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## NCALT MLE HR INTERFACE CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

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Author: Andrew Jermond, Simon Cooper

Owners: Helen Schofield, NPIA Director of Learning Programmes



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NPIA, National Centre for Applied  
Learning Technologies (NCALT)  
Peel Centre, Aerodrome Road,  
Hendon, London, NW9 5JE

T 020 8358 1370  
F 020 8358 1376  
[www.ncalt.com](http://www.ncalt.com)

NPIA (headquarters)  
4th Floor,  
10-18 Victoria Street,  
London, SW1H 0NN

T 020 7147 8200  
F 020 7147 8201  
[www.npia.police.uk](http://www.npia.police.uk)

## Document Control

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### Approvals

This document requires the following approval

Name	Signature	Title	Date	Version
Helen Schofield		NPIA, Director, Learning & Development		
Mark Osborne		Head of Interactive Learning.		

### Distribution List

This document has been distributed to the following:

Name	Title	Date	Version
Myles O'Connor			
Simon Cooper			
Mark Osborne			
Jay Parmar			
Jon Aveling			
Tony Sammons			
Doreen Lenihan			

### References

Document	Author	Issue Date	Version	Location/Contact

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## **1 Background**

The National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT) provides learning technology products and services to the Home Office police forces of England and Wales and other non-Home Office police organisations. As part of their operation NCALT has provided the Managed Learning Environment (MLE), a learning management system for the delivery and management of learning, with particular focus on e-learning.

The MLE went live in 2004, and the following year delivered the “Domains” project, giving each force its own area within the system. Since its implementation growth in customer-base and user-base has led to several enhancements of the MLE in the area of account creation and management. The long-term goal for this is to synchronise MLE account creation with the Human Resource (HR) systems of customer organisations, thus maximising data quality and minimising the ongoing cost of data maintenance. To that end, NCALT began the “MLE HR Interface” project during 2006, establishing a representative board to validate requirements and design for the interface. That project has now made sufficient progress for NCALT to make the HR interface available to the wider customer-base.

## **2 Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of the basic information relating to the MLE HR Interface in order to provide forces with a clearer understanding of the purpose, operation and functionality of the HR Interface, as well as enable the force to plan its approach to implementing and using the interface.

The information is intended for Force Training managers, Information Systems Directors and Human Resource System owners. It is intentionally business-focussed and does not go into the technical detail, which can be found in separate documentation which is available from NCALT on request.

## **3 What does the HR Interface do?**

Due to the nature of the systems there is a natural overlap in the data held in the MLE and the HR systems that are used at force level. This includes employee data (which forms part of the wider employee details held on the HR system) and the entries on the MLE which relate to the training and learning which the employee has undertaken. This information should form part of the wider training and development record held for that employee on the force HR system.

The MLE HR Interface makes it possible to automatically synchronise those areas of data. This results in the following organisational benefits:

- it removes the need to enter data in multiple systems
- it enables synchronicity of the organisational structure and ranks/grades between the MLE and the force HR system

- it ensures that user accounts on MLE reflect the employment status of the employees
- it enables the provision of a single complete training record for the employee within the HR system
- it reduces administration and support overheads for MLE domain administrators
- it reduces the potential for errors and discrepancies, thus improving overall data quality

#### 4 How does the HR Interface work?

As the name suggests, the HR Interface acts as an intermediary between the MLE and the force's own HR systems. This intermediary will enable the flow of relevant information between the two systems.

Essentially, the functionality of the HR Interface can be broken down into two main areas:

- (i) The transfer of user account information from the force's IT network across to the MLE, which will enable the registration of the user on the MLE and populate the user profile with the relevant information.
- (ii) The transfer of employee training data from the MLE to the force's HR and training systems, which will ensure that a detailed breakdown of all of the e-Learning that the employee has completed – or even is part way through completing – will form part of the employee record on the force's HR system.

In the past these two core elements have been broadly referred to as Phase One and Phase Two respectively. However, these two phases have been combined into one deliverable which will reduce overall cost and complexity.

The transfer of data will take place across the Criminal Justice Extranet (CJX) to ensure data security. Details of NCALT's compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 can be found on the MLE at <http://mle.ncalt.com/MLE/lang-en-gb/NCALT/dpa.aspx>.

A pictorial representation of this process is shown in *Figure 1* on the next page. In this schematic the Force Training Administrator role represents the person in the force responsible for the scheduling and booking of training courses, including those publishing e-Learning. For National samples of e-Learning this role is performed by the NPIA.

The HR Administrator refers to those in the force responsible for entering employee data onto the HR system and keeping it up to date. In some forces this may include the employee himself/herself if they have a responsibility to maintain some of this data.

The Learner role refers to the end user of the MLE who is undertaking the learning or training.

Most forces will have other people with a need to view or report on information from the HR system, including training and other employee information.

### NCALT MLE HR Interface Architecture

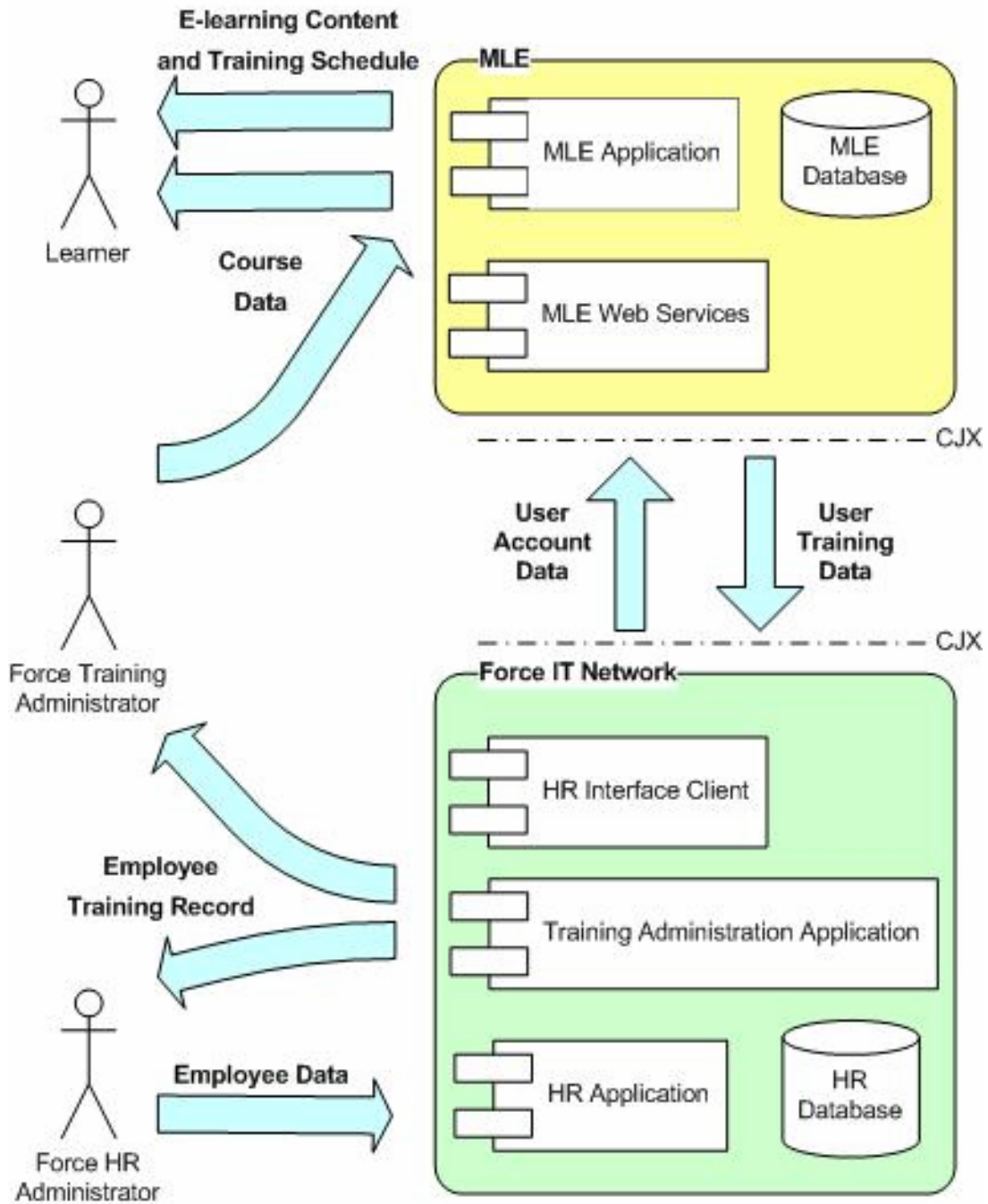


Figure 1

## **5 What software is involved?**

The transfer of data between the force systems and the MLE is enabled using the software described below.

### **MLE Web Services**

These are the actual interfaces that will allow authorised systems to transfer employee information into the MLE and extract training information out into the force HR system.

These interfaces will be maintained by NCALT, and over time their functionality may be extended to support the changing needs of forces and thus providing enhanced functionality. The process for establishing those needs is currently carried out by the technical board, but this will move to the Senior User Group and the End User Group to ensure that it is prioritised against other product development.

Authorisation to use the web service interfaces will be set up manually by NCALT through discussion with the owners of force systems and information systems administrators.

### **Force HR Interface Client**

From a force perspective this is the HR Interface. It is a piece of software that connects the force HR system to the MLE web services. It retrieves user data from the HR system and uploads that data through the MLE web services onto the MLE. It also retrieves data passed from the MLE via the MLE web services and uses it to update the employee training record within the force HR system.

The development of the software responsible for these actions does not form part of NCALT's work, and should be considered an enhancement to the force's HR system.

Where the force is running NSPIS HR this enhancement will only need to be made once for the core product, and this work will be managed by the NSPIS HR Management of Change Group. Once this is complete the HR Interface will be available to all forces using NSPIS HR.

The specific functionality of the HR Interface software is entirely within the control of the owning organisation. However, it is recommended that as well as the data interchange features which form the core functionality, the software also provides a console for Force Administrators to view and manage exceptions and configuration options.

## **6 How to start using the HR Interface**

If a force wishes to make use of the HR Interface there are several steps it will need to take.

It will need to set up a project to develop and deploy its local HR Interface client. NCALT do not have the resource to actively participate with the development, but we are committed to providing information, support and advice to forces whilst they undertake this work. We recommend that any force that starts a project to develop a client contacts NCALT so that a suitable level of engagement can be established at an early stage and any associated costs the project may incur can be described.

NCALT maintain a set of test interfaces that can be used by forces during the development of their HR Interface client.

The client you use will need to be authorised by NCALT. For forces who are not running NSPIS HR systems it is likely that the process of authorisation for the client to interact with the MLE Web Services will be completed during the development period as described above.

For those forces using NSPIS systems the HR Interface Client will be developed centrally (subject to central funding), and it will then be the choice of the force when it is implemented. Authorisation will therefore need to be made separately on a force-by-force basis. It should be noted that Forces will need to have upgraded to Origin Version 11 before they are able to implement the NSPIS HR Interface Client.

Before implementation it will be necessary to synchronise the existing data within the MLE and the force HR system so that there is a harmonious starting point prior to the automated transfer of data. To achieve this, NCALT and the force will need to work together; depending upon the quality of the prevailing data this could take several days.

## **7 When will the HR Interface be available?**

The MLE Web Services are already in place which provides the gateway to linking HR systems to the MLE.

If a force is not using NSPIS HR systems they can look to initiate a project to develop their own HR Interface client to transfer data between the MLE and the HR systems as soon as they wish to.

Those forces which are using NSPIS HR systems will need to wait until the Management of Change group has completed their development. The Data Services layer is expected in Spring of 2008, with Origin, a revised version of the HR system, expected in Summer 2008. NSPIS HR Forces will need to upgrade to Origin prior to implementing the HR Interface.

## **8 How much will it cost?**

The total cost of implementing the HR Interface will vary from force to force, depending upon whether they use NSPIS or another HR system, the quality of the existing data, and the value of the resources allocated to the force's project team.

Regardless of the HR systems currently in use there will be a cost associated with the supplier of the Interface, and this will need to be agreed between the relevant parties, and costs incurred internally will also need to be factored in.

Data cleansing typically takes around two days and the services of NCALT staff are available to assist in this area on a charged out daily rate.

## **9 Is use of the interface mandatory?**

No force will be obliged to use the HR Interface, but the benefits of doing so form the basis of a strong business case. They include:

- Reduced administration costs
- Removal of duplication of data entry
- No requirement for individual registration
- No requirement for bulk uploads
- Greater visibility of employee training
- Synchronised data between the MLE and the force HR system
- Accurate reporting
- Improved overall efficiency
- More time to spend on other value-adding activities
- Improved management and performance information
- Facilitates planning and strategy formation

## **10 Where can we get more information?**

In the first instance please contact NCALT on 020 8358 1370, or via e-mail at [info@ncalt.com](mailto:info@ncalt.com).