

CEN/ISSS Workshop: e-Certification in Europe

Focus Group Meeting – London – 10 July 2008

London, Southampton Street, 5; BCS Building

10 July 2008

- Ed Title: Certification Magazine (good source for articles, empirical data around the area of certification)
- Article about certification (“IT Training” and “Service Talk”: Journal of BCS)
- ISEB-Qualifications and Training

Attendees (see slides and attendees signed in the list of attendees circulated at the start of the meeting)

- **Welcome** (John O’Sullivan)
 - o List of attendees
 - o Agenda for the meeting
- **e-Certification in Europe** (John O’Sullivan)
 - o (see slides attached in the annex)
 - o Presentation of the project
 - o Overview of initiatives
 - o Industry Leadership Board (ILB)
 - Hugo Lueders/CompTIA: Interested stakeholders invited to consider membership in the ILB
 - o Data needed about issued certifications
 - o Discussions of the difference of qualification and certification
 - o Discussion of the names listed on the slide “Metrics”: why are in particular these names displayed; and not as well other organisation issuing IT credentials
 - o Discussion about the scope of this project (which kind of certifications are considered)
 - o Charles Hughes: BCS is offering a variety of certifications
 - o Matthew Dixon: EUR-INF project
 - o IT vendors are not attending, but have been invited
 - o IT vendors should be involved to make the workgroup more relevant
 - o ILB special certification committee: CEN-ISSS group could be invited to a meeting in Brussels
 - o Mapping of e-certifications: what is the value of such a mapping? ...and for whom? ...who keeps information updated?
 - o How stable is the e-Competence Framework in comparison to the dynamics of the IT market and emerging technologies and trends?
 - o Matthew Dixon: Offers to report about EQF status and current developments
 - o European Model for e-certification

- Industry portals, e.g. SAP-Portal; relevance for employers and IT vendors
- The quote of the “project description” (taken from the Commission’s e-skills Communication of 7 Sept. 2007) should be complemented by a reference to “self-regulatory process of industry”.
- Charles Hughes: **Professionalism in IT** (see two page summary provided by Charles about the Professionalism Initiative in the annex)
 - Programme (BCS has launched)
 - International Programme about IT Professionalism (“IP3”)
 - Director for Professionalism for BCS has been established (currently Charles Hughes is interim director until a full-employed person is found)
 - IFIP-Programme (1 million IT practitioners around the world)
 - Professionalism is one of the major objectives and vital activity that IFIP wants to lead at international level
 - Charles chairs an established task force about “Professionalism”
 - Roberto Bellini: Professionalism in Italy covers only regulated professions, but should be expanded as well to non-regulated context
 - Task force: members provided basic funding for the initiative: BCS, ACS, CIPS, IEEE, IFIP
 - Invitations were sent to: CEPIS, and a couple of other companies
 - Programme aims not at reinventing of what already exists
 - IFIP is the only organisation able to establish a “world standard”
 - Growing responsibility on top-level professionals
 - Principles and major concepts of “Professionalism”
 - “IP3” as a branding for this programme
 - Set of standards for institutions offerings professional qualifications (guidelines for assessment, offering services to organisations interested in assessing their programme against international standards
 - SFIA standard for whole public sector; SFIA is framework used for “IP3” not as standard skills framework put to provide necessary guidance to set up the programme
 - Looking for sponsorship: Microsoft (contact: Graham Watson, Director located in Seattle, US) funded “web site” for the programme; support of major consultancy; but still have to look for further sponsors...etc.
 - WCC 2008: industrial conference on “Skills and Competences in IT”
 - Working with many other organisations and institutions: networks of IT industry: IT Outsourcing, etc.
 - Support of major employers of IT practitioners (Peter Weiß comment: association of CIO’s of major employers is important as well for the e-certification initiative...)
 - Roberto Bellini: aim of the event in Milan (WCC 2008) is as well to arrive at a position paper which expresses the willingness to achieve better transparency about what is existing on the market
 - Roberto Bellini: EUCIP has been accredited by Italian government; and is now the leading initiative in Italy; because it has been updated “Finmeccanica” , “Italian Post” , “Assicurazioni Generali ” , “Ragioneria Generale Stato-Minister of Finance”
 - John O’Sullivan: Professionalism is “top down”; e-certification initiative is “bottom-up”.

- Charles Hughes: Professionalism: Looking as well at qualifications not only at “certifications”. Looking at any acquired technical knowledge and skills in IT.
- Charles Hughes: EUCIP and IP3 agreed to formulate a position paper and intend to work together to establish IT professionalism
- The aim is to get a big movement going.
- Fragmentation, confusion, damage is not a preferred state, but is currently what we find on the market
- ICT certification “jungle” represents a prosperous eco-system or market, so it ought not be a central aim to destroy this market
- Possible link between ISO and IFIP?
- Charles Hughes: compliance with ISO/IEC 17024 for the assessment and other normative provided by ISO; compliance with ISO standards is seen as important
- Roberto Bellini: Interest of PIN (body of federations from eight countries representing SMEs) in these developments (professionalism, e-skills and e-certification)
- Importance to include the perspective of SMEs and to get them as well involved
- Charles and JOS agreed to prepare a joint position paper covering IP3 and CEN-ISSS e-Certification
- Peter Skyte: Employers want to know how a qualification, certification or award from one country equates to accepted or understood qualifications, certifications and awards from their own country. Employees want to know if they want to pursue a particular job or role, what qualifications they need, and if what they have meets or matches what is required. (I made reference you may recall to the qualification from a Bulgarian university). It is not apparent that the e-skills framework as presently drafted will do this.
- Peter Skyte: There is a need to make sure that training leads to recognised qualifications, certificates or awards, that is commonly known outside of the firm/training provider.
- **Presentation of Harmonise project and activities** (Peter Weiß)
 - (see slides in the annex)
- **Map of UK organisations in e-Certification** (John O’Sullivan)
 - (see slides in the annex)
 - “Intellect” is the UK-member in EICTA
 - Certification providers should be added to the map?
 - Matthew Dixon: Qualification frameworks and related institutions from Scotland and Ireland. Question and discussion to refer to them on the map for the UK
 - Discussion of the “map” and completion of the overall picture/ situation
 - More information is needed: additional slide with the vendors of certifications or a list of organisations issuing certifications would be helpful
 - Channels of delivery: training channels; elaborate a map showing through which channels a particular certification are delivered
 - Matthew Dixon: initiative of EC about public funding for individuals to finance training measures
 - Peter Skyte: better use the name “diagram” instead of “map”
 - The ILB “Policy Declaration 2008” refers to needed “...investment in e-skills”, therefore funding schemes to support training measures are important

- Matthew Dixon: condition that might be applied to become public funding for certification providers is: compliance with and adherence to European standards (framework, guidelines, etc..)
- Why should people pay (with their own money) for certifications/ qualifications?
New models of financing are needed, because people often can't afford in particular high-value certifications
- **UK e-Certification Market (Roberto Bellini)**
 - (see slides in the annex)
 - 7.2 million certifications issued (July 2008)
 - Captive markets should be considered: for example in-house training of Siemens and other large companies. They provide in-house training and qualifications, and build their own certifications.
 - Data should be forwarded to vendors to complement the chart and to provide additional figures. All vendors should check these figures. The ILB certification committee could be asked to support this approach.
 - Roberto Bellini: Are these numbers important? Are their ideas and means to formalise to assess the numbers?
 - Paul Turner: The purpose of this exercise has to be clear? What is the value of having these numbers?
 - Use the events "WCC 2008" and "European e-Skills Conference 2008" to present figures about the certification market
 - Paul Turner: David Pardo has possibly figures that can be used
- **Towards harmonisation of e-certification (Peter Weiß)**
 - (see slides in the annex)
 - Community is envisioned by the European e-Career Portal
 - Career Portal is launched as an initiative of industry stakeholders (ILB)
 - Career Portal Committee is established and funds for the Portal pilot phase has been funded
 - The CEN-ISSS group could join one of the next Career Portal meetings to present content of the e-certification project
- **European model of e-certification (John O'Sullivan)**
 - (see slides in the annex)
 - Elements of the standard
 - Internal quality criteria are defined and are applied to vendor products; internal competition and benchmarks
 - How can "parallel universes" (between formal and non-formal IT training and education) be bridged (multi-stakeholder partnerships are a very important element to bridge the universes) -> this relates as well to the 2004 e-SCC/CompTIA report
 - Paul Turner: risk that vendors just apply the e-Comp levels just to claim conformity with the European standards without necessary internal changes. Slide: "Who is the standard for?"
 - Paul Turner: ITIL could serve as example for the harmonisation process. Model for rolling out IFIP world wide. ISEB, APM, EXIN are main partners; they have an examination board; service management forum;
- **Questions:**

- Phrase it not “European standard for e-certification”; call it better “process” and in this context “self-regulatory process” is important (cf. the earlier comment made about self-regulatory process)
- Paul Turner: “Map” is not the right phrasing. Rethink as well.
- Using a European process to arrive at agreed European standards or better communalities for certification (in a narrow meaning) or professionalism (in a wider context)
- Paul Turner: “e-Skills certification” is the better phrasing instead of “e-certification”
- 10 September 2008: next meetings in Brussels of the ILB Executive Committee as well as of the Commission/DG Enterprise Career Portal stakeholder group.
- 23rd September 2008: CEN/ISSS Plenary Meeting in Paris at AFNOR
- ILB Certification Committee probably to be established in autumn; this would allow to present the CEN-ISSS project to industry vendors.

End of the meeting: 16:35
