



Connecting schools to NRENs – political, funding and managerial issues

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Political issues connecting schools

- Need for political agreement before an NREN connects schools – hard to do this in competition with normal ISPs without a political consent
- This political agreement can be national or at a more local level
- In fact, the EU made it a goal some years back that NRENs should connect schools – but not all European countries have tried to do so, and somehow the goal seems to be "hidden" or "forgotten" today. But still the number of countries working on this increases.

Political issues connecting schools

- **Why do politicians and ministries think of asking their NREN to connect the schools: there has to be a rationale for this, some advantages – it would be useful to list these possible advantages.**
- In some countries, like Denmark, the vision of connecting all schools came early in the 90es, so at the time a central solution seemed the only feasible way
- In other countries, the NREN has seemed the only capable actor for a roll-out to schools in a coherent way

Managerial issues connecting schools

- A new order of magnitude – at least 10 times as many schools as universities, research institutions and colleges
- Many smaller institutions without their own networking expertise
- Need for more services than universities
- Need for much more support than universities
- How do you meet these needs as an NREN: by expanding, by finding new partners, or by sub-contracting to one or more Telcos?

Funding issues

- Schools are often poor – so there is a need for some central funding
- "Seed-money" is most often not so hard to get, if the political will exists, but the network should be built so that schools in the end can pay the running cost themselves
- A good dialogue should be maintained with both schools and school-owners at the local level – and with the Ministry of Education

- Psychological issues:
- Schools should perceive their network provider to be "close by" – but of course that doesn't mean you have to live all over the country, even though UNI-c does ;-)

