

## Overview of the SIFA UK Quarterly Meeting at Dunchurch Park, Warwickshire

The most recent quarterly event was held at Dunchurch Park, Warwickshire on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

Thank you to all those who made it to this event - it was the largest SIFA UK conference to date!

We were delighted to have 10 new Suppliers and 1 new Local Authority represented during the conference, and hope they will be joining the SIFA UK Community in the near future.

In total, there were 118 delegates over the two days, including 6 Learning Platform Services Framework Suppliers, MoU signatories who represent of 95% of MIS products used in schools and representatives from Wales, Northern Ireland and DfES. There were presentations from Nick Tomlinson (DfES) on 'DfES' view of SIF' and

Larry Fruth (SIFA) on 'The State of SIF and SIFA' to name but a few. Delegates were also able to see the first live UK demonstration of interoperability, functioning on current software applications that are used in UK schools.

All working groups and the SIFA UK Board met and continued to address the challenges of incorporating SIF into the UK education system, and there were general discussions on the Data Model release cycle and an update on the Proof of Concept 1 (Birmingham). It was very encouraging to have so many people stay and join us for dinner, carrying on the many conversations on SIF through into the evening.

Working Groups are now able to access their specific documentation from the Community Site on the SIFA website. There are also discussion fo-



**Dunchurch Park,  
Warwickshire**

rooms within each individual working group section for work to be done in the intervening time, before our next event in June.

In general, this was a very positive meeting with lots of interesting questions raised by the new attendees. The best phrase over the 2-days was definitely 'policy wonks' (Mark Phillips can explain!).

Thanks again for your support within the Community and we look forward to seeing you in June!



**Presentations in the Garden Rooms, Dunchurch Park**

All the presentations can now be found on the website ([www.sifinfo.org/uk](http://www.sifinfo.org/uk)), in the 'Press Room' section.

Should you require instructions on how to use the Community Site (<http://community.sifinfo.org/sites/InternationalConsortiums/UnitedKingdom>) please email [penny.murray@becta.org.uk](mailto:penny.murray@becta.org.uk).

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### Special points of interest:

- SIFA University— have you signed up yet? ([www.sifinfo.org](http://www.sifinfo.org))
- 2007 Calendar of Events — NOW AVAILABLE!
- UK Community Site available to all SIFA members

## 'Welcome' by Larry Fruth, CEO, SIFA

*Welcome from over 400 members of the Schools Interoperability Framework Association (SIFA®)!*

*We are excited about leveraging the work done on interoperable standards to specifically address the needs of UK schools. Becta, DfES and others in the SIFA UK Governance structure have been great partners to identify the particular needs of UK learners and we are thrilled by all the possibilities – and the best practice sharing – that are coming to light.*

*I commend you in showing the leadership and time commitment to attend and participate in the SIFA UK meetings on the critical topic of data identification,*

*movement and utilisation.*

*At the last SIFA UK Quarterly Meeting, I welcomed the chance to meet each and every one of you and answer any questions or concerns you might have in how SIF will be utilised in the UK.*

*Many of you asked numerous questions and I hope you have become "proactive" in the data conversations and SIF utilisation for your constituents.*

*Your involvement, as with our other 400 members, is critical in the success of the Association and in achieving true data interoperability through the use of standards.*

**Larry L. Fruth II Ph.D.**  
Executive Director  
SIFA

## Welcome to our new SIFA UK Members

Since our last meeting at Walton Hall on 29/30 November 2006, we are very pleased to welcome RM and CEM Centre as new SIFA Members.



## SIF workshops for Local Authorities

After evaluating the delegate responses from the Data Sub-ICES events, held in October & November 2006, it was evident that Local Authorities were requesting more information and further workshops to gain a better understanding on how SIF could impact their working environment.

As such we are proposing to hold additional workshops in April & May 2007 across the country.

We will be contacting members of the SIFA UK Community to help support these workshops .

## Dolphins in Malibu by Mark Phillips, Chair, SIFA UK Board

**Welcome to SIFA UK.**

*Who said that the US and UK are 'separated by a common language'? (It was George Bernard Shaw actually). Nonsense, say I. On the contrary I think it's encouraging, and indeed comforting, to work with US colleagues and find that, apart from a little linguistic diversity, we wrestle with the same problems and reach for similar solutions. And it's really satisfying, once you've crossed that small linguistic bridge, to find how convergent our thinking is. This was particularly noticeable in*

*Washington last year when I went to Stats DC as part of my SIF fact finding. 'The Big Ask' they called it – I thought what a concise way of describing a 'consolidated data acquisition programme'. An American colleague, on the other hand, when hearing that we referred to 'No Child Left Behind' as 'Every Child Matters' just said "you Brits, you get it right every time."*

*And that's how it should be. Diversity gives us the scope to learn from best practice, to build on mature thinking and together to move common*

*standards forward. This year, in Los Angeles, I began to detect this happening on a new front as SIFA began to grapple with some of the issues of internationalisation. They might be thorny, but I got the sense that the SIF standard will benefit from the renewed rigour that this process will require. Hybrid vigour, I think they call it, and in evolutionary terms it wins out every time.*

*So, I'm really looking forward to this year, and the developments that will lead to some meaningful applications of the SIF standard here in the UK.*

*Oh, about the Dolphins; the British contingent stayed over one night after the LA conference finished. I knew a secluded little beach in Malibu where you can get a great breakfast so we went there early on Saturday morning. Bearing in mind that we were only a few days out of the UK breakfast in Malibu already seemed pretty surreal but as one, then another, pod of dolphins swam lazily by - right in front of us - well, that was magical.*

**Mark Phillips**  
Chair  
SIFA UK Board

## Six of the best, in Britain!

SIFA UK is pleased to announce that we now have SIX members officially certified in Implementation Training. This major accomplishment should not go unnoticed, as these six delegates are the first in the world to undertake this course.

It all started back in January, during a meeting at the Hilton Olympia London, with members of Service Birmingham, Becta and SIFA discussing implementation. Everyone quickly came to the conclusion that a training session was urgently required to be able to fully understand the impact of SIF implementation for

the National Pilot Birmingham.

The invitation was then opened up to all those directly involved in POC 1 and a date was set for February at Becta's offices in Coventry, with Laurie Collins, SIFA and Doug Quinton, Edustructures agreeing to fly over from the USA to conduct the training.

Every delegate on the course agreed what an incredible two days we had, with several in-depth topics covered including Understand Project Planning as it relates to SIF, Business Analysis and Processes, ROI and Net-

work & Architecture Planning among others.

There was an assessment at the end of the two days (minimum pass mark 80%) for delegates to prove their knowledge of implementation practices, and we are very pleased to inform you that all six delegates passed with flying colours!

We would like to acknowledge the commitment of all those who attended this course despite some rather discouraging weather conditions!

This course will soon be available on SIFA University at [www.sifinfo.org](http://www.sifinfo.org).



**Karen Crowston, B'ham**  
**and Tony Lockwood,**  
**Serco**

## DSPB gives approval for Proof of Concept 2 in Northern Ireland

On 24<sup>th</sup> January the Data Services Programme Board (DSPB) gave their approval for the Proof of Concept (POC) 2 in Northern Ireland, which involves C2k, Capita, CEM Centre and HP.

The main objectives for this POC are:

- ~ SIF as a possible solution for data interoperability
- ~ To identify dataset requirements
- ~ To understand the technical and financial implications for current and future ICT provision of implementing a SIF solution
- ~ To understand the road

map for Agent Certification

The main outputs for this POC are:

- ~ Populating the INCAS database with the relevant pupil data from SIMS® systems
- ~ Pupils accessing and completing the assessments
- ~ Movement of assessment data from INCAS to SIMS® Assessment Manager

It is proposed that agent development will be completed by August 2007, and a trial will commence in the new school year, beginning September 2007.

## SIFA UK Handout

As part of the promotion of SIFA within the UK, Board members agreed that publicity material should be designed (with potential Suppliers in mind) for distribution at BETT, 10-13 January 2007.

The double-sided handout gave a brief overview of SIFA UK and the progress that the work to date has delivered.

There were also details of the membership costs, FAQs and contact details

for anyone interested in finding out more information.

Much interest has been generated in recent months with several new participants attending the SIFA UK Quarterly Meeting in March at Dunchurch Park, Warwickshire.

To receive a hard copy or PDF format of the SIFA UK handout please email [sifauk@becta.org.uk](mailto:sifauk@becta.org.uk) with your details.

## Did you know .....

### ..... we have our own SIFA UK website in production?

We have made great progress over the last couple of weeks putting together the basis of our very own website. Linked directly to the main SIFA website ([www.sifinfo.org](http://www.sifinfo.org)), the UK pages will be specifically targeted to promote the progress and planning to-date within the Community.

SIFA is updating certain

areas of the website, so it can accommodate the growing global interest. The Members List is one specific area that is being changed, and we will be able to provide descriptions of your organisations, web-links and contact details.

We will have a UK specific events page where past and future event details will be posted. Eventually, you may be able to register your attendance and also book your ac-

commodation online!

### We need YOU.....

There will also be 'In the News' and 'Success Stories' sections, so we will be needing any press releases, interviews, articles and documents promoting all your hard work and effort.

You will also be able to download the latest issue of the SIFA UK Newsletter as well as other SIFA information!



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES ....

### SIFA UK Quarterly Meeting—Summer

Tuesday 26th & Wednesday 27th June 2007

### SIFA UK Board Meeting

Wednesday 27th June 2007

### SIFA UK Quarterly Meeting—Autumn

provisional dates— Wednesday 26th & Thursday 27th September 2007

## CONTACT DETAILS



For more information on **SIFA UK**

[sifauk@becta.org.uk](mailto:sifauk@becta.org.uk)

**Paul Shoesmith**—Int'l SIFA Board Member

[paul.shoesmith@becta.org.uk](mailto:paul.shoesmith@becta.org.uk)

**Mark Phillips** - Chair, SIFA UK Board

[mark.PHILLIPS@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mark.PHILLIPS@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

**Larry Fruth** – Executive Director, SIFA

[lfruth@sifinfo.org](mailto:lfruth@sifinfo.org)

**Nick Barron**—Senior Architect, SIF Project Team

[nick.barron@becta.org.uk](mailto:nick.barron@becta.org.uk)

**David Owens**—SIF Project Team

[david.owens@becta.org.uk](mailto:david.owens@becta.org.uk)

**Penny Murray**—SIF Project Team

[penny.murray@becta.org.uk](mailto:penny.murray@becta.org.uk)

To submit articles for future newsletters

[sifauk@becta.org.uk](mailto:sifauk@becta.org.uk)

Any other comments or questions please email:

[sifauk@becta.org.uk](mailto:sifauk@becta.org.uk)