

Connecting the region: Infrastructure for an Information Ecosystem

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SYNOPSIS

The Centre for International ePortfolio Development (ClePD) is a University of Nottingham team in touch with national policy for learning, skills and employment, working closely to government standards for IT development. We are collaborating with partners across the region to join up organisations and processes for the benefit of students, employees, universities and businesses.

Joined-up systems and data interoperability – these are at the heart of ClePD projects.

Recent regional projects have begun to implement use of national data standards to promote interoperability amongst regional systems supporting the learning and skills agenda.

Current projects underway are

- Providing an infrastructure for easy to access communications between work-based learners, employer and universities
- Piloting a “Trust and Security” architecture supporting information-sharing by all the partners involved in university researchers’ work placements in regional businesses
- Developing an “XCRI” infrastructure with colleges/universities, 14-19 Prospectuses and Your Future East Midlands to improve the accuracy of information about courses of study available across the region through streamlined data collection
- Supporting the 14-19 Prospectuses and Further Education in implementing DCSF requirements to enable learners to apply to courses seamlessly across East Midlands’ county boundaries.

Joining employers, universities and work-based learners with SAMSON

Whether employers are taking on work-placement students, sending staff on CPD, or bringing in Knowledge Transfer, there is a clear need to connect all parties involved and maximise the services that university, learner and employer can offer and share, to make the most of collaborative working around work-based learning.

The University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University have joined together on the [SAMSON](#) project to develop a linked IT platform which will provide excellent information and communications around a wide range of Learning and Development activities for all concerned.

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Managing personal data: Trust, security and data protection

Putting the individual in control of his or her personal data is at the heart of an international EU-funded project, [TAS3](#). The project is developing architecture and services for users to manage information generated over a lifetime and stored at distributed locations.

The ClePD are running the UK-based pilots to test the trust architecture, the first focussing on secure and reliable data exchange to support graduate employability via work placements.

Learning opportunities and XCRI – Improving access to Information, Advice and Guidance

Current and accurate course information is vital for learners to be able to identify real-time progression routes and opportunities.

With project funding from Leap Ahead and JISC, the ClePD is working on a nationally significant initiative developing IT infrastructure using the [XCRI data standard](#) to provide a streamlined dataflow of courses information with 12 partners from the East Midlands, including Nottingham FE Colleges, Connexions Nottinghamshire and Your Future East Midlands.

Aimhigher's "[Your Future East Midlands](#)" website is providing the import and aggregation mechanism for these projects and, in the longer term, we anticipate partners will adopt this method of export and data collection more widely as a potential solution to the practical issues surrounding the sharing of course information.

Streamlining the Application Process for FE learners

The DCSF wants learners to be able to apply for courses seamlessly across county borders*. Our project, XCRI-XB-CAP, seeks to maximise the efficiency of information flow, supporting access to seamless services and quality information for learners in the region, and to support implementation of 14-19 FE reforms in terms of both quality and affordability. Working with the five East Midlands Connexions services and up to 3 Nottingham FE Colleges, the aim is to pilot new data standards to support streamlined cross-border and web-service enabled Common Application Processes for young people.

*[DCSF Action Plan](#)