



synnovation

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MAKING THE CONNECTION

Today's network has more possibilities and players than ever before, and is energizing the way we interact, work, and strategize.

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Education Without Borders

One World, The Network, and Infinite Possibilities

By Scott McNealy, Sun Microsystems, Inc.



Using The Network to Drive Education

No one questions the right to learn, yet more than 100 million children worldwide do not have access to a primary education. Knowledge should never be proprietary.

While the No Child Left Behind Act helps to address this problem in the United States, the child we're holding back here and around the world, because of lack of Internet access and other economic hurdles, is of equal disaster and needs help, too. The solution to this challenge is simpler than you think. In the Participation Age, an age in which everyone and everything is interacting on The Network, the first step is to open source education.

The good news is that The Network and the technologies that power it are paving the path for learning in ways we have only begun to understand. By using this power to open source education, we can eliminate borders to drive change and stimulate new businesses, new social services, and new discoveries. Open source education is possible, thanks to The Network, open standards, and the community: the foundation upon which Sun is built.

Accelerating the Education Process

Using The Network accelerates learning, letting the smart kids go as fast as they can to become tomorrow's innovators, who may find the cure for bird flu or figure out how to curb energy demands to help address global warming. The world is being done a huge disservice in holding them back. Today's student is tomorrow's researcher, developer, business owner, and global citizen.

As a raging capitalist and chairman of a Fortune 200 company, I'm always in search of the next

generation of talent. With The Network and open source education, the doors of opportunity are infinite and without borders. Finding and developing talent anywhere in the world is a good thing. It brings corporations access to an enriched pool of human resources that represent the best talent anywhere in the world—and lets that talent develop and work anywhere worldwide.

Accessibility to education helps foster intelligence that can mean an end to some of the world's greatest problems. The more corporations, nonprofits, educators, and individuals collaborate to expand opportunities, break down barriers to access, and improve overall quality, the better the chances for innovation at every turn.

Sun's Investment in Education

At Sun, we're applying everything we've learned about The Network, open source, and sharing to create communities of collaboration to help provide teachers, students, and parents with access to the educational resources they need.

In 2004, we started the Global Education Learning Community (GELC) to drive knowledge sharing and continue to develop the resources needed to improve the quality of education worldwide. The GELC is now Curriki.org, an open, free web resource where educators can easily add, edit, and change curricula. Curriki.org is a growing community of developers, teachers, and educational institutions collaborating on more than 300 projects.

Members include the Curriculum Corporation of Melbourne, Australia's Curriculum Corporation, the Department of Science and Technology Ministry of Education, P.R. China, and the Monterey Institute for Technology and Education. You can learn more about the organization in my radio interview (www.sun.com/scott) with the executive director of Curriki, Dr. Barbara Kurshan.





The mission of Curriki.org, a 501(c)(3), is to educate, and the community that supports it is helping deliver universal access to education with open source technology. Curriki's goal is to develop curriculum that can be delivered globally and its impact measured by project and individual. The organization's initial focus is on kindergarten through high school curricula in the areas of mathematics, science, technology, reading, and languages.

Teaming With the United Nations

Sun's emphasis on collaboration and education doesn't end with Curriki.org. With 75 percent of the world not connected to The Network and one-fifth of the global population of 6.6 billion people between the ages of 15 and 24, there's work to be done—especially when you consider that 86 percent of these young people live in developing countries.

Sun believes that sharing and collaboration in the Participation Age will stimulate innovation to help all participants from across the world grow and prosper.

In conjunction with the United Nations and the Youth Leadership Summit, Sun is bringing together youth leaders from around the world to address challenges outlined by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015. These challenges include eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, supporting environmental sustainability, and improving maternal and child healthcare in the developing and developed worlds.

The summit is designed to provide a framework for youth leaders to discuss and debate strategies to achieve the MDGs and promote peace, create their own networks for exchanging ideas, cooperate on new initiatives, and reach out to more young leaders and organizations.

As the sole corporate sponsor and technology partner for the youth summit series, Sun offers a platform for delegates to network during and after the event. Sun provides training on technology-enabled collaboration, blogging, and communications to assist the youth delegates in understanding the implications of new technologies and how to use these tools to improve their work, collaborate with peers, and maintain connections.

Sun is also offering a first-time mentoring program for the youth delegates, matching them

up with Sun employees across the world who have business, technological, or personal expertise in areas that could benefit the delegates' home-country projects. Every delegate has the chance to pair with a Sun employee, and Sun will provide a global platform for ongoing interaction to take place after the summit is completed.

Open Source Education

Access to knowledge should never be proprietary. The Network and the Participation Age can dramatically lower barriers to innovation at the earliest introduction to learning and beyond—eradicating the digital divide between the technology haves and have-nots. The more participation we foster and the more educational assistance we provide, the more additional opportunities will be created by everyone on The Network.

We're really just beginning to understand The Network—a phenomenon that has not only changed the way we do business and access education, but also the way we think about it. If The Network was built to do anything, this is it. |s|

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