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To: OhioLINK Governing Board, LAC

From: Tom Sanville

Subject: Ohio Commons for Digital Education (OCDE)

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The attached proposal recognizes that the electronic environment eliminates the traditional distinctions between instruction, libraries, and research. The directors of OhioLINK, the Ohio Learning Network, and Ohio Supercomputer Center are proposing to their boards a more formal coordination process. Since all three organizations are to enhance the instructional and research missions of Ohio higher education, we seek to develop coordinated use of resources as we develop to maximum effectiveness digital resources and capabilities.

This proposal was first shared with the OLN board in December and is now being shared with the OhioLINK and OSC boards. Groups such as the OhioLINK LAC and Ohio CIO's will be briefed as well. Since December the three directors have discussed further what projects will most benefit from a collaborative approach. Our initial thinking are these:

1. Statewide Institutional Repository/Knowledge Bank capabilities
2. My Space – personal web space for all Ohio students and faculty
3. Course Management Systems selection, licensing and development
4. Statewide user authentication system
5. Computational Grid development and use
6. Faculty development programs

For each we are developing a brief definition and a statement of the general developmental approach for each. These we will share with our working communities and with them put these into motion. We must recognize that these projects may require new resources to be fully implemented.

As noted in the OCDE proposal we hope that we can build on our successes and maximize the effectiveness of all institutions through our collaborative efforts.

**An Ohio Commons for Digital Education**  
**Concept Paper**  
December 19, 2002

The Ohio education community faces continuing development, expansion, and maintenance costs in instructional technologies, information resources, and research necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. In all facets of this effort, it has been demonstrated, both in and outside of Ohio, that they can be done effectively and efficiently in a shared resources and services environment. OLN, OhioLINK, and OSC (including OARnet)\* in Ohio, as well as efforts such as Wisconsin's dotEDU utility and U of California's Digital Library and e-scholarship repository are just a few of the many leading edge examples.

It is quite clear that the traditional distinctions between instruction, libraries and research applications and resources are eliminated in an electronic environment. More importantly, to be used most effectively they must converge. Separate OLN, OhioLINK, and OSC activities are now converging. For examples, OhioLINK already stores a variety of digital resources provided from faculty that falls outside traditional library collections, OLN grant funds help faculty develop sharable learning objects and course content, e-learning course management systems can draw more effectively on OhioLINK stored and licensed data, OhioLINK already collects and stores satellite data that may best be analyzed via computational resources of OSC, and OSC hosts a variety of computer applications that now can be applied more widely to course-work and research applications.

OLN, OSC, and OhioLINK recognized this convergence through informal coordination in joint planning three years ago. This allows each organization to focus on its own primary mission – developing Ohio's e-learning capacity, information resources, or computational research and networking – while taking into account the convergence of these activities. As developments in instructional technologies continue, these interrelationships must be more expressly recognized and accounted for to best leverage to maximum affect the capabilities of all three organizations. In this sense OLN, OSC, and OhioLINK act as partners to create a commons of resources and services for education and research purposes. The benefits of this commons should extend to the K-12 community.

All three organizations contribute to and enhance the instructional and research missions of Ohio higher education. In all cases the objective is to provide high quality services at less cost than individual institutions would incur for those same services. Examples of the resources and services that can be created or expanded include:

- 24 x 7 help desk for faculty and students. OARnet manages a support center for its clients and some faculty/students. This could expand to more broadly serve distance learners.
- Instructional design support
- Statewide expertise in teaching and learning
- Knowledge about emerging technologies, including open source activities
- Professional development for faculty (@ OLN now)
  - Learning Communities
  - Tools training (limited, via contract)
  - Tools communities support via Bb and WebCT listservs
  - Teaching and Learning Best Practices dissemination
  - Instructional design assistance
    - Science simulation and Visualization/modeling (@ OSC now)
    - ADA compliance (@ OLN now)

- Intellectual Property (@ OLN now)
  - Software for course development/delivery (WebCT statewide contract held by OLN)
  - LMS access for course development (OSC does with funding from OLN)
  - Hosting Course delivery for students statewide (OSC does some on fee basis)
  - Scientific Data repository
  - Computational Grid
  - Hosting digital objects/learning objects - OhioLINK already has very diverse capabilities and digital resource as reflected in the Digital Media Center, Electronic Theses and Dissertations, Electronic Journal Center, e-books, reference databases and more. These are both commercial and institutional resources, library and faculty supplied resources, and text, video, and audio resources. The vehicles for submission of content and the use of it should be more broadly created to fully integrate with course and research applications.

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The creation of these new or expanded resources and services is an ongoing process as the partnership evolves. Expanded coordination of the three programs simply improves our collective ability to build the best services at the lowest cost with maximum use. This effort begins with ongoing coordination from the directors of OLN, OhioLINK, OSC-HPC. It is reinforced with an ongoing expectation of three boards for coordinated planning. Meeting agendas and proposed service developments should reflect the integration of services and resources, where needed, across all three groups. Directors of each organization will be involved in each other's board meetings when appropriate. A single annual or bi-annual planning meeting of all three boards will set common strategies and priorities.

### Initial Implementation:

1. OLN/OSC/OhioLINK directors assess current activities and plans that would benefit from a more collaborative approach and can be acted on in the immediate future. Complete initial review and planning/implementation recommendations as feasible prior to March 1 to be shared broadly at the annual conference.
2. OLN/OSC/OhioLINK directors assess broader and longer-term objectives and plans of all three programs and determine which would benefit from a more collaborative approach. Recommend how these might be further investigated and refined for potential joint action. Provide initial list of potential joint initiatives prior to March 1 that will be given more consideration at the annual conference.
3. OLN/OSC/OhioLINK directors assess what ongoing techniques are needed to have a collaborative approach integrate properly into the operations of the three programs. (e.g. community involvement in planning and implementation, joint assessment processes, joint planning meetings, joint task forces, etc.)

\*OSC references include OARnet