

Global Education and Learning Community (GELC)



Education leadership around the world is struggling with maintaining quality of education with less resources. Making global lifelong learning a reality has been along and difficult process, constrained by lack of vision, funding, and standards. Sun Microsystems, building on the efforts of many, has created a new vehicle for accelerating the adoption of lifelong learning for all, the Global Education and Learning Community (GELC).

What is GELC?

GELC is a community for educators of all types: teachers, academics, researchers, developers, administrators, public officials, students, parents, and others. It offers something for everyone. If you have something to share, get global feedback on it to improve its quality and application. If you need quality and tested content or functionality on a limited budget, the GELC may be the place to find it.

The GELC addresses a variety of issues of great importance to the educational community, including teaching and learning new technologies, vocational retraining, bridging the digital divide, and achieving free and unencumbered access globally to top education content and functionality.

An important component of GELC is its web presence. Currently the website, as part of the java.net community, has hundreds of projects across a wide range of academic subjects and levels. But GELC leadership is launching a community portal, gelc.org where you can find, develop and share open source educational tools, research, open learning standards implementations and open course learning materials.

GELC Mission and Vision

GELC's mission is ambitious, but clear: Improving global education by empowering teachers, students and parents with self-paced, web-based, free and open content combined with best practices for advancing

student achievement world wide. Its vision is to provide the best world class learning, community developed and supported, just a click away.

Core Problems Solved By GELC

Three things differentiate the GELC from other educational communities. First, schools, educators, teachers, students, even parents, often lack the resources or technical expertise to identify, evaluate and acquire quality open standards-based content and reusable learning objects (RLOs). This is particularly true in learning topics outside the core areas where few concentrate their development efforts. The GELC will identify quality content and make it freely available.

Second, there are hundreds of great examples of good uses of educational technology. But often, these are single instances that are not well publicized, disseminated or shared globally. Thus, much gets reinvented and many hours of development time is wasted, or at best, misappropriated. The GELC seeks to provide a wider conversation for these successful initiatives, encouraging them to work together to share best practices and methodologies for the global good.

Finally, while many governments and other educational decision-makers have adopted an open standards-based approach to curriculum, there are few places to go, other than higher education, to get needs fulfilled. Often, where open source activities are taking place,



Highlights

- Sharing best practices and collaboration on open standards-based projects from around the world
- Based on universally-accepted Java technology
- Achieves faster implementation, with less risk, at a lower cost with a common set of interoperable tools and content.

the developers working on these projects are not connected to the educators who will eventually use them.

Components of the GELC

The GELC Community Portal is the single access point for projects and ongoing communications around the community. Various communications forums, such as discussion groups, BLOGs, WIKIs and webinars are utilized to keep the community coordinated.

Content is featured prominently and organized by subject area around primary, secondary, and university/graduate levels. Initially the GELC is focusing on mathematics, the sciences, and language, but content in other subjects is available as well. The portal provides individual sections for four different audiences: content developers, policymakers, educators, and students and their parents.

Finally, special events, such as the annual GELC Summit, the Sun Worldwide Education and Research Conference and JavaOne, along with a series of white papers and other publications in the fields of education and learning, are part of the GELC.

Key Projects

GELC is already working closely with a number of Ministries of Education (MOEs) around the world, including the Korean Education & Research Information Service (KERIS), the MOE of the People's Republic of China, and the MOE of the Province of Alberta, Canada. Additional contributions are coming from organizations in Australia, Europe, Canada, and the United States. On the Java development side, there are already several hundred projects involving thousands of developers.

Why Join GELC?

The reasons for joining GELC are numerous. One of the biggest benefits is access to open source tools, functionality and content, all based on

100 percent open specifications. This can dramatically reduce project implementation timeframes and costs for everything from global to local education and learning projects.

Additionally, individuals and organizations can initiate projects and collaborate with others, gaining development knowledge and professional connections. Through its forums and other collaborative media, participants to the GELC can learn, get questions answered, and share their experiences and best practices with others.

Since one of the GELC projects is Public Policy, global education decision-makers can interact with peers to discuss and implement global policies which effect education and learning.

How to Participate

It's easy to begin taking active advantage of the GELC immediately by joining at:

<https://www.dev.java.net/servlets/Join>.

There, you can create or join any of the Java projects, or register to take part on any of the community activities of GELC. To provide a focus around which to engage the community, these are the primary areas:

- Content Development/Sharing
- Assessment Tool Development/Localizing
- Professional Development/Localizing
- Best Practices
- Discussion Groups
- Advisory Roles
- Peer Review

The GELC leadership encourages you to look at your resource requirements around participation in the community, such a representation, project definition and requirements, and event participation.

GELC Honorary and Advisory Boards

The GELC has both Honorary and Advisory boards. A complete list of board members can be found at: www.sun.com/edu/gelc

"Sun has always been fantastic at starting and fostering communities. The Java Community Process (JCP) is a great example. Their efforts and 10 years of results are truly amazing. The next community that I envision Sun growing is a free and open, self-paced, Web-based community for students to get access to the best curriculum on the planet. This community's mission is to empower teachers, students, parents and to advance student achievement by providing access to quality open source content, a critical factor to success in learning. Global Education Learning Community (GELC) puts teachers a click-away from training, curriculum resources, and tools to train tomorrow's workforce."

Scott McNealy

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer,
Sun Microsystems, Inc.

For More Information

For more information on the GELC go to:
<http://community.java.net/edu-gelc/>