“A Model for Delivering K-Gray Education”
Presentation Overview

- Project History
- Vision
- Opportunities
- Future Impact
Background & Demographics

- Dark fiber and bandwidth
- Agreement with Time Warner Cable
- EPCC investment and capabilities
- Equivalent to over 1,000 T1 lines
- Connects EPCC Campuses, UTEP & EPISD
El Paso Profile

- International metroplex bordered by New Mexico and Ciudad Juarez (2M population)
- Historically dependent on minimum wage jobs
- Educational attainment of those 25 and older show 37.3% have not completed high school
- According to TEA, 25% of El Paso County students are classified as bilingual/ESL
Orion will integrate El Paso’s independent networks into a single high-speed Community Network with a one-stop portal for online access and delivery of K-Gray education.
Discovering the Possibilities of a Connected Community
“The two great equalizers in life are the *Internet* and Education.”

John Chambers, CEO Cisco Systems
About UTEP
- 19,500 Students
- 72% Hispanic
- Ranked 2nd in the nation in awarding undergraduate degrees to Hispanic students
- Only doctoral-research intensive university in the country with a student body that is mostly Mexican-American

About EPCC
- 24,458 credit students
- 5 campuses
- 85% Hispanic
- Fastest-growing community college in the nation
- Ranked 3rd in the nation among community colleges in awarding associate degrees to Hispanic students

About EPISD
- Approximately 63,811 K-12 students
- 93 Schools
- 81% Hispanic
- 21.9% ESL, 30% LEP
- 61.6% At Risk
- 69.6% Economically Disadvantaged
Orion Objectives: Increased Educational Services

For Students
- Increase quality and reach of concurrent, dual credit enrollment
- Increase parental involvement
- Increase the number of 2 year associate degree graduates
- Access to online library resources
- Increase student recruitment and retention
- Bring dropouts back into the educational system

For Teachers
- “No Child Left Behind” compliance to provide teacher professional and paraprofessional training: In El Paso, currently 80% of paraprofessionals have no college credits
- Increase teacher recruitment and retention

For the Community
- Provide a seamless K-Gray education portal
- Increase community involvement
- A better educated workforce for economic development
- Access to online library resources
- Access to healthcare resources
- Potential communication vehicle for emergency first responder information
Connected Community Learning

- Personalized portals bring the teacher to the student using distance learning and video on demand
- Reach out to students at home or at satellite campuses with distance learning classes
- Host guest instructors and community leaders via video feeds from remote locations
- Integrate video content for multi-media instruction
- Provide live and playback classes using the web
- Secure high quality video, voice and data transmission
Return on Information Technology

**Improved Productivity**
- Customized portal experience
- Easy access to information
- Familiar applications
- Improved communications
- Common delivery platform for shared applications

**Lower Total Cost of Ownership**
- Shared development costs
- Shared operations costs
- Common delivery platform for shared applications
- Economies of scale in pricing for connectivity, content, software licenses, and hardware

**Educational Leadership**
- Wider access to learning applications
- Flexible study times
- Consistent, pervasive technology
- Synergy with community and workforce initiatives
“Making El Paso the Future Generation Community”

Orion Content Committee
The Shared Vision:
What do educational partners want from the Project?

Philosophical-Cultural

- Change in technology use in the community, close the “digital divide”
- A “Technology Empowerment Zone” for El Paso
- Change in K-12 student expectations with respect to higher education
The Shared Vision: **Continued**

Classroom-Instructional Development

- A flexible, community-wide course/content delivery system
- Enriched opportunities for learning technology
- Resource sharing
The Shared Vision: Continued

Practical-Economical Development

- Leverage of the Orion membership to achieve economies of scale
- Partnerships with community businesses
- Partnerships and collaborations with K-Gray
- Promotion of all educational opportunities in the community
- Staff and parent development opportunities at school sites
The Exchange:
What do the Orion educational partners need from each other?

- Access to learning objects and available human resources
- An accurate inventory of all learning objects and human resources
- Greater communication about each partner’s needs and expectations
- Shared research data to advance the Orion mission and align efforts with student realities
- Collaborative grant writing
- Facilitation of student outreach for enrollment and transfer opportunities
- Access to students for recruiting purposes
Our Role in the Community:
How do the educational partners see this relationship?

- We want to democratize community access to information and education
- We want to be an open doorway to community education
- We want to be partners and participants with the community, as well as educational destinations
- We want to have access to community resources
- We want to use Orion to empower our community
How will the Orion Ring be used by the Community?

1. Learning for professional and career development
2. Learning for essential (basic) skills development
3. Learning for advanced credentials, degrees and certification
4. Learning for personal enrichment and fun
5. Learning for civic engagement
6. Learning for life needs
7. Learning for special needs
What technical functionality is necessary to support community use of Orion?

1. Community Services
2. Repository of Learning Objects
3. Management and Delivery of Education
Within those 3 categories...what specific technologies will we need?

1. Course management system, for example, WebCT or VISTA, or an open-source structure (see the Sakai Project)
2. Content management system such as at Merlot.org – might be combined with #1
3. Real-time collaborations online (video conferencing, data-sharing)
4. Video/audio on demand
5. Data mining capabilities
6. Portal for administration, organization and access
Welcome to The Orion Project

The Orion Project is a high-speed Community Network, connecting El Paso’s independent networks with a one-stop portal for online access and delivery of K-Gray education. The founding members of the Orion Project are the El Paso Community College (EPCC), the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD).

EPCC’s list of online courses
UTEP’s list of online courses

Visit the Orion Web site for more information. www.orionprojectelpaso.net
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