

## The Browne Report and synergies with the current ClePD Projects

### Centre for International ePortfolio Development (ClePD) Information Services University of Nottingham

Close reading of the Browne Report *Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education*<sup>1</sup>, and in particular, those sections dealing with courses information, information advice and guidance (IAG) and employment outcomes, reveals some areas of synergy with the working direction of the ClePD.

ClePD projects<sup>2</sup> seek to maximise the efficiency of information flow, supporting education stakeholders in access to seamless ICT services and quality information. These aims correspond to the challenges outlined in the Browne review. Some pertinent quotes are:

*“We have received evidence on the critical role of information, advice and guidance for prospective students – and the variable quality of what is available.”* Chapter 3, section 3.1, p.24

*“Students need access to high quality information, advice and guidance in order to make the best choices. Improvements are needed. Providing students with clearer information about employment outcomes will close the gap between the skills taught by the higher education system and what employers need.”* Chapter 4, Summary, p.28

*“Government has a responsibility to ensure that all pupils, in all types of school, have access to high quality advice about the benefits of higher education and well informed support to ensure that they are able to make the best choices”* Chapter 4, section 4.2, p.29

*“There are gaps in the information available to students”*

*“Some of this information already exists, but it is spread across many different sources. Some of the information is not collected in a way which allows easy comparison.”* Chapter 4, section 4.2, p.30

#### **Maximising accuracy and access to courses information**

The ClePD is leading national work in helping to implement the UK eProspectus data standard *eXchanging Course Related Information (XCRI)*<sup>3</sup>. Working in partnership with over 20 organisations over a number of projects<sup>4</sup>, the ClePD has sought to improve the flow of course-related information for the benefit of learners, educational institutions and local/regional courses systems. XCRI and open data will potentially have a big part to play in meeting the challenges of the Browne Review.

#### **Enhancing availability and access to employment information**

One current ClePD project, *Shared Aggregation of LAbour Market Information (SALAMI)*<sup>5</sup> is connecting standardised XCRI course data with raw Labour Market Information and destination data to provide dynamic and timely access to; Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) for IAG, course search, curriculum planning and gap analysis, workforce development, local/regional planning, employer and business engagement activities. Shared services and targeted interfaces will provide flexible routes into this information for a variety of purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> Browne Report <http://hereview.independent.gov.uk/hereview/report/>

<sup>2</sup> Projects are mainly funded through the JISC and the EU. See [www.nottingham.ac.uk/eportfolio](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/eportfolio) for further details

<sup>3</sup> See [www.xcri.co.uk](http://www.xcri.co.uk) for information about the UK standard

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/eportfolio/xcri> for details of the ClePD's XCRI projects and their funders.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/eportfolio/salami> for further details of the SALAMI project

Exploring new ways for HE and business to collaborate is a focus of the *Shared Architecture for eEmployer, Student & Organisational Networking (SAMSON<sup>6</sup>)* project. It is envisioned that placements and work experience will feature as a priority for HEIs in promoting employability of their students. SAMSON uses new technologies to improve the student experience and employer engagement with placements, whilst introducing efficiencies into the placements and CPD processes.

### **In summary**

Browne claims that student choice will “*shape the landscape of higher education<sup>7</sup>*”. It is therefore vital that information about course offerings – together with the peripheral associated information (transport, location, labour market, finance, learning resources etc.) which is often regarded as equally important - is current, accurate and informative.

Joining together datasets using open standards will provide potential students with a coherent and seamless experience helping them to make the best choice possible.

Shared web services will help to meet the needs of careers professionals and curriculum planners operating in the forthcoming challenging climate, providing the information element and empowering them to concentrate on offering guidance.

For more information about the ClePD’s work, see the website [www.nottingham.ac.uk/eportfolio](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/eportfolio)  
To contact the ClePD, email [eportfolio-admin@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:eportfolio-admin@nottingham.ac.uk)

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/eportfolio/samson> for information about the SAMSON project

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 3, Section 3.2, Principle 2 p. 25