



Digital Curriculum Service

May 2002



Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
1 Executive Summary	
2 Background	1
2.1 A digital curriculum would improve the effectiveness of education in UK schools	
2.2 The time is right for the BBC to develop the Digital Curriculum, as the next step in the evolution of the BBC's educational role	
3 The Digital Curriculum Service	3
3.1 The BBC service would combine multiple content assets with simple functionality to give teachers and students a rich but easy to use system	
3.2 The service would provide materials for the school curriculum for 5-16 year olds, tailored for a number of different audiences	
3.3 Spend allocated to each subject would support teaching and learning needs	
3.4 Users of the service would have access to support	
4 Distribution	9
4.1 The essence of the BBC's approach is to deliver universality, high reach & a service which is free at the point of use	
4.2 The distribution plan is flexible to accommodate different users and evolving technology	
4.3 The distribution plan would deliver across all BBC policy objectives	
5 The Digital Curriculum in the wider marketplace	12
5.1 As part of the <i>Curriculum Online</i> initiative, the Government is providing demand-side funding to stimulate competition and choice for schools	
5.2 The BBC's service should be distinctive and achieve high penetration, but would be used alongside commercial offerings	
5.3 The BBC has worked hard to ensure its proposition has a positive impact on the market.	



1 Executive Summary

The Government, educational bodies and media and software companies have all recognised that Information and Communication Technologies have the capacity to transform teaching and raise educational standards. A clear demand for interactive learning tools has been amply demonstrated.

The Government has supported the emergence and wider use of a broad range of interactive educational materials and services, from a variety of providers, through the *Curriculum Online* initiative which was endorsed by the Prime Minister in December 2001.

As a public service organisation which has had an educational mission at its heart since the 1920s and which has an unparalleled record in the provision of media resources for schools, the BBC has a key role to play alongside others in bringing the potential benefits of these developments to fruition.

The BBC is therefore proposing to make a major investment in a new Digital Curriculum. This would be a pedagogically valuable service, designed to be attractive to teachers, students and individual learners. It would provide a coherent learning environment, harnessing the power of interactivity and a wide range of media to offer users exciting new ways in which to learn. It would be freely available to all, via the internet.

The proposed service would be distinctive in terms of the spread, range and mix of its content. It should sit within the Government's *Curriculum Online* initiative, complementing materials offered by other providers. Through its investment of licence fee funding and by contracting out half of its content production, the BBC would stimulate the wider marketplace and help grow both demand and supply.

Following extensive consultation and discussions, the BBC believes the time is now right to seek the Secretary of State's approval for this new public service.

2 Background

2.1 A digital curriculum would improve the effectiveness of education in UK schools

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have already transformed the workplace and leisure experiences of the nation. The Government, major publishers, the educational sector and the BBC all believe ICT and interactive digital learning resources can also transform teaching and improve the educational experience of today's 'screen generation'.

Supporting this view are a number of reports published by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA). These reports show that ICT has a positive impact on exam results, both at primary and secondary level. This message was echoed by The University of Durham in a study of the effect of the BBC's own *GCSE Bitesize* which found that children using the service obtained higher grades than had originally been predicted.

Beyond raising academic standards, digital resources are also believed to have a wider social impact. BECTA found that the improvements in standards they observed were most significant amongst those predicted to achieve the lowest grades, with interactive learning having re-engaged those students in the education process. Furthermore, the support offered by ICT can open up learning for students with physical disabilities, allowing them to study alongside able-bodied students.

By introducing computers into the general education process, students would become comfortable with the skills required for the digital and interactive world of work. The next generation will naturally see the internet as a key learning resource, and will become more open to the anytime-anywhere lifelong learning opportunities that it offers.

2.2 The time is right for the BBC to develop the Digital Curriculum, as the next step in the evolution of the BBC's educational role

Education, along with information and entertainment, was identified as part of the BBC's remit in its original Royal Charter. Since the 1920s, the BBC has sought to exploit the educational possibilities of emerging technologies, first radio, then television, video and audio recordings, interactive media and, most recently, online services. The Digital Curriculum is the next stage of the development of the BBC's educational mission, providing the opportunity to ensure the BBC's educational output remains highly relevant and effective in the digital age.

The value of electronic resources has been widely recognised by education policymakers and resource providers for some while. Now, due to a unique combination of circumstances, the time is clearly right for a major development in curriculum-based e-learning:

- There is clear demand from users –
 - Teachers are becoming more comfortable with ICT.
 - The general public is showing a growing enthusiasm for lifelong learning via the internet.
- The necessary infrastructure to allow users to receive such a service is being established rapidly –
 - Government has provided £657m over 4 years to improve school ICT hardware and Internet connectivity.

- A further £710m is committed over the next 3 years. This is in addition to schools' own ICT budgets.
- Falling subscription prices are creating renewed interest in broadband access to the home.
- There is a gap in the current range of curriculum-based offerings for teachers, students or independent learners. The market for the provision of digital educational materials is still at an early development stage and is populated by a large number of different providers, pursuing a variety of business models.

The BBC believes it is right that its Digital Curriculum service should form part of the Government's wider *Curriculum Online* initiative, and should complement the resources offered by commercial players:

- For teachers and users there would be greater coherence in the provision and presentation of resources.
- The critical mass of the BBC's activity and investment would anchor the transformation of the content market



3 The Digital Curriculum Service

The BBC has developed a proposal for a major investment in a distinctive, pedagogically valuable service that would prove attractive to teachers, students and individual learners. In this section we describe the structure of the offering, the areas of the school curriculum covered, and how it would address the needs of the audience in a distinctive way.

3.1 The BBC service would combine multiple content assets with simple functionality to give teachers and students a rich yet easy to use system

The BBC’s Digital Curriculum would create a coherent and distinctive ‘learning environment’ that would harness the power of interactivity to offer the school student and independent user exciting new ways in which to learn. It would not seek simply to transfer the structure of traditional teaching to an online environment, but instead to create an online space, in which students discover and explore concepts in innovative ways developed to suit the nature of each subject and the age of the students.

In this environment, a student would be offered a rich mix of learning resources, providing a variety of ways to learn interactively and to achieve targeted outcomes. These outcomes would be mapped directly from the school curriculum for each of the Nations of the UK, clearly demonstrating to teachers and individual learners the pedagogical value of the service.

A broad range of media would be used to create the learning resources – including video, flash animations, interactive games, printable worksheets, text pages and illustrations – and would create an offering which is distinctive in the marketplace. The service would be used by individuals through the PC or for whole class teaching via interactive whiteboard. The BBC would utilise its vast experience in commissioning in both the traditional and new media sectors to ensure the most appropriate mix of media is offered for each subject to engage the interests of the students.

These individual resources would be presented as a coherent whole within the BBC’s own Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). This online software application creates the space in which students interact with the resources, providing learners with the flexibility to navigate through the service in the way best suited to their method of learning. It would also provide teachers with a personalised service, allowing them to sequence the resources in their own individual manner. In particular, the service would provide the following key functionalities:

Additional Functionality	Enter Personalised Environment	View “Autocourse”	Develop Personalised Lessons	Play out Lessons	Provide Lesson Feedback
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher is required to log on to the system Having entered personal registration details, the teacher enters the system, which is configured to their own personal profile and specific requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher will access an autocourse – a group of related resources structured to create a distinctive pedagogic approach The content within this ‘autocourse’ can be previewed to judge its suitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ‘autocourse’ can then be reordered, and additional materials can be added to develop a personalised lesson, applicable for the audience to whom it is intended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users can then access this personalised lesson, and interact with the content to achieve their own individual learning experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localised feedback will be provided to the teacher of how their students have performed

The BBC has no plans to extend the functionality of its own VLE beyond this level, nor to use it to carry content from other providers. As set out in section 5.3.2 below, the BBC would seek to support

the emergence of alternative Interactive Learning Management Systems, and would make its content available on any approved for *Curriculum Online*.

The service would be designed to be both attractive to students and intuitive to operate. Harnessed together with the trusted BBC brand and the wealth of experience within the BBC in creating highly valued online educational offerings, this service should create the incentive for teachers to embrace electronic resources as a key part of their teaching toolkit.

3.2 The service would provide materials for the school curriculum for 5-16 year olds, tailored for a number of different audiences

The portfolio of content created would range across the curriculum, bringing the benefits of the service to as wide an audience as possible. Materials would be commissioned across the whole curriculum, covering both primary and secondary education.

The proposition would be designed to be relevant across all four Nations and to be as accessible as possible:

- For each subject, a coherent planning process would be undertaken, involving representatives from each Nation, to ensure key differences in the English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish curricula are supported.
- Where required, subjects would be translated into the Welsh language.
- Accessibility features would be accommodated within the portfolio of resources, providing special support for children who need it.

Funding for original content creation would be allocated with the aim of enabling the provision of a compelling proposition at every level in each of the subjects covered:

- 25% of those funds would be dedicated to materials for the core subjects for the statutory English National Curriculum (Maths, English, Science).
- 35% would be dedicated to materials for the non-core subjects for the statutory English National Curriculum (Design & Technology, History, Geography, French, Spanish, Religious Education).
- 40% would be dedicated to other areas, which could include areas such as:
 - Providing resources to cover variations in the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish curricula across all subject categories,
 - Providing Welsh language versions of materials,
 - Materials for minority subjects and areas of study (e.g. community languages),
 - Cross-curricular areas (e.g. PHSE, Citizenship), and
 - Creating materials for audiences with special educational needs or accessibility issues.

Money would be set aside to update and refresh the materials to keep the portfolio relevant in light of curriculum changes or technological developments. Funding would be allocated so that an average of one-eighth of the portfolio could be updated each year.

3.3 Spend allocated to each subject would support teaching and learning needs

For each subject, a teacher is looking for a coherent set of resources that can be integrated into their teaching practices to provide clear pedagogical benefits, engage their students and accommodate a range of abilities and learning styles. Similarly, the independent learner will most highly value resources that

comprehensively support his/her needs in areas where interactivity can contribute the most to the learning process. In this section we describe how the BBC's proposition satisfies these requirements, whilst also ensuring maximum value for money is achieved.

To give teachers the incentive to invest time in discovering the value within the BBC's resources and developing ways to integrate them into their teaching, the service must be compelling and offer something for their particular requirements. Greater variety and depth of provision is required for each curriculum topic, in order to motivate teachers to adopt this new learning resource, and to suit their individual needs.

The BBC's service has been designed with this in mind, providing coherent packages of resources offering a range of learning materials for key curriculum topics. Within each of these packages, a teacher or independent learner would find sufficient resources to allow each topic to be studied in a progressive way and to accommodate a range of teaching styles and learning abilities.

The topics offered by the service would be those where the BBC believes:

- Its skills and approach could make the most of interactive learning.
- Support is most needed by the student or the teacher, or where identified in the policy frameworks established by the Government, its agencies and the education authorities.
- Provision is necessary to ensure the coherence of the BBC's service.

Topics would be chosen so that the service covered a maximum of 50% of the learning outcomes for any subject, allowing an appropriate spread of the available licence fee investment, while recognising the contribution which other players would make to the wider *Curriculum Online* initiative. Care would be taken to plan according to the pedagogic needs of given subjects. Allowance would be made for complementary provision by other providers, so that end users have optimum support and meaningful choice.

For the independent learner, the service would also provide a guide to where the resources fit in relation to the rest of the curriculum. Support would also continue to be offered by the BBC's *Revisewise* and *Bitesize* resources to enable students to take their studies further.

The service described above is exactly what the BBC believes is required to stimulate the electronic learning market. It fulfils the key criteria of the main user groups – teachers, students and independent learners. Being “free-to-air”, it would be accessible to all and so spread the unique learning benefits of the service as widely as possible.

3.4 Users of the service would have access to support

Support would be available both to teachers and learners in their use of the services, as well as to provide maintenance cover for the service, fixing and amending the content and applications as required.

3.4.1 Help facilities would render a comprehensive set of online assistance including a reference manual, 'How to...' guides, FAQs and links to useful sites

A number of online help facilities would be provided, informing the user of how to interact with the service in order to make the best use of it.

Reference manual

The way in which each individual page of the application should be used would be described in detail in the form of an online reference manual. This would be context sensitive so that the user would be directed to help on the given page.

'How to...' guides

The reference guides would describe the way the individual pages of the application should be used; the 'How to...' guides would indicate how they should be used to achieve a particular objective. There would also be an overview guide to indicate the overall flow between the concepts. The 'How to...' guides would examine possible alternative methods of achieving an objective, and discuss any consequences of achieving the objectives via one route or another. An example of this would be: '*How to Plan a Lesson*' – this would explain the various steps in the lesson planning process and which pages to use for which purpose to plan the lesson.

Frequently Asked Questions

A Frequently Asked Questions section would be provided to document the answers to those reoccurring questions and themes that are collected by the support team. These would be updated frequently, and used to improve the other guides periodically.

Links to useful sites

There is a great deal of information that may prove useful to users to be found on other BBCi sites and the internet in general. Links to such sites would be maintained to supplement the information provided by the dedicated support services.

3.4.2 A registration process would cater for both schools & independent learners separately

Independent learners and schools would register before beginning to use the service. Independent learners would register online. Schools would either make an online enquiry or acquire a registration pack. The registration pack would consist of collaterals and a CD containing some training materials and templates. The templates would permit the schools to provide their details for registration, including a list of teachers and the subjects/years that they teach. The training materials would include those that are provided online, and in addition a detailed how-to-use facility would be provided which would include a 'ScreenCam' that illustrates the sequence of pages used and actions to perform specific tasks.

3.4.3 The training process & materials would be intuitively arranged and objective driven

Training courses would be put together around the way it is anticipated that the user would interact with the service, following the lead of the 'How to...' Guides, and provide examples of how to achieve the users various objectives. It is planned that the first schools to register for the service should be provided with two places at a training session free of charge, in return for which they would be expected to provide feedback to help develop the service. All other training would be on a cost recovery basis. Third party organisations may also supplement the training with their own courses and materials.

3.4.4 Forums/Bulletin Boards provide additional group and community help to users and allows them to share experiences

Self-help and group/community help in the form of bulletin boards and chat rooms would also be provided. This would allow users to share experiences and explore methods of working and solutions to problems they may be experiencing. Periodic 'Ask the Expert' chat room sessions would be hosted by commissioning or training staff.

3.4.5 Help for users would also include a call centre, which would handle queries both by email and over the phone

If users have difficulty accessing the service, discover a fault with the service, have a suggestion to improve it, have a question on how it works or have any other type of observation, they would be able to submit it via an electronic form or, if they are registered users, to telephone a help line.

Call centre staff would attempt to resolve issues quickly themselves, and would have the appropriate training and support to do so. In some cases they would have to refer users to a named person or organisation for infrastructure or technical support. Any calls that the call centre staff could not resolve would be referred to the contact centre team, who would answer questions themselves or re-direct them to the trainer for the region. Suggestions for improvement would be forwarded to the commissioning team or application development teams for consideration. Faults would be classified and passed over to the appropriate source of technical support for rectification.

3.4.6 A technical support team would fix problems experienced by users

A technical support team would be responsible for fixing any problems within the BBC's control that users may experience with the service. They would aim to do so quickly, though in some cases they would need to refer to the original developers or producers.

4 Distribution

4.1 The essence of the BBC's approach is to deliver universality, high reach and a service which is free at the point of use

The mainstream method of distributing materials to schools is developing and changing. Initially, distribution was via schools-based systems: CD-ROMs, servers installed in schools and local area networks. The more forward thinking schools-based systems now have online links for updating and amending the service. Over time, a wholesale shift to online delivery is predicted, as this is by far the most cost effective way to support large numbers of students and schools.

It is on the basis of these developments that the BBC has framed its distribution plan. The core service, comprising full access to all of the content, would be made freely available over the internet. Beyond this, teachers and independent learners would be able to access the functionality offered by the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) by registering for the service.

This section outlines how the plans for distribution deliver this strategy and support the core policy objectives of the BBC.

4.2 The distribution plan is flexible to accommodate different users and evolving technology

Flexibility in delivery is vital to ensure the widest possible use of the service from launch.

4.2.1 The service would offer full functionality and rich content delivery regardless of the type of internet connection

Three types of access mechanisms would support the delivery of the service:

True Broadband: A user has 256kbps connection or above at their PC. This connectivity would provide access to 100% of the VLE functionality along with 100% of the content.

Cached Broadband: A user with a 56kbps narrowband connection to the PC supplemented with locally cached content would be able to enjoy a broadband experience, receiving 100% of the VLE functionality along with 100% of the content (providing it is pulled down into the cache).

Narrowband: A user has a 56kbps narrowband connection at their PC. With this connectivity, a user would have access to 100% of the VLE functionality along with approximately 70%¹ of the content. The service would be designed so as to ensure that this would represent a coherent and effective service, even without the richest media elements.

Across each of these access mechanisms, registered users would also have the option to download packages of content to use offline. This would assist with uptake during the early years of the service as research has indicated that some teachers may initially be nervous about using a fully online service within the classroom.

¹ 100% of the content will be downloadable over a narrowband connection.

4.2.2 The three-tiered distribution solution would ensure a commitment to performance & quality of service

To service these different means of access, the distribution solution has been split into three tiers.

BBC Nerve Centre: The nerve centre would deliver all VLE functionality to end users of the service. It would be centralised and based upon an extension to the BBC’s current online hosting infrastructure. When a user accesses the nerve centre through a route which does not possess cached content (either at the distribution node or at the school), the nerve centre would also serve the content.

Distribution Node: Content would be pushed as close to the school as possible but would still reside on BBC managed servers in order to retain a defined and controllable quality of service. Key distribution nodes include the 10 English Regional Broadband Consortia, the 3 National Broadband Consortia in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the key educational ISPs. Distribution nodes would also be able to operate on a “pull” basis – ie. “pull” content into their own caching mechanisms and infrastructure.

School Cache: Where present, a school cache² would pull the content from the Distribution Node to serve up locally within the school. When a user accesses a piece of content within the distribution node or within the nerve centre, the cache would pull the content down so that other users within the schools could access it locally, thus increasing overall performance. For schools without a cache, the content can still be downloaded, as described, in order to reside locally on a school network server or PC. This facility enables all users to receive the service and content with the high level of performance that accessing content locally provides.

The distribution mechanism has been designed to ensure that quality of service is both controlled and managed by the BBC (and its chosen suppliers). The best practices developed to deliver BBCi at present would be utilised to serve home users and extended to support school users.

The BBC would seek to collaborate and contract with commercial players to maximise the effectiveness of distribution and reduce the cost to the licence fee.

4.3 The distribution plan would deliver across all BBC policy objectives

In summary, the proposed distribution model enables the following key goals to be delivered.

Policy Objective	How achieved
Achieves universal coverage of the service within 18-24 months, in all Nations and regions of the UK	Universal coverage is achieved by making the core service available to anyone with an internet connection – ie to 99% of schools and 46% of homes. Narrowband users would be able to access 70% of the content and broadband users or schools with a local cache would have access to 100% of the content.
Supports homework, schoolwork and independent learners	Due to the fact that all application logic is housed in the BBC nerve centre, teachers, students and independent learners can access the service from anywhere with an internet connection.
Is free at point of use to users	The service would be freely available to anyone with a PC and an internet connection.
Supports <i>Curriculum Online</i> core principles (open platform and content interoperability)	The solution has been designed to support open standards. This means that the nerve centre can make content available to any platform operator authorised to deliver it to users.

² Existing research conducted by Mori suggests that approximately 40% of primary schools and 70% of secondary schools currently have some form of local caching.

Offers value for money to the licence fee payer	The distribution approach maximises performance and minimises cost. By encouraging local caching, the BBC could reduce the load on its nerve centre, thus achieving better value for money. Providing the ability to download packages of content out of the system would also reduce the cost of the nerve centre.
Delivers the vision for the full service	The service vision outlined in Section 3 would be delivered in full by the distribution solution.

5 The Digital Curriculum in the wider marketplace

Alongside the BBC's Digital Curriculum proposition, the Government is developing the *Curriculum Online* initiative, a public/private partnership to deliver a coherent and comprehensive set of learning materials to schools. This section gives an overview of *Curriculum Online* in the wider marketplace, the role the BBC service would play within it, and how the BBC service would support the development and growth of this entire market sector.

5.1 As part of the *Curriculum Online* initiative, the Government is providing demand-side funding to stimulate competition and choice for schools

The BBC is not alone in developing an end-to-end electronic learning service. Some commercial companies have offerings in the market and are continuing to improve the functionality offered by their learning platforms. However, the market has not yet fully developed, and potential users may be put off by the cost.

Recognising this situation, the Government has announced that it will provide schools with funding, in the form of electronic learning credits with which to purchase electronic resources. An investment of £50m has been committed for the academic year 2002/03, and although no commitment has yet been announced for future years, there is an expectation that funding will continue for the medium term. This injection of funding represents a significant increase to the overall value of the market. Such a commitment would have a very positive effect on the commercial sector. The BBC strongly endorses this initiative and would wish to see it continue beyond the first year.

5.2 The BBC's service should be distinctive and achieve high penetration, but would be used alongside commercial offerings

The BBC believes its service would be attractive to teachers, pupils and independent learners. It would use its vast experience in educational commissioning and new media to develop a proposition with a distinctive and clearly valuable pedagogical approach. A coherent portfolio of materials would be accessible by all from one central internet site, and the BBC brand would encourage users to trust the resource. Accordingly, the service should achieve high penetration, being used at least in part by the majority of those teachers incorporating electronic learning into their lessons.

However, the BBC service would be unlikely to satisfy all of a school's requirements for digital materials. Once complete, the BBC's service would only cover up to 50% of learning outcomes, and the materials would not necessarily be suited to every teacher's style, thus providing a further requirement for additional resources. In general, by providing up-front investment in high quality resources, the BBC would do its part in promoting user confidence in electronic resources as a whole, so helping to drive demand in the wider market.

In addition to existing funds for schools to purchase electronic learning resources, Electronic Learning Credits will be available to be spent on digital content from commercial sources, and schools are highly likely to use these credits rather than forego the additional resources, further promoting commercial service offerings alongside the BBC's Digital Curriculum.

Hence, although the BBC's service is likely to be utilised and highly valued in a large proportion of schools, its usage would be accompanied by alternative resources from the commercial sector, and there would be public benefit in encouraging this. For this reason, the BBC strongly supports the principle of public funding for schools to help them to acquire those alternative resources, through a system of electronic learning credits (eLCs).

5.3 The BBC has worked hard to ensure its proposition has a positive impact on the market

The BBC has consulted at length with other potential players in the *Curriculum Online* initiative. One of the BBC's aims has been to play its role in stimulating diversity and choice in the wider marketplace.

5.3.1 In developing content, the BBC would seek to support the emergence of a wider market for digital learning resources

In implementing the Digital Curriculum service the BBC would:

- **Invest in new sources of supply:** an average of 50% of the BBC's content budget over five years would be spent with external suppliers, providing opportunities and stability for the smaller players, and supporting the growth of experience and expertise in the wider market.
- **Ensure plurality of provision:** the BBC has committed to covering a maximum of 50% of the curriculum for any course at any level. This guarantees opportunities for commercial players to provide comprehensive or complementary coverage in every area.
- **Inform Government decisions, supporting complementary provision:** the BBC has offered to provide annually to the Government its three year headline commissioning plans (with indicative plans for years four and five), ensuring the total investment in *Curriculum Online* is optimised. If the Secretary of State gives her approval for the launch of the Digital Curriculum, the BBC will deliver these detailed plans as soon as possible.
- **Address areas of market failure:** funds for original content creation would be allocated across core, non-core and minority areas in the proportions 25%, 35% and 40%, thus focussing resources on those areas likely to receive less investment from the commercial sector.
- **Provide access to branded BBC materials:** the BBC wishes to ensure the widest possible reach for its licence fee invested media assets and would therefore allow any content provider producing materials for *Curriculum Online* in the UK to offer web-links to relevant branded resources from the BBC's Digital Curriculum portfolio.
- **Provide access to unbranded BBC materials:** for the benefit of *Curriculum Online* as a whole, the BBC has put forward a framework which would allow a percentage of materials to be purchased by commercial players at the lowest price consistent with the BBC's Fair Trading Guidelines, for use in third party commercial products. Commercial players would be able to utilise BBC materials for up to 20% of any asset type for each of their course, up to a maximum of 10% of the total BBC assets available through *Curriculum Online*.

5.3.2 The BBC would support the development of Integrated Learning Management Systems

In order to be flexible and pedagogically effective, the Digital Curriculum requires a certain level of Integrated Learning Management System (iLMS) functionality – software which allows the user to manipulate and tailor the learning resources. This is what is delivered by the proposed “Virtual Learning Environment” (VLE). By providing its own VLE as an integral part of the Digital Curriculum, the BBC can ensure the relevant functionality to deliver the complete editorial vision, maintain appropriate control over presentation and branding of the service, ensure free universal access, and facilitate the provision of support and training in the use of the whole service.

However, the BBC recognises that the market is likely to develop its own iLMS systems, which may become able to provide access to a wide range of resources, including the BBC's, in a way which meets the BBC's own vision and requirements while delivering wider user benefits. The BBC would support such developments.

The BBC is therefore committed to:

- Initially develop a limited “free to air” iLMS (the VLE), for use only with the BBC's materials and services and for materials self-authored by teachers.
- Offer to any commercial iLMSs (provided they are *Curriculum Online* approved) all the BBC's Digital Curriculum materials for caching locally and for BBC-branded presentation to schools, alongside other materials.
- Work with the DfES-led working group to define the technological, functional, data and branding standards which should apply to any *Curriculum Online* approved iLMS.
- Review its plans, following an independent review of the iLMS provision for *Curriculum Online*, which is scheduled to be conducted in the early years of the initiative.

5.3.3 All exploitation activity would be conducted strictly within the terms of the Fair Trading Guidelines

To support the investment the BBC is making in the Digital Curriculum, the BBC would seek to develop a portfolio of ancillary products for the UK market and to exploit the service in markets overseas. The BBC would seek to ensure that commercial players have opportunities to participate in these activities. All such activities would be conducted within the terms of the BBC's Fair Trading Guidelines. In particular, the BBC would ensure:

- **A level playing field for commercial promotions:** the BBC would not use television or radio information slots to advise audiences about BBC merchandise which may be developed in association with the Digital Curriculum.
- **Publication opportunities:** the BBC would support the production of unbranded companion guides by commercial players and would make beta versions of the service available for this purpose. Commercial players would be able to draw on the structure and themes of the BBC materials and would be able to incorporate up to 20% of the visual assets from each course, made available at a zero rate.