

SmartCatalog®

October 3, 2006
Portland, ME

ANNOUNCEMENT

Anne Valentine, president of SmartCatalog, will co-chair the Postsecondary Electronics Standards Council workgroup to develop course data and XML standards for academic catalogs.

The Postsecondary Electronics Standards Council's (PESC) mission is to lead the establishment and adoption of data exchange standards in education. The workgroup will kick off at the annual summit in San Diego in October, and is co-chaired by Rick Skeel, Director of Records at the University of Oklahoma.

The workgroup's mission will be to develop a set of XML tags to define fields in a course record. The resulting schema will define fields such as: title credits, hours, description, etc., and be published on the XML registry and repository at pesc.org.

Of equal importance to developing the schema will be creating consensus. For that reason the workgroup will include volunteers from many different organizations, with the result a set of tools that institutions of varying types and sizes can use effectively.

Why are standards important? Electronic standards are the common language of information exchange. As student and institutional information is passed between campuses with increasing frequency, agreeing on a set of standards becomes critical. The advantage to using meta tags is that they are flexible. They can effectively define data across systems that vary in structure and presentation. Standards not only facilitate exchanging information across campuses, they make it possible to exchange information across inter-campus systems—such as Catalog Management Systems and Student Information Systems.

How will this change working with SmartCatalog? We would never impose any standard without the direction of our clients, and use of any published schema is voluntary. It does mean that we are tuned into the future of catalog information--not just how to publish it across formats, but how it is exchanged from campus to campus. For example, standards allow us to append course information to electronic transcripts, thereby facilitating equivalencies for transfer. Standards also create a basis for parsing degree and course information into databases that can drive websites and document management.

In short, when institutions work together to agree on standards, information becomes dynamic, serving students and campus constituents in entirely new ways.

For more information on this, or to become involved in the standards effort, please call SmartCatalog at **1 800 770-8425** or go to **academiccatalog.com**.

SMARTCATALOG--WE'RE WORKING ON THE BIG PICTURE.

1 800 770-8425
www.academiccatalog.com