



TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTED LEARNING: the Becta Case Study

Between 2004 and 2009, Vantaggio received 13 individual commissions from Becta, plus a rolling contract as Project Manager looking after Becta's Vocabulary Management System and Service. Most of these commissions involved formal research and report writing using a variety of research methods, both quantitative and qualitative. Some involved producing papers which Becta would use to brief at Ministerial level, or to influence educational ICT policy. Some of these pieces of work are summarised here.

Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) Standards

The seamless exchange of data files between different vendors' IWBs has long been a problem and often resulted in considerable duplication of effort. The aim of this piece of research was to set out the case for the introduction of a common technical specification for IWB file content which would enable data to be interoperable across different systems. This would only be successful, with benefits afforded to system and data users, if the industry as a whole adopts the interoperability specification. The paper also investigated and reported on what would be involved in establishing a new technical standard, and prepared a draft standard for adoption. To the best of our knowledge, this standard has subsequently been adopted by the majority of IWB vendors.

The noise and the silence: Making sense of accessibility and inclusivity in ICT.

Accessibility and inclusivity issues in ICT are complex and emotive. Guidelines for best practice in designing and developing ICT content for all levels of learning are often contradictory and almost always out of step with recent and current developments in assistive technologies. The legal requirement placed on schools as result of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) brings a further dimension of confusion with its reference to the need to make "reasonable adjustment" to accommodate for disabled pupils. This paper has the aim of unpicking these issues, and synthesising the debates on all sides into a pragmatic and coherent set of recommendations for UK education. The paper was presented to the (now DfE) DfES Content Advisory Board. This paper can be found in our Whitepapers section.

eLearning Provision for the Post 16 sector:

We were commissioned to carry out a study into eLearning provision for the UK's Post 16 education sector. This is a broad and diverse sector, involving Further Education, Sixth Form Colleges, Work Based Learning as well as Adult and Community Learning. The final report was subsequently used to form the basis for Becta's five year strategy for digital learning content for the Post 16 sector.

Best Practice Guidelines for Content Packaging and Publishing

This project involved researching and writing a set of best practice guidelines for eLearning content packaging and publishing for the UK education sector. The aim was to introduce common technical standards, based on SCORM 2004, to underpin the drive for system interoperability. This substantial

piece of work, which includes a number of detailed technical best practice exemplars, was launched in January 2005 at BETT and also at a special Technology Experts conference. The guidelines can be found in our Whitepapers section.

Technical Standards and Interoperability Frameworks

This work was undertaken for the (now DfE) DfES Content Advisory Board which advises education ministers. The paper explores the necessity of developing a digital infrastructure in which content can be shared between different systems. It investigates the different technical standards and the drive for interoperability frameworks, why these are needed, and what benefits they can realise.

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