Exploring the use of OpenOffice.org as a courseware authoring environment
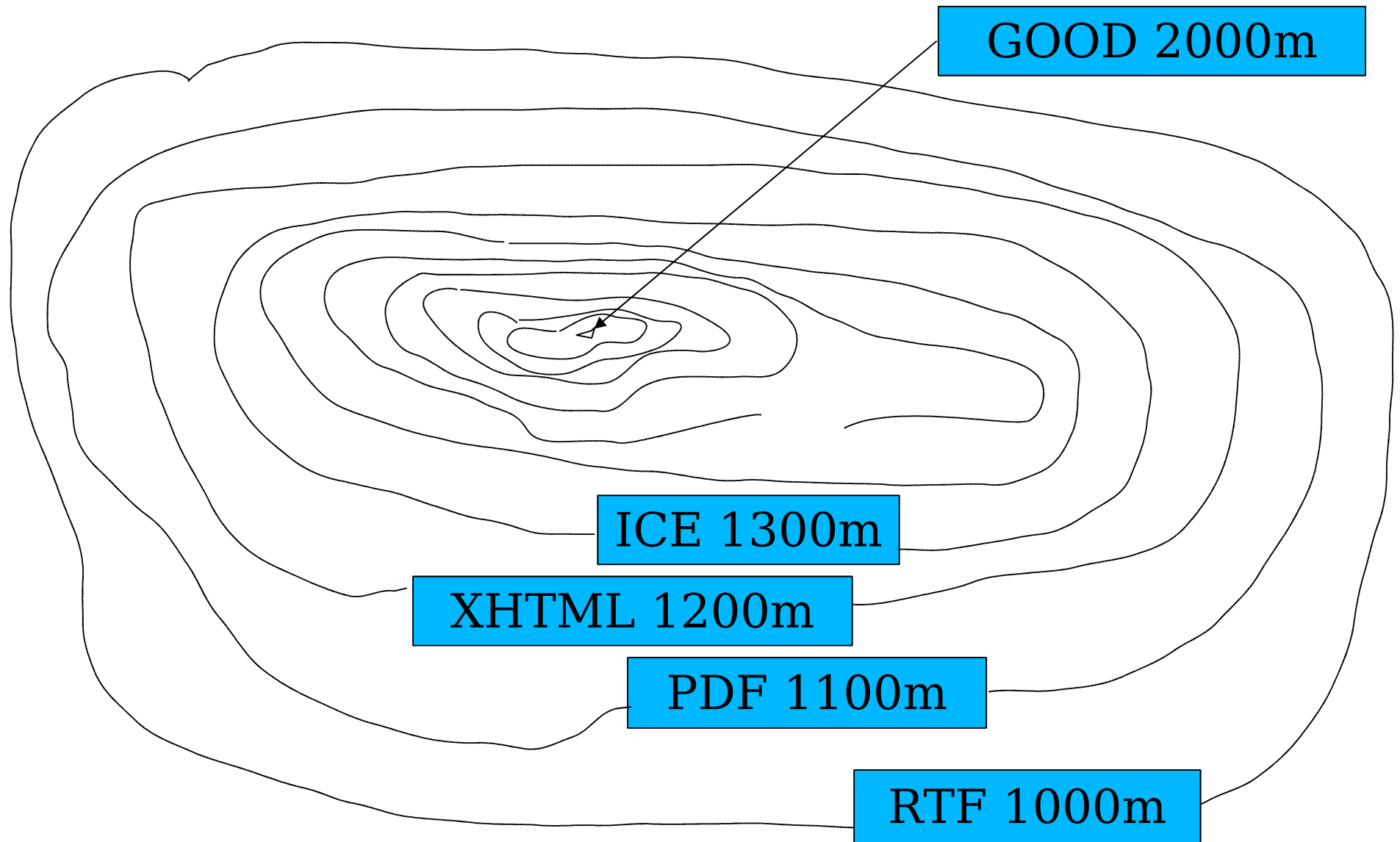
Peter Sefton,
Distance and e-Learning Centre,
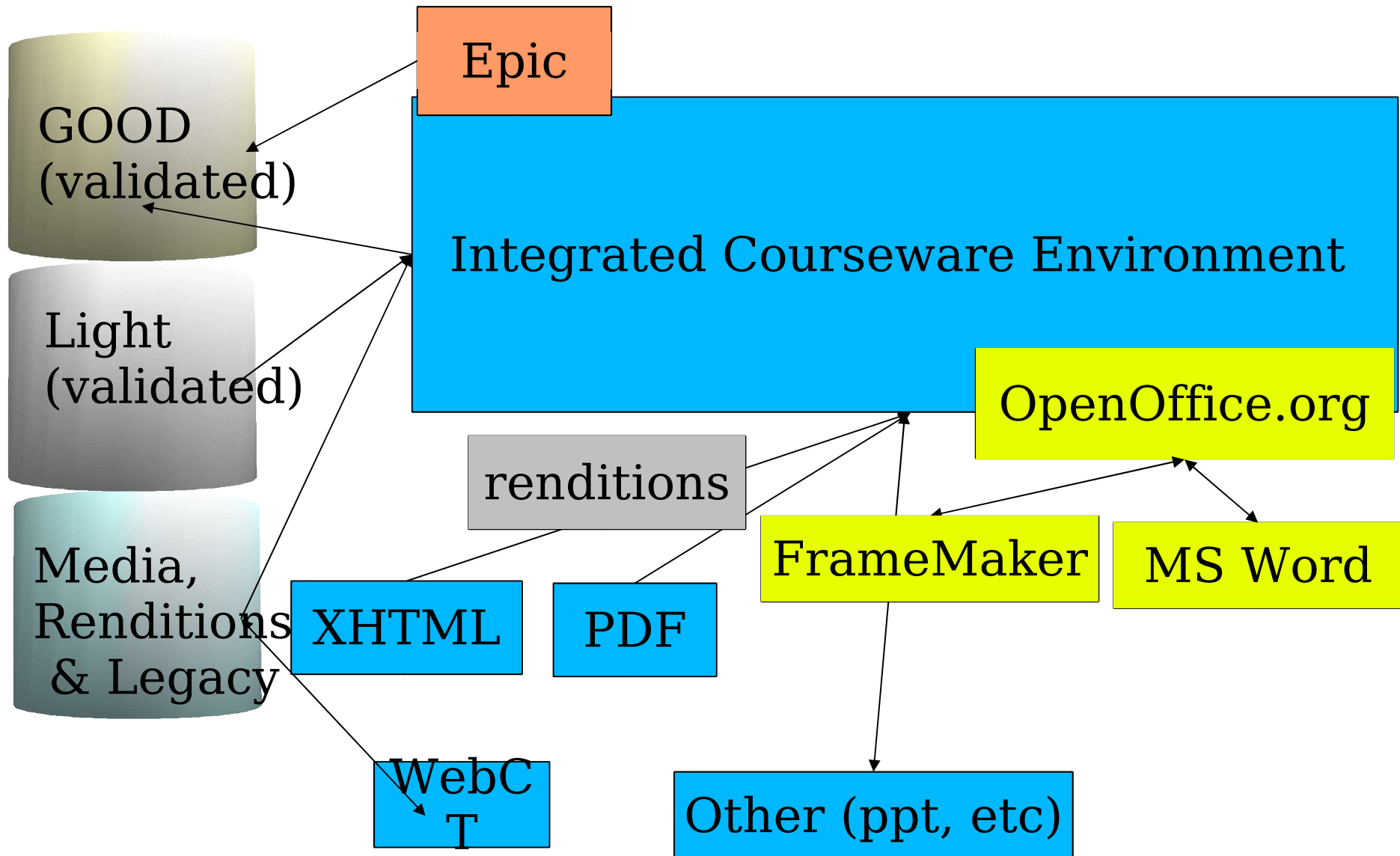University of Southern Queensland

Abstract

The University of Southern Queensland has developed a high end XML publishing system known as GOOD (Generic Online/Offline Delivery) for managing the production and delivery of courseware to print, web (via a Learning Management System) and CD-ROM. This system builds on the Distance and e-Learning Centre's decades of experience as a distance education institution. This paper presents **preliminary** experiences in customizing OpenOffice.org Writer to serve as an easy-to-use front-end to the GOOD XML publishing system. It also looks at the additional potential for using OpenOffice.org as part of a low-end single source publishing solution for courseware, including export to industry-standard IMS courseware packages.

Talk Topography

GOOD 2000m

ICE 1300m

XHTML 1200m

PDF 1100m

RTF 1000m

USQ Courseware Formats

Epic

Integrated Courseware Environment

GOOD (validated)

Light (validated)

Media, Renditions & Legacy

OpenOffice.org

renditions

FrameMaker

MS Word

XHTML

PDF

WebCT

Other (ppt, etc)

Self reliant publishing

"Give a kid a day ticket
and she'll ski for a day.

Give her a pair of cross country skis
and she'll ski until global warming
turns the resort into a beach."

Interesting things

- Bibliographic tools
- Equations and Maths
- Interoperablility with MS Word and FrameMaker
- Designing a template and associated course-management application
- Authoring interactive content?

Not so good things

- Cross-platform functionality not complete.

- Export is not ready!

- List styles less than ideal for our purposes

Progress at USQ

- Input from FrameMaker / Word and OpenOffice

- Rudimentary XHTML output for complete courses achieved (but the export system is still a problem)

- One Pilot course – more coming

- Tentative moves to OpenSource

Resources

- http://www.usq.edu.au/dec

- 2 Articles on word processing issues with 2 more forthcoming: http://www.xml.com/pub/au/245

- Generic templates: http://trac.officecontent.net