



# Connections

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## From the CEO...

By Bruce E. Hawkins, CEO

2005 has been a busy time for the Management Council as we have looked at several statewide issues that have an impact on technology. Other articles in this newsletter will be more specific in addressing these issues.

*Some of the areas we are covering and have been monitoring include the following:*

### State Budget

The Management Council gave testimony before legislative committees and met with individual legislators on behalf of the OECN sites for funding in the current biennial budget.

### eTech Ohio

As part of the budget process, Ohio SchoolNet and the Ohio Educational Telecommunications Network were merged into a new agency eTech Ohio. Bruce Hawkins, who previously served on the SchoolNet Commission, was appointed by Senate President Bill Harris to be an eTech Ohio commissioner.

### Third Frontier Network (TFN)

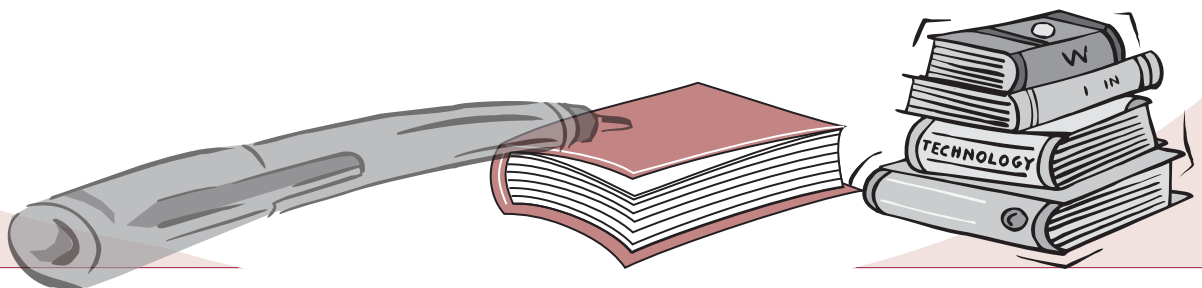
This summer there have been lengthy discussions with several state agencies including the Governor's office, the Ohio Department of Education, eTech Ohio, Office of Information Technology, the Ohio Board of Regents, and OARnet to collaborate on the formation of the Third Frontier Network which will provide much higher speed bandwidth to the OECN sites and to the large urban school districts.

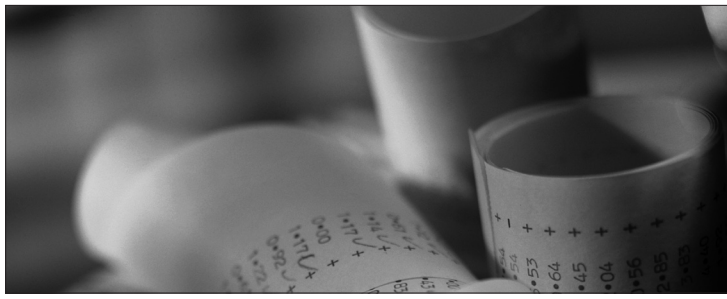
### DA Sites will be Renamed ITC's (Information Technology Centers)

For the past year, the Ohio Department of Education, the OECN, and other interested parties have been working on revising the Ohio Administrative Code regarding the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN). In July, the State Board of Education passed a motion of intent to approve the new standards, which were subsequently approved by JCARR (Joint Commission on Rules Revision) of the legislature. At the September meeting, the State Board of Education gave final approval, and DA Sites will now officially be known as Information Technology Centers or ITC's.

### D3A2 (Data Driven Decision Making for Academic Achievement)

Several organizations are now working together to launch the D3A2 initiative. This program will provide data analysis, instructional resources, and other materials to improve student achievement in Ohio schools. The Management Council strongly endorses this collaborative effort among the state educational organizations.





# INFOhio 2005-2006 Toolkit

Theresa M. Fredericka, Executive Director

INFOhio's Toolkit provides educators and parents with the supplies and resources needed to get the school year off to a great start and to ensure continued success throughout the year! Start your school year here: <http://www.infohio.org/Toolkit2005.html>! If you're unfamiliar with INFOhio's vast products and services that support student learning and instruction, or even if you are a returning user, you will want to find out what's new for the 2005-2006 school year from the What's New link of the Toolkit.

From the Toolkit (each page of the Toolkit is also available in MS Word or Adobe PDF format for ease of printing), links for valuable resources, a supply list, to do items, and help with how to make the most of INFOhio have been designed for each member of Ohio's learning community:

- Administrators and Directors of Curriculum
- Classroom Teachers
- Guidance Counselors
- Library Media Staff
- Parents
- Technology Coordinators

A Toolkit Supply List provides materials to promote the Core Collection of Resources. The Supply List includes the Core Collection Flyer (information about all of INFOhio's resources), bookmark, and student card, which can all be downloaded, printed, and copied locally for distribution to teachers, students, and parents. Commercially printed handouts may be purchased from

R Design & Printing Company using the INFOhio 2005-2006 Order Form also available from the Toolkit.

We hope you find the INFOhio 2005-2006 Toolkit to be a useful resource during the school year. As always, your input and feedback are welcome. Best wishes for the new school year ahead! Should you have any questions about the Toolkit or other INFOhio products or services, please do not hesitate to contact INFOhio at [central@infohio.org](mailto:central@infohio.org) or 614-752-2941.

## Two NEW Resources



LearningExpress Library includes test preparation resources, skill-building tools, study guides and career guidance materials. Online course series are available in language arts, math skills and standardized test preparation including practice exams and quizzes. Use LearningExpress Library for:

- Test preparation: ACT, SAT and other college, graduate school and military entrance exams (ASVAB)
- Skills improvement practice exercises and online courses for elementary, middle and high school students
- Advanced Placement practice tests

World Data  
Analyst

**World Data Analyst lets students analyze over 200 countries at a glance. Highlights include:**

- **Country Snapshots** – easy access to printable country statistics including map, area, population, demography, vital statistics, GNP and more
- **Comparative Statistics** – Create a table or chart that compares countries using over 250 recent statistics
- **Historical Statistics** – Create a table or chart that compares countries over time.
- **Ranked Statistics** – Find information on country rankings in categories such as population, economy and significant geographic features.



# New Names for Familiar Faces

ONenet Ohio Network and Data Acquisition Sites get new names. Ohio SchoolNet Commission (OSNC) and Ohio Educational Telecommunications (OET) combine to form a new state agency.

Several familiar faces have undergone some recent changes. First, two former state agencies – the Ohio Educational Telecommunications Commission (OET) and the Ohio SchoolNet Commission (OSNC) – were combined under the recent budget legislation into a new agency called “eTech Ohio.” The legislature made this change to streamline the delivery of technology services to Ohio schools. The new agency is being led by Interim Executive Director Jillian Froment, who will report to a commission made up of nine voting members and four ex-officio (non-voting) members. The voting members are comprised of three statutory members (one each) from the Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Board of Regents, and the Office of Information Technology; and six “public” members appointed by the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House.

Another change is in the works for Data Acquisition Sites. The Ohio Administrative Rules governing the OECN are reviewed approximately every five years. As part of recently adopted OECN rules, the regional data centers will be called “Information Technology Centers” (ITC’s). The term “Data Acquisition Site” or “DA Site” was coined in the early 90’s to underscore the OECN’s role in the Education Management Information System (EMIS). Since that time the OECN sites have added many additional services such as INFOhio library automation, decision support, and Internet access. Although EMIS is an important function, the term “Data Acquisition Site” seemed to define limits on the array of services being offered. “Information Technology Center” is a more descriptive name for the services the OECN sites provide to their member schools.

Also changing is ONenet Ohio. The name “ONenet” was adopted to describe our statewide project to create “one network” for voice, video, and data for Ohio schools. Unfortunately, the state of Oklahoma had previously registered a trademark for that same name for Oklahoma’s technology network. A verbal agreement allowed Ohio to use the name “ONenet Ohio” to differentiate our project. Recently, Oklahoma officials had begun to express concerns regarding our use of “ONenet.” Given the creation of the new eTech Ohio agency, it seemed an appropriate time to make a change. The new name for the Ohio project is “The Ohio K-12 Network.”

## D<sup>3</sup>A<sup>2</sup> Initiative Underway

In partnership with education volunteers from across Ohio, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is leading the Data-Driven Decisions for Academic Achievement (D<sup>3</sup>A<sup>2</sup>) initiative which promises to make a difference in improving access to data and educational resources throughout Ohio’s education system.

“So far, we have received positive feedback from educators and researchers who are excited about having access to the resources they need to do their jobs,” said Amy Andres, ODE’s internal operations executive director. “District leaders and educators will be able to share data, content aligned to Ohio’s Academic Content Standards, professional development tools and other items electronically.”

The goals of the D<sup>3</sup>A<sup>2</sup> project are these:

- Improve educators’ comfort and proficiency in analyzing data to inform instruction and practices.
- Provide systemic access to data and aligned resources to improve instruction and student achievement.
- Contribute to a sustainable infrastructure to promote and enhance information-based education practices across the state.
- Leverage technology and existing support entities to accelerate the integration of existing educational tools and the development of new data systems.

“D<sup>3</sup>A<sup>2</sup> will let technology do the heavy lifting,” Andres said. “The D<sup>3</sup>A<sup>2</sup> initiative is actually an infrastructure of common standards that will

allow us to integrate existing local software so that district leadership, educators, students and families will be able to access data, curricular resources and planning tools through their local systems.”

The infrastructure to support the statewide, integrated system will be designed, developed and maintained using a committee structure comprised entirely of stakeholders, including school districts, DA-Sites, Education Service Centers, content providers, higher education, ODE and other State agencies.

“Planning for the D<sup>3</sup>A<sup>2</sup> project began in 2004,” Andres said. “In June, we held a kick-off meeting and formed the working committees. Now, we are moving into a six-month analysis phase, with plans to have a small working prototype accessing third-grade reading data analysis and content resources through the eSIS and DaSL student information systems. We are on schedule to have the prototype working by the end of September 2005.”

Plans are to use the prototype to develop recommendations and a plan to integrate system across the state by the end of March 2006, with full D<sup>3</sup>A<sup>2</sup> implementation beginning during the summer of 2006.

For more information, visit [www.odestate.oh.us/data\\_exchange](http://www.odestate.oh.us/data_exchange).

*continued on page 4 — see D<sup>3</sup> A<sup>2</sup> Committees*

## Third Frontier Network Background Work Being Completed

The Third Frontier Network is a high capacity fiber network being developed by the Ohio Board of Regents and the Ohio Academic Research Network (OARnet). The Ohio K-12 Network is partnering with TFN to bring this next generation network to Ohio schools. From lessons in science class we learn that four-fifths of a glacier is below water. In much the same way, several "below the water line" activities have been taking place regarding K-12 participation in TFN.

The Ohio K-12 Network's participation with the Third Frontier Network is not only about increased speed and capacity; it is also about a long-term reduction in the cost of statewide connectivity. To meet this goal the Ohio K-12 Network needed to establish a more complete cost baseline in our TFN participation agreement. Over the summer representatives from several agencies including the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Department of Education, eTech Ohio, the Office of Information Technology, the State of Ohio Office of Budget and Management, OARnet, and the Management Council of the OECN put in many hours to structure a new agreement. With this agreement in place the participation of the K-12 Network in TFN has been secured.

Another recent activity has been the installation of the K-12 Network backbone equipment. Over the past few months over \$1.4 million worth of high-capacity fiber switching equipment has been delivered, inspected, inventoried, installed, and tested in various point of presence or "PoP" locations on the TFN backbone. This installation also required "make ready" upgrades of power and air conditioning services at several of the PoP locations.

A third background task involved drafting the contracts for installation and support of the connections to the TFN PoP locations. There are eight different vendors providing connectivity services to the twenty-three ITC's and seven large urban districts. Under the leadership of the Management Council, the ITC's and large urban school districts pooled their resources to contract for legal services. This partnership allowed for more uniform contracts and reduced the overall cost for legal services.

K-12 participation in the Third Frontier Network is moving forward. Background tasks like these may not seem glamorous, but each is a necessary and important step towards completing the new K-12 network.

### D<sup>3</sup>A<sup>2</sup> Committees

- Content Committee - Promotes the alignment of content and resources to Ohio's academic content standards for use within the system.
- User Group Committee - Defines the end-user requirements of each component of the systemic model for academic achievement to be used at the classroom, building and district levels.
- Data and Technology Committee - Determines overall system architecture, security measures and technology standards for system integration.
- Financial Resource Committee - Coordinates and leverages existing funding sources and searches for additional funds to keep the project moving forward and sustainable during a time of constrained resources.

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