Adapt Learning: Themes and principles

# Document control

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| **Abstract:** | Breaks down the vision statement into various themes and explains these. The themes are then broken down into principles for the various disciplines. | | |
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| **Summary of Changes:** | **Versions** | **Date** | **Description** |
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| 0.1 | 12 / 11 / 2013 | Initial draft for review. |
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# Purpose of document

The purpose of this document is to help those involved in the project understand how they can work towards the vision in the disciplines relevant to their work. It is intended for briefing newcomers as well as serving as a checklist for decision-making or reviewing work.

The document breaks down the vision statement into various themes and explains these in further detail. In the following sections, the themes are then broken down into specific principles.

# Vision statement breakdown

Below is the vision statement as agreed as part of the setup of the Adapt Learning open source project. We acknowledge this may not be perfect or as clear as it can be. However, it captures a lot of the intention and ambition and a good amount of time has been spent trying to phrase it. This section aims at summarizing and explaining the various themes and thought processes that are contained within the statement.

## Vision statement

In the table below, the vision statement is broken down into identifiable chunks:

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| **ID** | **Statement** |
| VIS1 | To create, as a community, the leading e-learning authoring tool for producing responsive content (i.e. single version output) that works across multiple types of devices. |
| VIS2 | To develop a freely available authoring tool for organisations that wish to develop their own responsive e-learning content, specifically those in education but also commercial companies and public organisations. |
| VIS3 | To encourage a large, global community of end users and developers and drive for widest possible adoption by releasing the code under the GPL open source license and ensuring a low barrier of adoption for all types of users. |
| VIS4 | To ensure that the tool is intuitive and easy to use for those with limited technical knowledge. |
| VIS5 | To ensure the authoring tool produces content, which can be deployed to a typical environment that end users may have (e.g. Moodle, SCORM-based LMSs etc.) |
| VIS6 | To support the principles of collaborative development and transition to a community led governance structure. |

## Extrapolation of themes

In order to explain the vision statement, the table below highlights the themes and thoughts, which are contained within the vision. It also attempts to describe the though processes behind each of the themes.

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| **Related VIS ID** | **Theme** | **Description** |
| VIS1, VIS6 | Development as a community, collaborative development and community-led governance structure | The key elements we wanted to capture here are:  That this project is not the effort of one particular organization or partnership but rather something that’s meant to of benefit for the whole learning and development industry.  That everyone can get involved and their contribution will be recognized. Significant contributions will be rewarded with influence as long as the collaborator is aligned to the vision statement and principles. The principles of a meritocracy apply.  We work collaboratively. The particular aspect to highlight is that we would like this project to be a place where neither hierarchies nor competition or individual business goals play a major role. Our particular aim to let everyone achieve their individual goals and to orchestrate these efforts towards the common vision. |
| VIS1 | Learning and e-Learning in particular | We stay focused on learning and e-learning in particular. This means making the best decisions in terms of creating a tool and framework, which consider the goal of their primary audience to be the production of learning materials.  We endeavor to strike the right balance between flexibility / configurability and ease of use. We will avoid trying to please everybody (in particular those who are using Adapt for anything other than producing learning materials) and watering down the vision in doing so. |
| VIS1, VIS3 | Market leading Authoring tool | We are ambitious and strive for the best possible result. We want to produce the best (i.e. market leading tool), no matter whether we are compared to proprietary or other open source tools. We accept that this means working intelligently and hard on an ongoing basis.  To narrow down the statement a little, we are aiming to produce the best server based tool, which produces responsive design e-learning content.  We believe we have a very good chance to achieve this seeing as:   * The marketplace does not have (m)any mature solutions in this space at the time of writing the document * The marketplace is ready for open source models and software business models have been changing significantly * We can scale up the contributor capacity (developers in particular) much beyond the capabilities of a proprietary model.   However, in order to achieve this, we must also consider the following:   * We have to achieve mass adoption. Various considerations apply including openness, being thorough, producing a high quality product, marketing, etc. These considerations are woven into the project in various places. * We have to be led by our end users. It’s important to engage end users and listening to them in terms of demand, what’s needed and where the pain points are. * We have to satisfy the needs of commercial e-learning producers (described in more detail below). * We have to enable service based business models (described in more detail below). * We have to enable scalability of design and development activity on the project.   **Satisfying the needs of commercial e-learning producers:**  This means making it beneficial for companies like Kineo, Learning Pool and Sponge to use the framework or tool in their production work. E-learning companies need to work quickly, cost effectively and they need to have enough flexibility to meet their clients’ needs. Our set-up accommodates this as follows:   * It’s possible to use the Adapt framework only, i.e. without the authoring tool. We hope this will encourage developers in commercial companies in adopting the Framework. Having the codebase available to them should save cost of developing their own and any ongoing maintenance and further development. * The Adapt framework is modular and flexible. It’s easy to add to and also accommodates overrides, which helps avoid customizations. This will enable commercial producers to use the codebase and achieve high-end, bespoke output. We also hope that developers who benefit from the codebase and create extensions will contribute these back to the project, meaning the wider community benefits. * All code is available under GPL, which means content producers (who are essentially service providers) can create content and package the codebase without any impediment to their business model. * One of our success criteria is to make the Adapt Authoring tool cost effective to use for commercial content producers. In other words, it has to be quick and fit with s variety of production processes. * The Authoring Tool also has to deliver the ability for content producers to collaborate with their clients. This is designed to help with the workflow (customer engagement) and producing high quality output (e.g. by keeping the data in a single place and managing versions, comments and issues lists). * Ability to configure and extend the workflow. Working practices vary across organizations and even clients and projects. The ability to reflect the workflow closely and offer (optional) functionality at various stages will enable more end users to use the tool for their purposes. It will be possible to extend the workflow in the Authoring Tool (using workflow plug-ins) to reflect working practices very closely. This also means that as working practices evolve (or community members think of better ways to work than we have done), it’s possible for the tool to improve and move with the times. * Considers regular challenges of working with tools for developers via overrides functionality. If the output of a tool has to be modified by a developer, these changes can be made once, uploaded to the authoring environment and will then be included every time an end user publishes. In our experience, this can save a lot of time and effort.   **Enable and support service based business models:**  In order to get to a market leading position, we appreciate that offering the tool has to make commercial sense to service providers. Commercial service offers are a sign of mature and successful open source projects. The ability to get experts (suppliers and end users) in the marketplace forms a part of this and enables clients (especially in the private sector) to consider and buy into open source software as they can satisfy ‘purchase’ requirements such as contracts, service level agreements and the ability to find and recruit system owners / administrators and users.  Unlike with some commercial open source projects, we are not providing a cut down free and a paid for enterprise version but rather we will:   * Make the entire tool and framework available for free (thus enabling and encouraging mass adoption). * Build in features, which support commercial service provision (e.g. multi-tenanting, quotas, tool branding etc.). * Encourage and support commercial service providers in adopting the tool. This includes the founders as well as any other organization or individual who in interested in becoming a service provider.   Building the tool as a server-based authoring tool is a key part in enabling commercial service provision to grow when we move towards maturity. |
| VIS1 | Responsive content, single version output, suitable for multi-device delivery | By responsive content, we mean web based learning content, which adapts according to the available screen size and device capabilities as opposed to:   * Producing native apps (for tablets and smartphones) * Developing multiple versions of a single content module |
| VIS2 | Freely available | Anyone can download and use the framework or tool and use is within the terms allowed by the GPL v3.0. This includes using the code for their purposes and for providing chargeable services to clients.  It specifically excludes the ability to license or sell the code or include it in a piece of software, which is then sold / licensed and distributed. |
| VIS2, VIS3 | In-house development, breadth of target audience | Multi-organisation |
| VIS3 | Global take-up, multi language |  |
| VIS3 | Mass adoption, GPL |  |
| VIS3, VIS4 | Difference between end users and developers |  |
| VIS3, VIS4 | Low barrier to entry | Success in 5 minutes, well documented, examples |
| VIS4, VIS1 | Intuitive and easy to use for non-technical end users | Market leading |
| VIS5 | Typical environment, mindful of best practice and systems in the marketplace | Pluggable, interoperability |
| VIS3 | Flexible, extensible |  |

# Community and engagement principles

Project administration

Driven by end users

# Design principles

# Architectural principles

# Development principles