

THE BELLE PROJECT

Backgrounder

What is the BELLE Project?

BELLE (Broadband Enabled Lifelong Learning Environment) is a \$3.4 million cost-shared project to develop a test bed for online learning. It has several components, including the development of a technological infrastructure, the building of communities of use and the establishment of a prototype educational object repository. This project is a two-year collaboration led by Netera Alliance, and funded jointly by CANARIE Inc.'s Learning Program and the following project partners:

Banff Centre for the Arts
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)
Sheridan College
University of British Columbia
University of Calgary Learning Commons
Vancouver Film School
CAREO (Campus Alberta Repository of Educational Objects)
RightsMarket

McGill Faculty of Medicine
Seneca@York
University of Alberta
University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine
University of Lethbridge
Callisto
OnDisC
Telesat

The Project Components

BELLE is investigating three interconnected aspects for advancing online education:

1. Creating and Cataloguing Educational Objects

BELLE is cooperating with other Learning Program projects to develop and test a set of standards, or a meta-architecture, aimed at structuring educational content so that repositories can be effectively searched. In cooperation with the Learning Commons at the University of Calgary, BELLE is creating tools and methods for automatically generating metadata and optimizing the digital content creation and repurposing processes.

2. Evaluation and Support

BELLE is collaborating with the University of Alberta in developing evaluation tools to assess the value and impact of its activities. Netera Alliance is providing information support, including training workshops, presentations, articles, and support via telephone and email.

3. Test bed Infrastructure

Netera Alliance is working with all its partners to establish a test bed infrastructure of Content Repurposing Facilities, servers and Client Learning Environments. Content Repurposing Facilities are used to digitize and tag content. This content is served from a variety of servers from companies such as SGI, Callisto and Apple. Client Learning Environments are mobile workstations that turn any classroom with a broadband connection into a distance learning centre by providing access to the multimedia content on the servers, as well as H.323 video conferencing and application sharing.