FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Department of Education Funds Project Supporting All-New Level of Disability Access

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November 30, 2012 (Half Moon Bay, CA) – The U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research has recently funded a project dedicated to helping people with disabilities personalize a "one-size-fits-one" approach to accessibility, thereby removing barriers to access for users with sensory or physical limitations, cognitive constraints or other unique learning affordances. The contract for this project was awarded to the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME), in partnership with the Global Public Inclusive Infrastructure (GPII) team, including the Inclusive Design Research Center at OCAD, Raising the Floor International, WGBH's National Center for Accessible Media, IBM, and Inclusive Technologies.

The overall goal of the project "Profile Creation Support for Cloud-based Accessibility," is to harness global networks and cloud services, delivering appropriate solutions to users anywhere, anytime and on any device or platform. Work is now underway, with research being conducted by ISKME and its partners – a project team bringing decades of design and implementation experience in accessibility and inclusiveness, in order to develop custom preferences that travel with a learner across devices and learning environments, both on and off the Web.

The first stage of the project will be presented in a feasibility study that outlines methods for individuals to specify their needs and preferences, and to discover, create, and store user interface and digital content configurations that work best for them. The second stage will involve creating working prototypes, through the lens of these custom preferences. ISKME's OER Commons will serve as a framework for the project, as the OER Commons Open Author tool is the first profile tool in an open educational resource environment that is personalized to the learner. Using this tool as a reference, the current project will allow users to store individual access preferences and needs, such as whether they require text-to-speech transformations, translations into different languages, or modifications such as text magnification to enhance visibility.

While critical for expanding access to education, the information stored in the prototypes developed by this project will also be available to users whether they are using an ATM machine or accessing a bus schedule. The result is a shift away from a world in which people with disabilities have to change the way they access online resources and services – and toward an inclusive environment that presents resources in a multitude of different formats, thereby catering to something critical: an individual's unique needs.

For more information, see: http://iskme.org/our-work/preferences-global-access

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About ISKME

The Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education **(**www.iskme.org),
an independent non-profit research institute established in 2002, is a pioneer in
knowledge sharing and educational innovation. Dedicated to the study, spread, and
strategic use of knowledge management in education, ISKME helps schools, colleges,
universities, and the organizations that support them expand their capacity to collect and
share information, and create open knowledge-driven environments focused on learning
and success. In assisting the K-20 education sector, ISKME also helps philanthropic
organizations and government agencies examine and improve their own and their
grantees' processes for continuous improvement, evaluation, and learning.