



Summer 2005

*Skills Update is
the newsletter of
the SFIA Foundation*

Skills Update

SFIA release 3.0 is on the way!

The consultation process to produce the next version of SFIA is now in its final stages.

First published in 1999 as NISSF (the National Information Systems Skills Framework), the latest release of the IT industry's skills will be launched at the annual SFIA Conference in November.

"SFIA must continue to keep in touch with the changing needs of IT practitioners," says chair of the SFIA upgrade Project Board Malcolm Sillars, "And our extensive consultation process has helped us do just that."

For Sillars, who has been involved with SFIA since it was started by a DfES initiative in 1996, release 3.0 will represent the most extensive overhaul of the framework to date. This is an inevitable result, he says, of the extent of input received during consultation.

"As SFIA comes to be more widely used and accepted as a national and international skills standard, so the number of people wishing to contribute has grown.

"The result has been a very wide consultation, with input gathered over the web and from workshops held throughout the UK."



However, Sillars points out, there is still time to make your voice heard, as the final stage of consultation closes on September 5th. To see the proposed changes to SFIA, and to make your comment, visit:

<http://sfia.textmatters.com/>

*Sillars – working with
SFIA from the start*

SFIA Conference Date Set for November 10th

The date has been set for this year's SFIA conference: 10th November.

The theme of this year's conference will be 'Widening the Horizons.'

In keeping with the rising profile of SFIA, the event has drawn major speakers from government and industry, including Ian Watmore, the government's head of IT profession.

Other speakers will come from the Royal Bank of Scotland, the European Commission, the NHS and IBM.

During the day, delegates will be able to take part in a series of short hands-on workshops focused on the practical side of implementing SFIA.

As in previous years, this free event will include a

buffet lunch, networking opportunities, and a mini-exhibition of companies providing services around SFIA.

The conference will be held at the DTI Conference Centre, 1 Victoria Street, London.

Places are limited, so early registration is advised. For more information, visit: www.sfia.org.uk.

The SFIA Foundation is a not-for-profit body jointly owned by:



IBM offers SFIA assessment service



Hewitt: Industry standard framework

IBM, the world's largest IT company, will offer a service allowing organisations to assess how SFIA might suit their skills management needs.

SFIA Connect will enable organisations to examine SFIA with the benefit of expert IBM consultants, and will be delivered over a proven software platform supplied by InfoBasis.

"The service represents an ideal way for organisations to assess SFIA," says Alan Hewitt, Partner, More from

People Practice, IBM Business Consulting Services. "This skills framework is clearly becoming the industry standard, yet to deploy it well requires both expertise and technology. With SFIA Connect, we can supply both."

IBM Business Consulting Services has a team of highly-qualified consultants to support the service, drawn from 60,000 consultants and professional staff world-wide.

"SFIA Connect provides an easy, low-risk, approach to

testing the benefits of SFIA for an organisation," explains Hewitt. "As the solution is web-hosted, there are no deployment issues, and there is a clear pricing structure.

"Participating organisations will develop SFIA-based job roles and use the standard as part of their assessment and review processes. The results include a skills health check, a set of job role profiles and a skills gap analysis."

To learn more, contact Jan.Halper@uk.ibm.com.

CELRE maps salary survey data to SFIA

National providers of IT Salary Surveys, CELRE, has recently finished a complex SFIA mapping exercise.

With 37 years' experience in the field, CELRE is the UK authority on IT salaries. Its latest survey of 558 organisations represents over 58,000 individuals.

"The mapping will allow organisations using SFIA to learn how their valuable IT staff are remunerated in the market," says CELRE managing director Paul Campfield.

"In addition to mapping SFIA skills to the CEL job functions, we have data on

120 key technical skills," he explains. "This enables participants to differentiate between the pay of – for example – an Oracle and a SQL DBA."

The CELRE IT salary survey runs twice a year. For details on participating, contact 020 8549 8726, paul@celre.co.uk

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SFIA in Government

The newly-established Chief Information Officer Council will focus on skills as part of its drive to build and develop the newly-formalised government IT profession.

First of six themes listed for the government's 50,000 IT staff and managers is a professional competency framework based on SFIA.

To find out more, visit: www.cio.gov.uk

SFIA 3.0 Workshop

SFIA Foundation-accredited software provider InfoBasis will run a workshop on 7th December exploring SFIA 3.0 in detail

The free one-day workshop will examine the features of the latest release of the framework, and consider the effect of the changes on new and current users.

To register, visit www.infobasis.com/events

Newly Accredited

The following have recently been accredited as SFIA consultants: Michael Bridgefoot, IEE; Simon Bullmore, InterQuad Learning; Melvyn Burton, npower; Adrian Hall, InterQuad Learning; Ian Ridpath, Business Consulting Services, IBM UK Ltd; Hillary A Taylor, Zumiya Consulting; Garry Tyrrell, TBC; Nigel Wallis, Partner, Ergon Limited

SFIA and e-GIF – working together

by Paul Turner

We are now used to thinking of SFIA as *the* industry IT skills standard, so much so that it might seem strange to consider using any other standard.

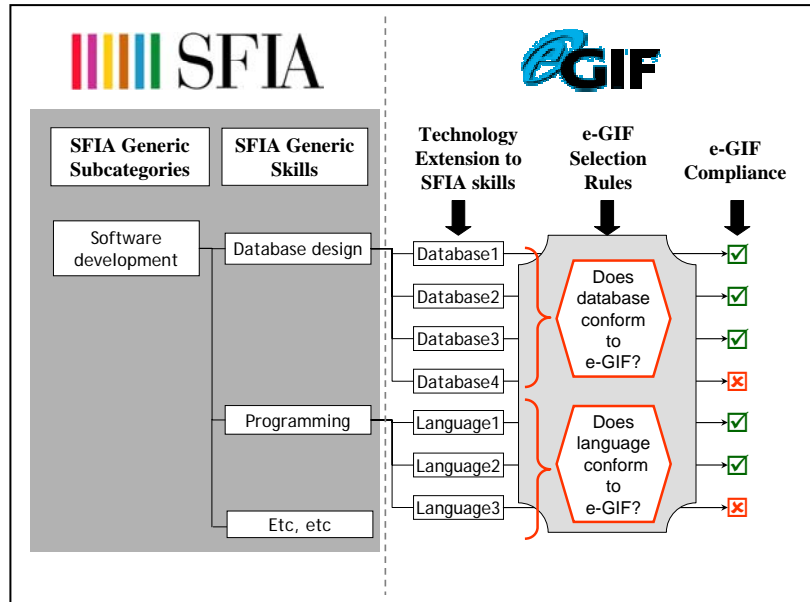
Other specialist knowledge standards in the IT field are needed, however, and are being developed. One example is the e-Government Interoperability Framework, or e-GIF, launched in September 2004. The e-GIF sets the standard for information exchange between government systems, and interactions between those systems and third parties. The framework is very large, and one part of it concerns the knowledge of information workers.

This sounds as if e-GIF must be overlapping with SFIA, but it is not. Instead, it provides extra underpinning technical information (see diagram).

SFIA provides a set of vendor-neutral definitions of IT skills and competencies that can be used to build up job roles and to assess an individual's capabilities against the framework's definitions.

The e-GIF, on the other hand, is a set of technical standards covering such aspects as interconnection, content, data integration and Smart Cards. These standards can all be related to SFIA skills.

To ensure e-GIF standards



e-GIF: underpinning SFIA

are applied well, it is vital that those using the e-GIF should do so with the right skills at the right level. To this end there is now an e-GIF accreditation scheme (for organisations) and a certification scheme (for individuals). The first of these concentrates on the job roles and processes to apply e-GIF principles correctly in an organisation. The second focuses on ensuring that individuals have the appropriate knowledge and skills to carry out such work.

So the definition of the appropriate roles and the individual skills required to use e-GIF effectively may well need to be considered when implementing SFIA within an organisation. In the same way, other more specific skills definitions can be used to extend SFIA, such

as ITIL for the detail for Service Management

Organisations planning to use SFIA as their foundation for IT skills management, but also planning to use the e-GIF, should consider extending the appropriate SFIA skills with e-GIF-specific detail. The SFIA skills most likely to need extending are programming, databases, architecture and technical specialism.

In addition, organisations building job roles from SFIA skill sets should consider which parts of the e-GIF categories to include in each role. For more information on this and the e-GIF, visit: www.egifcompliance.org

Independent consultant Paul Turner of Business & IS Skills can be contacted on bisskills@aol.com.



Turner: underpinning technical detail

Last word



*SFIA Foundation
Operations Manager
Ron McLaren forecasts
the take-off of SFIA in
government.*

Year of Government

In the last edition I said that 2004 was a year of progress. This year is the year of government. Everywhere, government departments are preparing for their implementations of SFIA. Some are already running with it, of course.

This synergises with the UK's period of Presidency of the EU, and with the determination of our government and of the EU to make progress with the IT skills agenda.

To emphasise this, our conference will have high-level speakers from the DTI and from the European Commission. The overall significance for us all is the commitment that wide Government usage represents.

The conference, however, will not be short of speakers from the commercial sector!

Training

The training theme is important in any debate about skills. This year has already seen SFIA well

received at the Institute of IT Training's Skills Conference. Training companies have also been in action: Parity, QA and InterQuad have mappings of their courses to the SFIA Framework. For our part, we have run four SFIA Training courses so far this year.

Growth

There were 990 registrations on the SFIA web site during the first six months of 2005, as against 580 in the same period of 2004. About a third of the registrants expressing interest in SFIA are from organisations employing over 1,000 people. There are registrations from 96 countries outside the UK, the top ten being (in ascending order) South Africa, Belgium, Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Republic of Ireland, Australia, USA (109) and Japan (129).

SFIA is also in demand as a subject for presentations at conferences. Apart for the IITT conference mentioned above, SFIA has put in an appearance at Kablet's Government Computing

Conference, and at the InfoBasis Digital Skills Summit.

Practical Usage

I have personally met people from a number of the larger organisations. It is evident that their preferred use of SFIA is as a way of constructing their own role profiles using a set of standard skills descriptions. This is important because different organisations require their staff to have different combination of skills. This way they can retain their own view of how to do things, whilst building on a standard base.

Web Site

The web site was updated a few weeks ago. All of our information is now on-line and downloadable. The framework itself is also on-line in browsable form, so you can easily see the detail.

SFIA Skills Development Conference

10 November at the DTI

See you there!

Ron

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