

24 January 2001 / For Immediate Release

## Canadian educational institutions join high-speed network project

CALGARY – Ten Canadian educational institutions have joined a \$3.4 million test bed project to make Canada's high-tech network infrastructure more accessible and useful for educators and students. The participating institutions include: Banff Centre for the Arts, McGill Faculty of Medicine, Northern Alberta Institute for Technology, Seneca@York, Sheridan College, University of Alberta, University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge, and the Vancouver Film School.

The project, called BELLE (Broadband Enabled Lifelong Learning Environment) involves ten post-secondary institutions across Canada, who are working to digitize, classify and make available new kinds of multimedia learning materials to broader audiences. Each institution will install a special workstation, called a Client Learning Environment, connected to the national high-speed research network, CA\*net3. From these, educators and students will be able to access multimedia learning materials. These materials are being prepared at specific Content Repurposing Facilities. Two servers, one in the east and one in the west, will make the materials available.

“BELLE will take advantage of Canada's world-class national broadband Internet to take online learning materials to a new level of maturity,” says Douglas MacLeod, Director of Projects at Netera Alliance. “It is an in-depth investigation that will digitize a range of educational multimedia, make it available through workstations connected to a high-speed network, and evaluate the benefits and barriers to learning.”

The project is designed to provide quality, peer-reviewed learning materials – video, still images, 3D models, virtual environments – by connecting repositories of materials to standardized client workstations at each of the participating institutions.

“There are many hidden glitches and problems that have prevented the seamless online delivery of multimedia materials,” MacLeod explains. “Through BELLE, we plan to work through the wrinkles to create a test bed that meets the needs of educators and adult learners, and realizes some of the promises of very high-speed networks.”

The BELLE project is led by Netera Alliance, a not-for-profit corporation whose primary role is to develop and manage the advanced Internet in Alberta. The project is supported by a \$1.7 million grant from CANARIE's Learning Program and matching funding by participating institutions.

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For more information: BELLE project [www.netera.ca/belle](http://www.netera.ca/belle)  
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