



The Verizon Foundation Supports JES & Co.'s Achievement Standards Network

Education's Greatest Public Asset: Academic Standards for Everyone

Tucson, AZ, January 18, 2008 --(PR.com)-- Non-profits, research organizations, and universities have found a friend in JES & Co., a non-profit research organization dedicated to facilitating a 21st century education for all Americans. Thanks to recent funding from the Verizon Foundation, JES & Co.'s Achievement Standards Network (ASN) database of publicly available state academic standards has grown from the National Science Foundation's support in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) subjects, to now include English Language Arts, Social Studies, Economics, Geography and the Arts.

Using JES & Co.'s ASN, The Verizon Foundation's Thinkfinity project, formerly Marco Polo, will now offer teachers information about how each Thinkfinity resource addresses their own state's academic standards. The Verizon Foundation chose to use the publicly supported and adopted collection of human and machine readable standards over expensive commercial proprietary collections. Through an on-going research project funded by the National Science Foundation, The Center for Natural Language Processing (NCLP) and JES & Co. have been able to use the ASN standards' data and educational resource description (metadata) in such a way that software applications can now suggest appropriate resource-to-state standards correlations quickly and economically.

Because the ASN uses unique identifiers based on WEB 2.0 and Semantic Web specifications, projects like The Verizon Foundation's Thinkfinity can work collaboratively and easily with other global educational initiatives. "We have worked on issues surrounding standards for years now, making sure that our educational expectations (standards) are available to everyone, including publishers, parents, researchers, educators and the applications they use in a format that is useful to everyone. We have worked to assure the education community that ASN standards correlations could be consumed by digital libraries, publishers' in-house computer systems, state and district portals and researchers' analytical systems," said Diny Golder, Executive Director of JES & Co. "The support from The National Science Foundation has enabled JES & Co. to be a key player in the U.S.'s efforts to improve educational standings in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. With The Verizon Foundation's support, we can now offer support to resource providers in all subjects."

About JES & Co.

JES & Co. has occupied a unique niche in the educational landscape since its establishment in the early 1990's. JES & Co., through its efforts in co-founding The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, brought together a vast array of participants from all facets of the educational enterprise. Companies such as AOL, Microsoft, SAP, Dell, Apple and Cisco put aside their business self-interest to work with COSN, NEA, USDOEd, SREB, SETDA, ISTE, AASL and others members of the public sector to develop a dialogue that would become the vision of what a 21st century education and workforce needs to be.

In 2005, JES & Co. assumed the administration of the Gateway to Educational Materials (GEM). GEM



was formed in the mid-90s and was originally funded solely by the US Department of Education. With JES & Co.'s leadership, GEM was transformed into The Gateway to 21st Century Skills and boasts a consortium member base of over 700 organizations and universities with close to 50,000 21st century teaching and learning resources. Now sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA), the Gateway serves NEA's 3.2 million teachers nationwide and remains free to all of its users. With the transfer of GEM to JES & Co., a memorandum of understanding among JES & Co., The Information School at the University of Washington and The Information Institute of Syracuse University, formed The GEM Exchange.

The goal of The GEM Exchange is to develop further and promote the use of GEM vocabularies and cataloging tools. Through this joint effort, GEM continues to be the internationally accepted standard for describing learning resources that has enabled them to be discovered and shared, using terms meaningful to educators. The National Science Foundation granted funds to JES & Co., in order to take the GEM vocabularies one step farther with the creation the Achievement Standards Networks (ASN).

The ASN is a digitized, authoritative collection of academic standards for all fifty of the United States in both a machine and human readable format. Globally Unique Identifiers (GUID) enable content creators to describe the objective of learning and teaching resources in the terms required by each state. Each GUID resolves back to the machine or human readable text.

In 2006 JES & Co. partnered with SETDA, the State Education Technology Director's Association, to develop a toolset that would combine the GEM cataloging tools with the ASN state standards descriptors. The SETDA tool kit also supports state and district educators, providing a place to share the best practices in the use of standards and suggestions on how to share learning resources state-to-state.

During the past 15 years, JES & Co. has developed and managed educational programs for Microsoft, Dell, Intel, Job Corp. and others. With proven success, JES & Co. continues to fulfill its mission of assisting companies and agencies in their efforts to improve education through philanthropic endeavors. For more information on how you can join JES & Co. in our efforts, contact Diny Golder, JES & Co.'s Executive Director, at: DinyG@JESandCo.org.

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Contact Information:

JES & Co.

Diny Golder

520-907-1177

dinyg@jesandco.org

www.jesandco.org

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