

Digital California Project

K-12 Statewide Network

Frequently Asked Questions

May 2001

Q: What is the Digital California Project (DCP)?

A: The Digital California Project: K-12 Statewide Network is an initiative proposed by Governor Davis to provide \$31.6 million annually, funded by the State of California, to create the digital infrastructure needed to prepare the next generation of Californians with the skills to excel in the network-driven economy.

The DCP is building a cohesive and seamless statewide, advanced services network backbone that reaches into each of the State's 58 counties for use by California's K-12 students, teachers and administrators.

The DCP provides access to rich content resources for teaching and learning, to prepare students with the basic knowledge and specific skills to inspire them to enter and be successful in higher education and in the 21st century workforce.

Q: What is CENIC?

A: The Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC) is a nonprofit corporation founded by the five major California universities: California Institute of Technology, California State University, Stanford University, University of California, and the University of Southern California. The mission of CENIC is to facilitate and coordinate the development, deployment, and operation of a set of robust advanced communications services for education and research organizations in California based on the newest Internet technology.

Through its development of projects like the DCP and CalREN-2, CENIC is meeting the challenge of delivering the advanced network technology of tomorrow to all of California's education communities today.

Q: What are the goals of the DCP?

A: The DCP has five major goals:

1. To provide a statewide network communications infrastructure for the K-20 systems in California;
2. To facilitate access to rich content resources for teaching and learning in K-12;
3. To create an environment that facilitates collaboration between California's K-12 and higher education communities;
4. To provide a conduit for educators to access Information Age tools and enhance the skills required to use technology effectively in the classroom; and

5. To provide an ongoing mechanism and the technical support required enabling California education to sustain a cohesive and reliable K-20 statewide education network.

Q: Why do we need the DCP?

A: While today's Internet is widely viewed as an effective means to provide information and a limited array of services to K-12 educators and students, it is insufficient to facilitate the comprehensive sharing of resources and delivery of high quality programs and services.

Although there are programs like the Digital High School Program and Federal E-Rate Program in place for developing the infrastructure at each school site and interconnecting the schools within a district — prior to the DCP — no cohesive effort existed in California to address the need for connectivity among all segments of education statewide or to provide K-12 schools with the advanced network services necessary to access the rich information and services most useful in an educational setting.

In order to meet this need, the DCP is leveraging two existing high-performance advanced services networks to support connections to K-12: CENIC's own California Research and Education Network (CalREN-2) and California State University's 4CNet.

The DCP will extend the reach of these networks into the K-12 education community throughout the state. This network will be linked to the larger Internet2 and the public Internet, providing access to the learning resources that are prerequisite for enabling the education community in California to be responsive to the demands of the Information Age.

Q: What benefits will the DCP provide?

A: The DCP contributes to accomplishing the vision of the California Commission on Building for the 21st Century. This State Commission's four major framework goals for technology and the DCP's contribution to them are:

Goal 1: Developing and Maintaining a Statewide Technology Infrastructure

The key to a comprehensive information technology strategy is the development of a cohesive and seamless statewide high-speed, advanced service network. Developing and maintaining this technology infrastructure is a primary goal of the DCP.

Goal 2: Providing for Professional Development

The DCP will offer greater access to currently available Internet-based teacher preparation and certification programs and in-service staff development. More importantly, it will serve as the conduit for innovative multimedia and interactive professional development programs, allowing educators greater flexibility in determining when and where they will receive training, certification and services.

Goal 3: Developing and Integrating Curriculum-Based Applications

The DCP is not designed to fund the development of applications. However, the plan does call for providing coordination among, and facilitating collaboration between, CENIC universities, community colleges, K-12 institutions and private sector entities in identifying, providing, demonstrating and developing the best content, applications, practices and new collaborative tools enabled by this network.

Goal 4: Providing Access to Library Information and Learning Resources

Library information and other archives and resources are increasingly available electronically and widely accessed in the post-secondary and research communities. The need for a high-speed advanced services network to provide access to this rich content for K-12 educators and students has become critical.

Q: What will the DCP K-12 Statewide Network look like?

A: The DCP offers a cohesive strategy for developing the most cost-effective statewide network possible. It builds on CENIC's higher education advanced services network, CalREN-2, which currently connects 40 plus research and higher education institutions throughout California.

CalREN-2 provides more robust networking capabilities than the commercial Internet and is interconnected with the larger universe of Internet2. Moreover, the DCP leverages investments in the inter-connected California State University (CSU) wide-area network, 4CNet, as well as existing network infrastructures supported by County Offices of Education and local school districts.

Specifically, the DCP network plan extends CalREN/4CNet infrastructure backbone into all 58 counties in the state by providing regional DCP hub sites strategically located throughout California, as well as primary and secondary access nodes in each county.

These county-based access nodes will be positioned to take full advantage of extant county, district and school networks, as well as the telecommunications infrastructure at school sites.

By connecting the existing K-12 county and school district networks to these nodes, K-12 schools, district offices and county offices will then be able to connect to each other statewide and to both the more advanced Internet2 network and the public Internet.

Twelve (12) hub sites and 71 primary access nodes have already been identified. Extensive planning and consultation, including meetings convened with K-12 technical staff in each of the 58 counties, was involved in selecting the node sites. Planning is now taking place for up to 60 additional secondary node sites.

Q: What kinds of new applications will be available for use with the DCP network?

A: While development of applications and resources is outside the scope of this project, the DCP will be operated in conjunction with outreach and enrichment programs already initiated and being developed by CENIC universities, community colleges, K-12 institutions and industry. These relationships embrace and include teacher preparation, professional development, curriculum development, student outreach and access to library information resources.

What the DCP offers is a coordinating mechanism for strengthening the educational relationships between the K-12 schools and universities and an environment that nurtures these relationships. Specifically, this coordination component will involve identifying applications and resources that can best serve the K-12 community.

The programs, applications and services provided through these relationships will be delivered via the DCP network in a friendly, time efficient manner for K-12 educators and students.

Furthermore, DCP will implement a multimedia e-content distribution system to help ensure the effective and efficient storage and distribution of these applications and resources throughout K-12.

Q: Will my school be connected to the DCP network?

A: Because most of the node sites are co-located with countywide K-12 networks, a high percentage of the schools will be immediately connected to DCP. Current estimates show that approximately 938 school districts and 7,851 schools will be connected to one of the initial 70+ county-based DCP nodes immediately following the installation of the DCP node sites.

For information about a specific school, please contact the Network Liaison for the geographic region in which the school is located. A list of Network Liaisons can be viewed at:
http://www.cenic.org/DCP_npl.html

Q: How will the DCP help bridge the "digital divide" in California?

A: By delivering high-performance networking services to every county in California, the DCP is designed to ensure that all of California's students

can benefit from the tremendous resources made possible by this advanced services network.

For example, rural and urban schools that currently have little or no access to advanced placement courses will be able to use the DCP to access a range of AP courses available through the University of California College Prep Initiative.

Q: Who will maintain this new network?

A: The DCP includes the services of a Network Operations Center (NOC) to oversee the operations of the statewide DCP network on a round-the-clock (24/7) basis. Individual counties and/or school districts will be responsible for developing and monitoring their own connections to the DCP network.

Q: Who will pay for the establishment of the DCP network?

A: Governor Gray Davis and the California State Legislature have approved complete annual funding for the DCP starting with the 2000-2001 budget. This funding is being used to plan, implement and manage the DCP network. There is no cost to schools for establishment of the DCP network infrastructure.

Q: Don't our schools already have Internet access?

A: Although access to the current public Internet has helped K-12 education, the DCP advanced services network will open up a new realm of experience for K-12 students and educators alike. High performance networks represent a quantum leap from the type of Internet access currently available to most California K-12 schools.

Students currently travel on the "information superhighway". With the DCP network, they'll be able to work, learn and grow from a state-of-the-art "launching pad."

Q: Will the DCP provide computers for our classrooms?

A: The DCP was designed to provide the network infrastructure for statewide interconnectivity of existing computer networks in K-12 institutions. Acquisition of additional computer systems or local area networks is beyond the scope of this project.

Q: How is K-12 involved in the planning and development of the DCP?

A: The DCP will not be successful unless it draws upon the resources and the expertise of K-12 educators and administrators.

The CENIC Board of Directors has established a broadly representative Program Steering Committee to formulate and oversee the planning, development, coordination, and implementation of the DCP.

Representatives from the following education organizations serve on this committee:

- Association of California School Administrators
- Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities
- California Education al Data Processing Association
- California Community College System
- California County Superintendents Educational Services Association
- California Department of Education
- California Federation of Teachers
- California School Boards Association
- California State Secretary of Education
- California State University System
- California Teachers Association
- CENIC Board of Directors
- Computer-Using Educators, Incorporated
- Small School Districts Association
- University of California System

Q: What is the current status of the Digital California Project?

A: The planning phase of this project was successfully completed January 31, 2001, which included project staffing and development of the overall network architecture. The network is expected to be fully implemented and operational by June 30, 2002.

Q: How do I find out more about CENIC and the DCP?

A: Information about CENIC and the Digital California Project is available on the Internet at:
<http://www.cenic.org/>

If you have additional questions, please contact CENIC via email to info@cenic.org or by telephone at (562) 985-9656 or by FAX at (562) 985-9012.



The Corporation for
Education Network Initia-
tives
in California

4655 Lampson Avenue
Los Alamitos, California 90720
PHONE: (562) 985-9656
FAX: (562) 985-9012

info@cenic.org
<http://www.cenic.org>