Appendix II

Educational Portal
White Paper

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ABOUT THIS WHITE PAPER
As mentioned in the Preface section of this book, in late 2000, the author
developed and presented this white paper to the Indiana Higher Education
Telecommunication System (IHETS). This white paper produced much conversa-
tion and received acceptance and support from a number of educational and
government institutions in the State of Indiana. At the time of publishing this book,
the IHETS has received funding to create a RFP and proof of concept as the initial
stage of developing an Educational Portal for the State of Indiana. The new running
name for this project has been changed to Indiana Learning Portal. More
information about this project can be found at the IHETS website, http://

ABSTRACT
This white paper conceptualizes and discusses the design and application
of a super web portal for state or nationwide educational applications. The
term “Educational Portal” refers to a web gateway environment that allows
users with varied educational interests to access educational resources and
information. The Educational Portal provides a collaborative environment
where educators can find peers who share educational knowledge and
creativity. It is also a “profile-based” web environment portal that can be totally personalized according to each user’s needs and interests, providing each user with specialized “MyPortal” functionality.

Many educational institutions are currently in the process of offering Web-based portals to their instructors and students. This might include services like course portal, library portal and campus portal. However, each of these portals offers services available within the institution only to the members of that institution. For instance, each portal can offer authenticated student and faculty access to courses, library materials and Student Information Systems in an institution. But there is no direct sharing of knowledge or resources between and among the members of various educational institutions.

It now appears necessary to offer a state or nationwide single front door portal gateway where any and all learners, regardless of institutional affiliation, can gain access to educational and training information. It will provide an opportunity for educators and trainers to share resources, and information and to collaborate on the development, evaluation and sharing of educational modules. For instance, the gateway will include a portal environment where a teacher can share the use of a personally developed e-Learning module with other teachers in the same field and class rank at other schools, or with students and others who wish to use it in their learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

There is a need for the design and implementation of an “Educational” Portal that offers three primary services within one portal environment. First, it will offer a place to find and acquire various educational resources, similar to services offered by amazon.com, but totally tuned toward teaching and learning materials. Secondly, the portal will promote exchange and trade of educational knowledge and creativity similar to functions offered by ebay.com, but optimized for exchange and trade of teaching, learning, and research knowledge and modules. The third component will feature a smart search engine that can find information according to your search parameters and your personal profiles, similar but more advanced than services offered by askjeeves.com. Placing these three primary services within one portal gateway will create a comprehensive educational gateway that can serve and link all educators at K-12 schools, colleges and universities. This super portal will complement other portal environments being built within colleges and universities called Campus Portals. Campus Portals offer some of these services only to the members of their particular institution. This white paper is intended to elaborate and justify the design and application of an educational portal to be a super web, serving the needs of teachers and learners independent of their school association.
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