



Connections

Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network

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From the CEO...

By Bruce E. Hawkins, CEO

Update on Technology in Ohio's Schools

In the ten years that I have been the CEO for the Management Council, the importance of technology in the classroom and in the administrative offices has become much more pronounced. The schools depend on these quality services, and the Management Council, through their member ITC's, continues to strive to provide the highest quality of services to Ohio's educators.

OECN Oversight Committee

The OECN Oversight Committee continues to meet and review the services provided by the 23 Information Technology Centers (ITC's) around Ohio. The committee is currently working on several initiatives including revisions to the ITC's Continuous Improvement Plan, site visits to evaluate the ITC services, and review of the subsidy distribution formula to make sure they are as equitable as possible.

Ohio K-12 Network Committee

The Ohio K-12 Network is currently being upgraded including a migration from the previous video protocol ATM (asynchronous transmission mode) to IP (Internet Protocol). As part of this migration, the speed on the fiber connections to each of the 23 ITC's and 7 urban districts will be increased dramatically. This new speed will be improved from 155 Mb/sec to 1 Gb/sec. On more common terms, the speed will be increased by about six and one-half times. The target for the completion of this migration is September 1. State-wide support for legacy ATM video is scheduled to end on that date.

MC-TSG

Internet usage among Ohio K-12 schools has grown fourfold in the last two years. To maintain an adequate supply of bandwidth, the Management Council Technology Solutions Group is working with the Ohio K-12 Network to increase Internet availability. The network is adding a second Internet connection. Having a second connection will effectively double the Ohio K-12 Network's capacity to reach the Internet. The second link is being routed to a different national backbone location in order to provide an element of redundancy to the existing service. The purpose is to make sure that districts can continue to count on economical, robust, and reliable Internet access for instructional and administrative purposes.

The MC-TSG is also working with the Ohio Department of Education in sponsoring a network security audit. This process will encompass thorough testing to provide each site with a report of their baseline security posture.

Again, realizing the importance of technology for instructional and administrative functions in schools, the MC-TSG is moving forward to develop a centralized disaster recovery facility that can be shared by all ITC's and the Ohio Department of Education. A more cost effective centralized site is now possible due to the high speed fiber backbone connecting the ITC's and large urban school districts.

eTech Ohio State Conference

The eTech Ohio Commission recently held their 10th annual state educational technology conference. There were over 6,400 attendees at this conference with over 450 presentations and displays. Please mark your calendar for next year's state technology conference on February 2-4, 2009!

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Ohio K-12 Network Update

The MCOECN and OECN ITC's actively support the Ohio K-12 Network. This is an update on some of the major improvements that are happening. The Ohio K-12 Network continues to add services and features to maintain our state's status as one of the premier K-12 educational networks in the country.

ATM to Gigabit Ethernet Migration Project

The Ohio K-12 Network is in the midst of a project to increase the capacity of the network backbone. This is an upgrade from OC-3 (155Mb/sec) to Gigabit Ethernet (1000Mb/sec). This phase of the project will involve a migration of the network from the Asynchronous Transfer Mode "ATM" protocol to the Ethernet "IP" protocol for all services, including video. Approximately half of the thirty network access sites have been upgraded to Gig-E speeds. It is anticipated that the remaining sites will be converted before the start of the 2008-2009 school year. As part of this effort, the eTech Ohio video Network Operations Center (NOC) has been upgraded to support bridging for IP video conferences.

PLEASE NOTE: All schools are reminded that support for ATM video services will end on September 1, 2008. Schools will need to upgrade or replace video equipment to make it compatible with IP video.

Internet Bandwidth Upgrade Project

Ohio schools are currently consuming approximately 1.9 gigabytes of Internet bandwidth capacity on the Ohio K-12 Network. The MCOECN is working with the K-12 Network partners to increase bandwidth to the Internet. A second connection to the Internet is expected to be on-line in early spring 2008. This new connection will provide an alternate path to the Internet and double the existing Internet bandwidth of the Ohio K-12 Network.

Network SPAM Filtering

The Ohio K-12 Network continues to provide a first-line defense against unwanted junk email. Over ninety-eight percent of electronic mail flowing into the Ohio K-12 Network is junk mail or includes possible malicious content. The network SPAM filtering system is now capturing approximately 40 *million* junk or dangerous mail messages each day. This system is provided at no additional cost to any ITC or large urban school district that wishes to participate in the filtering project.

Network Noted for Security and Reliability

Two other activities are geared towards improving the security and reliability of the network. On the reliability front, the MCOECN was recently informed that it was nominated for the "Best Practices in Storage" award at [Computerworld's Storage Network World](#) conference in Orlando Florida. The MCOECN is a finalist in the "Storage Reliability and Data Recovery" category. This nomination came as a result of the work of the MCOECN and other network partners to develop shared disaster recovery facilities. This project will create one or more "hot site" locations and utilize the network to facilitate remote data backup and disaster recovery operations. These efforts are being engineered to enable nearly real-time recovery of information processing needs for Ohio's schools.

On the security front, the MCOECN recently awarded a contract to provide a network security audit for the thirty network sites on the Ohio K-12 Network. This audit will provide a "picture" of the security posture of the network. This is a preventative measure intended to maintain the security of vital school data. The thirty Ohio K-12 Network sites can use this information to increase their awareness of any potential security issues.

Update on Technology continued...

eTech Ohio Commission

Jillian Froment has been the Executive Director of eTech Ohio since shortly after the commission was formed as a consolidation of the previous SchoolNet and the Educational Telecommunications Commission. Ms. Froment has accepted another position; therefore, the eTech Commission will now be looking for a new Executive Director. The Commission is also working on an updated strategic plan which may be aligned with the recent strategic plan that was introduced by the Ohio Board of Regents.

EMIS Redesign

The Ohio Department of Education has contracted with IBM and EduStructures to redesign Ohio's EMIS reporting system.

This new EMIS redesign will be piloted next year in a few districts and is planned for full implementation on July 1, 2009.

The new EMIS system will be based on a relational database which will permit various functions of a school district to be able to interact thus eliminating the need for redundant entering of the same data.

EMIS Advisory Committee

House Bill 115 from the previous legislature established a statewide EMIS Advisory Committee. The chair of this committee alternates between the chair of the House and Senate Education Committees. This year, Senator Joy Padgett, chairs the committee. The purpose of the committee is to have the legislature, the Department of Education, ITC staffs, large urban staffs, and EMIS coordinators communicate ways to make EMIS more useful and efficient. The committee is currently looking at the cost of EMIS, the requirements for EMIS reporting at the district level, and professional development for EMIS implementation.

INFOhio

Did you know that INFOhio is the largest school library network in the world? INFOhio recently relocated their main office to be in the same building as OhioLink, which is their counterpart in the post-secondary environment. INFOhio is currently working with OhioLink and OPLIN (the public library network) to determine their offerings for on-line resources for the next school year.

State Budget

The recent budget cuts announced by Governor Strickland have had an impact on technology services like many other programs in state government. Line item 200-426, which is the OECN budget, was cut \$1,318,696 this fiscal year and will be cut \$1,470,551 in FY09. There are also budget cuts to the EMIS line item which eliminated the proposed increase that was anticipated in FY09. The governor and the Ohio Department of Education tried to hold schools harmless in these initial cuts. Therefore, the \$3,000 per building connectivity subsidy will not be impacted at this time.

State Budget FY10-11

The State Board of Education is currently having the Department staff work on proposed budget recommendations for the next biennium. These recommendations will go to the Office of Budget Management and eventually to the state legislature for consideration.

D3A2 Statistics

More than 130 schools now have some portion of data loaded into D3A2 and another 50 districts are in the process of having their data loaded. There are 5,497 user accounts set up to access their respective district data. The project continues to grow, and the Financial Resources Committee is looking through ways to continue to support D3A2.



EMIS Redesign Update

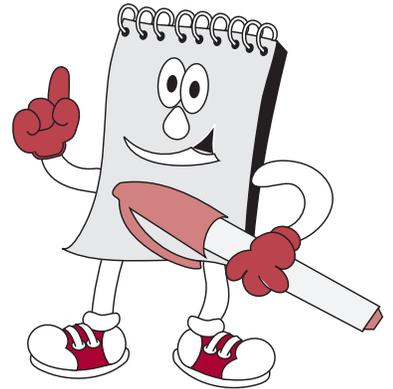
The EMIS Redesign is currently in the development phase of the project for both the vertical reporting framework and the SSID enhancement. The SSID enhancement is on schedule for completion of the development and testing phases by June 2008. Currently the SSID enhancement is planned to be implemented along with the vertical reporting framework. The vertical reporting framework is also on track with the development phase to be completed by the end of July 2008. The pilot testing is still scheduled to begin in late fall. Three ITCs (MEC, NOACSC, and NWOCA) will be participating. It is expected that each ITC will solicit three to five districts to participate in the pilot.

The development phase will be the more exciting phase as we will begin to see the results of the hard work that has been put into the previous two phases, requirements, gathering and design by ODE staff as

well as other stakeholders. This will also be a critical phase for receiving feedback from stakeholders to ensure information is presented in the Data Collector in a user friendly manner. Remember that the Data Collector is the new web system for gathering, reviewing and submitting EMIS data.

Where can I learn more?

If you would like additional information regarding the EMIS Redesign project, contact Nancy Haefeli, Project Manager, at ODE, nancy.haefeli@ode.state.oh.us



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