

IMS Europe - driving open standards in Europe

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SUMMARY

Higher Education institutions share a common need to allow for the secure exchange of data between systems and tools within their teaching and learning ecosystem. Getting systems on campus to work together remains a significant challenge and investment. Without a set of coherent standards across the industry, integration will remain the task of every individual institution, reinventing the wheel again and again. This means more customizations, more (and more expensive) IT projects that have to be maintained over time, and greater fragility and inefficiency in your overall digital ecosystem.

IMS Global Learning Consortium has an expansive body of technical interoperability work that is being applied to connecting educational applications, including data collection, with higher education institutional leadership networks focused on guiding and adopting this work.

IMS Global is the world's largest non-profit educational technology collaboration with over 500 members representing leading edtech suppliers, universities, school districts, ministries of education, and states worldwide. IMS Global plays a leadership role in advancing pivotal education technologies that are helping institutions achieve digital transformation in the areas of adaptive learning, digital assessment, integrated learning platforms apps and tools, learning analytics, and micro-credentials and learning pathways. IMS Global open standards enable a plug-and-play architecture and ecosystem that provides a foundation on which innovative products can be rapidly deployed and work together seamlessly.

IMS Global's view is that the full range of stakeholders in the education sector "own" the evolution of a generic educational technology ecosystem. These stakeholders realize that relevant standards are a necessity.

Many initiatives from IMS Global are being developed together with Higher Education Institutions in Europe. There is increasing support for LTI Advantage, the next phase of adoption for the widely implemented Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) standard. LTI is a standard for integrating a wide range of learning tools into an LMS or other products that serve as a centralized course management or access portal to learning tools. A new community initiative called Edu-API was formed to establish a standard API for student data. SUNet from Sweden and SURF from the Netherlands play an important role in bringing this specification forward. Other initiatives are on digital credentialing, integrated analytics, and digital assessment.



Figure 1 - Initiatives IMS Global

In Europe, we need to make sure that we contribute to the standards by participating in the relevant IMS Global communities. This way, we can make sure European characteristics (like GDPR requirements) are considered during the development of the specifications. To ensure that European institutions and supplier organizations are well represented within IMS Global, the IMS Europe board was launched in early 2018.

In November 2018, EUNIS and IMS Global came to an agreement to collaborate. They will join efforts to disseminate standards, IT policies, and best practices for the use of information technology.

During the session, we will first focus on IMS Global as an organization. How can a member organization as IMS help to enhance learning impact, who are the members, and how can members be involved in creating and maintaining the standards and specifications? Second, we will touch on the most relevant standards for higher education that are currently being adopted and standards that are under development. There will be some comprehensive use cases to go with these standards. Third, we will discuss the recent agreement between IMS Global and EUNIS and what this means for members from both organizations.

Throughout the session, we welcome thoughts and ideas from the audience that will help shape future work and provide new areas that can be explored to enable the innovative teaching and learning that educational leaders seek.

REFERENCE

IMS Global website: <https://www.imsglobal.org>

IMS Certified Product Directory: imscert.org

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Nynke de Boer works for IMS Global as the Program Director IMS Europe. In this role, she is the liaison between the IMS Global organization and the European IMS members and users of the IMS standards in Europe.

Before working for IMS Global, Nynke worked as a project manager for innovation within education at SURF, the national collaborative organization for ICT in Dutch higher education and research. Before working for SURF, Nynke worked in the field of computer-based testing for the last 20 years for both commercial businesses (Pearson VUE) as the Dutch government (College voor Toetsen en Examens).