

SLT's Broadband Network Connects Schools Island-Wide Through SchoolNet

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Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) is the infrastructure and service provider for SchoolNet, a new online educational system, which will improve efficiency and increase academic achievement within public schools across the nation. As part of the Secondary Education Modernization Project under the Ministry of Education, the initiative is set to revolutionize the way school administrators operate, the way teachers teach, the way parents are involved as well as the way in which children learn. SchoolNet allows teachers and students from schools throughout the nation to access reference material, tutorials, emails and other educational programmes over the Internet. In addition, for the first time teachers will be able to access several lesson plans on their computers.

SLT's IPVPN solution will connect schools island-wide to one unified network, which is SchoolNet, through the provision of multiple products such as voice, video, broadband Internet, network services and hosting services. A total of 1100 schools are to be connected under the first phase of the project, with 5000 schools to be connected to the network by 2010. SLT's IPVPN would allow all schools island wide to have access to a centralized IT network at any given time, which will enable them to communicate with Network Operations Centre (NOC), located at the University of Moratuwa. The planned network can carry Internet Protocol (IP) traffic - voice, video, mission critical and standard class data facilitating island wide schools with seamless connectivity. It is a secured and fully managed network.

The project allows the SchoolNet community prompt online access to educational software and enhances the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the educational environment. The impressive development in audio, video and computer assisted programmes along with computer mediated communications offer many possibilities for teachers to convert activities around interactive learning, watching related videos, online assessments and holding conversations in real time. Each school will be connected to the SchoolNet VPN by using different access speeds based on current requirements. However, this could be increased to higher data rates on demand.

"Our involvement in SchoolNet demonstrates SLT's commitment to collaborate with the Government of Sri Lanka to take the education system to greater heights. Since education is of extreme importance to the country, it will bring necessary facilities to improve and enhance the methods of learning and teaching further," Shoji Takahashi, CEO, SLT said.

The servers for web applications, databases, intranet and security will be installed at the NOC and maintained by a dedicated staff to offer reliable and maximum service levels. The latest ICT technologies have been selected for the SchoolNet operations, foreseeing future requirements in the education sector. The NOC will be connected to the Internet through 155 Mbps Optical Fiber Link to avoid bottlenecks in the bandwidth. SLT will provide state-of-the-art technology to introduce high quality, reliable broadband information to the national education system. This will give rural school access to information and educational content.

SLT's customized solution is of minimal cost, making operations smoother, enhancing the capabilities of the Ministry of Education and the education system as well as enabling to offer more online services to school children and teachers.

SLT believes that they can help to create a stronger resource pool for children and teachers across the country through the implementation of this SchoolNet programme. SchoolNet's resources will enhance the educational applications through SLT's technology. The company's commitment will be a direct cost saving to the Ministry of Education as well as further enhancing the capabilities of students and teachers