



New Report Shows District Leadership and Support Are Key to Empowering Teachers to Use Web 2.0

White paper from Lightspeed Systems, netTrekker and IESD provides comprehensive source of Web 2.0 research findings, best practices, and recommendations to apply lessons learned

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. and CINCINNATI – Nov. 17, 2009 – New research indicates educators view Web 2.0 technologies as a means to transform education and meet 21st century learning goals, but district leadership and support are critical to ensure safe and effective use. Commissioned by [Lightspeed Systems Inc.](#) and [netTrekker](#), the “Safe Schools in a Web 2.0 World” white paper from Interactive Educational Systems Design ([IESD](#)), an independent research firm, offers a picture of Web 2.0 use in education through an analysis of several recent research studies, and outlines the implications for educators.

The white paper is part of a multi-year initiative launched in fall 2008 by Lightspeed Systems, a school network security and management software provider, and netTrekker, a leader in the delivery of digital K-12 educational resources. The initiative’s goal is to help schools maximize the learning opportunities afforded by Web 2.0 tools, while ensuring a safe, secure educational environment.

The report serves as a comprehensive source of information to guide districts in using Internet technologies to promote collaborative, participatory learning. An easy-to-use checklist provides prompts for meaningful discussions among district stakeholders, helping them apply new research results by reflecting, analyzing, and making decisions about their current and future uses of Web 2.0 technologies. Education leaders can also refer to the extensive list of recommended resources, research studies, best practices, and policies in the report to support the decision-making process.

IESD researchers analyzed findings from studies they conducted for Lightspeed Systems and netTrekker, and reports from the Consortium of School Networking and Project Tomorrow, among others. Research findings show that district technology directors play a key leadership role in driving adoption of Web 2.0 and supporting teachers in the effective use of these technologies. In their roles as change agents, district technology directors connect educators with technology by working collaboratively with curriculum leaders, educating district staff about the use of technology to support learning, guiding selection of appropriate technologies, and providing the core technology infrastructure. In turn, technology directors look to the vendor community to provide affordable technologies and Web 2.0 services in a protected environment, like a “walled garden.”

Other key findings detailed in the white paper indicate:

- While districts are adopting Web 2.0 technologies to individualize instruction and engage student interest, it’s essential that professional development and administrative support be provided to increase teachers’ comfort level and expertise in using these tools in the classroom.
- Depending on their size, districts are at varying stages of use with different Web 2.0 technologies, signifying a need to share best practices and establish common guidelines to reach widespread support and use.

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- Many districts implement Web 2.0 technologies to stimulate educational change while supporting and enhancing established instructional methods, yet some districts see a need for new instructional approaches.

“Web 2.0 presents one of the greatest opportunities and challenges in education, as teachers and students face a rapidly evolving, technology-driven world,” said Randy Wilhelm, CEO of netTrekker. “Our new report provides education leaders with resources to facilitate change, and to realize their vision of an engaging learning environment that prepares all students for the rigors of higher education and the workplace in a knowledge-based economy.”

During the 2009-2010 school year, partners in the *Safe Schools in a Web 2.0 World* initiative plan to develop free resources, including in-depth case studies, that will help administrators and educators incorporate Web 2.0 technologies into curriculum and instruction safely and effectively.

“Web 2.0 can have a profound effect on teaching and learning. Our goal is provide districts with a comprehensive set of resources and tools that will guide them in implementing Web 2.0 tools in ways that are meaningful, productive, practical, and safe,” said Scott Garrison, president of Lightspeed Systems. “With the rapid pace of technological change, we must act now to close the gap between how students learn outside of school and how they learn in school.”

To download the white paper, go to <http://nettrekker.com/pages/iesd-white-paper/>. Educators interested in discussing Web 2.0 related topics with their peers can participate in the free online education community, netTrekker Village (www.nettrekkervillage.com), or share their insights and comments on the Learning @ Lightspeed blog (www.lightspeedsystems.com/blog).

About Lightspeed Systems

Lightspeed Systems Inc., founded in 2000, develops comprehensive network security and management solutions for the K-12 education market. Lightspeed is committed to helping schools operate their networks effectively and efficiently, so educators can provide a safe online teaching and learning environment. The company’s flagship product integrates content filtering, spam management, bandwidth management, antivirus protection, extensive reporting capabilities, email archiving, and mobile filtering into a single application. Lightspeed Systems software is used in more than 1,500 school districts in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia to protect more than 5 million students. For the past two years, Lightspeed Systems has been recognized on the Inc. 5,000 list as one of fastest-growing private companies. For more information, call 661-716-7600, or visit www.lightspeedsystems.com.

About netTrekker

netTrekker is a leader in the delivery of digital K-12 educational content. The company is dedicated to enhancing the education of today’s youth with highly effective technologies that deliver the rich educational value of the Internet to every child in a safe, relevant, easy-to-use format. netTrekker is the #1 educational search tool and was first to market with a standards-based solution utilizing the services of Academic Benchmarks, the premier provider of comprehensive standards-based K-12 educational databases, alignment tools, and integration products. Peers, educators, and parents have honored netTrekker more than 25 times for its contribution to education. Founded in 1999 by Robert Reinders, the company serves millions of students and thousands of schools around the world. For more information, visit www.netTrekker.com or phone 877-517-1125.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

- Kristen Plemon, C. Blohm & Associates, 608-839-9805, kristen@cblohm.com
- Laura Hannah, netTrekker, 513-731-4090, lhannah@netTrekker.com
- Crystal Cochran, Lightspeed Systems, 661-431-1649, crystal@lightspeedsystems.com