Connexions module: m19772

## Introduction - Rob Abel\*

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## Abstract

An introduction to the post Open Source and Open Standards by Rob Abel who will relay a few thoughts on the relationship between open source software that supports teaching and learning and open standards for data and application interoperability in the same space.

I want to welcome Rob Abel and thank him for agreeing to contribute to the Impact of Open Source Software and Open Educational Resources on Education series on Terra Incognita. His post is scheduled to appear on September 19, 2007 (eastern U.S.). In this posting, Rob will relay a few thoughts on the relationship between open source software that supports teaching and learning and open standards for data and application interoperability in the same space. It is a brief synopsis of "possible lessons learned so far" based on two years of experience. Rob reserves the right to evolve or change these lessons based on future experience.



Figure 1: Rob Abel

Already a veteran Silicon Valley high tech entrepreneur, Rob Abel entered the world of educational technology in 1999 by joining Collegis (now SunGard Higher Education<sup>1</sup>), the leading provider of information, academic, and online technology services in the U.S. higher education market. Prior to joining Collegis, he was responsible for development of products and services for online learning at Oracle. In 2004 Rob founded

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<sup>1</sup> http://www.sungardhe.com/

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the Alliance for Higher Education Competitiveness (A-HEC) to conduct research on best practices in the use of technology in education. One study conducted near the end of 2005 looked specifically at the level and types of adoption of open source in the U.S. higher education market, sponsored by Sun, SCT, and Unicon. The report on this unique study is available online at the A-HEC Open Source Software Research<sup>2</sup> site. In February 2006 Rob was appointed as the CEO of the IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS GLC), a non-profit member consortium that have been focused on developing specifications and standards for inter-operability exclusively in the learning sector for now over eleven years. Participation in IMS GLC includes an annual report on Learning Impact: Trends in Learning, Technology, and Standards<sup>3</sup>. This report was inspired by the need to "connect the dots" between new and innovative learning technologies and the key global challenges of education leaders across sectors. IMS GLC has featured tracks on open technologies in its annual conference each of the last two years.

I am very much looking forward to Rob's posting, which promises to build on the great dialog that was generated during the past months on the Series. Although open standards have been mentioned in a number of posts, we have not dedicated much time to specifically discussing their impact on OSS and OER relating to education. In addition, the standards development process is one of much interest. Please feel free to comment, ask questions, build on the conversation, and enjoy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>http://www.a-hec.org/open source.html

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ http://www.imsglobal.org/learningimpact2007/li2007report.cfm