



Congress Launches the First National Research Program Focused on Technology and Learning

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[FACT SHEET](#) on National Center for Research in Advanced Information and Digital Technologies.

[Higher Education Act](#) -- Go to Section 802 for the National Center for Research in Advanced and Digital Technologies

WASHINGTON DC – Congress has authorized a major new research center, [the National Center for Research in Advanced Information and Digital Technologies](#), that will bring the same focused, sustained research funding to technology and learning that the federal government has funded for years in technology for health care at the National Institutes of Health and technology for energy at the Department of Energy.



“This new National Center will help move schools, universities, and training facilities nationwide into the 21st century,” said Senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut, one of the proposal’s original sponsors. “America’s reputation as an international leader rests in the hands of our youth, and it should be among our top priorities to provide our students with the tools they need to maintain and build upon this standing. The National Center will help future American workers compete in the global marketplace.”

“The National Center couldn’t come at a more critical time,” said Congressman John Yarmuth of Louisville, Kentucky, who spearheaded efforts to move the bill through the House. “American businesses know that they need a well-educated workforce to face growing competition from China, India, and Europe. Americans need to constantly upgrade their skills to keep pace with technology and international competition, and people who are losing their jobs often need to acquire new skills to rejoin the workforce.”

Learning scientists and educators have known for years that people learn faster if education can

be personalized, and if students are motivated by seeing how their knowledge can help them solve problems they, and their future employers, actually care about. These new technologies can help deliver on this promise. Students in today's schools were born into a digital world -- able to gather information, communicate and collaborate using the constantly expanding tools of the internet and the computers, wireless devices, game devices also attached to it.

“This initiative is built on historical precedents. Once each century, during a time of national crisis, our country has made a transformative investment in education – the Northwest Ordinance brought public education in the 18th century; the Land Grant Colleges Act brought public higher education in the 19th century; and the GI Bill of the 20th century. Creating the National Center will bring learning and skills training into the 21st century,” said the co-chairs of the Digital Promise Project, former president of PBS and NBC News Lawrence K. Grossman, former chairman of the FCC and PBS Newton N. Minow, and former American Arts Alliance president Anne G. Murphy.

This new National Center will do research that is essential for the United States in this digital age. The creativity that developed extraordinary new information technologies has not focused on finding ways to make learning more compelling, more personal, and more productive in our nation's schools. People assumed that the explosion of innovation in information tools in business and service industries would automatically move into classrooms.

The National Center is unique not only in its mission but in the way it will be managed. This will not be another government bureaucracy but a not-for-profit organization with an independent Board that will include educators, scientists, people from business, and professionals familiar with managing research that has transformed the way businesses use information technology.

“For the first time education research will benefit from the kinds of creative research management that has been so effective in driving innovation in other parts of the economy. It will be able to focus research talent across the nation – in many fields and many institutions on one of the nation's most pressing problems,” said [Henry Kelly](#), president of the Federation of American Scientists.

Initial funding will come from the Department of Education but the National Center will be able to take funds from other agencies – including the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security that have an enormous interest in education and training. It will also be able to receive funds from companies and other private donors interested in supporting research that can benefit the nation as a whole. It will be a unique public private partnership. The goal is to keep the National Center's staff small so that the bulk of the funds will go to researchers nationwide capable of focusing the best of emerging technologies on what surely is one of the nation's most pressing challenges.

The National Center is part of the reauthorization of the [Higher Education Act](#), 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.

[Click HERE](#) to learn more about the National Center.