

## e-Update July 2006

Welcome to the 19th edition of e-Update, the monthly electronic bulletin from the Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team.

The purpose of this bulletin is to keep you informed with the latest developments in ICT.

**Note: There will be no e-Update published in August.**

---

The information in e-Update has been taken from a variety of sources including ICTSN and Becta. Details on how to subscribe to these and other sources of information can be found at the end of e-Update.

e-Update can also be found on the Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team's website at <http://www.bucksict.org.uk/e-update/> and on the Buckinghamshire Grid for Learning website at <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk/resources/course/view.php?id=126>.

If you have any comments on e-Update, please send them to [adickson@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:adickson@buckscc.gov.uk).

If you wish to unsubscribe from e-Update, please send an email to [adickson@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:adickson@buckscc.gov.uk) with the title **Unsubscribe**.

---

## General News

### **Direct2U Service for Teachers to Close**

#### ***Becta – Janice Staines, Strategic Analyst – Schools and Early Years Adviser***

Becta's role has changed over the last twelve months, moving from being a government agency that has supported the development and delivery of ICT and e-learning for schools and the learning and skills sector, to an agency that directly supports government in the leadership and co-ordination of the e-strategy "Harnessing Technology". These changes mean that Becta will no longer be working directly with classroom practitioners and trainers.

As a consequence of these changes the Direct2U service will close at the end of July. However, you will still be able to access and download the archive of lesson plans for 2005/6 at: <http://forum.ngfl.gov.uk/direct2u>. In addition, we shall be sending out the complete index of activities organised by both year group and subject at the beginning of August.

For further support with ICT in teaching and learning please go to: <http://schools.becta.org.uk> or the Teachernet service at: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/Resources/>.

### **Becta to launch pilot service for digital map data**

#### ***Rebecca Singer, Becta***

Schools who are considering developing their use of ICT based resources, following on from exploring the Learning and Teaching element of the self-review framework may wish to consider using Ordnance Survey data.

Under the Mapping Services Agreement (MSA) between Ordnance Survey and Local Authorities (LAs), LA funded schools are allowed to have access to the Ordnance Survey digital data held by their parent Local Authority. The access that LAs have been able to provide to schools has been variable, with some LAs able to supply excellent systems, either online (increasingly via broadband) or via other media, whilst others have found it more difficult. Another restricting factor is that LAs are only able to provide their local data.

In response to these issues Becta has launched an initiative to rationalise the service and ensure that all schools are able to access the most up to date digital mapping from OS. The pilot scheme, supported by the Department for Education and Skills, will look at different approaches for schools to access Ordnance Survey digital map data via the National Education Network (the broadband network for English schools) and relevant networks in Scotland and Wales.

Becta has awarded the pilot to leading ICT-oriented educational consultancy Advisory Unit: Computers in Education who are working with eMapSite, an Ordnance Survey platinum partner and leading online supplier

of digital mapping services. A key aim of the pilot is to identify the type of solution required for schools in the medium to long term.

Commenting on the initiative, David Hassell, Becta's Director for Educational Content said: "There is huge potential for geographical information impact on learning in a wide variety of subjects. The pilot will be used to ensure that schools have a major input into the programme as well as increasing access to map data and ensuring that schools can share effective practice."

Schools, LAs and commercial providers requiring further information should email [mappilot@becta.org.uk](mailto:mappilot@becta.org.uk) and ask to be put on the contact list.

### **Learning Platform Functionality Matrix**

**Rebecca Singer, Becta**

As a result of review their learning and teaching practices, or as reviewing their use of resources, some schools may wish to explore the potential and develop their understanding of learning platforms further.

The Learning Platform Functionality Matrix has been developed as a response to the recently published Learning Platform Functional Requirements. These requirements are integral to the learning platform procurement framework that Becta is currently establishing, to be launched in early January 2007.

The matrix presents these requirements in an accessible way by using language and examples that are relevant and appropriate at institutional level. The emphasis of the tool is away from labels and acronyms (MLEs, VLEs, LMSs etc) and towards recognisable functional requirements. It will help schools and institutions evaluate their ICT maturity and capabilities by assessing what their present deployment of learning platform technologies currently enables them to achieve.

The outcome is a suggested action plan which provides senior management with a strategic road map to help inform and support their vision for the future.

The matrix is best completed by LAs/RBCs and head teachers, with the support and collaboration of SMTs, ICT coordinators, teachers, and governors as appropriate.

Links to the Learning Platform Functionality Matrix and the Learning Platform Functional Requirements document can be found at [http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=lp&catcode=\\_le\\_pp\\_02&rid=12144](http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=lp&catcode=_le_pp_02&rid=12144).

**Note:** Buckinghamshire is currently running pilots using a VLE called **Moodle**. If you are on County Broadband and are interested in participating, please contact Ian Usher, e-Learning Co-ordinator on 01296 382038 or [iusher@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:iusher@buckscc.gov.uk).

### **NGfL Portal Closed**

**Andy Dickson**

In case you hadn't noticed, the National Grid for Learning Portal was closed on 13 April 2006.

This was picked up earlier this month by the BBC (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/5145882.stm>) and The Register ([http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/07/05/becta\\_ngfl/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/07/05/becta_ngfl/)).

The Department for Education and Skills said in a statement: "The National Grid for Learning was always a time-limited programme (1998-2002) which was developed to deliver a structure of educationally valuable content on the internet and to offer ICT infrastructure, services, support and training.

"The programme was superseded by the ICT in Schools programme which looked at the actual embedding of ICT to improve learning and teaching and raise standards for all children and learners."

Visitors to the National Grid for Learning Portal at <http://www.ngfl.gov.uk/index.jsp> will find the following notice:

*"The National Grid for Learning portal closed on 13 April 2006.*

*The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta) is improving its offer to teachers by rationalising the number of different services it provides for schools and teaching staff. This is being achieved by integrating valued components of the NGfL into its existing services.*

For online schools resources, please use Becta's Content Search (<http://contentsearch.becta.org.uk/search/index.jsp?clear=y>) Click on 'Search help' for how to locate quality-assured educational websites suitable for use in the classroom."

## **ICT Advice Alert Returns**

### **Becta**

Becta's ICT Advice Alert returns: this year there have been lots of changes to our services – notably merging the ICT Advice website into a new Becta Schools website – so it's time to bring you up to date.

Our July 2006 edition of the ICT Advice Alert arrives in a new format which aims to alert you to recent and upcoming news and advice on Becta's Schools website.

You can read the edition in the E-publications section of the Schools website by clicking the following link:

[http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=il&catcode=nwsltr\\_index&icctypeid=3&icteditionid=23](http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=il&catcode=nwsltr_index&icctypeid=3&icteditionid=23)

Contact schools services

We value your thoughts about Schools services, and look forward to hearing your views. You can contact us by sending an email to [schoolsservices@becta.org.uk](mailto:schoolsservices@becta.org.uk).

---

## **Subscription Details**

### **Becta**

To subscribe to the various publications, click here:

[http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=il&catcode=nwsltr\\_index](http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=il&catcode=nwsltr_index)

### **ICTSN**

ICTSN membership is available to organisations that provide support to schools. Schools are therefore not eligible for membership. Information about ICTSN can be found at <http://www.becta.org.uk/ictsn/index.cfm>.

### **RM**

To subscribe to the various RM newsletters, visit the RM website at

<http://www.rm.com/Security/Login/FormsLogin.asp> and register. If you are already registered, log in and go to *Email Subscriptions* in *My Account*.

---

## **Disclaimer and Copyright Notice**

The information contained in e-Update is collated from a range of non-Buckinghamshire LEA sources. Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team does not accept any liability for its accuracy or content. If you rely on this information you do so at your own risk. All information may be copied for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the source is acknowledged.