

HARNESSING THE POWER

*TECHNOLOGY FOR SOCIAL GOOD
CAPITALISM FOR THE COMMON GOOD
INNOVATION FOR EDUCATION
PEOPLE FOR THE FUTURE*



OPEN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR ALL

A CALL TO ACTION

*A Strategic Vision for Providing
Free Universal Online Educational Services
And a Plan for Getting There*

NEXT STEPS – AN OVERVIEW



*YES WE CAN
AND HERE'S HOW*

VERSION 1.2

Notes

This is an Overview of Next Steps in a plan to provide **Free, Universal, Online Educational Services**. This is a public document, so you are welcome to share it with whomever you wish. This draft is the result of conversations with thousands of people and organizations over many years, and it will continue to evolve. The most recent copy of this plan will always be available on the Stargazer Foundation Web site (www.Stargazer.org) under “Open Educational Services.”

In addition to feedback on the ideas in this plan, as well as additional ideas, we would welcome your support in this campaign – a Campaign for a Cause, not a Candidate. One of our goals is to assemble a broad cross-section of national leaders to promote the concepts in this plan, even if not all of the specific ideas. You can play an important role in spreading the word.

The purpose of this campaign is to foster a national conversation on the **quality** and the **equality** of our educational system in our technologically evolving society. The learning tools and technological infrastructure are available today to improve both teaching and learning. While there is certainly a role for government, all of us and all of our companies and organizations can play a significant role. All it takes is the will to contribute and to collaborate. Fully implemented, this plan will help address the challenge of providing a quality and an equal educational opportunity for all of our children.

Like any campaign, it needs endorsements, supporters, contributors, and volunteers. It needs people like you to promote these ideas by sending them to people and organizations you know. It needs you to recruit others. It needs your company’s help and support. Anybody, and any company, school, group, organization, or government entity, can play a role. We must all work together on this, for we have no alternative. Our children’s future is at stake.

Thanks, in advance, for joining the campaign. Your support can make a difference.

Next Steps – An Overview

President Obama has asked for more support for education¹ and for ideas on advancing the long-term human capital strategy for our country. Many of our students don't have the skills to handle 21st Century jobs, and many of our teachers are not adequately equipped to teach the math, science, and technology skills that are needed for 21st Century citizenship. Working together, we can all share the costs and the benefits of a more effective and a more equitable educational system. While the most of the critical components are available today, it will take a national public effort to bring them together.

One solution is to provide **Free Universal Online Educational Services** (called **Open Educational Services**) to address the immediate and critical need for improved public K-12 education in the United States, and around the world. We can harness the power of technology, capitalism, and innovation to develop a new platform for learning – a platform that will utilize and expand our existing infrastructure (technology, people, and organizations) to provide meaningful and equitable educational tools for all teachers and learners. This plan does **not** address what to teach; rather, it is a plan to make teachers more effective and learners more productive.

This plan embodies **very big ideas**, and it contemplates a **very large scale endeavor – the educational equivalent of our national commitment to put a man on the moon**. Simply stated, it proposes a **national commitment to give all teachers and students the basic online tools they need to teach and learn in the 21st Century**. It is about ideas whose time has come.

BUT, it is going to take the cooperation of many people and organizations to make it happen. Most of the educational and technological components already exist or are well understood, but they need to be brought together through new kinds of collaboration and public/private partnerships. Collectively, we have the ability to do this, but need **YOUR HELP** to make it a reality.

Join the **Campaign to Harness the Power of Technology for Social Good**. Recruit your friends, colleagues, groups, and organizations. As the world and its future becomes more interconnected and more interdependent, we all have a vested interest in educating our children and ourselves. We can no longer afford to ask “what’s in it for me or my group”; we must ask “what’s in it for all of us.”

Spread the Word – Promote the Idea – Become a Champion – Involve Others

In order for Open Educational Services to become a reality, the idea must have widespread support and broad participation. Your help is needed and important to achieve this consensus. As a champion for the cause, you can tell others about the cause, what it is about, why it is needed and how to get involved. This is a call to action. In this era of social networking, instant communications, and group-based collaboration, you can:

- Spread the message to your friends, colleagues, groups, organizations, and companies
- Identify appropriate online educational content, reference materials, courseware, and tools
- Work with associations, organizations, companies, and schools to encourage and facilitate their participation

Identify, Aggregate, Organize, and Evaluate Online Educational Content

The first step in establishing Open Educational Services is to **identify** the content that is already available, as well as to identify additional content that is needed. There is already a great deal of educational content available online; the problem is that “it’s just out there.” It’s unorganized. Often, it’s not easily findable or usable, unless you know where to look.

¹ This plan focuses on public K-12 education, but there is nothing in this plan that inherently limits it to public or K-12 education. Some of the ideas can also be applied to areas other than education.

The initial task is to create an (ever-evolving) **inventory of existing content** that could be included under the umbrella of Open Educational Services. We need to identify online education content whether it's curriculum, courseware, tools or mobile applications. Once identified, this online education content needs to be.

The second task involves developing more effective ways to **organize, rate, and certify online content**. The online content must be usable, accessible, and findable. Students and teachers, parents and researchers, must be able to access the educational information and services in ways that make sense. Traditional search engines or simply accessing countless Web sites is not practical or adequate.

Rating and search schemes must be established, and you can help by suggesting categories, tags, areas for experts, and so on. For example, a particular document, video, class curriculum, or self-taking course and quiz might be categorized by subject/topic, grade level, geographies/schools that use it, etc.

Besides user ratings (e.g., students, teachers, parents), outside experts in the related field(s) must rate the material according to its accuracy and validity, its effectiveness in teaching students, etc. In some cases, material like this exists, and in other cases, the appropriate groups and organizations must be enlisted.

A third task involves the **creation of new content**. Besides areas in which there is no online content available or the existing online content is weak in substance, much content is continually being developed or repurposed for the new technologies. Content that was adequate for computers, for example, is now being repurposed for handheld mobile devices, and additional content for these media is being developed. This new content, which may take the form of online tools and courseware or which may involve the creation of more applications for mobile devices, must not only be developed, but it must also be identified and organized in a systematic and usable way.

Marshal Forces – Encourage Others – Enlist Groups and Organizations – Challenge Companies

The technology and the educational content is the easy part of this effort; bringing together the people and organizations in a collaborative effort is the hard part. Students and young people can contribute time and talent. Groups and organizations, companies and schools, can make products, services, funding, facilities, and people available.

Schools can combine academic studies with getting involved in the cause. Whether for technology experience, subject area skills, or social purpose, involvement for young people is a way to gain practical experience and further develop skills. Internships, course credit, and academic projects are just some of the vehicles to enable students to get involved and also get academic credit for it. And, of course, the school, its faculty, alumni, and research activities, can also become involved.

Companies can give to the cause in many ways, but undoubtedly the most individually rewarding is through the company's own people through **Volunteer and Community Service Programs** and **Educational Fellowships** that encourage direction participation in appropriate nonprofit organizations.

Companies can be **Proud Sponsors** of Open Educational Services, advertising and promoting their sponsorship on their own Web sites and other vehicles. This is similar to the sponsorship of the Olympics and other causes, rather than placing advertisements on third-party Web sites.

More innovatively, a company can provide basic elements of its products and services for free, while charging for more advanced or enhanced versions. **Open Source** software (in which the source code is freely available, even if subsequent service and maintenance is fee-based) is a growing trend in recent years, and is often considered in conjunction with the free nature of much on the Web. However, the free vs. fee nature of **Open Services** is still evolving. Services and technology have costs, and third-party advertising, a common Web funding vehicle, is inappropriate in many educational settings. A common platform for **Open Educational Services** coupled with easily replicable educational software would reduce the overall cost, whether paid by consumers, schools, donors, or public entities.

Companies can also **Harness the Power of the Stock Market for Social Good**, by donating a warrant² to a school or other nonprofit entity (which does not have to be involved in education). A warrant is similar to an option, only it is not granted to an employee or board member in relation to corporate service. The best time to issue these warrants is now, when the market is down, with the value that is created coming from the growth in the stock market. There is no cost to the company, no risk to the nonprofit recipient, and minimal nonmaterial dilution to the company's shareholders, the same as there is with options. You can **help promote** this idea of companies granting **Social Bonuses**, thereby encouraging companies to see this as another expression of their Corporate Social Responsibility. No cost. No stimulus. No bailout. No taxes. No tax cuts. Just Capitalism for the Common Good.

We Can – And We Will

It is time to make educational services available to all. This is not merely a challenge for governments, or schools, or teachers, or someone else. This is a challenge for **all** of us. It is a challenge for **you**. Working together, we can all share the costs and the benefits of a more effective and a more equitable educational system. But it's going to take a lot of people and organizations to make it work. You're not alone in this. It will take **all** of us. The time has come for each of us, individuals and organizations, to **contribute** to the solution. Let's get started building an Open Educational Service that provides our students with the skills to handle 21st Century jobs. Let's get started building an Open Educational Service that trains our teachers to teach the math, science, and technology skills that are needed for 21st Century citizenship. All we need is **YOUR HELP**.

We must answer President Obama's call. YES, WE CAN – AND WE WILL.

Follow-Up

1. Read the latest copy of the Full Plan and other materials at:
<http://Stargazer.org/oes.php>
2. Post your ideas and share your efforts by joining the conversation on these Facebook Groups:
 - Harnessing the Power of the Web for Social Good
<http://groups.to/harnessingthewebforsocialgood/>
 - Open Educational Services for All
<http://groups.to/openeducationalservices/>
 - Harnessing the Stock Market for Social Good
<http://groups.to/harnessingthestockmarket/>
3. Send comments and other materials to:
OpenServices@Stargazer.org

² Further information on this topic is available in the Full Plan.