

Good morning, Everyone. Here is the **March update of Loop matters**. Brief and to the point.

Christchurch Earthquake

Clearly the Christchurch earthquake has been a devastating blow for many schools and I know that all of you have been doing what you can to help those families and students who arrived in your schools - and indirectly through fundraising, donating goods and sharing resources. The earthquake has impacted on the Loop in the following ways:

- The Loop offered any surplus switches and routers we had to those trying to help get Christchurch schools back up and running.
- While now is not the right time, as a region we will need to look at the lessons CH-CH schools learned in terms of disaster proofing networks and in ensuring that there are plans for sharing resources and facilities if Nelson was to suffer a similar fate. Our collaboration around the Loop has the capability to help address a number of these issues.
- The Earthquake has also had an indirect impact on the Loop's developments as key personnel from the Loop, MOE, TorqueIP and KAREN have all been diverted to help out down south. However, they are now returning to regular duties and we have managed a surge in progress on our key developments.

Re-Joining NEN/KAREN

We have been working with the MOE and KAREN to plan for our successful return to the NEN Trial which will address our immediate bandwidth squeeze. Rejoining KAREN is crucial as this then gives us access to a NZ-based Google cache so that much of our Google traffic (well over half our total traffic) would be carried on the free KAREN link rather than on our 70Mbs commercial (SNAP) link. The MOE have approved and budgeted for the Loop rejoining the NEN trial which means that we are guaranteed free access to KAREN until 2013!

Planning discussions have started with key meetings over the last fortnight:

- The KAREN team made a second visit to Nelson sussing out the various connectivity issues including the future options for the link across to Marlborough. No decisions yet but options are emerging.
- This week there was a high-powered video conference to discuss and agree on the key elements of the design of the new Loop/KAREN connection and all the associated issues such as AS numbers, routing schema, edge switches, filtering etc. This is part of documenting the work that needs to be done to ensure a successful re-connection. Still hoping for a late May hook-up date.
- There have been important discussions with the MOE around the contract for the work the Loop will provide in planning for and managing this connection (contract due to start on April 1). Equally important are discussions scoping the regional services support contract which we hope will enable us to have a person working with schools helping them to better understand (and maximise) the potential of the Loop and the NEN. This will be a very exciting development which will help members get more bang for their buck from both the Loop and UFB.

Backup Strategy

To ensure we have a backup strategy the Loop has continued discussions with those ISP's which can offer us Commodity Internet. To date SNAP remains the best option but things may change as wider regional and national decisions are made. We have discussed an interim increase in the size of our Commodity Internet connection but, given the cost of this, the larger schools have agreed to limit their usage until we rejoin KAREN.

Loop Ownership Structure

Mr John Hooper, the Ch-Ch auditor we have engaged to help us with the next phase of the Loop entity and ownership work has provided wise and experienced counsel. He confirmed that forming a company

provided the appropriate legal entity for managing the Loop. His advice is that the most effective and manageable structure to resolve the share holding and charitable status of the Loop would be a Trust which will own Nelson Marlborough Loop Ltd. This was the “plan B” we had in case having individual schools as shareholders proved too difficult to achieve. We are now working on an overview paper for member schools explaining how this Trust will work – and seeking feedback. We are confident that schools will be pleased with the advantages of this solution.

May 24 seminar on Single Sign-On

You may be aware that Paul Seiler and his MOE team are in Nelson 1-4pm on Tuesday 24 May at Nayland College to talk about Identity Management and the new UDI tool that helps SMS and LMS talk to other programmes such as My Portfolio, Google Apps etc. We will be sending out a separate notice that explains the context and significance of these for schools. These discussions will also look at the Single Sign On capability that exists on the Loop. More information soon.

New Schools

In all 10 new schools are in the process of joining the Loop bringing the total to 39 schools and NMIT. This month we hope to welcome Bohally, Brooklyn, Koromiko, Lower Moutere, Nelson Christian Academy, Picton, St Mary’s, Stoke, Tua Marina and Waikawa Bay. Several are now fully connected and receiving our services.

To support this we are running a “New Loop Schools” workshop to bring everyone up to date with the Loop, how it operates, the services schools can access, benefits, requirements, budgeting etc. This is also open to existing and potential Loop schools. If there is demand we will be repeating this workshop in Blenheim. Contact me if you want to know more.

Edserf

With “Edserf” (the group who manage the Nayland/Nelson Girls virtual server) looking to increase the services they offer, the Loop has handed responsibility for “Clickview” and “LoopEd” over to them. So now the first point of contact for these services should be Ruth Elmey at ruth.elmey@ncg.school.nz. For example, if your school did not reply to Ruth’s email to confirm that you wanted to stay with “Clickview” this service will have been stopped. If you want to continue you need to contact her immediately. The Loop will still help schools to understand and access these services.

Financial Situation

The Loop, thanks largely to the extra time many people generously provide, continues to operating in the black – just. When the Loop rejoins the NEN Trial we may receive some financial support but this will be to provide extra services related to the trial. Our thanks to Elaine Osborne at Nayland who does an excellent job of managing the Loop’s finances.

AGM

It was proposed to have our usual whole day Loop round up and AGM this term but we have struggled to find a day that suits. We are now looking at the second week in Term 2 (to be confirmed). The proposed format is a general overview for everyone followed by the AGM for principals, a services session for ICT co-ordinators and a technicians’ meeting. With the increased number of schools in Marlborough we will canvass the option of holding two separate AGM days.

Area School Connections

The Loop continues to watch UFB/RBI developments closely to ensure that schools can get maximum benefit from these developments. We have ascertained that Area Schools will be receiving fibre which is essential if they want to consider hosted and managed services.

Acceptable Use Policies

Last month we circulated a notice about the need to ensure that all member schools have an Acceptable Use Policy that spells out the expectations of appropriate and lawful use on the Internet. We are grateful to all who followed up on our request. Thankfully there have been no further issues.

Loop Services

This month's attachment is our revised overview of what the Loop offers. Have a quick glance through to remind yourselves of where the Loop fits in the broader UFB plan and what we can offer your school

Offer of Assistance

Finally, there is a lot happening in ICT and elearning at present and I am lucky that my current work exposes me to this. If you would like me to come and talk to your teachers or senior management team about what is happening in the big picture and other parts of NZ I am too happy to help.

We will keep everyone posted as the NEN Trial work proceeds.

Thanks.

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