



For Immediate Release

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The SIF® Association UK Sees Continued Growth

Washington, DC, 22 June 2010---Following the successful SIF Association UK's Quarterly Meetings held in Nottingham, the Association's UK Community continues to expand and plan for future development. During the meetings, conversations and sessions addressed SIF Choreography, teaching and learning, future needs of the SIF Implementation Specification (United Kingdom), resolving security issues and the work by the Data Standards; Business, Development and Communications; Implementation; Technical and Infrastructure and Children and Young People's Agencies Working Groups.

"Participation at the June SIF Association UK Conference proved yet again to be incredibly valuable," stated Michael Pickett, Manager – Digital Infrastructure, ICT Solutions, Norfolk County Council. "Membership of the Association and participation at the conferences has been key to the successful delivery of an open standards based interoperability solution for Norfolk's schools. The June conference has highlighted how far the SIF Standard has come in the UK. There is a clear swell of activity across Local Authorities and schools with many successful examples of how the standard can solve interoperability challenges such as with 14 to 19, identity management and single sign on, free school meals and collaborative learning. There was a really positive atmosphere with suppliers, LAs and schools committed to working productively together to solve problems and achieve key outcomes." Overall, the meetings provided the opportunity to share best practices, work on the SIF Implementation Specification (United Kingdom) and determine future work of the SIF Association UK.

The SIF Association UK, through the leadership of Becta, has become an efficient, widespread and self-sustaining organisation in the UK. While the new UK government announced the closure of Becta, the SIF Association UK will continue with the community membership continuing to manage the critical work ahead. The elected Management Board of the SIF Association UK continues to drive the vision and strategy of interoperability in the UK. The Management Board leaders are:

- **Nick Barron** - Head of UK Business Development, Edustructures
- **Tony Brown** - Director, Children's Services Strategy, CACI
- **Karen Crowston** - Birmingham local authority - **Co-Chair of the UK Board**
- **Mike Edge** - Head of Technical Architecture Group, RM Education
- **Rupert Hay-Campbell** - MIS Adviser, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- **Ian Lehmann** - Consultant, London Grid for Learning

- **Lyn McCullagh** - Core and Curriculum Officer, C2k
- **Philip Pearce** - Strategic Technical Manager, East of England Broadband Network (E2BN)
- **Roger Plant** - Education Systems Director, Pearson
- **Lawrence Royston** - Managing Director, Groupcall
- **Paul Shoesmith** - Director, Technical Strategy, Becta - **Co-Chair of the UK Board**
- **Ian White** - Consultant, South West Grid for Learning
- **Emma Williams** - Head of School Improvement Branch, School Management and Effectiveness Division, Welsh Assembly Government

"At the recent UK Management Board meeting, it was clear the need for the SIF Association UK to provide leadership; raise awareness and develop the SIF Standard for the benefit for schools and local authorities," explains Ian White, Senior Technical Consultant, Southwest Grid for Learning. "It is imperative that we continue to build upon the existing SIF Implementations across the UK and to ensure the uses of the secure, open standards are available to provide efficiency savings at the front-line, in turn, reducing the amount of staff time spent on entering and duplicating data entry."

Future work of the SIF Association UK includes:

- **SIF Implementation Specification (United Kingdom) 1.3** - look for the release in autumn 2010.
- **SIF 1 Enabled Application (United Kingdom) Certification** – continued growth and development to support additional versions of the Specification.
- **Case Studies** - continued development showcasing best practices and lessons learned. Existing case studies can be found at <http://www.sifassociation.org/uk/success-stories.asp>.
- **Quarterly Meeting** - the next SIF Association UK Quarterly Meeting will be held on 10-11 November 2010.
- **Implementation Planning Toolkit** – updates and revisions to include lessons learnt from current implementations as well as updated guidance on data agreements and 'role out' planning.
- **SIF Seminars** – series of regional seminars to raise awareness.

"In these times with parents, governments and society as a whole asking the education enterprise to do 'more with less,' the proposed closure of a government agency providing savings and guidance on leveraging technology to offset costs, while providing strong learning experiences, is discouraging. Now more than ever, an open and independent community such as the SIF Association UK is needed to ensure that the learning systems which must be put in place are done so in a cost-effective manner, allowing schools and LAs to leverage best-of-breed approaches to their development. The international SIF Community supports the continuation of the great progress the SIF Association UK Community has made in 4 short years," states Dr. Larry Fruth, Executive Director, SIF Association.

About the SIF Association UK

For over four years, the SIF Association UK has worked to lead the technical development of a world-class specification and certification program to enable data interoperability for education. Through the localisation and adoption of the SIF Specifications, Certification Program and Data Model and creating local/national SIF Pilot Projects for the leveraging of technology investments in the United Kingdom and beyond, data interoperability has been achieved. Information about SIF Association UK can be found at <http://www.sifassociation.org/uk>.

About the SIF Association

The SIF Association is a unique, non-profit collaboration composed of over 3,200 schools, districts, states, US and International Ministries of Education, software vendors and consultants who collectively define the rules and regulations for educational software data interoperability. The SIF Implementation Specification enables diverse applications to interact and share data efficiently, reliably, and securely regardless of the platform hosting those applications. The SIF Association has united these education technology end users and providers in an unprecedented effort to give teachers more time to do what they do best: teach. For further information, visit <http://www.sifassociation.org>.

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