphorix to extract data about courses held in the local course catalogue (SITS), transform the data into XCRI format and make it available for further manipulation and eventual publishing and aggregation with other institutions' data.

The scenario presented in the introduction emphasises the extent to which data in a large number of institutions needs to be co-ordinated and exchanged. Manual re-entry of data is a possible stop-gap solution but the certainty of significant levels of data input errors mitigates against this as a long-term solution (even disregarding the wastefulness in terms of human resources).

The purpose of the workpackage will be to work with those institutions reassured by the approach and willing to co-operate in extending the methods and solutions for passing data back and forth between institutional systems and the ioNetwork. The work will provide actual interoperation in individual cases and a growing bank of expertise applicable in different technological contexts.

Workpackage 5: Use of admin tools to track learners

Contributors: LLN learning provider institutions, LLN managers, Phosphorix Ltd., evaluators, project manager

Nature of tasks:

The ioNetwork services and administration interfaces will be used to track learners involved in the LLN programmes over the course of the second year of the project. The focus of this work will be

1. To identify and rectify problems with software and processes as they emerge
2. To evaluate and report on all aspects of the systems for the benefit of the JISC and LLN communities

Timetable

Quarter from	Oct	Jan	April	July	Oct	Jan	April	July
Workpackage	2006	2007	2007	2007	2007	2008	2008	2008
Packaging								
Admin tools								
Skills in XCRI								
Interoperation								
Tracking Learners								

Deliverables

- An interoperable network allowing LLN institutions in the North West to track work-based and vocational learners undertaking courses in the LLN programmes

- Installation scripts and documentation for deploying and configuring ioNetwork components
- An evaluation report on the operation of the system, highlighting challenges, implications, successes and areas for further work
- Use cases, case studies and scenarios illustrating and clarifying the utility of the systems
- Feedback to the e-Framework reference model on how skills information about individual courses or modules could be carried within the XCRI schema

Project Management

Project Steering group:

Members: Representatives from the three LLNs, JISC representative, CETIS representative

Function: To oversee project progress and make high level strategic decisions affecting the project. To assist project management in matters of institutional, regional and national involvement

Project Management Group

Members: Individuals with operational responsibilities in organisations directly involved in the project, project manager, project officer

Function: To support the project management team by liaising and taking responsibility for critical work within their organisation. To assist with operational decision making and to report on progress to the Steering group.

Project Manager/Technical co-ordinator

It is anticipated that Dr. Roger Clark, the project manager for the Learning Matrix project, will take this role.

Function: To manage the project according to JISC guidelines. To liaise closely with key individuals and groups among partners and contributing organisations on the one hand, and the development partners on the other to produce requirements and specifications for software systems and interfaces.

Project Officer

Function: To assist the project manager with the tasks of project management and help in activities such as staff development and training.

Evaluation

The approach to evaluation is primarily formative and ongoing. An external evaluator or evaluation team with suitable background will be engaged to contribute to the evaluation activities. There are three main areas of evaluation activity.

Software and interface development

The developer partners, Phosphorix, use an extreme programming methodology (XP) that fits well with a formative evaluation approach. Interfaces and tools are rapidly prototyped for feedback from partners, and further refined in a continuing cycle. This allows for flexibility as requirements emerge during consultations.

Project Management

Previous experience has indicated that issues and difficulties of varying severity emerge continually in the course of a complex project of this nature. The project needs the flexibility to cope with this, so a process of self-evaluation and review of project strategies will be built into project management processes. This will be augmented by engaging an external evaluator in a "critical friend" role to engage with the contributors and report at regular intervals on progress towards project aims.

Implementation phase

An evaluation of the use of the system by administrators and managers will be conducted. This will make use of interviews with a sample of individuals involved in the various aspects and "over-the-shoulder" observation. It will be managed and collated by the external evaluators.

Risks

Risk	Probability (1-5)	Severity (1-5)	Score (P x S)	Action to Prevent/Manage Risk
Staffing				

Staff with appropriate skills and experience cannot be recruited to project team	2	5		A suitable project manager has been identified and involved in the bid process. Phosphorix have agreed to be project partners
Critical staff leave during the project	3	4		Project planning documentation clear and kept up to date. Open style of management so others can step into new roles if needed
Organisational				
LLNs withdraw from project	1	5		The LLN partners aims and requirements and activity built into design of systems so intrinsically motivated to support project work. A statement of the aims and terms of the partnership will be agreed.
Participating institutions not willing to do required work	2	4		Early consultation with IT service departments. Project management group to take responsibility for their organisational inputs
Project "drift" from aims, or stuck on particular problems	3	4		External evaluator in "critical friend" mode to alert early. Management of expectations e.g. some problems will need temporary "kludges"
Technical				
Technology not capable of meeting operational needs in the timescale	1	5		"Fallback" processes designed into delivery planning
Solutions fall short of partner expectations	2	3		Involvement of partners in requirements gathering and development cycle
Partnership difficulties with developer partner	1	4		Relationships established in previous projects. Phosphorix will look to siting one of their staff in manchester area during the project
External suppliers				
Legal				
Data protection issues not resolvable	2	5		Early examination of issues and agreement on strategy

Intellectual Property

There are no anticipated issues with IPR directly impinging on the project. The inter-institutional arrangements for course delivery and access to resources belong to the LLNs themselves, and resolution of potential issues in this area is one of their areas of responsibility.

Sustainability

The project work is embedded as an integral part of the normal activities of the three lifelong learning network partners. The partners are contributing significant resources to the project and are committed to it because it takes their work forward. The medium term sustainability of the project is therefore linked to the sustainability of the LLNs themselves, who are receiving funding until July 2009.

Dissemination

Dissemination will take place throughout the project through participation in relevant SIG activities, a project blog, and through the national networking activities of the LLNs.

Budget

	JISC Contribution requested		Institution Contribution		Total
	2006-7	2007-8	2006-7	2007-8	
Staff (list all staff with FTEs and salary scale range)					
Project manager 1.0 FTE @SL19	£42,000	£43,470			£85,470
Project officer 0.5 FTE@SN1	£14,858	£15,304			£30,162
IT staff time buyout	£5,000	£5,168			£10,168
GMSA LLN 0.1 FTE@PL28			£5,900	£6,494	£12,768
GM&WL LLN 0.1 FTE@PL28			£5,900	£6,107	£12,007
Chsh&wgtn LLN 0.1 FTE@PL28			£5,900	£6,107	£12,007
LLN consultancy			£1050		£1050
Phosphorix Ltd (Partner)	£50,000				£50,000
Consultancy	£5,250				£5,250
Travel & Subsistence	£1,450	£1,500			£2,950
Equipment (specify individual items over £10k)					
Dissemination activities		£2,000			£2,000
Evaluation activities	£4000	£4000			£8000
Institutional Overheads					
Computer services	£3,000	£3,000			£6000
Accommodation			£6,648	£6,494	£12,768
HR & Finance			£5,000		£5,000
Total	£125,558	£74,442	£30,398	£25,202	£255,600
Total requested from JISC					£200,000

Benefits to lead institution and partners

The lead institution, Manchester Metropolitan University are also the lead for the GMSA LLN. The benefits of the project are that it will provide systems for delivering some of the LLN objectives which they would in any case have to find some means to do. The other LLN partners benefit in a similar way. There will be longer term benefits of having the ioNetwork in place through the region that could accrue to any participating institutions in the region.

Key personnel

Dr. Roger Clark BA(Hons), PhD

Project manager and technical co-ordinator for the Learning Matrix project. Previously deputy head of Psychology at Liverpool Hope University, and then head of the Learning Development Unit there. He has designed and programmed numerous e-learning resources including a VLE used at Liverpool Hope. Contributor to JISC projects in the area of learning design and PDP (LUSID).

It is expected that he would manage this project.

Dr Mark Stubbs

Principal Lecturer in Business IT at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). He was formerly a technical architect with Andersen Consulting and currently manages MMU's Managed Learning Environment Project. He has worked on the TRICS and COVARM JISC projects, and is project manager for the XCRI project looking at course information standards with UCAS. He has published a number of articles about e-learning and his PhD thesis is about building collaborative responses to complex problems across institutions.

Selwyn Lloyd

Founder Engineer Phosphorix. In the last five years Selwyn has designed and managed delivery of the ioNode and ioNetwork solutions which underpin the technical interoperability architecture for notable lifelong learning projects in the education sector. Phosphorix are an ethical company whose community based principals are realised with the provision of open source solutions for education and not for profit organisations. Selwyn has been directly responsible for the delivery of Phosphorix solutions for The Vodafone International Intranet, Vizzavi MAP, SHELL, The Learning Matrix, JISC, EELLS, PDP4LIFE, the iceBox, the ioNetwork, XCRI and ioMorph. Phosphorix are working with a number of innovative projects in education and participate in specialist communities in e-learning and telecoms.

Gill Scott – Development Manager – Learner Support

Key member of the senior management team of the GMSA Life Long Learning Network with specific responsibility for learner support, IAG and tracking and monitoring of learners within the network provision. The development of appropriate tools to monitor and track life long learners, as well as the development of innovative PDP processes for work based and vocational learners, is a key focus of her role. She has significant experience through Aimhigher and previous management of vocational programmes in FE of developing and delivering innovative projects and programmes of studies for work based and vocational learners.

Selina Green

Project Director - Cheshire and Warrington Lifelong Learning Network previously Project Manager Cheshire and Warrington Aimhigher. Worked on many Widening Participation projects over the last 9 years.

Gary Mallon

Project Manager

Greater Merseyside & West Lancashire LLN

Responsible for taking forward partnership arrangements between FE and HE and increasing the opportunities and progression routes for vocational learners

Simon Grant

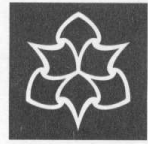
PhD in area of cognitive science and HCI, 1991. School teacher; university lecturer; internet skills trainer. Conceptual architect, LUSID PDP support system, Liverpool, 1997-2000. Joint coordinator: CETIS LIPSIG then Portfolio SIG, 2003-current. Major involvement in and contribution to JISC projects LLSP, TransPortALL, WS4RL, SPWS. Independent consultant in e-portfolio and interoperability domains.

Garfield Southall, MSc.

Director of the New Technology Initiative for Cheshire and Warrington and IT lead for the Cheshire & Warrington Lifelong Learning Network, both based at The University of Chester. He was formerly Deputy Head of Computer Science at the University and specialises in programming; especially high-level Java.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Professor Barry S Plumb
21 June 2006



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

North West Regional JISC Bid: Interoperability Network North West ioNW2

This is to confirm that Manchester Metropolitan University is fully supportive as the lead institution of the above application.

The development of underpinning systems that can support and enable the key aspect of cross institutional provision within the life long learning networks has significant value in meeting our overall strategic aims.

Our involvement as lead institution and the inclusion of staff from the XCri project team in both steering and developing the project reflects our commitment. The project has the potential to offer the development of management systems that have application for life long learning networks nationally.

The institution fully supports this bid

Yours sincerely

Professor B. S. Plumb
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR

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19th June 2006

RE: **ioNW2 project**

Dear Gill

I am delighted to confirm our full support and involvement as a partner in the above bid / project.

Phosphorix will bring to the project their broad experience of open source and open standards as well as the rapid development of prototypes and user interfaces, particularly in the specialised areas of distributed systems for lifelong learning.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Selwyn Lloyd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent peak at the end.

Selwyn Lloyd
Founder Engineer and Company Director

Phosphorix

Progression through lifelong learning

www.gmsa.ac.uk

22 June 2006

Selina Green
LLN Project Director
University of Chester
Warrington Campus
Crab Lane
Warrington
WA2 0DB

Dear Selina

North West Regional JISC Bid: Interoperability Network North West ioNW2

This is to confirm that the Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance – Lifelong Learning Network for Greater Manchester is fully supportive as an active partner of the above application.

The development of underpinning systems that can support and enable the key aspect of cross institutional provision within the network and has significant value in meeting our overall strategic aims. We are happy to offer direct support of staff time within the LLN to support both development and delivery of the project within our partner institutions. This direct support is outlined in the proposed overall budget and equates to half a day per week over the stated two years of the project.

Our involvement at the level of steering group and support with expertise from within the network also reflects our commitment to this project and its potential to offer the development of systems that have application for lifelong learning networks nationally.

We wish you every success with this application.

Yours sincerely

Cath Walsh
Director

Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance
1st Floor, Tresco House
149/153 Oxford Road
Manchester
M1 7EE

June 21st 2006

North West Regional JISC Bid: Interoperability Network North West ioNW2

This letter is to confirm that in my capacity as Project Director of the Cheshire and Warrington Lifelong learning network (LLN) I wholly support and commit to being an active partner in the above proposal.

The Cheshire and Warrington LLN has made a commitment in its strategic plan to develop an electronic Learner Passport to suit the needs of learners and employers and to link with students' Personal Learning Plans. This proposal will make a significant contribution to enabling us to meet these commitments.

Selina Green
Project Director
Cheshire and Warrington
Lifelong Learning Network

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West Lancashire LLN

Greater Merseyside &

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2nd Floor
Silkhouse Court
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16 June 2006

Dear Sir/Madam

Interoperability Network North West

I fully support the JISC e-learning Capital Programme bid by Manchester Metropolitan University.

The Greater Merseyside & West Lancashire LLN as a project partner recognises that the project will support vocational learners who will be undertaking learning activities across the 3 fully funded Lifelong Learning Networks in the North West including developing personalised learning within a work based environment.

The Greater Merseyside & West Lancashire LLN will benefit tremendously from this project.

Yours faithfully

Gary Mallon
Project Manager



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For the attention of Gill Scott

16th June 2006

Dear Gill

North West Regional JISC Bid: Interoperability Network North West ioNW2

This is to confirm that the Creative Industries Development Service (CIDS) is supportive of the above application and the intention to offer an ICT based tool to support the professional development of individuals working in the creative industry sector. This appears to meet a significant gap in provision in providing a mechanism for transferring and sharing records of achievement.

CIDS has extensive links with employers and individual self employed practitioners in this field and will be happy to contribute our experience derived from this to assist delivery of the project. CIDS is currently leading on the development of a North West regional ICT information resource for creative businesses. There is at this stage no specific financial or other resource offered as direct contribution, however we would be interested in identifying the detail of our partnership and contribution as the project develops.

We wish you every success with this application.

Yours sincerely

LYN BARBOUR
DIRECTOR