



Gig.U

The University Community Next Generation Innovation Project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University Communities Launch Gig.U for Next Generation Network-Based Innovation

Washington, DC, July 27, 2011 – A broad-based group of 29 universities and communities across the country today launched Gig.U: The University Community Next Generation Innovation Project. Drawing on America’s rich history of community-led innovation in research and entrepreneurship, Gig.U seeks to accelerate the deployment of ultra high-speed networks to leading U.S. universities and their surrounding communities. Improvements to these networks drive economic growth and stimulate a new generation of innovations addressing critical needs, such as health care and education.

“America’s global leadership in many areas results from its leadership in creating and maintaining the world’s leading research universities,” said Michael M. Crow, President of Arizona State University. “As the world accelerates towards a knowledge-based economy, global leadership in generating economic growth and jobs will depend even more on these research institutions.”

University communities increasingly depend on high-speed networks to educate, collaborate and share large amounts of information instantaneously. Research in real time has fueled the growth of the global information economy, yet today’s market for bandwidth services does not address the particular needs of university communities. Gig.U’s mission is to create a favorable climate for next generation network test-beds and trigger a new generation of high-speed networking offerings for these communities.

“Gig.U members came together to address our unique connectivity gap,” said Lev Gonick, Chief Information Officer and Vice President of Information Technology Services at Case Western Reserve University, a Gig.U member. “We intimately understand that for American research institutions to continue to provide leadership in areas important to U.S. competitiveness, we have to act to improve the market opportunity for upgrading to gigabit networks in our university communities. We believe a small amount of investment can yield big returns for the American economy and our society.”

Gig.U universities and their surrounding communities have the most favorable conditions for a market-based, ultra high-speed broadband strategy, including dense populations and high demand from institutions and residential customers. These communities have long served as partners and test-beds for advances in market segments ranging from healthcare and education to technology and energy. Through an open Request for Information (RFI) process, Gig.U will gather data on these specific segments with an intent to inform high-speed service providers of new implementation approaches, and to enable competition to bring high-speed networks to

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research communities. The group aims for the RFI process translating into tailored Requests for Proposals for deploying cutting edge networking technology to campuses and communities in a matter of years, not decades.

“Alaska and our universities are leading the way in many unique fields of research and it’s vital that we support and encourage their work,” said Senator Mark Begich (D - Alaska) “I don’t want to just hear about the next great idea, research project or potential breakthrough, I want to see them happen. Research doesn’t just happen inside the 4 walls of a university. By giving our communities the necessary tools we can spark research, innovation and invention anywhere.”

Gig.U released the attached open letter explaining its purpose and inviting others to join in the effort. The letter stresses, “we believe that if our communities can have access to next generation networks, we can unlock a new generation of opportunities.”

“As the home to one of these institutions, Gainesville has known for some time that we need broadband speeds to our campuses and communities far beyond that which the market offers today,” said Craig Lowe, Mayor of the City of Gainesville, Florida. “High speed broadband connectivity will be the key to furthering the research and development reach from these institutions.”

The membership of Gig.U includes:

Arizona State University
Case Western Reserve University
Colorado State University
Duke University
George Mason University
Howard University
Indiana University
Michigan State University
North Carolina State University
Penn State University
University of Alaska
University of Chicago
University of Florida
University of Hawaii
University of Illinois

University of Kentucky
University of Louisville
University of Maryland
University of Michigan
University of Missouri
University of Montana
University of New Mexico
University of North Carolina
University of South Florida
University of Virginia
University of Washington
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)
Wake Forest University
West Virginia University

Gig.U originated at the Aspen Institute and will be directed by Blair Levin, a fellow at the Aspen Institute Communications and Society Program and formerly the Executive Director of the National Broadband Plan.



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For further information on the RFI, contact:
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or visit us @:
www.gig-u.org

About The Aspen Institute

The Aspen Institute mission is twofold: to foster values-based leadership, encouraging individuals to reflect on the ideals and ideas that define a good society, and to provide a neutral and balanced venue for discussing and acting on critical issues. The Aspen Institute does this primarily in four ways: seminars, young-leader fellowships around the globe, policy programs, and public conferences and events. The Institute is based in Washington, DC; Aspen, Colorado; and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also has an international network of partners. For more information, please visit: www.aspeninstitute.org

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