



**Joint Commission on Technology and Science**  
**August 5, 2009 1:30 p.m.**  
**House Room C, General Assembly Building**

- **Call to order, roll call.**

Delegate May called the meeting to order. All presentations for the JCOTS meeting are available on the web at [www.jcots.dls.virginia.gov](http://www.jcots.dls.virginia.gov).

- **Open Education Presentations**

**Pearson Education**

**Asghar Mostafa, CEO, Entourage Systems**

Kirk Schroder, representative for Pearson Education, provided a brief introduction and introduced Paul McFall, Linda Cloud, and Brent McKenize of Pearson Education. The presentation provided to the Commission can be found on the JCOTS website at [www.jcots.dls.virginia.gov](http://www.jcots.dls.virginia.gov).

After reviewing some of Pearson's online and electronic content, Senator Watkins asked if digital textbooks are offered at a reduced rate to reflect the reduced printing cost. Linda Cloud responded that Pearson offers digital textbooks for 20% less than the print version. Mrs. Cloud also reported on Pearson's work with California and their "Free Learning Initiative". One difficulty noted was that California is reviewing online content the same way as print content, which makes it difficult to take into account unique aspects of delivering content in an interactive and digital manner.

Senator Watkins asked what Pearson is doing to keep their content updated. Pearson representatives responded that they update their repository of content every year. Any delay that occurs in updating textbooks is attributed to delays in the adoption of updated SOL standards and the subsequent adoption of the most recent printing of the textbook. Additionally, Virginia law requires schools to use textbooks for a minimum of five years, thus further delaying the ability to provide the most up-to-date content.

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The Virginia Joint Commission  
**JCOTS**  
on Technology and Science

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Next on the agenda was Entourage Systems. Mr. Mostafa provided an overview of the capabilities of his company's device, the eDGe. The goal of the eDGe is to revolutionize education with a next-generation platform to merge technology and education. Mr. Mostafa noted that today's students are used to living collaboratively in the digital world, with tools such as Facebook and MySpace, and education needs to keep up students' expectations and experiences.

The eDGe Device is both an electronic reader with Netbook functionality. It would have the ability to connect, via wireless or 3G technology, to a central server, and could house books, magazines, newspapers, and other content. The screen, which looks like an open book, would have one side for text, and a second side for electronically taking and sharing notes, accessing the Internet, displaying videos, and other social integration tasks. It would allow for students to share and collaborate on files. The device is also "pen enabled," to allow students to input writing, highlights, or notes, directly onto e-documents.

- **Update on Undergrounding Transmission Lines**

**Kevin Curtis, Director of Electric Transmission Planning, Dominion**

Kevin Curtis provided the Commission with an update on several transmission line undergrounding projects in the Commonwealth, including two pilot projects authorized by the General Assembly. Dominion expects the cost of undergrounding the transmission lines to be around 8.5 times the cost of a similar overhead line.

- **Update on Broadband in Virginia**

**Karen Jackson, Deputy Secretary of Technology**

Karen Jackson reviewed money available from the federal government as part of the most recent stimulus package. Of the \$7.2 billion reserved for broadband, Mrs. Jackson expects the Commonwealth will be well positioned to get a large portion of the money. Virginia's recent effort to establish a map of broadband access across the Commonwealth and the previous development of the Virginia Geographical Information System (VGIN) have been major accomplishments that will help secure additional broadband funding.

- **Alternatives to the Motor Fuels Tax: Vehicle Miles Traveled**

**Ralph Davis, Deputy Secretary of Transportation**

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**Audrey Moruza, Associate Research Scientist, Virginia  
Transportation Research Council**

Audrey Moruza and Ralph Davis presented on the concept of a vehicle miles traveled tax system for transportation funding. At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Davis highlighted the following challenges in implementing a VMT system:

1. Switching to VMT would not eliminate the need for periodic rate increases;
2. There is a large administrative cost;
3. VMT is more burdensome to administer;
4. Without regional or national participation the state would miss out-of-state drivers;
5. Keeping track of every tax payer would be more difficult than keeping track of the current taxpayers: the gas stations; and
6. Privacy concerns and public acceptance are an issue

**• Overview of the Virginia Geographic Information Network  
Dan Widner, Coordinator, VGIN**

Dan Widner provided an overview of VGIN. VGIN falls within the Integrated Services division of the Virginia Information Technologies Agencies, along with public safety/e911. The goal of the division is to leverage existing GIS and public safety services, and to promote shared services and enterprise-wide approaches in the state and amongst localities. VGIN itself is tasked with creating a catalog of GIS data available in the Commonwealth. Some of VGIN's geospatial services include:

- Base Mapping Development & Management
    - e.g. Orthophotography, Road Centerline, Hydrography
  - Data delivery via web services
  - Data and Application Hosting
    - Geospatial Enterprise Platform
  - Geospatial Needs Assessment
  - Geospatial Project Management
  - Listservs for communication
  - Geospatial Metadata portal
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- **Other Business.**

No other business was discussed.

- **Public comment:** Members of the public are invited to express their views about the Commission and its work.

No public comment was received.

- **Adjournment.**

