MCOECN Update *by Bruce Hawkins, CEO*

Funding the Future of Technology in Ohio's Schools

By Bruce E. Hawkins, CEO

This spring, the Ohio legislature will face some difficult decisions as far as the new state biennial budget and how to most efficiently spend the taxpayers' money in a time of tight financial conditions. There will be some recommendations to the legislature on how to address technology in our schools. For example, the Ohio School Technology Implementation Task Force, chaired by Representative Kerry Metzger, met throughout the 2002 calendar year to look at long-term funding for technology in Ohio schools, the future funding for the SchoolNet Commission, and the alignment of regional service agencies such as Educational Service Centers, Data Acquisition Sites, Special Education Regional Resource Centers, Area Media Centers and Ed Tech Agencies. The recommendations from this commission will be given to legislators as they deliberate over the biennial budget. The Governor's Commission on both teaching success and student success are also looking at some of these issues and will be making recommendations.

Finally, the ESEA (or Leave No Child Behind Act) from the federal government will also impact reporting and student accountability through technology.

Technology can be used for data driven decision-making. This will help teachers address students' individual needs in the classroom and it can be used for fiscal accountability. Most importantly, technology can be used to assist student learning and prepare them to be successful members of our society.

In the Ohio Department of Education budget request, there are some significant increases for technology. For example, they are recommending a 5% increase in both FY04 and 05 over the original FY03 allocation. (Note: The FY03 allocation was later cut by 10% due to budget constraints.) There is also a 42.3% increase in EMIS requests for the first year and 5.2% for the second year to help with the rewriting of the current EMIS software. It is important to remember that although the software is very important to the success of any

technology program, the support for that software is crucial so that it can be efficiently and effectively utilized.

The Data Acquisition Sites are there to assist the districts in fiscal accounting matters, EMIS support, student software issues, library automation and electronic resource assistance and other technology issues. It is important for all of the technology agencies in Ohio to work together so that rather than duplicate services, we can efficiently address the needs of our schools.

It is crucial as budget decisions are being made, the districts that are going to be utilizing this technology have input into the decision-making. There are essential core technology services that should be provided to all school districts regardless of their wealth. These core services need to be identified and properly funded so that all children in Ohio schools have the opportunity to be exposed to technology and learn the necessary skills as they enter Ohio's workforce.

ATPSOS Announces Annual Meeting

The Association of Technology Professionals Serving Ohio Schools (ATPSOS) has announced the date for their first annual business meeting. The meeting will be held the evening of Monday, February 3, 2003, in conjunction with the State Technology Conference. The meeting will follow a special membership dinner to be held at the Hyatt adjoining the Columbus Convention Center. Planned activities include the first official election of ATPSOS board members and officers.

The dinner, meeting, and elections are open to all ATPSOS members in good standing. If you were a charter member of ATPSOS or interested in joining, application and renewal information can be found on the ATPSOS web site at WWW.ATPSOS.ORG.

2002 has been a busy year for ATPSOS. Members of the inaugural board have been busy formalizing the constitution and bylaws of the organization. Activities included the development of

the ATPSOS web site, establishing fiscal procedures, and working with other organizations in representing the needs and concerns of technology professionals in Ohio schools.

"The Association of Technology Professionals Serving Ohio Schools is an advocate for educational technology excellence through communication, professional growth, instructional effectiveness, and quality technology direction."

"Dazzled by DASL"

As you might have heard, we have changed the name of our Data for Student Learning (DSL) project to avoid confusion with high speed telephone lines. Our new name is **Data Analysis for Student Learning**, or "**DASL**", which is pronounced "Dazzle".

Along with the new name, we have been working on an entirely new interface written in Microsoft .NET. This new look will give districts using DASL even greater functionality and ease of use. New features are being developed to extend DASL beyond proficiency analysis. DASL will have a portal home page (see photo) that can be customized to the needs of specific districts, buildings, or staff. One of the new features will allow district news and announcements to be published on the DASL portal page. Other items in development include a more dynamic security system that will be easier to manage and changes to the data storage to allow DASL to handle even the largest of school districts.

We have completed a new scheduler system containing all the flexibility of the McSIS scheduler. Other student data

features that will be tested over the next several months include the ability to produce reports and report cards in PDF format for laser printing and a "rolodex" report format that can include student pictures. Developers are currently working on screens used to enter and manage student information, including registration, withdrawal, class rank, and GPA. Because learning new software can be difficult and confusing, we are also developing look-up routines that will allow those familiar with McSIS to find new screens using the old and familiar screen names.

A new feature for the decision support module will include the ability to link directly to a test question from item analysis data. We are also developing enhancements to the absence list reporting. The list of tests that can be handled by DASL now includes the Ohio Proficiency Test (OPT), CAT-5, Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), Item Analysis from NCS Pearson, Ohio Off-grade Proficiency Test (OOPT), Ohio Proficiency Base Assessment (OPBA), Stanford Ninth

Edition Achievement Test (Stanford-9), and TerraNova forms A and C. When combined with student demographics and attendance data, it is easy to see why DASL is the premier data decision support tool for Ohio schools!

## INFOhio
THE INFORMATION NETWORK FOR OHIO SCHOOLS

INFOHIO'S NEW AND IMPROVED WEB SITE GOES LIVE AT WWW.INFOHIO.ORG ON JANUARY 13, 2003.

The new site is being created to provide easier access to the information teachers, administrators, students, parents and librarians all need from INFOhio.

MINDS Professional Services Group Technology Audit Statewide Agreement
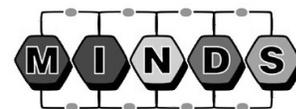
Why Perform A Technology Audit?

Technology continues to be one of the fastest growing areas within a school's budget. A technology audit thoroughly evaluates all the components of your investment and the progress made against existing plans and goals. A technology audit also provides recommended solutions for effectively supporting ever-changing network needs. Technology will continue to have an impact on teaching, learning and administration—and an audit will provide input, direction, and recommendations to ensure that the impact is both positive and cost effective.

To assist Ohio schools with determining if they have best practices in place to meet their technology needs, the MCOECN has a statewide agreement with MINDS Professional Services Group (PSG) to provide this service at an attractive

price. With over 16 years of recommending, designing, installing, and overseeing technology investments within the education community, the MINDS PSG Audit Team can provide a world class evaluation of your network and associated IT investments while working with either your technology committee, administration, or school board. The PSG Audit Team will provide recommendations for system optimization, problem resolution and prevention, cost savings and performance efficiency.

For further information please contact:

Marvin Sauer
MINDS Professional Services Group
(248) 489-8400 x2013
msauer@minds.tv
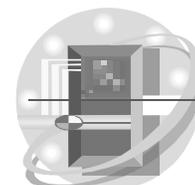
The OECN State Software – What's In The Future?

The OECN State Software is a suite of administrative applications designed for use by Ohio's public K-12 school districts. This software, funded and copyrighted by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), originated in 1979 and has been continually updated and improved ever since. The OECN State Software is currently comprised of four major packages called USAS (fiscal accounting), USPS (payroll/personnel), EMIS (Education Management Information System), and SAAS (fixed-asset management). The OECN State Software is offered as a service and supported by each of the regional Data Acquisition Sites (DA-Sites) comprising the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN). A majority of all Ohio public K-12 school districts utilize the USAS and/or USPS systems, and all Ohio public K-12 school districts utilize the EMIS package to report required data to the ODE.

The development and maintenance of the OECN State Software is performed by the State Software Development Team (SSDT) under the guidance of the ODE and the OECN State Software Advisory Committee. This committee is comprised of ODE, OASBO, and OECN DA-Site representatives from around the state and is chaired by Chuck Gossett, the Treasurer of West Clermont Local Schools. The SSDT receives guidance and feedback through this committee to prioritize requests for enhancements to the OECN State Software.

The OECN State Software has traditionally been a "text-based" (green-screen) mainframe application software. In recent years the SSDT has provided enhancements to the software by providing additional capabilities known as *FiscWeb* and *SSWAT* which provide administrative and decision-support data to users via a web-based user interface. During the 2002-2003 fiscal year the SSDT is performing feasibility testing to separate the user interface from the business logic and input/output modules of the OECN State Software. If this testing deems the process feasible, the SSDT will phase-in an optional web-based user interface for the OECN State Software over the next 2-3 years. The first prototype of a web-based interface is planned for release in June 2003, and it would be a purchase order requisition data-entry module.

The major goal of the feasibility testing currently in process is to provide users with a graphical user interface (GUI) that is web-based so that users would no longer need terminal emulation software in order to gain access to the OECN State Software. The use of a GUI interface will also reduce user training requirements, and allow the software to migrate to other hardware platforms in the future in a manner transparent to users. This will provide additional flexibility and cost-effectiveness, while eliminating any need to re-train a large number of users statewide in a short timeframe. (There are currently an estimated 6-7,000 users of the OECN State Software throughout Ohio schools.)

The SSDT makes hundreds of modifications and enhancements to the OECN State Software each year. Release notes outlining the changes made are posted in the OECN Public Forum, an online message board system. It is also through the OECN Public Forum where users provide feedback and requests to the SSDT for changes desired to the OECN State Software. All users of the OECN State Software are encouraged to actively participate in the OECN Public Forum discussion areas.

For additional information regarding the OECN State Software, please contact your local DA-Site for assistance.

Email Etiquette

Email has become a pervasive communication tool in our society. However, if you are careless about the use of Email you could do harm to your career. You need to know when to use it, and when it is best not used. Here are some tips:

❖ **Don't use Email to deliver bad news.** It's difficult to demonstrate your concern or compassion about bad news via Email. Frequently, it's better to deliver this kind of information personally.

❖ **Don't challenge a co-worker's idea in an Email.** Criticism delivered via Email can be deadly to any relationship. If you've got ideas on how a co-worker can improve a project, talk it out in person. They'll be less likely to put a negative interpretation on your offers to help.

❖ **Don't hash out conflicts through Email.** If you have a conflict with a co-worker or boss, it's always best to work things out in person. This allows for conversational give and take as well as an easier way to respond to one another.

❖ **Don't delay responses to Email.** The technology is there so it can make communication faster. Even if you can't respond to a question or request right away, send an Email saying you'll work on the request. Also, keep in mind that if an Email doesn't require a response, you shouldn't feel compelled to send one.

❖ **Don't copy people unless necessary.** Otherwise, you'll get the reputation of being a source of junk Email.

❖ **Don't write long messages.** Or, keep items in bullet form. Email should be quickly and easily read and comprehended.

❖ **Don't get lazy with style, grammar, or typing.** Edit your work and avoid using all caps … they're too difficult to read and denote that you are "shouting" at the reader.

INFOhio

THE INFORMATION NETWORK FOR OHIO SCHOOLS

INFOhio PREVIEW 2003

INCLUDES DISCOUNTED PRICING
AND A TWO MONTH ONLINE PREVIEW

Many schools call upon their library media specialists, technology coordinators, and other teachers and administrators to spend building and district funds to acquire additional electronic resources. To help spend local funds wisely, INFOhio continues to assist with PREVIEW 2003. This year's program allows Ohio educators, students, and parents to preview electronic resources from numerous vendors via the Internet and at no charge!

To visit each vendor's product between January 15 and March 15, follow a path from the New and Upcoming area of the INFOhio Web site <http://www.infohio.org>. A link takes previewers to a vendor page with a button to the preview site, any username/password required, product overview, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses for technical support and product information. Encourage everyone in your building to preview these products fairly and responsibly. The Preview is provided to assist school districts in making purchasing decisions for products that support their curricula.

The INFOhio Electronic Resources Price List 2003 contains discounted pricing and ordering information for all Preview products. The Price List will be mailed to every Ohio school during the first few weeks of January. NOTE: prices are in effect for the 2003-2004 school year.

If you do not receive the printed price list, check with other staff in your building. If your building does not have a copy, please contact Cathy Kerner, INFOhio Office Manager, at central@infohio.org or 614.752.2941.

The INFOhio Electronic Resources Task Force, co-chaired by Sheila Benedum, Bay Village City Schools, and Kathy Halsey, Canal Winchester Local Schools, coordinates PREVIEW 2003. INFOhio, in conjunction with the Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network (MCOECN), is pleased to continue the online preview and discounted pricing for the sixth consecutive year.

Disclaimer: INFOhio provides the Online Preview 2003 for evaluation purposes only. It is our desire to provide you with quality resources to review and possibly purchase at a substantial discount. However, inclusion of a product in the Preview does not guarantee such quality and is not an endorsement of any product over another.

Bruce Hawkins, CEO
hawkins@mcoecn.org

Columbus Office:
8050 North High Street
Suite 150
Columbus, OH 43235
(614) 840-9810

Mt. Vernon Office:
1365 New Gambier Rd.
Mt. Vernon, OH 43050

MINDS Professional Services Group
Technology Audit Statewide Agreement
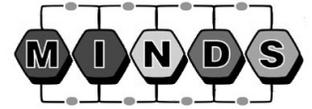
The following areas are addressed with the PSG Technology Audit:

INFRASTRUCTURE
An evaluation of the overall design of the current physical topology and compliance against NEC and industry standards will be conducted. Examination includes the internal connectivity between wiring closets, user devices connected within the buildings, growth capacity, flexibility, and external building connectivity.

NETWORK HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE
We will perform a site survey and produce accurate, logical network maps, an assessment of the current network's utilization and an inventory of devices, protocols, applications and services used. Recommendations to improve network performance and how to minimize network outages will be provided.

FILE SERVER AND WORKSTATION HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE
A comprehensive survey including a detailed description and count of all equipment, the operating system's version, patches, services and network protocols will be outlined. A model to determine potential life expectancy, upgrade requirements and future budget allocations will be provided.

SECURITY
This audit covers physical security, internal and external vulnerability (if applicable), security of network-based applications and Web-enabled devices, a policy checklist and network management.

DISASTER RECOVERY AND PLANNING (DRP)
DRP is a practice in which organizations develop policies and procedures to ensure rapid restoration of computers and resumption of computer-based operations in the event of a major system disruption. We will review the current DRP policy of your organization and make appropriate recommendations.

SUPPORT AND TRAINING
An assessment of current training to current technology requirements will be made. Recommendations for external support will be suggested as needed.

DOCUMENTATION
The existing documentation for your current network will be reviewed and appropriate recommendations will be made.

Current pricing models
for the audit are as follows:

# OF BUILDINGS	EDUCATIONAL PRICING	MCOECN PRICING
1-3	$ 3,495	**$ 3,146**
4-6	$ 4,995	**$ 4,496**
7-9	$ 7,495	**$ 6,746**
10-12	$ 9,995	**$ 8,996**

Please contact us directly for customized pricing should your district have more than 12 buildings. Attached is an order form to facilitate beginning your audit!

MCOECN K-12 State-wide Order Form For MINDS PSG Technology Audit
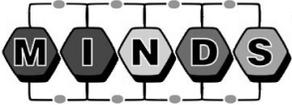
Organization Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Number of Buildings: _____

Purchase Order Number: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Bill to: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PLEASE FAX THIS ORDER FORM TO:

Marvin B. Sauer
MINDS Professional Services Group
37562 Hills Tech Drive
Farmington Hills, MI 48331
Phone: 248-489-8400
Fax: 248-489-8403

Please call Marvin Sauer with questions at 248-489-8400 x2013 or msauer@minds.tv