



**information
standards board**
for education, skills
and children's services

Information Standards Board
2010-11 Annual Report

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Independent Chair's Report

The landscape surrounding the work of the Information Standards Board (ISB) changed significantly during 2010-11. A new Government is in place, changes are underway to the Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) we work with, and the continuing need to make significant savings has meant the work of the ISB is more vital now than ever before both in helping to reduce the burden on frontline services and in supporting the new Government's Transparency agenda.

More recently, in April 2011, the Cabinet Office published, the [Government ICT Strategy](#), which enables the building of a common infrastructure underpinned by a set of common standards. The Strategy sets out the strategic direction of central government ICT and key deliverables over the next 24 months. The strategy also emphasises the need for open standards and interoperability.

During the last year, the ISB not only continued to develop open information standards to support a more seamless transfer of data across the education, skills and children's services system, but also gave much greater focus to encouraging organisations to migrate to or implement our standards.

Just one benefit of the spread of common information standards is helping learners have easier access to a comprehensive range of easily understood and comparable data about different educational and training institutions, and the courses they offer.

Looking ahead, I would like to see a stepping up of the pace of these changes: organisations collaborating by exchanging data securely in a standard form; policy initiatives implemented in shorter timescales; cross-sector and organisational restructuring made easier; central data collection which imposes little or no burden because only that which is needed for a well-run operation is collected; and vendors competing on value offered because markets are operating more efficiently.

The Board, its Secretariat and Technical Support Service, and our two sponsoring departments, BIS and DfE, all realise that there is a lot to be done in the year ahead and we are all fully committed to doing this through open dialogue with the ALBs, other stakeholders and suppliers.



Dorian Bradley

Looking Ahead

We aim to realise benefits through implementation of the ISB standards by organisations right across education, skills and children's services (ESCS). We have received approval from the DfE's Permanent Secretary to make it a requirement on the DfE's Arms Length Bodies to migrate to ISB standards when IT systems are changed or updated.

The ISB will also be taking forward the following steps to support the adoption and implementation of the standards:

- Making the ISB the official advisory body for any ICT related investments which come through the DfE's ICT Efficiency Control process.
- Making compliance with ISB standards an integral part of DfE's procurement.
- Commissioning the DfE CIO Council to develop and agree a set of principles to support and promote the development and use of approved standards.
- Requesting BIS to adopt a parallel approach.

Projects and Timelines

We want to continue working with suppliers from the Systems Interoperability Framework Association (SIFA), Information Management Partnership for Schools (IMPS), Management Information Software (MIS) Suppliers, and the Suppliers Association for Learning Technology and Interoperability in Schools (SALTIS) groups and others.

To enable wider engagement we plan to set up a Special Interest Group for Suppliers by June 2011.

ISB Standards Pipeline 2011-12

The following areas for the development of new information standards have been identified in order to meet the plans of projects and programmes known to the ISB. Others may emerge as policies are formulated and move towards realisation:

Learning Aims
Maintenance Criteria for Controlled Vocabularies
Leavers Destination
Contact
Qualifications
Results/Awards/Outcomes
Ethnicity (learner, workforce)
Disability (learner, workforce)
Employment
Location: see address
Employment
Metadata Standard
Staff
Data access labelling
Data Quality metadata
Family relationships
Dinner Money
LP Type

Collaboration

The ISB, and its Technical Support Service, have extensively collaborated with stakeholders on:

- Development of open information standards to support a more seamless transfer of data within, and external to the education, skills and children's services sector.
- Engagement to drive adoption of ISB information standards with:
 - JCQ awarding bodies,
 - Data and Statistics Division,
 - The Information Authority,
 - Learning Records Service,
 - Higher Education Statistics Agency,
 - University and Colleges Admissions Service, and
 - MIS vendors
- Exploitation of these standards to reduce front line delivery costs, facilitate the publication of 'transparent data'.
- The requirement to use ISB standards within procurement frameworks and remit letters for the new executive agencies.

Five Nations meetings

Members of the Five Nations Group are working together to align the development of standards in Eire, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Five Nations Governance meetings

The Five Nations Governance Group aims to provide strategic direction to the collaborative work of the Information Standards Board for England and the equivalent bodies in the other nations, recognising the policy and organisational constraints that exist across the UK countries and Eire.

Standard Implementation Working Group

This group has been set up to work with key stakeholders to move towards the adoption and migration of the ISB standards – aims for the next 24 months:

- Focus on implementation
- Share experiences
- Share/harmonise adoption solutions
- Shared services for common issues
- Harmonise plans.

New Website and Collaboration Space

As part of the Government's web rationalisation programme, we are in the process of transferring the ISB website from its current location www.escs-isb.gov.uk to www.education.gov.uk/escs-isb.gov.uk (this is still under development). This will have a number of benefits for the ISB and its stakeholders, including improved search functionality and the opportunity to refresh both the structure and the 'look and feel' of the website.

The ISB has also established a new collaboration space 'Huddle' and the Secretariat is in the process of inviting Board, Special Interest Group (SIG) and working group members to join the collaboration space. Huddle will be a useful forum for open discussion with ISB stakeholders the Board and the Technical Support Service.

Performance Against the ISB's Delivery Plan 2010-11

April 2010 – The Childcare and Family Services Data Standards have been developed to meet the identified need for parents to access, search, sort, filter and compare information about childcare and family services providers, including childminders. The Board approved the Childcare and Family Services Comparison Data Business Data Standards with a status of 'Recommended'.

September 2010 - Interactive Whiteboard Content Interoperability the Digital Content SIG has developed an Interactive Whiteboard Common File Format (IWB CFF) specification to ensure teachers and learners can:

- Create content for one product and save it in a file that can be used again in another product
- Share resources with their colleagues and use content created by others.
- Take resources with them when they move to another school or college.

The specification also allows providers of ready-made resources to create them in a single format rather than many, therefore allowing more time and money to be spent on the quality of the resources. The Board approved the specification with a status of 'Technical Standard'.

Standards Under Development

Workforce Data Standards: meet system-wide needs with the impetus coming from DfE data collection needs.

- Vetting and Barring - to develop the definition of a single set of ISB standards that can support and ensure alignment of vetting activities. It covers Criminal Records Disclosure, the Vetting and Barring Scheme (with the caveat that the scheme is not currently operational) and National Security Vetting.
- Foreign Workers - to develop the definition of a single set of ISB standards that can support and ensure alignment of immigration activities. It covers a range of processes to establish sponsor status, to sponsor workers, to sponsor students, and to monitor performance.

Ethnicity: to align the ISB's Ethnicity standard to the 2011 ONS Census.

Learner Records: to define data standards to support learner data, including those required to repurpose the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).

Learner Learning Difficulty and Disability: to express information about the nature of a learner's learning difficulty or disability.

Registration, Assessment, Results and Awards Notification Data Standards: approves data standards for exam registration and results notifications for awarding bodies.

Address: Guidance and updates to the ISB standards for the UK address, linked to the National Address Gazetteer (NAG) available on the ISB website. The Ordnance Survey is responsible for the UK contribution and for the NAG, which will be available online at www.nlpg.org.uk from April 2011 and will include URIs for addresses.

Standards Approved by the ISB

<i>Business Data Standards</i>	
Learner Attendance Period	The chosen period for recording attendance
Learning Event	A period during which learning is delivered/ received
Learning Opportunity	Any course/apprenticeship/training
Learning Opportunity Award	Records achievement against a qualification
Learning Opportunity Delivery	An instance of a LO
Learning Opportunity Enrolment	A record of a learner application/ enrolment
Locator	Any channel/means of communication (address, tel, email etc)
Premises	A locator used by a stakeholder
Qualification	A statement of achievement or learning
Service	Work done by a stakeholder for another
Service Provision	a record of (intention to) provide service
Stakeholder	A person or organisation
Stakeholder (Organisation) Post	Any post in an organisation
Stakeholder Contact	Records the nature of the relationship between stakeholder and locator
Stakeholder Role	eg Consortium member, LP, learner
Stakeholder Schedule	A period in a schedule

Stakeholder Contact	The relationship between a stakeholder and a locator
Direct Service Offer	An offer, with time, price and conditions, of goods or services
Provider Service Delivery	Record of delivered services or goods

<i>Technical Data Standards</i>	
Interactive White Board	a specification for interoperability between interactive whiteboards

ISB Board members

We would like to thank the Board members for their contributions during the year, and give a welcome to new members who have recently joined the board: Alan Bowling, Chief Information Officer, TDA; Clare Gilligan, Head of Awarding Organisation Performance; Jude Hillary, Head of Data and Statistics Division and Head of Profession for Statistics, DfE; and Peter Duffy, Head of Information Systems, Ofsted.

We would also like to record our thanks for the work of Di Smith, Barry Kruger, Colin Hurd, Paul Shoesmith and Stephen Crunkhorn whose membership of the Board came to an end during 2010-11.

Profiles

Dorian Bradley – Independent Chair



Dorian Bradley is the first independent chairman of the Information Standards Board (ISB), a post he has held since September 2007. He also advises the Secretary of State for Education on exemptions from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and is a member of an Expert Panel working with Dame Clare Tickell who is currently carrying out a review of the EYFS. Outside the UK, Dorian has been a consultant for the Chief Inspector of Social Services in Eire and for the World Bank in Russia.

“Since its formation, the Board has approved a set of data and information standards that are widely accepted across the education, skills and children’s services system in England. The next stage in our work is to encourage all organisations working in this system to increase the speed and range of their take up of these standards to deliver more quickly, better outcomes for children and learners, and cost savings for the taxpayer, through the use of better quality information based on our standards.

We have also established close working relationships with the other countries of the UK and with Eire, to bring even greater benefits. Using common information standards wherever possible will benefit all countries, as our people and information relating to them cross borders daily.”

Adam Cooper – Board Member



Adam Cooper has worked with the ISB since joining JISC CETIS (Centre for Educational Technology and Interoperability Standards) in 2006. Here he oversees the technology work of CETIS on behalf of UK higher and further education. He also chairs the British Standards Institute Committee IST/43 – ICT Standards for Learning Education and Training.

“I bring ten years of experience in standardisation work, gained from working in further and higher education – in both the public and private sectors. I aim to combine my practical experience of teaching and managing educational technology development, with my experience in designing and implementing interoperability standards.”

Alison Alden – Board Member



Alison Alden is Chief Executive of the Higher Education Statistics Agency, which collects data from all of the higher education institutions in the UK and makes information and intelligence on the provision of higher education available to interested parties.

“I have been involved in the collection and provision of information through much of my career in higher education (as a University Director of IS and senior executive) and appreciate the importance of identifying standards that allow for information sharing and the collection of meaningful administrative and management information. The need for good quality information that both supports individual learners and the planning and provision of education is vital for the whole sector and I am glad that I am able to contribute to this through the Information Standards Board.”

Alan Bowling – Board Member



Alan Bowling has been Chief Information Officer (CIO) and a director for the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) since 2009. In this role he oversees all aspects of information and knowledge management for the agency. Included within his remit is Information Assurance as he holds the role of Senior Information Risk Owner for the agency. Prior to joining the agency Alan held several roles in the private sector within the information arena including CIO. He is currently Chairman of a not for profit ERP software User group for the UK & Ireland.

“The currency of our organisation is Information. The role we perform in the delivery of quality teachers to schools can only take place when data is collected from many organisations and converted to insightful information that supports this process. Information standards within this exchange are therefore critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of this process.”

Clare Gilligan – Board Member



Clare Gilligan is Head of Awarding Organisation Performance at Ofqual the independent regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessment in England, and of vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. Clare is responsible for the recognition of Awarding Organisations, accreditation of their qualifications, the monitoring of Awarding Organisations and working with them and other stakeholders to ensure the successful delivery of examinations and results.

Clare is leading on the development of a new risk assessment and evidence model for Ofqual and has been involved in the development and delivery of the Regulatory Information Technology System (RITS).

"The ability to share and understand information is critical to any evidence based regulator so the work of the ISB is an enabler for Ofqual and the whole of the education and skills sectors."

John Perks – Board Member



John Perks is Head of the information authority, which sets and regulates data standards for further education and training provision in England. Its goals are to improve the quality of data collections and reduce the time spent on administration.

"The information authority recognises that further education and training is a fundamental part of the wider education and skills sector and increasingly is working with colleagues in the schools and higher education sectors to develop common standards and

approaches to data collection and analysis. The role of the ISB in defining and setting data standards is important to all those involved in the education sector and I'm pleased to be supporting its aims and taking an active role in this area of work."

Jude Hillary – Board Member



Jude Hillary is Head of DfE, Data and Statistics Division (DSD). Jude is responsible for the collection, management and dissemination of a wide range of statistics which provide an evidence base for important policy and delivery challenges and funding decisions as well as support public choice and accountability. The Division operates within an environment of evolving policy requirements and it provides a portfolio of information, statistics and data which underpin funding decisions and the development and monitoring of policy right across the Department's strategic objectives.

Jude joined DfE as a Government Statistician with over 20 years experience across a number of Whitehall Departments including HM Treasury, HM Revenue and Customs, and latterly Department for Work and Pensions. He replaced Malcolm Britton who retired in January 2011.

Peter Duffy – Board Member



Peter is Head of IS at Ofsted. His IS career stretches back almost 30 years and has included programme management, project management, infrastructure management and systems development and support.

Una Bennett – Board Member



Una Bennett is Head of Learning Records Service which provides information services for learners and learning providers across the UK with the aim of enabling information sharing and reducing administration. Learning Records Service include the Unique Learner Number for learners aged 14 plus and the Personal Learning Record which holds achievement data on behalf of individuals. These services support a range of educational initiatives such as 14-19 Diplomas and the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

“In providing services to schools, further education and skills providers, higher education institutions and their learners, I have become even more convinced of the need for common data standards so that information can be easily accessed and transferred when appropriate. The ISB’s work in developing and promoting common data standards is central to continued progress and realising the benefits for learners and all involved in education.”

Members Representing Organisations

David Riley– ISB Health and Social Care (HaSC)



David is the National Lead for Social Care for the ISB for HaSC and is their representative for the ISB for ESCS. He also works for the London Borough of Greenwich as Information Governance Manager and Caldicott Guardian.

“I bring with me the knowledge from a board with several years’ experience. Experience such as appraising and approving information standards that are fit-for-purpose, safe, interoperable and implementable.

I also bring more than 30 years’ experience working in local government. That includes several years in the youth service, more than 15 years in social care – including children’s social care – and significant experience in Information Governance.”

Stuart Edwards - Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)



Stuart Edwards is a Deputy Director in the Further Education and Skills Investment Directorate at BIS. He leads on policies relating to quality improvement, teaching and learning, workforce development, harnessing technology across the FE and Skills sector and more. Stuart holds a Doctorate in Educational Administration and is a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Personnel.

“Standards are important for the efficient flow of data and its effective utilisation to support improved learner experience and progression.

I really welcome the opportunity to contribute to the work of the ISB, which has a critical bearing on my current role in BIS.”

Ken Anderson – Department for Education (DfE)



Ken Anderson is a Deputy Director in the DfE's Chief Information Officer Group - responsible for the Information Strategy for Education, Skills and Children's Services and the DfE's senior sponsor for the Information Standards Board.

As the Department's Chief Technology Officer, Ken has considerable experience in the development of information systems, ICT programme management, enterprise architecture and shared service creation.

“ISB standards will ensure that information is stored in common, consistent formats which will aid front line delivery, reduce bureaucracy and enable a more joined up service.”