

Good morning, Everyone. Hope you enjoyed a relaxing break. Here is the **May update of Loop matters**.

RBI Decision Announced.

The government has announced that Telecom and Vodafone will be rolling out to be Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI). This will see another 12 Marlborough and 16 Nelson schools getting fibre. While this is great news the big unknown is whether or not the Loop will be able to access this fibre to provide our service to the schools – and whether this will be an affordable option. Clearly, the Loop would like to be able to do this because small schools have got so much to gain from our collective support. There is a RBI Introduction meeting hosted by Telecom/Vodafone and the MED in Nelson on May 11. After that we will have a better idea of where things stand and will be keeping people posted.

May 24 seminar on Single Sign-On

As previously advised 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 schools access SMS's user identification data for use by other programmes such as My Portfolio, Google Apps etc. As promised, and after a fair amount of head-scratching, we have produced the attached **"A Beginners Guide to IAM, Provisioning, SSO and the UDI"** which endeavours to explain the context and significance of these tools for schools. Hopefully you find this useful in understanding how these various aspects interrelate and how they can assist your school. We are recommending that the larger schools (rolls > 500) should attend – as should those who provide ICT support to smaller schools.

Re-Joining NEN/KAREN

At last we are making headway on rejoining KAREN and the NEN Trial. There has been a flurry of activity over the holidays. REANNZ (the people who operate KAREN and are responsible for the connectivity aspect of the NEM trial), the MoE (who are responsible for the NEN services and trial budget) and the Loop have hammered out the Scoping Document for our re-entry to the trial. We have also negotiated the Wrangling Contract that covers the work we have to do in setting up and monitoring schools connectivity to KAREN. The timeline is for the Loop to re-peer with KAREN is the start of June – but we are at the mercy of factors beyond our control.

Regional Services Support

Equally important are the current discussions around the Regional Services Support contract. As part of the NEN Trial Extension we are entitled to some funding from the MOE which we hope will enable us to employ a person to work with schools looking at how teachers can better leverage the benefits of fast Internet and NEN services. This will be a very exciting development which will help member schools better understand (and maximise) the potential of the Loop and the NEN – and comes at a time when schools are getting much more interested in this environment.

Internet Bandwidth

The squeeze on Internet bandwidth will continue this month – especially as several schools are working on internal improvements. Essentially we are in a holding pattern until we can rejoin KAREN in June. In the meantime we are trying to squeeze as much as we can from the existing arrangements. As part of preparing to rejoin KAREN we will be upgrading our Internet route which should help a little. We are also working with SNAP to test different scenarios – but there is not a lot else we can do. We did discuss 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.

Re-peering with KAREN will address our immediate bandwidth squeeze because 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 70 Mbs commercial (SNAP) link. As long as their service holds up we then have two years to come up with a longer term solution to the bandwidth crunch that all schools are going to hit as they come on to fibre. It would be nice to think that some national solutions might materialise by then.

New Schools

We hope that we will have completed bring all the 10 new schools on to the Loop by 1 June. Most of the work has been completed. As part of this we will be offering a “New Loop Schools” workshop in Blenheim. This will coincide with the Blenheim leg of the AGM.

Edserf

Just a reminder that with “Edserf” (the group who manage the Nayland/Nelson Girls virtual server) looking after “Clickview” and “LoopEd” the first point of contact for these services is Ruth Elmey at ruth.elmey@ncg.school.nz. The Loop will still help schools to understand and access these services.

Financial Situation

It was great that all schools paid their first quarter fees promptly. Many thanks. It would be most appreciated if this could happen with the second quarter fees invoices that are being sent out this month. This money is vital to our cash flow!

AGM

We are having difficulty finding a suitable date for the AGM so this has been pushed back to the start of June. 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. There is support for a second AGM session in Marlborough. The dates for both meetings will be confirmed this week.

Offer of Assistance

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, senior management team or Board about what is happening in the big picture and other parts of NZ I am too happy to help.

Finally, **getting back onto KAREN is our primary focus** this month and we will be keeping everyone posted as the NEN Trial work proceeds.

Thanks.

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