



media release

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First schools connect to advanced network

The first schools, content providers, the Ministry of Education and network aggregators are now connected to the new high capacity National Education Network (NEN). The NEN uses KAREN — the Kiwi Advanced Research and Education Network to provide high performance connectivity throughout New Zealand.

Donald Clark, Chief Executive of REANNZ, says "This trial will allow REANNZ to test the NEN architecture design and demonstrate better value and greater choice in services and content for the education sector of New Zealand."

The trial runs from this month until 15th December 2008 and is a REANNZ run project commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission and the National Library.

Donald Clark says "A variety of participants are being connected to demonstrate and test the NEN architecture, including clusters of schools on fibre optic loops such as the Wellington Loop, Nelson Loop, and the North Shore Loop (NEAL) as well as individual connected schools."

The Ministry of Education will be trialing their key student evaluation application (e-AsTTle) - testing its performance over the NEN with schools that are currently using it over the commodity internet. The trial will also offer German, and possibly French, TV channels to language classes alongside collaborative music classes.

"The natural attributes of the NEN lend themselves to use video conferencing as a teaching tool," said Donald Clark, "This high capacity, low latency, network makes it ideal to deliver time sensitive requirements such as teaching music or learning a language remotely. It also allows smaller country schools like Collingwood the ability to video conference with other schools across New Zealand and Australia."

The trial will be extended to companies that sell educational content to schools for example e-cast, who will be the first to participate through offering digital video productions, live webcam streaming, and full-length educational documentaries for distribution.

The outcome of this trial will shape New Zealand's education environment now and into the future and in doing so allow equal access to educational opportunities irrespective of location and the ability to deliver tailored learning to Kiwi children.

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