

ACETS Biannual Report: August 2003

Title of project:	ACETS		
Project Director:	David Dewhurst		
Project Manager:	Rachel Ellaway		
Lead Institution:	University of Edinburgh		
Project Partners:	University of Cambridge, University of Birmingham, LTSN-01, BIOME, Suffolk College Ipswich, Edinburgh s Telford College, Hull York Medical School		
Duration of Award:	10/02 — 09/05	Total award:	£197,401
Period of Report:	02/03 — 08/03	Total co-funding:	£138,884

Confirmation Statement

I confirm that the project development is being conducted under the terms agreed in the initial contract with JISC.

Aims, Objectives and Methodology

Aims and objectives continue to be as detailed in the project plan i.e. to develop and evaluate processes to achieve sustainable use of RLOs. Methodologies are also broadly as stated in the project plan. In practice the focus is increasingly teacher-centred; through interactions with individual teachers; assessment of the skills and support they require to apply appropriate digital resources (RLOs) within their teaching; and the analysis of their teaching approaches and practices. This is in line with the project's aim to explore creative ways of unlocking existing digital content and to support and facilitate teachers to organize their knowledge and resources in ways appropriate for the development of effective learning activities.

Highlights, Outcomes and Important Findings from project

There are a number of elements that the project is developing in support of its activities. The first is the development of a series of recommendations and approaches (which will be presented in the form of a cook-book) for the development of learning activities. This is taking shape in response to the observations and insights gained from interaction with project exemplifiers (teachers funded to develop exemplar learning activities based on existing RLOs) as well as being informed by ACETS project members' own conceptual and applied work in these areas and by wider engagement with the learning object and learning design debates, both nationally and internationally.

The project infrastructure, particularly the collaborative working environment (CWE) is proving to be effective and is steadily being populated with valuable resources by the project's participants. News is disseminated via the public pages of the CWE (www.acets.ac.uk) and direct to the community via the ACETS-X4L@JISCMail list.

The initial work on appropriate metadata has been superseded by the adoption of the UK LOM Core application profile of the IEEE LOM across the whole X4L programme. The highly generic nature of the UK LOM Core is providing ACETS with particular problems and a robust dialogue between ACETS, JORUM+ and CETIS continues to take place.

ACETS has been active in the development of the Strand B Jorum+ repositories and due to a lack of cross-platform support is concentrating on the Intralibrary system. The extension of the JORUM+ rollout to October 2003 has obliged ACETS to restructure its schedule of activities with the level of ACETS teacher recruitment and involvement scaled back until these aspects of infrastructure are well-established.

Much of the time assigned to this stage of the project has been spent conducting face-to-face interviews and sessions. Much valuable data has been gathered from a broad and representative range of project exemplifiers, in the form of baseline surveys (available via the CWE), which will be used to benchmark the ACETS exemplifiers' later teaching learning activities and the resulting exemplars. These same exemplifiers have also been introduced to the processes and expectations of the project and consequently are able to develop clearer ideas of what is expected of them and what outputs they may reasonably achieve. In order to facilitate the exemplification aspect of the project, two demonstrator exemplars, one in anatomy and one in communication skills are currently under development. To work on the demonstrator two of the ACETS exemplifiers have been recruited and are working with ACETS staff.

One of the major ACETS project deliverables is the exemplar. This has three components; a reflective diary/narrative of the thoughts, processes and events arising from the use of RLOs in creating learning materials; a formal and structured description of the learning design, showing the RLOs in a structured pedagogical context; and (optionally) the new materials themselves. The first item will provide the project with ethnographic research and evaluation data and is inherently situated. The second item, the formal description, is a key aspect of the more quantitative and formal aspects of the project's research and evaluation work, and it is hoped will yield the ability to conduct trans-exemplar analysis. In order to develop a formal way of capturing and analysing a teaching session the project is developing a natural language interpretation of the newly released IMS Learning Design specification. This instrument, the ACETS Semi-Structured Learning Design (SSLD), has been widely circulated among the X4L and CETIS communities and has, as a result, benefited greatly from input from across the community. Development of the SSLD continues, particularly in dialogue with Bill Olivier from CETIS, one of IMS Learning Design's authors.

Changes to original award

There have been no further changes to the original award at this stage in the project. Because of delays with the broader X4L infrastructure it may be necessary to make some minor changes in the next stage in order to ensure that time is well spent and the project continues to run smoothly.

Project staff

Workpackage 2: Metadata Model and Development Platform: Rachel Ellaway, Suzanne Hardy, Dawn Leeder, David Davies

Workpackage 3: Resource Discovery: Rachel Ellaway, Dawn Leeder

Workpackage 4: Object acquisition: Rachel Ellaway, Dawn Leeder

Workpackage 5: Creating exemplars Dawn Leeder, Rachel Ellaway, Suzanne Hardy, Clare Avery, Marnie Abercrombie

Workpackage 7: Evaluation of the Processes: Rachel Ellaway, Jean McKendree

Workpackage 8: Dissemination: Rachel Ellaway, David Dewhurst, Suzanne Hardy, Dawn Leeder

Involvement with Programme

- ACETS is part of the Scotland and North X4L cluster, which, with ACETS as the host, met in Edinburgh on 29th April. Due to the dispersed nature of the ACETS project, contact with the cluster has fallen to the Edinburgh-based Project Manager and, despite useful discussion at the cluster meetings, participation in the cluster has had no real effect on the work of the project.
- The Director and Project Manager attended a JORUM+ workshop in Glasgow in May 2003.
- The Project Manager met with staff at the NE Scotland JISC Regional Support Centre (FE) in May 2003.
- The Cambridge Project Manager attended the X4L IPR/copyright workshop in London in May.
- The Director and Project Manager attended the programme meeting in Warwick in June 2003.
- Substantial discussion and dialogue has taken place with JORUM+ regarding the use of controlled vocabularies and the Intralibrary product

Direct contact with the Programme Office

Beyond routine responses to queries and notices there has been no substantive contact with the programme office.

Publications and Publicity

- The ACETS leaflet, produced at the start of the project, continues to be distributed via the LTSN-01. It is also included in delegate packs at all UCEL workshops (which occur regularly across the UK). This leaflet will be updated in the near future to reflect advances in the project and its messages.
- A paper *Assemble, Catalogue, Exemplify, Test and Share: the ACETS Project* will be given at the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE) Annual Scientific Meeting in Bern, Switzerland, in September 2003
- A paper *ACETS — taking a pedagogical approach to reusing learning objects* will be given at the Association for the Study of Medical Education (ASME) Annual Scientific Meeting in Edinburgh, in September 2003
- The ACETS project was widely publicised in Hawaii at the ED-Media conference in July.
- Invited presentation - Dewhurst, D. (2003) *e-learning support for undergraduate pharmacology teaching and learning*. Proceedings of the 9th International Congress of the European Association for Veterinary Pharmacology & Toxicology (EAVPT) July 2003, Lisbon, Portugal.
- Invited presentation *Metadata Alchemy* at the CETIS Metadata and Repositories SIG in Glasgow in March 2003.
- ACETS receives significant verbal publicity through the many channels available to its participants in their other work. The LTSN-01 is highly supportive and verbal in talking about the project, the University Collaboration in e-learning (UCeL) is active in promoting ACETS, the International Virtual Medical School (IVIMEDS) has developed many links with ACETS, and other projects such as the Scottish Doctors Medical Curriculum Group are also actively engaged.

Engagement with Potential Outcomes/Users

A very wide range of channels and forms of engagement with the ACETS projects communities have been created (see the last point in the previous section).

ACETS online web presence at www.acets.ac.uk provides a regularly updated point for referencing the outputs of the project and other relevant developments.

Recruitment of academic teachers (exemplifiers) continues as work package managers identify individuals in universities and colleges throughout the UK and as knowledge of the project spreads. The recruitment process was scaled back as a result of the later than expected provision of the full JORUM+ platform.

A full project board meeting took place at the LTSN-01 in Newcastle in April 2003 to which David Byrne from Guys Kings St Thomas (GKT) medical school in London was invited. GKT have substantially financed and committed to an RLO-orientated review and reorientation of their undergraduate medical course and Dr Byrne presented their plans and engaged with the project board meeting. Further links with GKT are being pursued and they are looking to ACETS to provide much of the R&D expertise and resulting recommendations to inform their own work.

Detailed Progress and Future Plans

- **Research orientation:** the ACETS project's major research orientation is not congruent with much of the rest of the X4L programme. There are specific research instruments that ACETS would need to be instantiated in JORUM+, that are not going to be supported. In the light of these kind of issues, the project has had to rethink some of its research methodologies and pursue others.
- **Online collaborative work:** the collaborative work environment (CWE) continues to expand as project members populate it with resources, documents and links. Baseline surveys for each exemplifier are now available and ongoing notes can be added to document an exemplifier's progress. These are part of the evaluation record of developments and reflections. Access to the CWE has been extended to the X4L Programme Manager. The external public face of the site is expanding as deliverables and materials become ready and available.
- **Metadata:** with the UK LOM Core as the *de facto* X4L metadata model and the issues arising from this, the ACETS project is trying to negotiate the latitude and aspects it requires to function. Work has been carried out by ACETS and JORUM+ to instantiate a simplified MeSH Tree for descriptors for ACETS in JORUM+ (the ACETS MeSH subset has around 500 terms).
- **Repository:** delays with the implementation of the JORUM+ repository have had a knock-on effect, although the ACETS is concentrating its efforts in recruitment and creation of demonstrators as well as developing the documentation that will support and facilitate ACETS exemplifiers, so that these delays will have minimal overall impact on the project. Access to user IDs and the rights associated with these IDs is still being discussed with the programme. Due to its lack of Macintosh support ACETS is unlikely to use the Xtensis JORUM+ tool.
- **Teacher Recruitment:** the recruitment of our 30 or so exemplar authors continues apace. This is initially conducted on a face-to-face basis, which, although time-consuming and travel intensive, is proving to be extremely worthwhile. We currently have 13 academics signed up, including the 2 who will work with us to develop the demonstrators (see below). A further 15 or so are in the process of being recruited.

- Demonstrators — two subject experts, Jonathan Silverman (Communications Skills), Cambridge and Gordon Findlater (Anatomy), Edinburgh have been recruited to provide the expertise for us to create model exemplars to demonstrate what might be achieved by, and hopefully to inspire, the other academic members of the ACETS project. Filming for the communications skills exemplar (based on the concept of concordance) takes place in August 2003 and reuses video clips from the Dipex website — for which we have obtained the necessary permissions. A neurologist (real) will play the specialist and we are using actors as sim-patients
- Evaluation: the project s evaluation methodology continues to be developed and refined. Baseline evaluation data is being captured on exemplifiers and instruments for subsequent stages of the project are being finalised. In particular, work on an interpretation of IMSD Learning Design as a formalised way of describing RLOs situated in an a pedagogical context is well under way. The intention to have evaluation forms for ACETS staff at the point of object upload and download in Intralibrary have however been turned down by the JORUM+ group. The ACETS evaluation advisor, Jean McKendree has moved from LTSN-01 to Hull York Medical School (HYMS) but her services to the project have been retained and as a result HYMS has been added as an ACETS participant.
- Teleworking: the project managers are using video-conferencing and other teleworking tools to conduct regular virtual meetings and keep the dispersed project participants in touch. This is proving to be a very effective and efficient method of communication.
- Dissemination: leaflets for the ACETS project continue to be distributed at national and international workshops and conferences. As the project completes its first year, new materials are being developed to reflect the maturity of the project and explain the methods and processes that have now taken shape.

Addressing accessibility

There are three components to ACETS engagement with accessibility:

- The public areas of the ACETS CWE (www.acets.ac.uk) will be maintained to meet accessibility benchmarks.
- The private areas of the CWE will meet benchmarks if appropriate but this is less of an issue for this non-public area.
- The main activity of the project, the creation of the ACETS exemplars, is carried out in real teaching and learning settings. As such, the project will do no more than advise and support accessibility development among its exemplifiers. One of the evaluation criteria will be the actual attention paid by exemplifiers to issues such as accessibility in their work for the project. This is a reflection of the projects inherent research orientation.

Procedures for Clearing Third Party Rights

Our aim is to clear rights for all resources and components to be used and reused in or out of context by any or all members of the ACETS project and also potentially by the wider X4L community. To achieve this we will:

- a) Request that all content creators/resource contributors sign a disclaimer stating that the resource/media asset/ text is their own work and that they are free to assign copyright clearance.

- b) Where copyright is owned by a party external to the project we shall request, by standard letter, permission to use the asset(s) as above and entirely for educational/non-commercial use. In practice it is very rare for copyright owners to refuse permission for this use (on the understanding that the context will never be defamatory).
- c) Where resources are not available for free, then a suitable contractual basis and fee for using materials will be ensured.
- d) Display a copyright and terms of use notice where these materials are available online.
- e) Ensure Rights are defined in the Rights section of the metadata.
- f) All of the above are pending based on the depositor's licence that JORUM+ are developing.

Financial summary

Expenses since September 1st 2002 (project start date) are as follows:

Salary contribution (RE) - £5909.74 (£6218 still to be claimed)

Salary contribution (DL) - £0.00 (£7939 still to be claimed)

Travel (project board meetings, advisory board meetings, other meetings, dissemination activities) - £3270.39 (to end June 03)

Consultancy - D.Davies £1000.00

J.McKendree £1000.00

We believe that all are within budget and are consistent with the original cost projections.