

Case Study:

Global Learning with Collaborative Technologies

HOW GCI SCHOOLACCESS AND CILC PARTNERED TO DELIVER SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES WITH AN END-TO-END EDUCATION SOLUTION

Education is changing and our youth must have access to information and resources to become the leaders that society demands. Technology can give them access, regardless of their location. But empowering students with the programs and content to go along with the technology can help give them the edge they need to succeed.

GCI SchoolAccess is an organization created to meet the needs of students by leveraging technology and much-needed bandwidth to enhance the education process. The Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC) is a not-for-profit that specializes in the access to applications and the utilization of video conferencing for live interactive content and professional development. Eight years ago, these two organizations partnered to deliver collaborative technologies like video conferencing and high-speed Internet, along with content to enhance education within a variety of schools, libraries and learning centers. SchoolAccess and CILC share a passion for supporting learning through collaborative technologies across the globe. CILC is run by former educators, and provides a vendor-neutral voice that helps validate SchoolAccess' offerings. Both organizations deliver incredible value individually. But together, SchoolAccess and CILC are able to provide an end-to-end education solution.

CILC and SchoolAccess have partnered at a variety of statewide and national conferences to spread the word that providing the right tools and content for education is the key to success. CILC has also been able to expand its reach across Alaska to schools, universities, and libraries, creating interactive video projects such as cultural exchanges and environmental programs via interactive video conferencing.

SchoolAccess and CILC have worked together to deliver learning enhancements that include, but are not limited to, the following examples.

Alaska Online with Libraries (OWL Project)

Funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rasmuson Foundation and the Alaska State Library, the OWL project was designed to help bring Internet access and video conferencing capabilities to Alaskans and improve the computing capabilities of public libraries throughout the state. Each participating library is not only becoming a public computing center, but also serves as a videoconference network endpoint, connecting Alaskans to programs across the globe.



SchoolAccess provided the high-speed Internet infrastructure used for video conferencing for more than 60 libraries participating in the OWL project. SchoolAccess also facilitated the introduction of CILC to users of the OWL project for the training, communication, meaningful use, and implementation of interactive video conferencing in and among the state libraries. CILC is working with the OWL librarians to:

- Help them become familiar with not only the available content through CILC, but also the process and procedures in place to facilitate making those connections with Content Providers. Content providers from around the world offer video distance learning programs.
- Manage the Content Dollar Bank for the state library. The Content Dollar Bank allows the state library to deposit money for programs, which users can access, but CILC manages the requesting, invoice and approval process.

Alaska State Libraries invested \$38,000 in their Content Dollar Bank over the course of 18 months. During this time, approximately 250 programs have been requested. Some of these programs went to multiple libraries that were asked to join after the programs were requested.

CILC encourages librarians to collaborate with sites around the country and has armed them with the tools and education to explore the possibilities. For example, students and library patrons have been able to access dynamic content such as virtually visiting the Great Barrier Reef in Australia or investigating the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. The video conferencing technology makes it possible.

KC3 (Kids Creating Community Content)

The KC3 international contest challenges high school and middle school students to research, develop, and present community content through various technologies and connect with classes world-wide through video conferencing. CILC sponsors the contest and has partnered with SchoolAccess to support educators and students in the development, sharing, and delivery of engaging education student content.

Specifically, SchoolAccess supplied the networking tools for the North Slope Borough School District to research and deliver its presentation to a partner school. With the SchoolAccess service, four different sites across the North Slope were able to interact with the contest, ask questions and receive an answer virtually. Students enjoyed teaching other students about culture in Alaska.

CILC and SchoolAccess are encouraging schools to share culturally and regionally significant content. The contest supports students as they take ownership of their education by researching, developing and presenting curriculum that expresses their knowledge and cultural heritage.



Alaska Sea Life Center (ASLC)

Through its video conferencing unit, ASLC has been able to offer live, interactive, multi-media experiences to students. Participants can expand their knowledge of Alaska's marine environment without setting foot at the aquarium. Last year the ASLC's video conferencing unit reached more than 10,000 students.

Through a National Park Service grant, ASLC provided an onsite workshop for teachers in Alaska surrounding the video conferencing education program. Both SchoolAccess and CILC participated in the workshop familiarizing teachers with the opportunities and possibilities of interactive video conferencing as well as modeling, discussing, and exploring video conferencing best practices that can be taken back to the classrooms and create successful learning opportunities.

The commitment to distance learning from SchoolAccess and CILC has enabled more students than ever before the opportunity to learn about Alaska sea life, regardless of location.



Conclusion

By working together, SchoolAccess and CILC are providing a collaborative learning experience for students and library patrons. From Alaska sea life to historical events to sharing cultural heritages, users are able to experience and learn about the world around them. The bandwidth and video conferencing capabilities of SchoolAccess combined with the rich bank of content accessible through CILC provide a tremendous opportunity for more schools and libraries across the country to expand their learning.

For more information on partnership opportunities please contact Tonia Carriger at CILC at tcarriger@cilc.org or Pam Lloyd at GCI SchoolAccess at plloyd@gci.com.