



Connections

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Delivery of Regional Services to Ohio's School Districts

By Bruce E. Hawkins, CEO

There have been many years of debate over the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of regional services to Ohio school districts. Questions have frequently surfaced such as these: Is there overlap? Is our present system cost-effective? Are the local school districts getting the services they want and need? Our current system of regional service has evolved over time and has addressed needs as they have surfaced. For example, in the late 70's when computer technology became more prevalent, the A-Sites and C-Sites were formed to meet the fiscal and student service needs of school districts. Other regional service centers were either established or evolved as the needs changed in the school districts.

In the current biennial budget, the legislature has mandated that these regional services be consolidated and there be no more than 19 regional service centers in Ohio. The Ohio Department of Education has held numerous meetings around the state gathering the opinions of both stakeholders and service providers as to how this consolidation should take place. It is interesting to note that at many regional meetings, stakeholders stated that there probably is a need for better efficiency in other areas of the state, but most regions felt that their own systems were working well. Their perspective probably depends on the level of input they feel they have in the operation of the regional service agencies within their service areas.

The Ohio legislature has imposed certain mandates upon the Ohio Department of Education. Therefore, ODE must establish standards to ensure consistency and quality for Ohio schools and the implementation of these requirements. But, the Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network (MCOECN) believes collaboration among the Ohio Department of Education, Ohio schools, Ohio regional service centers, and the regional service agencies is essential. And since Ohio is a local control state, it is also imperative that school districts have input into the customization of the new educational delivery structure. OREDS (Ohio Regional Educational Delivery System) needs to reflect the unique needs and collective culture of the school districts within

each respective region. There also needs to be input from the regional service agencies to provide vision and direction for the educational services in their specific areas.

Obviously, one of the essential components of the OREDS discussions is the identification of the core services to be delivered. There are two aspects of these core services. First, schools exist for student learning. There are numerous core services that need to be delivered in curriculum, special education, instruction, and technology so students can have academic success. Secondly, there are certain business operations that are essential in order for schools to operate efficiently such as payroll, accounting, scheduling, grade cards, and attendance. Both the academic and business components must be considered as core services are identified. It is also crucial that adequate funding be appropriated for the core services to Ohio's schools.

Probably one of the most contentious issues in the OREDS discussion has been the designation of the boundaries for the regional service centers. There are many existing relationships that could be disturbed in the arbitrary redistricting of the regional service centers. There are also financial implications such as the hundreds of millions of dollars of existing infrastructure within the existing Data Acquisition Sites: for example, fiber networking, high-speed telephone networks, and computer hardware and software. Both service delivery and cost-efficiency need to be considered in the alignment of service center boundaries.

Finally, if this OREDS system is to be effective, there needs to be an accountability system to assure districts are getting the necessary services. The Management Council believes there should be service level agreements that address their needs and services of the Ohio Department of Education, the regional service agencies, and most importantly, the local school districts. It will be important for all educators to stay in touch with the OREDS process as it is developed this spring for initial implementation in the next school year.

DASL Student Information System on Target

We have exciting news regarding our Data Analysis for Student Learning project! With continued support from our Data Acquisition Sites and their member districts, we are now on target to have the initial version of the DASL student information system available for pilot mode by September of 2004.

Several modules will be released on a monthly basis beginning in the spring of 2004. These modules will be available for DA Site staff to begin testing and training. We are encouraging each participating DA Site to work with one or two districts to pilot the software next fall.

In addition to the functions currently found in McSIS, the new

DASL SIS will have a district "portal" page for customized news and information; a completely re-designed scheduler; and the ability to save, recall, and re-use the parameters for any report. But best of all – no more dumb terminals! The new DASL SIS will be based entirely on a web-based graphical user interface.

This update will have an impact on the student performance portions of DASL as well. Over time, all the existing "DSL" functionality will be rewritten to the DASL look and feel. In addition, there will be a new, expanded, and more powerful data search feature within the new DASL. Contact your DA Site for more information on the new and improved version of DASL.

DA Site Highlight

NCOCC - North Central Ohio Computer Cooperative - Heartland COG

NCOCC is busy like other DA Sites working on Fiscal, SIS, EMIS, INFOhio and technology services. Also like other DA Sites they have a few other projects in the works.

ProgressBook: Help Videos

NCOCC just completed their first series of training videos for ProgressBook. The intent of the videos is to provide building leaders a first line of defense in finding answers to the questions of their peers. Two CD's are completed, one covers most of the screens related to the classroom teacher, and the other covers the administration screens and parent access. Videos range from 57 seconds in length to a little less than 3 minutes addressing specific areas of the ProgressBook screens. For instance, one video explains how to set up recurring assignments and how they show up on the dashboard. This will be a continually updated project to match the improvements made by Software Answers, Inc. NCOCC is happy to share a copy of the CD's with other DA sites who in turn may feel free to make copies of them.

Professional Development Scheduler:

NCOCC has seen the need for teachers to be able to schedule classes, to know who is attending, and to contact them and has thus developed the Professional Development Scheduler, an online event scheduler. Offerings are posted on the web with descriptions and as shown to the right, a person simply clicks to sign up. By using their DSL password it automatically fills in the fields from the database with correct information as shown below. No more fuss with incorrect or illegible email addresses.

In addition, attendees receive a confirmation email, a 5-day, and a 1-day reminder. The facilitator may access the class to see

Event Information	
Teacher:	Cheryl Cronbaugh
Category:	Professional Development
Skill Level:	Intermediate
Date of Offering:	2/5/2004
Time of Offering:	4:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Location:	NCOCC Computer Lab
Attendees:	0 / 12 Seats Filled (Click here to view attendees that have signed up for this event.)
Class Name:	Creating Newsletters and Brochures
Class Description:	Using MS Word we see how to create a newsletter and a brochure, adjust columns, span columns, manipulate pictures and number pages. We will also look at web resources to improve these documents. Ideas will be given for using these skills in the classroom.

[Click here to register!](#)

*Notice: You must have a NCOCC Network username to sign up for events. (This is the same username used for DASL) If you need a network username please request one from your Technology Coordinator.

Register for the Creating Newsletters and Brochures Event	
Name:	First Name: Cheryl Last Name: Cronbaugh
School District:	NCOCC
School Building:	Mansfield
Phone Number:	419-747-8670 *Format xxx-xxxx Ext: 1410 *Format xxxxx
Email Address:	cheyl@ncocc.k12.oh.gov *user@domain.org

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IPDP Management Suite

Home | Personal Information | Create Plan | View Plan | Submit IPDP | Credit Status | Create Goals | Manage Goals | View PD | Submit Plan

Submit Individual Professional Development Activity

Name of Activity: _____
Date of Activity: _____ Select Date: *If multiple last date
Verification Method: _____
Credit: Semester Hours Quarter Hours CEU
Requested Credit:
Description: _____

attendees, edit the class information, send messages and event print a roster. The Professional Development Scheduler is available now for sites wanting to use it.

IPDP Management Suite: As this software was enhanced due to district requests, it grew into a professional development management package keeping track of teachers' licenses and certificates, tallying professional development and reporting to the local professional development committees (LPDC's). The complete package is called the IPDP Management Suite. The suite automates all the processes between the Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) and Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC) as well as keeps track of individual licensure status. All this is accomplished via a web-based interface.

- Electronically stores each person's professional development history including completed college coursework;
- Notifies users via email when their certificates need to be renewed
- Provides users access to their IPDP anytime, anywhere;
- Notifies teachers via email when the LPDC committee approves or denies their plan.

NCOCC does have considerable cost built into the development of this software, so we cannot offer it free to our peers, but our cost is considerably lower than any similar products around, with training and set-up built into the cost. Contact Bill Swartzmiller, Executive Director, at NCOCC 419-747-8660 for more information.

DASL Practitioners' Event at the State Technology Conference

Are you planning to attend the State Technology Conference March 1-3? Are you interested in learning more about using DASL for data driven decision making? Then plan to attend the DASL Practitioners' Event to be held at the State Conference on Monday, March 1.

A new event this year, the DASL Practitioners Roundtable will present an opportunity to share and learn about using DASL for student improvement. We hope a combination of DASL experts and lively audience participation will enable everyone to come away with a greater understanding of how to use DASL in your school.

This session is currently scheduled for 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Monday, March 1. Please check the Ohio SchoolNet State Conference web site at www.osn.state.oh.us for more information about this and other sessions at the 2004 State Conference.



INFOhio Moves to Sirsi

K-12 library network to use latest technology to serve students throughout Ohio

INFOhio has selected the Sirsi Corporation's suite of software and services to support school library automation needs in more than 2,000 school libraries across the state. "Sirsi's K-12 solutions are ideal for schoolchildren and will help INFOhio fulfill its role as Ohio's virtual library for K-12 schools," said Theresa M. Fredericka, INFOhio's executive director. "INFOhio is dedicated to bringing our school libraries into the 21st century and helping our schools meet the challenge of blending traditional educational resources with the power of technology and the tools of the information age. We strive to make resources available to help all students become

information literate and to support all teachers as they implement Ohio's academic content standards. Sirsi will help us achieve those goals."

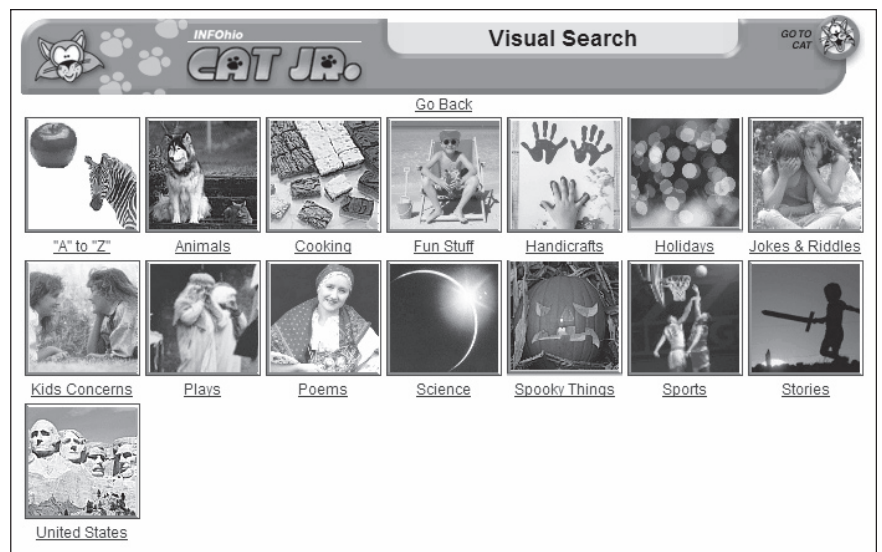
Library automation is necessary to organize the materials already in school libraries. Ohio school libraries have more than 40 million resources, and they continue to add to these print and non-print resources every year to support local curricula and foster independent reading. Library automation enables students to effectively access both print and electronic information and helps library staff manage their collections.

INFOhio and Sirsi's K-12 library automation will provide Ohio's schools with

- Improved access to library materials by reading level, interest level, and state curriculum objectives.
- A graphical interface that is dynamic, user-friendly, and accessible.
- An inexpensive option for standalone systems to migrate to INFOhio while maintaining a point-and-click application.
- Ability to provide districts with optional Online Public Access Computer (OPAC) Content Enrichment such as author biographies, book reviews, table of contents, book jacket images and more. (Content Enrichment is an optional feature available for an additional annual charge.)

Currently, 45 prototype buildings are using the new Sirsi product at the following DASites: LNOCA, MEC, NOACSC, SCOCA and SPARCC. The migration of the remaining 2,012 school libraries will occur in a series of waves over the next 30 months. Summer 2006 is targeted as the completion date for all INFOhio libraries and the Union Catalog to be migrated to the new software.

"The Sirsi suite of products and services will enable INFOhio to better serve elementary, middle, and high school students – not to mention parents and teachers – throughout Ohio," said Patrick C. Sommers, Sirsi's chief executive officer. "Sirsi is proud to be a partner with INFOhio, a truly remarkable organization, in its efforts to serve and inform today's students and tomorrow's leaders in the state of Ohio."



The Sirsi K-12 visual search interface is ideal for younger students.

**For additional information contact your local DASite or
INFOhio Central at central@infohio.org or 614-752-2941.**

Third Frontier Network Update

By Andrew Tompkins, CTO

We are in an age of electronic-based communication that is being fueled by the Internet, and the educational community is no exception. Use of Internet-related resources like web pages, email, and video has grown exponentially since the founding of the K-12 ONEnet network. Having access to these types of resources is a vital part of today's educational environment. However, there is a downside. Rapid growth is pushing the limits of budgetary funds.

In an effort to control costs and provide for future educational needs, our state is in the midst of a major upgrade that will link Ohio's educational research institutions, higher education, and the K-12 community with fiber optic connectivity. This initiative is called the Third Frontier Network. The Third Frontier Network is a partnership of the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Supercomputing Center, the Ohio Academic Research Network (OARnet), the Ohio SchoolNet Commission, and the Ohio Department of Education. Building and managing a private fiber network will allow Ohio's educational community to drastically lower operational costs while providing the network of the future.

We are in an age of electronic-based communication that is being fueled by the Internet, and the educational community is no exception.

It is important to note that this fiber project is still on track and moving forward in spite of the defeat of the bond issue this past November. The Third Frontier Network is being built in several stages. The first phase comprises the backbone of the network. Fiber testing and equipment installation for the backbone phase began in December 2003. The backbone is expected to be operational by April of 2004.

The second phase of this project will connect K-12 Data Acquisition Sites and Ohio educational research institutions into the backbone network. This phase will begin in March of 2004. If all proceeds as planned, some DA Sites will be connected by the summer of 2004, and the "last mile" connectivity for all K-12 DA Sites and large urban districts should be completed by the summer of 2005.

Controlling costs is important, but the real excitement of this project will be high-speed fiber connectivity and access to Ohio's colleges and universities. The Third Frontier Network should bring a wealth of new tools and resources to the K-12 educational community.

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