

Dear Friends,

The pace is quickening. A major new chapter in the Digital Promise saga is starting.

The Report to Congress authorized in PL 108-7, **Creating the Digital Opportunity Investment Trust (DO IT), A Proposal to Transform Learning and Training for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**, has been finished and will be released to all members of Congress on Thursday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Report provides a recommended Structure and Governance for DO IT, a detailed Rationale, and an extensive R&D Roadmap.

At a luncheon in the Capitol on that date, Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Rep. Ralph Regula (R-OH) will receive the Report on behalf of the Congress. Sen. Dodd will announce plans to introduce implementing legislation. Rep. Regula will discuss his efforts to obtain Congressional support for developing a realistic prototype that would be designed to train local emergency responders to deal with a simulated, virtually real major crisis. In addition, with Microsoft's help, a brief video will demonstrate

several dramatic examples of how advanced information technology can work to transform education, lifelong learning, and skills training.

Other Members of the House and Senate will join their colleagues and Digital Promise Coalition leaders, key Congressional staff members, and other guests at the luncheon, presided over by co-chairmen Newt Minow and Larry Grossman.

The Report to Congress represents thousands of hours of dedicated effort by some of America's best minds and most accomplished and celebrated scientists and experts who, without compensation, have contributed to its recommendations and conclusions. We are grateful for their service, and for the Congress' foresight in authorizing this Report.

Best regards,

Lawrence K. Grossman  
and Newton N. Minow,  
Co-chairmen

Anne G. Murphy,  
Project Director

## Report Distribution

The Report to Congress is in four parts:

1. Executive Summary,
2. Structure & Governance,
3. Rationale,
4. R&D Roadmap.

As of October 23<sup>rd</sup>, all sections will be available at the Digital Promise website:

[www.digitalpromise.org](http://www.digitalpromise.org).

If your organization needs hard copies, please contact Michelle Roper at the Federation of American Scientists: [digitalpromise@fas.org](mailto:digitalpromise@fas.org), or call her at 202 454 4683.

## Now is the Time for You to Take Action

Sen. Dodd expects to introduce bipartisan legislation to implement the Report to Congress. This is the time to gather co-sponsors in the Senate and House, and support-

“Congressional Action” (cont’d)

ers throughout the nation.

Write, call, e-mail, visit your Senators and ask them to “Join Senator Dodd in co-sponsoring the legislation he is introducing to create the Digital Opportunity Investment Trust.”

Enclosed with this newsletter is a DO IT “Frequently Asked Questions.” An electronic version can be downloaded on the Digital Promise website: [www.digitalpromise.org](http://www.digitalpromise.org), where you can also find a model letter to your Senators, and a sample Letter-to-the-Editor for your local newspaper. If you have additional ideas, or questions, we’d certainly like to hear them. Just e-mail Michelle Roper at [digitalpromise@fas.org](mailto:digitalpromise@fas.org) or call her directly at 202 4543 4683.

We need to provide a groundswell of support to show members of Congress how much you care. Are there others you can enlist in our cause?

### **Contest Winners Selected**

Congratulations are in order for Kori Ann Haymore of the Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering, and Haydee M.

Cuevas of the University of Central Florida who have been selected as the winners of our student essay contest, “How Information Technology Can be Used to Revolutionize Learning in the Next Ten Year.”

Kori Ann’s paper described a program called “Math Animations” that would use technology to provide captivating ways to learn mathematics and allow the student to work at his or her own pace. Her visionary paper calls for rethinking classroom teaching to make best use of teachers’ time and skills.

Haydee’s paper describes the potential impact emerging technology-enhanced education tools (the type DO IT would help fund) would have for learning. She vividly describes a real classroom scenario and proceeds to show how a program she calls Virtual Field Trips (VFT) could help to catalize learning and teaching. In VFT, technology that is on the horizon could be brought together to bridge the gap between “students’ limited real world knowledge and the unfamiliar content of their assigned reading materials.”

The winners will be invited to come to Washington to present the winning essays to Congress, in conjunction with the delivery to Congress of the Digital Promise Report. Winning papers can be found on our website.

### **House Hearing Delayed**

The Northeast’s electrical blackout caused the House Energy and Commerce Committee to postpone the planned Digital Promise hearing this fall before its Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet. The full Committee decided to reserve its time to pursue the causes of the blackout outages. We’ll keep you posted when a new date is set, with an *E-Mail Action Alert*. As always, you can keep track of developments on [www.digitalpromise.org](http://www.digitalpromise.org).

You can still sign our Letter of Support, which we shall submit as part of the hearing record. Call or write Michelle Roper at 202 454 4683, or [digitalpromise@fas.org](mailto:digitalpromise@fas.org) to include your organization.

### **A Letter of Support**

Here’s part of a letter we have received from Brenda Sugrue from the American Society for Training and Development, one of our

newest Coalition Members. It’s good to see our support growing:

“The Digital Promise Project is an unprecedented and visionary strategy to simultaneously accelerate and improve the use of technology in educational, government, military and corporate learning environments. We have not even begun to realize the potential of technology for increasing accessibility, efficiency, and effectiveness of learning opportunities. The funding structure and coordinated large-scale research and development effort proposed by the Digital Promise Project would jump-start a new rigor and momentum to raise levels of competence and performance of all populations in the United States.”

**We welcome these new members of our Coalition of Supporting Organizations.**

**Academic Advanced Distributive Learning (ADL) Co-Lab** An initiative to “Provide access to the highest quality education and training that can be tailored to individual

needs and delivered cost effectively anywhere and anytime it is required.” Serves as a focal point for the nation’s universities and colleges in promoting high quality content for distributed learning.

**American Society for Training & Development (ASTD)**, “The world’s premier professional association and leading resource on workplace learning and performance issues. ASTD provides information, research, analysis and practical information.”

**Apple Tree Institute for Education Innovation**, a nonprofit organization committed to improving the number of effective schools through innovation; working to develop a high quality early literacy program as a key to closing the achievement gap and breaking the cycle of poverty.

**Computing Research Association (CRA)**, encompasses more than 200 North American academic departments of computer science and related

fields; laboratories and centers in industry, government, and academia engaging in basic computing research and affiliated professional societies.

**Digital Library Federation (DLF)**, a consortium of libraries and related agencies that are pioneering in the use of electronic information technologies to extend their collections and services. DLF provides leadership for libraries broadly by identifying standards and ‘best practices’ for digital collections and network access.

**Our Success Depends on the Strength of our Coalition of Organizations and Companies that Support DO IT.**

We welcome your suggestions of organizations, corporations, and groups that will complement the growing list of associations that have already signed on. Contact Michelle Roper at [digitalpromise@fas.org](mailto:digitalpromise@fas.org) Phone: 202 454 4683.

## Digital Promise Regional Meetings

**WISCONSIN:** Larry Grossman spoke at a gathering of public television's university licensees at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, September 24.

**IOWA:** Larry will address a convention of public and commercial television broadcasters concerned about the transition to digital, on October 28<sup>th</sup> in Des Moines, hosted by Iowa public broadcasting.

**OHIO:** Anne Murphy and Larry will lead a Forum on Digital Promise in Cleveland on November 13<sup>th</sup>. Portions will be broadcast on Internet2. We'll let you know by E-Mail Alert how you can participate. There'll be a link on our website, [www.digitalpromise.org](http://www.digitalpromise.org).

**CONNECTICUT:** Larry will address a forum at the state capital in Hartford on December 8.

**LOUISIANA and NORTH CAROLINA:** In March of next year we're planning a regional meeting in Baton Rouge at Louisiana State University. And early next year, we're planning a regional meeting in Raleigh-Durham sponsored by Duke and the University of North Carolina.

Let us know if you would like to host a Forum in your area. We'll help with the materials you'll need for a successful event, and we are available for logistical and communications support.

 **DIGITAL PROMISE**  
1717 K St, NW Suite 209  
Washington, DC 20036

**With your support,  
we can DO IT!**

## Frequently Asked Questions About DO IT

### **Q. What is the Digital Opportunity Investment Trust (DO IT)?**

The Digital Opportunity Investment Trust will fund research and stimulate the development of advanced information technologies for use in our schools, work places, universities, and homes. DO IT will help transform education, lifelong learning, and skills training for the digital age. It will make possible the digitization of the contents of our libraries, museums, universities and other repositories that contain “the DNA of our civilization.” DO IT’s goal is to make these valuable learning resources accessible to all in rural, urban, and suburban America, and throughout the world. The Digital Trust will also stimulate the development of new Internet content and advanced training techniques for police, firemen, and medical first responders to emergencies and disasters. It will help finance the important work of the nation’s best cognitive and computer scientists, brightest educational thinkers and researchers, and most able private sector entrepreneurs in the field. (See [www.digitalpromise.org](http://www.digitalpromise.org))

### **Q. How will the Trust be funded?**

The trust is a self-sustaining fund financed by the interest earned from a portion of the proceeds from Congressionally mandated auctions of the publicly owned electronic spectrum (the nation’s airwaves). In this respect, DO IT models part of the future course of American education on its past: the Land Grant Colleges Act of 1862, under which revenues from the sale of public lands enabled generations of Americans to attend public colleges. DO IT will prepare successive generations for challenges and careers that we cannot even imagine today.

### **Q. What role does the government have in funding educational technology?**

No less a respected free-market conservative than former House Commerce Committee Chairman Thomas Bliley (R-VA), said it best in an article he wrote for the newspaper The Hill: “Such are the rightful investments of government: to do collectively those things that cannot, or will not, be done privately, but that nonetheless must be done. If there was a reasonable profit to be made in lifelong learning over the Internet, there’d be no need for DO IT; in its absence, Congress and the White House must act, and soon.”

### **Q. Wouldn’t a large government initiative compete with the private sector?**

DO IT will act as a partner of and stimulator for the private sector, not a competitor, expanding the reach of privately-funded research and development well beyond anything possible today – and sharing the fruits of that vitally needed research with the public, so private sector entrepreneurs will develop the commercial applications for DO IT-funded advances. As DO IT’s recent Congressionally-mandated Report to Congress says, “Although underlying content would be in the public domain, commercial firms will have the ability to make enhancements to the content, develop future alterations, and provide distribution and customer support.”

### **Q. DO IT projects a Trust of \$20 billion, a lot of money. Shouldn’t these funds go for other pressing needs, like funding for the schools directly, or for national security or reducing the deficit?**

Only the interest on \$20 billion, a sum closer to \$1.5 billion a year, will be spent annually. Even this amount, however, must be put in context. America spends about \$1 trillion a year on education and training. Hardly any of that money is invested in educational research and development. As in every sector, enormous improvements and efficiencies will be achieved in education from the much-needed investment in R&D.

Based on today’s rate of federal spending, the \$1.5 billion per year for DO IT would otherwise be spent by the federal government in 8 hours. Instead, DO IT affords the opportunity to endow America’s future, improving the learning productivity of all Americans, the best security investment our nation can possibly make.

As for national security, we utilized advanced technology to equip and train our armed forces with dramatic results. So, too, we must now train our nation’s first responders to protect us at home. If we are to remain competitive in the world economy, we must now retrain and re-tool our workforce for the careers of tomorrow. And if we are to preserve our quality of life, we no longer can afford to let our children continue to fall behind those in other nations in literacy, mathematics, science and technology. That’s what DO IT is designed to change.