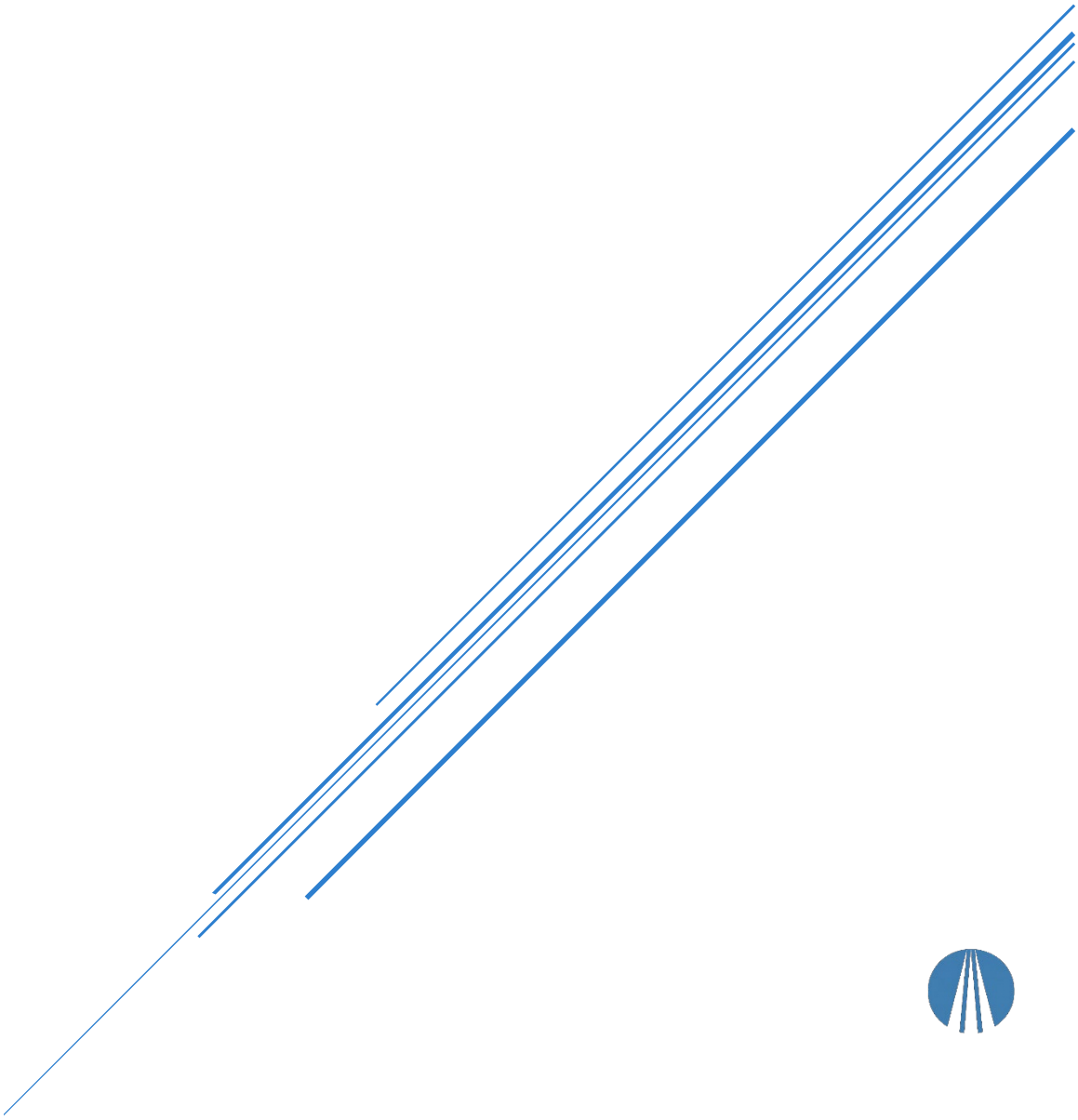
EVALUATING AN LMS INTEGRATION FOR EXAM SCHEDULING

From Vendor Risk to Controlled Migration Strategy



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The Situation

A legacy integration within an LMS environment was approaching end-of-life following a vendor deprecation announcement.
At first glance, the situation seemed straightforward: replace the integration before support ended.
But the more closely the system was examined, the clearer it became that this wasn't just a tool upgrade. The integration sat at the edge of a larger ecosystem—receiving data from upstream systems but not controlling any part of them.
That distinction mattered.
Any change in behavior wouldn't come from the tool itself, but from how data flowed into it.

Understanding the Problem

The real challenge was not technical replacement, but system understanding.
Before making any decisions, it was necessary to clarify:

- How the integration behaved during runtime
- Where it depended on enrollment data and course structure
- What would change under a modern integration model
- How those changes would be experienced by instructors and students

This shifted the focus from *"How do we upgrade?"* to *"What actually happens if we do?"*

What Became Clear

Breaking the system into layers helped reveal what was really going on.
The integration operated purely as a downstream consumer. It relied entirely on data passed from the LMS, which in turn depended on upstream provisioning processes.
In practical terms:

- The tool did not control users or enrollments
- It reflected whatever the system told it

This meant the upgrade itself would not impact core systems—but it would expose how dependent the tool was on data accuracy and timing.

Where the Change Introduced Risk

The shift to a newer integration model brought a meaningful change in behavior.
Previously, users were recognized when they launched the tool.
Under the new model, user access was driven by a continuously synchronized roster.
That improvement came with a trade-off.

Enrollment changes—adds or drops—would now affect access almost immediately.
In a dynamic environment, that increased sensitivity had real implications.

The Transition Challenge

Another layer of complexity emerged during the transition itself.
Running both versions of the integration in parallel created a different kind of risk—not technical, but operational.
Instructors could encounter:

- Multiple versions of the same tool
- Different behavior across courses
- Uncertainty about which version to use

This wasn't a system failure risk. It was a clarity and consistency problem.

Framing the Decision

At that point, the decision narrowed into two paths.
One option was to maintain the current state—continue using the legacy integration and accept the eventual loss of support and functionality.
The other was to take a controlled approach:

- Introduce the new integration alongside the existing one
- Validate behavior in a test environment
- Migrate gradually, starting with high-usage areas
- Retire the legacy integration before vendor deadlines

The second option reduced uncertainty while maintaining continuity.

Outcome

The result was not just a migration plan, but a clearer understanding of how the system actually behaved.
This enabled:

- More informed discussions across stakeholders
- A transition aligned with vendor timelines
- Minimal disruption to instructors and students

The system remained stable, while the path forward became more predictable.