



## Converting Existing Job Descriptions to SFIA

When faced with a pile of IT Job Descriptions (JDs) what a daunting task it could be to convert them to SFIA. Firstly you need to read through the JDs in order to pick out those elements which give you an indication of what the person will actually do. Too often IT JDs are filled with words that don't actually tell you what the person will be doing day to day. To pick the SFIA level would be to find the "Verbs" in the JD that give you a chance of finding out where to pin point the role in the SFIA levels. Then as a rule of thumb there are the elements of the role that are "Core Skills" this is often 4 - 5 SFIA codes which offer the greatest indicator in what you are asking the person to do. You will also be aware of other skills which may be called upon from time to time - "Contribute to" or "Awareness of" these skills may be called upon from time to time but not the main skill.

As a SFIA Partner we have developed an easy to use tool to assist organisations to map existing job descriptions to SFIA, save and export into existing HR descriptions. This tool is being successfully used in several recruitment campaigns with Hudson IT in a wide variety of clients allowing fast JD conversion to SFIA for assessment purposes.

If it's your first time mapping existing job descriptions our tool gives you the SFIA level and code descriptors all in one place. Discounts are available for readers of this newsletter. e-mail: kevin.tibbs@validateskills.com to request a demo account.

### Step 1 – Pick the appropriate SFIA level

### Step 2 – Pick the codes relating to the core skills.

### Step 3 - Save the chosen codes for export and future analysis



## Moving forward with SFIA

Matthew Burrows SFIA Operations Manager

After many years of loyal and professional service as Operations Manager for the SFIA Foundation, Ron McLaren has now retired. The Board is unanimous in its thanks to Ron for his major influences in making SFIA what it is, working with the Foundation Board, the Council, and the wide network of SFIA Partners, Consultants and Users around the world. SFIA is now in use in nearly 200 countries, and widely considered as the leading global framework for skills management in IT and digital.

As announced previously, the Foundation Board has been recruiting an Interim Operations Manager to take over Ron's role, and to work with the Board to develop a 3 year business plan based on an ongoing strategy review. The Board is pleased to announce that Matthew Burrows has been appointed to the Interim Operations Manager post. Matthew is a well-known SFIA Council member, SFIA Trainer and Practitioner, having used SFIA extensively for over 10 years. He is looking forward to working with the global community of stakeholders to maintain SFIA's success and contribute the development of SFIA's strategic business plan. We are sure you will join us in wishing Matthew every success.

### Using SFIA to develop confidence and offer opportunities for skills development. [Nicole Minster nicole.minster@sfia-alliance.org](mailto:nicole.minster@sfia-alliance.org)

The Queensland branch of the IT Service Management Forum, Australia recently used online SFIA Self Assessments and face-to-face workshops to help ICT professionals better understand and use SFIA to best advantage.

Significant changes in the global and Australian ICT markets, coupled with changes in state Government left many organisations eager to find new ways and efficiencies in how they manage IT services. Many organisations are preparing to outsource their IT capability to a potentially global marketplace (and therefore downsize their resources); there has been a significant impact on the job market for ICT professionals in Queensland.

The itSMF Queensland Branch Committee recognised an opportunity to harness the benefits of using the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) to help members understand the skills they had, and work out how they could use this information to more effectively match themselves to roles and market their skills and capabilities when applying for new opportunities.

The decision was made to coordinate a SFIA workshop to their members, and so they looked for assistance from Simon Roller, Managing Director of Adaps Consulting, a SFIA Accredited Partner and member of itSMF, to deliver something that would be perceived as valuable for individuals.

It was Shan Altmann's role to organise and coordinate the workshop on behalf of itSMF. Shan's role within itSMF is as a member of the State Branch Committee, and she is also an active member of the itSMF Council of Members.

The service took advantage of BSMimpact's SFIA Self Assessment, a cloud based, secure and easy to use system, which allows each individual to determine their own skills which is then presented in a word based report emailed to the individual.

Since completing the self-assessment and attending the workshop session, Shan has started using SFIA to help plan for future opportunities within her organisation. "Understanding where your particular gaps are in terms of where you are now, and where you want to be helps you to determine what is needed to build up that capability and move towards your goal". The beauty of SFIA, according to Shan, is that you can "sell yourself in a language that is based on fact, rather than persuasion!"

Shan believes that in an uncertain environment, it is more important than ever for individuals to understand the full extent of their capabilities and value. If an individual's capabilities are well understood by themselves and the organisation they work for, it opens up opportunities to be flexible around the application of an individual's capabilities to the business outside of a person's core responsibilities.

"I definitely see the power in having some sort of skills matrix, or register, where an organisation can keep track of the skills each individual has, and therefore understand what the impact is if and when someone leaves a position. This allows the business to make educated decisions on whether that gap needs to be filled, and who may be available to fill it from the skilled resources they already have".

Using the online SFIA self-assessment tool establishes a real sense of buy-in to the initiative and helps establish positivity and direction from the outset.

"I found the experience to be extremely beneficial", said Shan. "It was important to both go through the online skills self-assessment AND a face-to-face workshop to really understand the power of SFIA, and I look forward to being able to apply this knowledge in the future.

**This is an extract of a full case study produced by the SFIA Alliance. If you are interested in reading the full article, please email: [info@sfia-alliance.org](mailto:info@sfia-alliance.org)**

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## Virgin Media

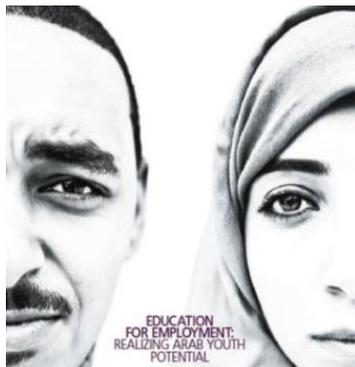
### Emma Smith from Virgin Media, on the benefits of SFIA.

Emma Smith, Head of People at Virgin Media, talks about how they have used SFIAplus to create and define job descriptions and build training and professional development plans.

You can pick the video up from here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6t0FxrO9bw>



## Skills Update



### ICT Qualification Framework. Amman, Jordan.

Last year, I was in Amman, Jordan working on the development of an ICT Qualification Framework integrated with occupational standards, and related assessment and certification processes. The project was commissioned by the International Finance Corporation, part of the World Bank, to progress the Education for Employment- Realizing Arab Youth Potential initiative. The starting point was in Jordan but the outcomes would potentially be applied across the Arab world.

The initial focus was on improving employment opportunities for ICT graduates from Jordanian universities by defining and addressing the skills mismatch between the supply of graduates and the demand of the ICT sector in Jordan.

As occupational standards key expert, it was critical for me to initiate and develop an open dialogue with key stakeholders from both public and private education and training providers, local and international employers, and government ministers and officers. In practice, this meant researching, identifying and recommending ICT occupational standards, frameworks and approaches that could be adopted by Jordan employers, including a framework that would validate the occupational skills and job profiles required by the sector.



There was a major tension between the universities and employers on the 'skills gap'. At an initial stakeholder meeting, employers were blaming the universities for not preparing graduates for the world of work. It was clear that there needed to be a mechanism in place to initially define what the skills mismatch was, and then to establish a suitable agency that could take charge of the ongoing management and governance of the process. Without this in place, we argued that the initiative would not become sustainable.

Our proposal was that INT@J, the Information and Communications Association of Jordan, become a body similar to a Sector Skills Council, promoting sector-based skills systems and:

- engage directly with industry, education and governmental interests
- produce labour market analysis at the sectorial level, identifying skills gaps and shortages
- improve labour market supply and demand; advise on the best way to develop workforce competency standards
- plan, evaluate and review provision of occupational standards to ensure that they are always fit for purpose in Jordan, particularly when future advances in technology may require the development of new occupational standards

I met with and undertook activities with a variety of employers, training providers and universities to validate the use of a standards-based approach. I used SFIA as an example of a skills framework and invited universities to map their courses to the SFIA skills and levels. I also introduced the framework to employers and described its potential application in HR processes. SFIA was thought to be the most appropriate framework for use in Jordan and could be adopted by

both employers and education. The primary evidence leading to this recommendation was the relative simplicity of using SFIA with large employers and SMEs, its increasing take-up throughout the world, and a number of international examples demonstrating its successful alignment with university degree curricula.

Whilst SFIA is essentially an ICT skills framework, a crucial component is the description of the generic skills needed to function effectively. The generic skills set out the 'soft' skills that employers require in the workplace. Jordanian employers consistently said these skills were not evident at application and interview. So whilst the IT specific occupational standards were important, the fundamental issue was to address the 'employability' skills that graduates need to have a better chance of securing work. In our draft employability framework, SFIA generic level descriptors and skills definitions were combined with the ABET graduate attributes framework, and the Common European Reference Framework, used to indicate desired proficiency levels for the English language category.

As far as impact is concerned, INT@J are currently recruiting for several positions to establish and progress the ICT Sector Skills Organisation.

Gareth Jones, Elgar Consultants Limited



### Bringing SFIA to life at John Lewis

The John Lewis Partnership redefined their role profiles and Job Family Framework to incorporate the SFIA Skills Framework in 2012 to bring consistent terminology for IT Skills across all three of their IT divisions. Since then, the John Lewis Partnership and North Highland have been working together to bring the role profiles and SFIA skills to life. Together, we have created a Career Development Framework, underpinned by the SFIA Skills Framework, giving Partners a one stop shop for their skill and career development needs. The Career Development Framework gives IT Partners increased visibility of roles and IT skills across all divisions, enabling IT Partners to own and manage their skill and career development. The Career Development Framework consists of three tools:

- SFIA based potential Career Pathways showing potential options for IT Partners next step
- A tool enabling Partners to easily view the SFIA skills relating to their role, as well as compare the skills in different roles
- Learning and Development Options clearly outlining the learning available to develop specific SFIA skills

### DDLS launches SFIA training courses

Sydney, Australia 02 July 2014 – DDLS, Australia's leading provider of technical IT & Process training, certification and professional development, today announced the launch of a series of new training courses for the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA).

The new SFIA courses, delivered by SFIA Accredited Partner Adaps Consulting, will help companies to recognise tangible improvements in productivity and project success by more effectively implementing SFIA – a skills framework that maps IT roles to required skill sets and levels. These courses will provide attendees with the tools, skills and knowledge required to allocate the right person to the right role, enhance professionalism and efficiency and plan recruitment, training and succession strategies. Mal Shaw, CEO of DDLS, said "DDLS is excited to partner with Adaps Consulting to offer SFIA courses nationally. There are very real benefits to organisations in understanding and employing such a framework – from ensuring that roles are benchmarked correctly to the skills requirement, assessing whether the organisation currently has the skills in place to meet its goals and targets and providing an informed training plan to address any shortfalls in the skills."

Simon Roller, Managing Director of Adaps Consulting commented: "We're very pleased to partner with DDLS in the provision of accredited SFIA training. Over the past 2 years we have seen the awareness of SFIA grow significantly in Australia. From Federal and State Government departments to Utilities, Manufacturing and Education organisations, SFIA is truly becoming the accepted way to ensure that ICT departments have the right mix of skills to suit their needs, and provide a framework to use in attracting, training, developing and retaining people with those skills."

"The SFIA courses are a great way for organisations to build awareness and commence a change program to ensure that staff fully understand the benefits of SFIA and why it's being implemented. DDLS is finding a growing number of clients are asking for SFIA training and we're really excited at the prospect of being able to deliver these courses."

Accredited "Understanding SFIA" courses will commence immediately. The first class is scheduled in July 2014 and introduces the SFIA framework, shows candidates how to use SFIA to create role descriptions and find candidates, and understand how it aligns with other industry frameworks (such as ITIL® and COBIT®) and Leadership skills.

For full details on the content, pricing and availability of the new courses, please visit:  
<http://www.ddls.com.au/VendCourse/SF+.htm>

**About DDLS:** Dimension Data Learning Solutions (DDLS) is Australia's leading, trusted training partner offering learning solutions across IT, process management and professional development. DDLS designs, develops and

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delivers innovative learning solutions from certification through to customised learning programs to enable clients to confidently deploy technology and effectively manage processes and people for their business growth and success. With national training facilities in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Canberra, DDLs provides the highest quality learning programs, Technical Instructors, Trainers and Facilitators to train over 15,000 students a year, from beginner, specialist to advanced levels, transforming their effectiveness. For more information [www.ddls.com.au](http://www.ddls.com.au)

**About Adaps Consulting:** Adaps Consulting focuses on IT Governance and Strategy, with a particular focus being the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA). A growing number of public and private sector organisations have partnered with Adaps Consulting to effectively implement SFIA using a combination of assessment and validation services, training services and communications techniques. Adaps Consulting has been a SFIA accredited partner since 2012, and Managing Director Simon Roller is a member of the international SFIA Council. For more information [www.adapsconsulting.com.au](http://www.adapsconsulting.com.au)



SeeraSFIA is a world-first cloud talent management solution based on the SFIA competency framework that delivers time and cost savings for organisations (up to 50%) with accelerated recruitment, competency quantified people, gap analysis, workforce planning, resource allocation, rightsizing and project resource modeling.

### Features

- CXO data driven decisions
- massive time saving on Competency Framework implementations
- gap analysis modeling by competency-skills-project-vendor
- smart org chart modeling by project, department and organisation
- vendor & project cost modeling
- skills and people knowledge bank
- large pool of competency quantified people
- automated management of all recruitment phases with participant visibility

Seera Pty Ltd [www.seeracloud.com](http://www.seeracloud.com) SeeraSFIA Helpline 1300 701 117

## The Last Word

The SFIA Foundation has had an eventful few months. Ron McLaren sadly stepped down from the position of SFIA Operations manager but you can rest assured that with Matthew Burrows recently appointed as his successor, the future of SFIA promises to be an exciting one. Interest in SFIA continues to grow across the globe, with a number of new countries starting to see the benefits of using the Framework. This along with the recent consultation for SFIA Version 6, continual support from our Partners, Consultants and the ever expanding Community it's sure to be an exciting year for SFIA.

Help us keep up to date with user experience and assist others with their SFIA Journey by sharing your story for the next edition of 'Skills Update'. Whether it's a success story, a tale of trouble overcome, or unique SFIA implementation we'd love to hear from you. Until the next edition of 'Skills Update' thank you for your on-going support we wish you a prosperous few months.



**Lucy Ryan**  
Business Administrator

Skills Update is the newsletter of the SFIA Foundation  
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