

EUMETCAL CASE STUDY



THE CHALLENGE

At the inception of the Eumetcal project in 2001 the key objective was to create and share learning materials to meet the training requirements of a large number of National Meteorological Services (NMS). Managed by the Finnish Meteorological Institute and financed by the European NMSs through EUMETNET and EUMETSAT, it was identified that several factors would determine how they would meet the needs of different organisations in several countries.

BACKGROUND

In 2001 EUMETNET created a project designed to maintain the output of EuroMET, and make it available on the internet, and to develop additional new materials. These would be focused on the needs of national meteorological services.

This project became Eumetcal, and its aims are to help instructors prepare lessons, minimize the sources needing to be searched and avoid duplication of effort in creating training materials.

Eumetcal consists of 19 organisations, and is based at the Finnish Meteorological Institute.

Meteorology is a rapidly changing discipline. With the reduction in cost of computer processing power, and the development of increasingly sophisticated mathematical modelling techniques, coupled with critical operational tasks, it was clear that an equally sophisticated and scalable system of managing learning objects was required.

The 19 member organisations all had similar training and educational requirements, but only 4 of these have professional, full-time trainers. It was clear that a solution that allowed organisations without a large training resource to share, adapt and re-use training materials would improve the quality and reduce the cost of creating and implementing training courses.

THE SOLUTION

After requesting tenders, intraLibrary was selected as offering the best combination

of ease of use, good search functionality and powerful metadata tools. IntraLibrary was chosen in 2002 and installed at the end of 2003.

Eumetcal's intraLibrary is hosted by Meteo-France in Toulouse, and in early 2007 will be upgraded to the latest version (v2.8). It currently has the capacity to allow 100 contributors, and has in excess of 300 users.

IntraLibrary forms the core of Eumetcal, and the sharing and re-use of learning objects has been instrumental in helping the partner institutions improve the quality of training. This is particularly so in the case of the smaller organisations, where the access to high-quality, cost-effective training materials was limited prior to the adoption of intraLibrary.

The number of learning objects on the system has grown impressively since installation. In 2005 there were around 700. In the last two years this has increased to more than 2,600 learning objects.

Eumetcal are using intraLibrary to support their blended learning programme, whereby students are able to participate in a distance learning programme, interspersed with weekly online sessions linking the trainers to their students. Courses are delivered by member NMSs with material drawn from intraLibrary. Dedicated working groups prepare a course syllabus and extract materials from intraLibrary to meet the requirements of the syllabus. Any gaps are filled by new material created and stored within intraLibrary ready for the next course requirement.

THE FUTURE

Météo-France will continue to develop the links between intraLibrary and the Eumetcal web site so that:

- Trainers are alerted to newly uploaded materials intraLibrary's RSS feeds functionality
- Direct searching of intraLibrary through the implementation of the Open Archives Initiative
- Further integration with Eumetcal's Moodle learning environment

Jaakko Karppanen, Eumetcal's Training Support Officer, said that Intrallect's policy of continual development of intraLibrary, its ease of use and the support of common operating standards were key to the success Eumetcal was having since deployment. "We have been able to improve the quality, and quantity of training carried out as a result of using intraLibrary. Trainers now know that they have a wide range of peer-reviewed training materials to access, and that they can easily adapt and change these to meet their own local requirements".

It is the aim to establish the Eumetcal intraLibrary as the benchmark in meteorological training materials, and to reach 5000 learning objects by 2012.

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