



CREATIVE COMMONS

Welcome to the 2009/10 school year! The Connected Superintendent is a resource to keep you informed on relevant topics. Collaboration and sharing of resources between districts is at an all time high and with that comes copyright issues. Creative Commons is a way to follow copyright rules when sharing resources directly or through web portals like the MSOL Online Portal. This month's newsletter is focused on these two relevant topics. Please contact your REMC Director for more information.

Mike Oswalt
President, REMCAM

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Michigan Learns Online

(Formerly Known as the Michigan Schools Online Website)

In 2007, the MDE, REMC Association, and Genesee ISD/GenNET partnered to implement the MI Schools Online project. The goals of the project were:

- To provide schools and students cost-effective resources and opportunities to meet the online graduation requirement; and
- To create a portal for easy access to quality online resources.

Significant resources were purchased for Michigan schools. Through the project's work, the Aventa Algebra I course was aligned to MI standards, and offered free for both Moodle and Blackboard learning management systems. Free training was also offered.

In 2009, a statewide seat-time waiver was granted to GISD for courses taken through GenNET. MVU courses taken through GenNET are also eligible for seat-time waivers.

The next phase is to bring these resources together in one cohesive, easy-to-use website.

The heart of the website will be contributions of teacher-created materials; courses, course components, assessments and lesson plans. The vision is to have a place where state educators can share their work, do so without violating copyright, and have their work respected. Creative Commons will facilitate this work.

Submitted by Ricki Chowning, Executive Director REMCAM



Creative Commons works to increase bodies of work available to the public for free and legal sharing, repurposing, use and remixing. CC licenses are not an alternative to copyright. They are a simple, standardized way to grant copyright permissions to use creative work.

<http://creativecommons.org/choose/>

FOCUS ON REMC 14 East: Genesee, and Lapeer ISDs

GISD Technology and Media Services has the responsibility of not only servicing the 3 county REMC 14 area of Genesee, Lapeer, and Shiawassee but also manages GenNET, the consortium of 21 school districts in Genesee County. It manages data, technical and instructional technology services plus offers a host of activities for the entire REMC 14 service area through the Teacher Discovery Center. Over 500 PD sessions per year are offered to teachers, and administrators in HOTT Spots (Hands On Technology Training). Services also include:

- Genesee Network for Educational Telecommunications - GenNET;
- GenNET ITV: 21 local districts offer 63 high school sections/year;
- GenNET Online: 743 Online teacher-led, web-based courses for students statewide;
- Statewide Seat Time Waiver program; and
- GenNET Pioneers: annual PD to integrate technology into instruction.

GISD is a member of six county interconnected fiber optic network and GenNET has built ITV systems in each HS, MS, and elementary school. In 2008, GISD received an NSBA District Salute for exemplary technology and media programming.

REMC 14 works on behalf of all the local districts through involvement with local, state and national committees and organizations.

Submitted by, Beverly Knox-Pipes, Assistant Superintendent GISD

Questions?

PLEASE CONTACT

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Creative Commons: The Solution for Sharing Teacher-Made Lesson Plans and Learning Units

The Issue

In 2006, the State Legislature made it mandatory that students participate in 20 hours of online experiences between the 6th grade and HS graduation. We are three years into implementing this requirement and continue to need to provide quality online learning experiences to students. Parts of the requirements strongly suggest that teachers providing this experience will be well trained and that the online experience be in the core areas. Professional development for these teachers, when done well, requires quality support materials that are timely and relevant to what teachers need to know and be able to do. These materials need to provide help with good online instructional strategies as well as teach how to use the technologies. Although some local districts, ISDs and REMCs have developed quality materials for professional development and lessons and activities for teachers to use, many do not have the expertise, time or resources to do so. Sharing these resources supports educators who are providing professional development and/or implementing online lessons and courses for students. Equally important, it contributes to the common good; a fundamental principle of our educational system.

The Solution

Those educational agencies choosing to share materials offer a generous gift of their staff's time and deserve recognition for providing their work, and their work should be protected from inappropriate use. Like other content providers, the agency providing the materials should be protected by copyright. At the same time, educators should be able to use the shared material understanding the intent of the provider. Fair Use, more of a doctrine than a law, provides some implied flexibility to the very restrictive copyright rules and are only meant for short-term use. A Creative Commons license can be much more flexible and explicit on how the shared material is to be used. For example, agencies wanting to share materials at no cost but want to be recognized and assured that others will not financially profit from their work can make that assumption clear with a Creative Commons license. Creative Commons is a 501c3 organization whose purpose is to design methods and technologies that facilitate the sharing of scientific, creative, and other intellectual works with the general public. In its simplest form, institutions that commit to supporting the Creative Commons licensing system agree to permit originally created material (e.g. lesson plans, syllabi, units, curricula) to be shared with other educators with certain restrictions—all less restrictive than fair use guidelines. Owners of the material can identify the type of license that a work is given. Some examples are:

- Use of the material with attribution to the creators
- Use of the material only in its original form
- Right to make derivative works
- Use of the material only at the level that governs your own work

To learn more about Creative Commons go to:
<http://creativecommons.org/>

To license work under Creative Commons:
1. Go to the Creative Commons licensing page at:
<http://creativecommons.org/license/>
2. Answer about 9 very simple questions, and
3. Click on "Select a License".

This is a very simple process, used by non-profit entities across the world, that is growing exponentially.

The Michigan Learns Online Committee is recommending school district and ISD adoption of these guidelines for sharing materials and protecting the intellectual property rights of individuals and organizations. More information will continue to be forthcoming from the Michigan Learns Online Committee and its partners: the Michigan Department of Education, the REMC Association, and Genesee ISD.

Submitted by Mike Souden, REMC17, Director

Watch for your December Issue of The Connected Superintendent