Questions from Students@Centre Industry Briefing

Monday, 19th December, 2005
10am-11am
Rooms G.1, G.2 and G3.
Ground Floor, 2 Treasury Place

Geoff Elwood, Etech Group Pty Ltd – How much work has DE&T undertaken in evaluating different systems and products from other part of the World?

The DE&T have been working on this project for some time. Whilst the partnership with Oracle has been undertaken to help understand the specifications that would be required in any future Statewide system and to evaluate the process in which this project was rolled out, DE&T is committed to better understanding what is best practice throughout the World.

Already a number of officers from the Department have travelled to other jurisdictions to look at what they are doing in this space. This will continue to happen into the future and these visits will also inform DE&T as they develop the specifications for the upcoming tender. It is anticipated that the current trial may provide up to 80% of the information needed to develop the tender. The other 20% will come from information gathered from other projects, from schools that are currently using other systems and from looking at other systems in other states and other countries.

Do DE&T intend on continuing the evaluation and the research and development trial beyond the 12 month period?

At this stage the research project will only run for 12 months and the evaluation will be completed by the end of 2006.

Richard Quan, Microsoft Australia – How much of the work/code that was undertaken at Glen Waverley Secondary College using Oracle products has been reused in the trial.

The intranet at Glen Waverley Secondary College was built on a software platform of Cold Fusion, .Net, SQL sever and ASP. Oracle was not involved in the development of the Glen Waverley intranet and Glen Waverley SC uses no Oracle code or product. Glen Waverley SC provided a model for some of the original thinking as to the functionality to be implemented in the Ultranet.

A staff member from GWSC has now moved on to the Students@Centre team as Technical Director. Another ex-staff member from GWSC is now employed as a consultant by Oracle Corporation.

Kevin Rodrigo, Microsoft Australia – How can others contribute to the research and development?

Others are encouraged to contribute to the knowledge base of DE&T. They are able to do this by:

- Bringing new research to the attention of DE&T, via the Education CIO.
- Feeding information to the Department (via the Education CIO) about similar projects in other jurisdictions.
- Providing information / examples (via the Education CIO) of best practice within Victorian schools which we may not be aware of.
It is not desirable at this point to allow others to have input into the Students@Centre project as any such input could effect the evaluation and make the results invalid.

*Richard Quan, Microsoft Australia – Is Students@Centre tied to the blueprint?*

The Students@Centre initiative is tied to many of the Department's blueprint goals. These include:

**Flagship Strategy One - Excellent education for all students. More student opportunities and better outcomes.** Reading, writing and numeracy skills are a key foundation of learning. Students also need a range of other skills to operate effectively in our changing society. Flagship Strategy 1 aims to develop a new approach to curriculum, standards and assessment that builds on the current Curriculum Standards Framework and prepares students for life in the real world. The initiatives within Flagship Strategy 1 focus on the reform of curriculum practices relating to what students learn; how teaching facilitates learning; how learning is assessed; how student achievements are reported to parents and the documentation of exemplary practice.

The Ultranet meets this objective through the integration of planning of Student work, integration of Standards and, the ability to individualise learning for students. It also allows teachers and schools to report accurately to parents on student progress.

**Flagship Strategy 4 - Creating and Supporting a Performance and Development Culture.** Pursuit of continuous improvement and learning is essential for teachers and students to reach their potential. Continuous improvement already drives our best schools. A sustainable performance and development system in schools improves student outcomes by: -identifying areas for the improvement of individual teacher's professional practice, and providing targeted professional development to do so.

Schools that provide an effective performance and development culture for their staff also create a more enriching and supportive environment for staff and better outcomes for students. Over time all teachers should be able to work in a school that has an effective performance and development culture.

The Ultranet addresses this goal by allowing teachers and school leadership access to real time data about their performance. It will allow teachers to track their own professional learning and will allow access to other teacher’s resources and exemplars created by those in similar roles with similar student groups.

**Flagship Strategy 5 - Teacher Professional Development.** Providing teachers with significant opportunities for professional renewal and development.

Through access to the Ultranet teachers will have opportunities to share professional learnings, as well as to have a place to access local professional learning opportunities.

**Flagship Strategy 6 - School Improvement.** Excellence in the Victorian public education system should be driven by a relentless focus on improving student learning. School planning, accountability and review arrangements have a vital role to play in improving student outcomes. These processes provide precise information on student, school and system performance and highlight the performance of particular groups and cohorts of children and young people. They
must be used as a starting point for improvement. The existing Accountability Framework works effectively for schools and is well accepted. However, changes are needed to make it even more responsive to immediate and future school needs in terms of planning and achievement. Changes are also required to, - streamline and target the arrangements - reduce the administrative burden on schools, - maximise time and energy spent on improving outcomes for children and young people.

The Ultranet will provide a vehicle for School leadership and teachers to have access to data that allows for continuous school improvement. Because the data will be available instantaneously, it will allow for more informed decision making.

**Craig Thompson, Accenture – Do we see the Ultranet being used across all sectors (TAFE, VET, P-12)?**

DE&T sees the Ultranet as delivering potential benefits in TAFE, VET and VCE. The question to be determined is how much fits. This will be determined through ongoing dialogue and analysis of needs in those sectors. In 2006 DE&T will be conducting a project to evaluate the alignment of business requirements for Student Information Systems across the sectors. This project will be run out of the Education CIO’s office.

**Peter Lowe, HarvestRoad – How much research are we currently undertaking in looking at different standards eg IMS, SCORM.**

The Victorian Education Channel is constantly evaluating and making recommendations about which Standards that DE&T uses in this area and projects such as Students@Centre adheres to those standards. As Students@Centre moves into developing the specifications of the tender these standards will be included in the documentation.

**Is Students@Centre a pilot of the technology being developed?**

No. The Students@Centre project is a research and development project designed to test a set of specifications for a student learning environment. The other objective of the project is to then pilot and evaluate the specifications of the environment and the process of the implementation of the pilot.