

Subject: Kuali Days UK

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Because of your Kuali Days UK presentation I thought it would be helpful to describe some of the activities and relations between the U.S. and UK open source communities.

When JA-SIG had its first production ready portal, Ian Dolphin and Rob Sherratt, University of Hull, organized JA-SIG UK. It was an exceptionally effective open source implementation effort. It began with the very successful Portals conference in July 2002 at the University of Nottingham. Richard Spencer, University of British Columbia presented his concepts for a student system which led to Kuali Student.

France is the largest implementation success. A group of 15, primarily teaching universities, formed ESUP Portail. Subsequently Ian Dolphin (who may attend your session in London) and Alain Mayeur, Université de Valenciennes, have made integrated open source software dominant in French universities. ESUP has contributed some applications that extend the suite of open source. Subsequently, because of Ian Dolphin's leadership in studying the use of information technology to enhance research productivity, additional open source applications, primarily developed in the UK, was introduced into the French major research universities. The suite of administrative, information storage and management, and research tools has been implemented in almost all—an achievement not yet accomplished in the U.S.

In November 2007 several European software firms sponsored a workshop in Rome focusing on standards. Sigma Systems' Randy Timmons attended this and subsequent meetings of the resulting Rome Student Systems and Standards Group (RS3G). The group subsequently met in Stuttgart jointly with the Aviation Industry CBT Committee to exchange work on learning standards. In September 2008 two consortia began work on a student system—MUCI (Multi-University Centre for Informatization) a consortium of Polish Universities and CINECA a consortium of Italian Universities. Both have produced and implemented elements of student systems in other countries as well.

Digitary, an Irish firm participating in RS3G, held a key conference in May 2008 that focused on 10 business cases of a student system that subsequently influenced both commercial and open sourcesoftware architecture.

Through efforts of JISC's Centre for Educational Technology, Interoperability and Standards, the RS3G standardization efforts led to an International Standards Organization committee developing standards for learning data. The U.S. Department of Defense's Advanced Distributed Learning laboratory (source of the SCORM standard) participated. This has been a vital and timely initiative for integration of various development and implementation efforts. Sakai was introduced into Europe and immediately supported by key UK research universities and now has the support of many other universities, especially in France.

All of this is taking place as universities in the 47-country European Higher Education Area implement the Bologna process. This has significantly different business processes from the U.S. Manuel Dietz, founder of RS3G with Simone Ravaioli, is the "go-to expert" on its implementation. Manuel was a PESC Director before he had to put more than full-time into his work. Although Manuel gave a key briefing at PESC on this process and met with NASFA (Association of International

Educators). NASFA subsequently decided the 47 countries should use U.S. processes for all U.S. students studying in EHEA and all students from EHEA that study in the U.S. (Personally the 47 to 1 odds seem a bit self-defeating).

Randy's team includes Justin Tilton (who now lives in the Czech Republic) and Michael Ivanov who drove uPortal to success. Justin worked with JISC, Universities of Oxford (where he gave a lecture) and Hull, Open Universities UK and the Netherlands, and Lubeck University of Applied Sciences (it provides online courses in the Baltic Consortium and would be the third largest provider in the EU—after UK and Spain).

So there are long and productive relationships between the Sigma team and Europe. Randy's quiet leadership and expertise was well received by his European colleagues.

If Ian Dolphin attends I would suggest you get his perspective on development and implementation of open source software. He has a long and very successful record of success.

I should also mention that im+m's Jon Allen was a principal organizer of the first Moodle conference in the UK at open university and for several years organized the Moodle conference associated with the ITC annual conference.

If there is any additional information you would like, I have documents from all of these activities and would be glad to provide any you believe would be helpful.

jim