

The Tucson Framework FAQ

What is the Tucson Framework?

The Tucson Framework will perform two functions. First, it will house the authoritative collection of state and nationally recognized academic achievement standards and benchmarks in electronic format. The collection will faithfully represent the standards and benchmarks as created by the originating agencies and as approved by state or national bodies. The collection will be made available using industry standard data structures (e.g. XML schemas) and formatted according to standards bodies recommendations including Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF), Gateway to Education Materials (GEM) and others. Second, The Tucson Framework will provide research and development services. It will develop recommendations and best practices for incorporation of academic standards and benchmarks: 1) Within learning resources and their related catalog records, 2) Within on-line and digital libraries, and 3) Within content and learning management systems. Note that the collection will not house any organization's proprietary information or any public or private alignment systems.

Who is managing the Tucson Framework?

The project is housed within JES & Co.'s Managed Learning System Research and Development program. Initially, the project will be jointly managed by three organizations: JES & Co. and Align to Achieve, Inc., both 501 (c) (3) non-profit tax-exempt organizations with missions dedicated to the education community, and the Information Institute of Syracuse (GEM, the Gateway to Education Materials).

What is the relationship with standards bodies such as SIF, GEM and others?

All access and output to the Tucson Framework collection will be based on standards in place from the relevant standards bodies such as SIF (Schools Interoperability Framework), GEM (Gateway to Education Materials), Dublin Core, IMS Global Learning Consortium, Library of Congress MARC Standards Office, and others. Tucson Framework project managers will maintain regular contact with relevant people in these bodies.

Who will benefit from the Tucson Framework?

Any individual or any organization that needs access to academic standards and benchmarks – for commercial, educational or research purposes – will benefit from the work. Potential users include: 1) publishers, 2) educators and teachers,

3) school and district level curriculum committees, 4) local and state education agencies, 5) pre-service and in-service schools of education, 6) alignment and correlation experts, 7) content specialists, 8) school and community libraries, 9) providers of software, 10) standards bodies, and 11) research-based organizations. All these organizations and individuals need to access and incorporate accurate and current academic standards and benchmarks in order to produce their products, provide their services or fulfill their job functions.

Why is the Tucson Framework needed?

The lack of an authoritative collection of academic standards and benchmarks available in a consistent standards-based electronic format is a barrier to interoperability and seamless integration of technology in education systems and in the classrooms. Schools and vendors alike incur significant and unnecessary expense trying to integrate technology projects that involve academic standards and benchmarks.

What will educators gain from the Tucson Framework?

States and districts are implementing education portal and content projects that provide on-line searches for approved resources. Examples include CLRN, the California Learning Resources Network, Oklahoma's VISION Project and Cleveland's C-SIB project. These and other projects will be able to provide more consistent and reliable search results when publishers and content developers take advantage of the Tucson Framework delivering alignment information for their resources in a standardized electronically consumable format. Also, state education agencies and school districts will be able to use the Tucson Framework to maintain and improve their own standards and compare them with other districts and states.

How is the Tucson Framework supported?

The Tucson Framework is supported by a combination of corporate endowment, public grants, private donations, and subscriptions. Initial project development will rely on corporate Cornerstone Sponsors for data collection, analysis and design. Once the Tucson Framework is developed, ongoing maintenance and support will be financed through a subscription model on a cost recovery basis. Commercial rates will help subsidize low cost / no cost access to the education community. The Framework managers believe that when completed, subscription costs will be dramatically lower than what companies and

organizations annually spend collecting and maintaining internal proprietary databases of state and nationally recognized standards and benchmarks.

What are Tucson Framework Cornerstone Sponsors?

Cornerstone sponsors will fund the initial data collection, analysis and design. Ten Cornerstone Sponsors will be needed to fund Milestone 1 of the Framework which includes completion of the top 25 key states. Each Cornerstone Sponsor will be asked to contribute \$25,000 and, if available, their current collection of state academic standards and state-related metadata in electronic format. Differences in format and structures will be resolved, a uniform and standards-based data format will be adopted and the public beta version of the Framework collection will go on-line.

What advantages do Cornerstone Sponsors receive?

The most important advantage for the early sponsors will be input and oversight for the technical specifications and data representation that comprise the Tucson Framework. Most companies and organizations budget for large recurring expenses to track, collect and maintain proprietary internal systems for academic standards and benchmarks. The advantages derived from helping form the technical specifications and best practices may potentially save the participating sponsor many times the initial cost. Additional marketing benefits, such as logo placement and sponsor acknowledgement plus opportunities for sponsorship events such as meetings and seminars may also become available.

What quality assurances will the Tucson Framework offer?

The Cornerstone Sponsors, working with the project managers, will help assure the highest degree of accuracy and authority. By initially incorporating the combined data collections of the Cornerstone Sponsors, checks and balances for tracking and managing data integrity can be put in place. As the project completes initial development, direct state involvement in validating and updating the database will become an integral part of the overall Tucson Framework project

What if I can't become a Cornerstone Sponsor right now?

Opportunities to participate in a second round of sponsorship will become available upon completion of Milestone 1. Milestone 2 will require a round of financing in order to complete final database design and data collection for the remaining states and national organizations. Subscriptions and other forms of

access to the database and other Tucson Framework developments will become available to commercial, education and general public individuals and organizations once the project is complete.

How do I become a Cornerstone Sponsor?

The deadline for submitting a firm letter of commitment to become a Cornerstone Sponsor for Milestone 1 is March 20, 2003. Sponsors will be required to remit funding and, if they have internal state standards databases, arrange for delivery of those databases only when sufficient commitments are received to satisfy initial funding requirements. Letters of commitment may be directed to Diny Golder-Dardis.

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