

HEAnet rolls-out 100 Gbps national network for Ireland's higher education and research sector

Minister Richard Bruton welcomes HEAnet roll-out of Ireland's first national 100 gigabit-per-second network to serve the education and research sector. Dublin City University is the first Irish university to connect to new high-speed network. #FutureofEdu

The Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton T.D. has welcomed the roll-out of HEAnet's upgraded national education and research network, which will benefit students, teachers, researchers and support staff across the country.

The new HEAnet network delivers 100 gigabit-per-second (Gbps) capacity, making it capable of carrying ultra-high bandwidth traffic for Universities, Institutes of Technologies and other Higher Education Institutions across 216 locations in Ireland.

The €5 million e-infrastructure project is funded by the Department of Education and Skills through the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

Minister Bruton was shown how the new network is already being used for learning, collaboration and research on a visit to the Glasnevin campus of Dublin City University (DCU) today (September 1st), which was the first University in the country to connect to the high-speed network.

Minister Bruton was met by Kerrie Power, the newly-appointed CEO of HEAnet, Professor Brian MacCraith, the President of DCU, Barbara McConalogue, Director of Information Systems Services at DCU and Darragh Richardson of Agile Networks in Dublin, HEAnet's network integration partner on the project.

Speaking at DCU, Minister Bruton said: "A digital revolution is taking place and we want to ensure that Ireland is well-placed to take advantage of the opportunities that arise by having high speed connectivity at all levels within our education system. This is a key aim outlined in the Action Plan for Education, which aims to make the Irish education and training service the best in Europe within a decade. Through HEAnet, more than a million students along with nearly 89,000 teachers, researchers and support staff rely on high speed broadband connectivity every day for learning, collaboration and research. From speaking with students and staff during my visit to DCU, I can see how this new infrastructure is enabling the digital campuses of the future. I warmly welcome the roll-out of the new HEAnet network, coinciding with the start of the new academic year."

Kerrie Power, CEO of HEAnet, said: "In future-proofing our National Education and Research Network, it is vital that we maintain investment in essential e-Infrastructure services and connectivity. Thanks to Ireland's first national 100 gigabit-per-second resilient network, which is funded by the Department of Education and Skills through the HEA, we have a scalable

infrastructure in place to meet the ever-increasing demands of Ireland's thriving education and research sector."

The President of DCU, Brian MacCraith said: "This exciting collaboration with HEAnet and Agile Networks, coupled with a significant €8m IT infrastructure investment by DCU itself, is testament to our commitment to developing a 21st Century Digital Campus. With the most modern IT network within the third-level sector and a 400 fold increase in our IT network capacity, we are transforming the teaching, learning and research landscape for all students and staff at DCU. Our more than 17 000 students arriving on campus over the coming weeks will benefit from classrooms equipped with state-of-the-art technology to enable the latest teaching and learning innovations including lecture capture, remote streaming, and local and remote student engagement."

HEAnet has invested €5 million over three years in this network upgrade project to connect 216 higher education and research locations across the 2,500 kilometre national fibre network. In all, over 1 million students and nearly 89,000* researchers, teachers and support staff across primary, secondary and third level will ultimately benefit from the increased capacity of the network.

Dublin-based Agile Networks are providing network design, build and ongoing support services in a technology partnership with Juniper Networks. Agile Network's Managing Director, Darragh Richardson said that the new network was a "game-changer" for Ireland's education and research sector, saying: "With a 100 gigabit-per-second capacity, this means that it takes only one second to download 100,000 eBooks or 600,000 web pages and this is a game-changer for the way we learn, collaborate, innovate and research. Importantly, the new provisioning system will also drastically reduce the time it takes to connect other education bodies and new services to the network."

Following the successful completion of a phased roll-out to the main urban campus locations, six of the seven Universities are now connected to the new network. The upgrade project will now address remaining campus sites in regional locations with the national roll-out of the 216 locations due to conclude in early 2018.

Further details about the 100 Gbps network are available on the HEAnet website at www.heanet.ie

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Photography Note:

High resolution reproduction-free images are available from this announcement by Minister Bruton through Mark Stedman Photography (Mobile: 086 367 9394)

Notes to Editor

*Sources for numbers quoted:

1,122,616 students (across all three levels)

Source: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Key-Statistics/Key-Statistics-2016-2017.pdf>

88,841 researchers, teachers and support staff (across all three levels)

Sources:

8,043 researchers (third level) <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/HEA-Key-Facts-and-Figures-201516.pdf>

17,163 teachers and support staff (3rd level) <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/HEA-Key-Facts-and-Figures-201516.pdf>

63,635 teachers (1st and 2nd level) <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Key-Statistics/Key-Statistics-2016-2017.pdf>

The HEAnet network upgrade project is funded by the HEA, through the Department of Education and Skills and was implemented with the co-operation of HEAnet clients. Dublin City University (DCU), Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) volunteered for the pilot phase and became the first to transition to the new network.

About HEAnet (IFSC, Dublin 1)

HEAnet is Ireland's National Education and Research Network, providing Internet connectivity and associated ICT services to education and research organisations throughout Ireland, including all primary and post-primary schools. Established in 1983 by the Irish Universities with the support of the Higher Education Authority, HEAnet now provides essential Infrastructure services to over 1.1 million users across all levels of the Irish education system. Their high quality resilient network connects all Irish Universities, Institutes of Technology and other higher education institutions (HEIs), along with research organisations, and all primary and post-primary schools across Ireland. HEAnet is guided by corporate values of integrity, openness & transparency, collaboration and enthusiasm amongst its staff.

www.heanet.ie

About DCU (Glasnevin, Dublin 11)

Dublin City University is a research-intensive, globally-engaged University of Enterprise, distinguished both by the quality and impact of its graduates and its focus on the translation of knowledge into societal and economic benefit. Through its mission to transform lives and societies through education, research and innovation, Dublin City University acts as an agent for social, cultural and economic progress at the individual, national and international levels.

www.dcu.ie

<http://www.dcu.ie/iss/it-transformation.shtml>

About Agile Networks (CityWest, Co Dublin)

Agile Networks is one of the leading independent network integrators in Ireland, designing, building, and supporting networks for some of the country's best known organisations and businesses. The integrator has built its reputation around providing customised networks with leading international vendors and holds top level accreditations across an unrivalled portfolio of partners.

With over a dozen national and international awards and the highest customer satisfaction levels amongst its peer group, Agile Networks has disrupted the marketplace with a compelling choice. Setting new standards in IT Networks, the company supports over 2.3 million end users across 4,900 sites for 100 major customers, including 16 of the top 25 Internet Service Providers in Ireland

www.agilenetworks.ie.