



June 2010

Skills Update is the newsletter of the SFIA Foundation

Skills Update

CompTIA – Certifying technicians



CompTIA's Poyiadgi: train and certify for competitive advantage

The certifications awarded by CompTIA (The Computing Technology Industry Association), aimed principally at IT technicians, are used worldwide to assure employers of employee's technical competence.

CompTIA has now become a partner of The SFIA Foundation, the immediate result of which is a mapping of SFIA skills to the CompTIA accreditations.

Matthew Poyiadgi, European Vice-President of CompTIA, said "Ongoing skills training is vitally important to the rapidly advancing IT industry. CompTIA supports this by developing certifications in key areas. This partnership is an important step forward that gives employers a consistent, independently verified method of identifying skills gaps and opportunities to advance their company

through training and certification – and retain a competitive advantage."

The mapping information between the CompTIA qualifications and SFIA can be seen on the organisations' respective web sites: www.sfia.org.uk and www.comptia.org

This collaboration further strengthens the hand of those organisations that invest in the development of a skilled workforce.

Sustainability with SFIA version 4G



SFIA version 4G: the sustainability version

Responding to a number of requests, The SFIA Foundation has taken action that reflects the growing importance of sustainability in IT.

Traditionally underpinning efforts to build efficiency into business operations, IT itself is now under the spotlight. The use of energy is a prime concern, as is the disposal of the sensitive materials on which our hardware technologies are based. And then there is

paper ...

Of course, many aspects of the greening of IT are covered by existing skills: we don't need a second system design skill in order to recognize the need to design green IT services.

However, the Foundation was impressed by the thoroughness and scope of Government efforts to reduce carbon footprints, as made clear to us through the co-operation of the Government IT Profession.

The conclusion was that four new skills and some slight changes to the wording of existing skills will enhance the usefulness of SFIA as a management tool.

Consequently, the Foundation has brought forward an interim update, known as SFIA version 4G. It is now on the SFIA web site.

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The Green Challenge



BCS's French: go green or go slow

Richard French, BCS Green IT Product Manager, comments:

"IT has faced many challenges during its development from being a core support service to its current position of being integral to every business operation in every organisation. Today's challenge is to continue to satisfy the growing demand whilst reining back the impact on the

environment.

Considerable value is now attributed to sustainable IT. Both public and private sectors now actively employ teleconferencing and cloud computing along with increasing levels of virtualisation. This will continue to grow, and is increasingly evident in IT strategy documents.

In support of this trend, the skills within the SFIA

framework must reflect and take account of this need – they must have a green or sustainable 'lens' through which IT activities are seen. The alternative could be a slowdown in to IT uptake.

To see SFIA meeting these challenges confirms its position as the most widely respected and relevant global IT skills framework."

Skills Management Conference 2010

Last year's conference maintained the standard expected of us, with a full house of delegates.

This year's promises to be as good or better. The Conference date has been fixed as 1 December 2010.

Once again, we thank The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – now under new management – for letting us use their very convenient venue.

Current plans are for more focussed break-out groups, so that we can look forward to sessions on topics we have not covered before. One example is that of IT technicians. The IET is having success with its technicians' qualification

(ICTTech). The success is not surprising because that group probably accounts for a greater number of IT employees than any other recognisable group. The business of recruiting technicians with the right competencies is also being helped by the CompTIA qualifications, and their recent mapping to the SFIA skills and levels.

The subject of Green IT has also attained prominence in our thinking (see SFIA version 4G, now on our web site), so a session on that topic is being planned.

Other areas of current interest are: methods in skills management; how to make learning really

happen; organisational implications; engaging with HR.

There is still scope for people with a significant story to tell to get a slot on the conference agenda on these or possibly other topics. If you feel able to make a contribution please send a very short summary of it to ops@sfia.org.uk

Ron McLaren, SFIA Operations Manager said "our skills management conference is a key event in the calendar of people who are building capability into IT: given the importance of IT in business, that capability is key to our economic recovery."



SFIA's McLaren: skills key to economic recovery

Conference details and bookings will be on the SFIA web site by the end of August

Strategy for further success

Our vision for SFIA is that the framework is universally accepted and used worldwide as the open source framework for professional IT skills by all organisations that are involved in IT, whether they are Users, Service Providers or Professional Bodies.

We have this vision because: it is crucial to the success of businesses and the economy; managing IT staff is key to the success of businesses; appropriate skills in the right context and in the right timescales are essential; SFIA is the framework that is regularly updated, accepted by industry, properly managed, eminently adaptable and simple to understand.

To move forwards, The SFIA Foundation will ensure that:

The Framework is up to date, relevant and complete.

SFIA version 4G, with sustainability skills, will be released by June 2010

Version 5 will be commissioned in December 2010 for completion and publication by October 2011.

To support these actions:

The Foundation will consult with the SFIA Council,

thereby ensuring that development are aligned with the needs of users and supporters.

The User Forum will continue to play a part by facilitating feedback and experiences.

The Foundation continues to engage with users when refreshing SFIA.

The Framework is supported by the IT industry, User community and Governments, through the development of Case Studies, liaison with the community and with Governments. This healthy situation is, in my view, one of the cornerstones of our success to date.

The Framework is promoted through:

Our website; engagement with the User Forum; marketing research of users and potential users through surveys; development of promotional material including a video and marketing literature; updating of membership lists together with regular communications with members, users and other interested partners.

On the International scene, initiatives to localise the framework will be undertaken. The quality of these local variants is guaranteed through the

development and introduction of a variable governance structure tailored to each market. The promotion of localised (national by country) incentives for the adaptation and adoption of SFIA will drive further adoption of the framework.

This is likely to lead to annual licensing of organisations engaged and approved to operate as local agents.

Recognition is an important issue, so The SFIA Foundation will develop and deliver a SFIA-User Quality Assured Certification and Qualification Scheme; the SFIA accredited consultants scheme will be enhanced. The training for SFIA Users will be extended.

Management

The five Foundation Members have agreed that the Directors of the Foundation shall have responsibility for parts of the business. The identified portfolios are:

Finance & legal – Niall Daly, e-Skills UK

Governance brand & communications – Keith Aldis, itSMF

Refresh, SFIA product development & maintenance – Mike Bridgefoot, The IET



Chairman Aldis: underpinning SFIA's ambitions

Product promotion, language development & roll out – Michiel van der Voort, BCS

Website, IP & database – successor to Ian Rickwood, IMIS

Overall

Overall, to achieve these ends, the SFIA Foundation will ensure proper governance and resourcing of the SFIA products and services. It will also ensure that SFIA Foundation membership is open & transparent, and that the actions and mission, vision and strategy are regularly publicised.

Ian Rickwood retires



The SFIA Foundation has announced the retirement of Ian Rickwood, Chairman of The SFIA Foundation since 2005.

In a long and distinguished career, Ian has been well-known as the CEO of IMIS – The Institute for the Management of Information Systems, one of the foremost professional associations in the field of information systems, and a Founder member of The SFIA Foundation. Under Ian's Chairmanship, SFIA has become a worldwide phenomenon in use in over 100 countries.

SFIA's new Chairman, Keith Aldis, who is Chief Executive of itSMF, commented: "It is a privilege to be able to follow Ian as Chairman of The SFIA Foundation at a particularly exciting time when we are consolidating our international success."

SFIA Board says goodbye to Ian: Niall Daly, COO, e-Skills UK; Ian Rickwood; Michiel van der Voort, Director, International and Professional Development, BCS; Ron McLaren, Operations Manager, The SFIA Foundation; Keith Aldis, Chief Executive, itSMF; Mike Bridgefoot, Registration and Standards Manager, The IET

The last word

Relating SFIA skills to CompTIA accreditations was, in a sense, long overdue. Both organisations have achieved considerable success. The popularity of CompTIA certifications and SFIA skills has been achieved mainly through the important attribute of usefulness. We believe that allowing users to see the simple relationship between these two things will enhance that usefulness.

Another hot topic at the moment is the growth of SFIA in Australia and New Zealand.

Well over 1,00 people in Australia and about 200 in New Zealand have obtained SFIA information. We know of a number of users' initiatives, both in Government and industry. Training support is available from Rob Sewell who is currently providing that service for users in Australia and New Zealand (SFIA@icdi.co.nz).

More widely, things continue to prosper: our database contains over 17,000 names of current subscribers to SFIA information. The top SFIA countries are: UK, United States, Australia, India, Canada, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Netherlands, Ireland, South Africa, Italy, France, Belgium and Spain.

We have 32 partners; 54 consultants have achieved SFIA accreditation, though this is just a fraction of the 446 who have received the official SFIA training. As the numbers increase, the Foundation is moving towards practices more suited to large-scale operation, as the strategy article by Keith Aldis indicates.

Ron McLaren



Skills Update is the newsletter of the SFIA Foundation, published twice a year. To be added to the mailing list, just register to access SFIA on the SFIA web site:

<http://www.sfia.org.uk/cgi-bin/wms.pl/932>

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