

Moodle Open Source Learning Management System to underpin higher education National Networking Initiative (NNI).

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The NNI will use Moodle, an open source learning management system as the online platform for its collaboration, cross institutional networking and information sharing. Moodle, already used in approximately 40% of Australian universities will be hosted and maintained by NetSpot, an official Moodle and NNI partner.

The \$200,000 National Networking Initiative (NNI) has been established to facilitate and sustain a collaborative network between higher education professional associations. Funded by Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), the NNI's vision is to foster, share and promote best practice in Australian higher education learning and teaching.

The overarching vision for the NNI is to facilitate a sustainable collaborative network between higher education professional associations. ACOE (Australasian Council on Open, Distance and E-Learning) and ascilite (Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education), the funding recipients for two years, will establish an advisory group consisting of representatives from ACOE, ascilite, HERDSA (Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia), CADAD (Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development), ODLAA (Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia), together with AARNET (Australia's Academic and Research Network), NetSpot and DEEWR to guide the direction of the NNI.

With the closure of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC), the aim of the NNI is to develop a comprehensive network for promoting, disseminating and enhancing the outcomes from the ALTC funded projects. The two year funding, will also be used to develop a sustainable network that will champion the scholarship of teaching and learning beyond the project's funding term.

NetSpot Managing Director Allan Christie is pleased that open source software is being used which is in line with the openness and sharing principles of the network. "NetSpot is proud to be associated with this initiative and it underlines our desire to support academics in achieving their educational goals through the appropriate use of technology. The strength of Moodle is its adaptability and we look forward to working with the peak tertiary education professional bodies in establishing the NNI."

The NNI will also use Moodle to host webinars, online discussion forums and digital resources that have open licenses for free sharing across higher education institutions.

The NNI first advisory group meeting will commence in early 2012 with the Moodle site planned for release by mid-2012.

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About NetSpot Pty Ltd

NetSpot Pty Ltd (ABN 50083417403) is a Premium eLearning Technology Services Partner to education organisations within the Asia Pacific region. NetSpot provides a range of professional services including AARNet-based managed hosting for over 600,000 users, technical support, training, content migration, customisation and helpdesk. NetSpot is an official Moodle Partner in Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong.