

## **Education and Cultural Services Directorate, Lincolnshire County Council's response to the Application by the BBC for a Digital Curriculum Service**

Lincolnshire Education and Cultural Services Directorate (ECSD) has a history of pioneering new initiatives as part of its aim to be a leading edge Authority in the area of Education and Lifelong Learning. It has produced ground-breaking work in piloting the Local Management of Schools (LMS) initiative and has continued supporting schools through ongoing investment in Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Since the launch of the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) initiative in 1998, Lincolnshire pursued a long-term aim to establish, as a virtual private network, an integrated County-wide grid called NETLinc for (a) learning (with a user-profiled content management system and on-line tools), and (b) electronic communications, secure e-services and data exchanges ([www.netlinc.org.uk](http://www.netlinc.org.uk)).

Lincolnshire Education and Cultural Services Directorate welcome the opportunity to respond to the BBC proposals.

### *Response to the Secretary of State's questions*

The Education and Cultural Services Directorate of Lincolnshire County Council welcomes the BBC's proposals for a digital curriculum as outlined in the submission presented to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. We believe that the developments proposed are within the BBC's public service role as set out in its charter and agreement.

There is significant value in the proposed service to the public, however, the impact on the market needs careful consideration, support and development. The development of interactive resources delivered using new and developing technologies has enormous potential in enhancing the online learning experience of pupils. This said, the size of connection to the Internet varies in schools and new digital content should be designed to be accessible by the vast majority of schools and not restricted to those who are fortunate enough to have a broadband connection.

It is our belief that the Curriculum Online initiative provides an essential balance where schools will be able to use E – Learning Credits to purchase digital content. The total impact of both initiatives in schools will to be determined by the extent to which the development of online resources by the BBC and industry can be coordinated to ensure that the breadth of study within the wider curriculum is supported over the next 5 years. The current BBC proposed percentages for Core, Non-core and Minority subjects will need further consideration over the next 5 years.

We welcome the BBC's proposal to involve external suppliers in the development of content, but would suggest that the percentage spent should be increased above 50% if the BBC's core policy on rights and ownership are to apply. The difference between sponsorship and ownership of resources requires further consideration.

We also welcome the proposal to develop a VLE to host digital curriculum materials and recognise the limitations identified. These additional services are often covered at a local level and the proposed scope of development is appropriate at the present time. We would also be interested to investigate further the potential interoperability between external VLE's ,including the proposed COL portal.

We note that there are similar services available, however, these are limited in scope and ability to deliver breadth of content required. The proposals, together with continued support for the Curriculum Online initiative, will enhance the existing market and provide a welcomed increase in the amount, quality and availability of online resources for schools.

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