



# The National Center for Research in Advanced Information and Digital Technologies

## FACT SHEET

The [National Center for Research in Advanced Information and Digital Technologies](#) is part of the reauthorization of the [Higher Education Act](#) (section 802) approved by Congress on July 31, 2008, and signed into law by President Bush on August 14, 2008. The National Center will be organized as a Congressionally originated 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation located within the Department of Education. Supporters are seeking a \$50 million appropriation for the National Center for FY 2010.

**Purpose:** The National Center for Research in Advanced Information and Digital Technologies will support a comprehensive research and development program to explore ways advanced computer and communication technologies can improve all levels of learning. This includes K-12, college and university, corporate and government training, and both formal and informal learning.

Specific activities will include:

- Research, development and demonstrations of learning technologies that could include simulations, games, virtual worlds, intelligent tutors, performance-based assessments, and innovative approaches to pedagogy that these tools can implement.
- Design and testing of components needed to build prototype systems. This could include tools for answering questions, for building and evaluating the construction of simulations and virtual worlds that could include sophisticated physical and biological systems or reconstructions of ancient cities brought to life with intelligent avatars (models of humans in virtual spaces).
- Research to determine how these new systems can best be used to build interest and expertise in learners of different ages and backgrounds. This will give educators, parents, employers, and learners the information they need to make informed choices.

It has been difficult for private developers to make the significant, sustained investment in research needed to address these critical but difficult issues. The National Center will fill this critical gap in funding “pre competitive” research that will provide information critical for groups building commercial products.

**Management:** The National Center will not be an agency of the federal government but an independent, nonprofit organization with its own Board of Directors.

- The initial Board members will be appointed by the Secretary of Education from recommendations received from Republican and Democratic leaders in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Board will subsequently elect its own members based on advice received from the public.
- The National Center can receive funding from any federal agency, from private organizations (not including funding from outside the U.S.).
- The bill authorizes expenditure of funding from the Department of Education but the funding levels will be determined by the appropriations committees. \$50 million is being requested for Fiscal Year 2010.
- Under the direction of the Board, the National Center's staff will develop a research plan and ask for competitive proposals. The research will be selected by a peer review process. Proposals can come from colleges and universities, other non-profit organizations, and corporate research organizations. Collaborative proposals that combine the research strengths of several organizations are allowed and may be encouraged.
- All material resulting from the research will quickly be made freely and nonexclusively available to the public. This provision may be waived if the National Center's director and a unanimous vote of the Board determine that some restrictions on free and nonexclusive availability would result in significant public benefits.

[Click HERE](#) for the news release on the new National Center.