



Government Creates Educational Network

Bulgaria enables 3200 schools to improve learning and achievement

Customer Name: **Government**
Industry: **Education**
Location: **Bulgaria**
Size: **1,007,300 students and
79,700 teachers at 3200 schools**

Case Study



Business Impact

- **Improved access to information and learning resources**
- **Easier for students and teachers to collaborate**
- **Reduced administrative burden for teachers**

Business Challenge

Bulgaria's educational system has traditionally embraced Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in a number of ways, most notably by placing computer programming on the national curriculum and providing PC equipment in school laboratories. Aside from IT lessons, however, modern technologies were still to be integrated with mainstream teaching.

Against this background, the government implemented a set of policies to harness the power of IP technology to create a more dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy.

The government's ambitious plan to close the digital divide is far-reaching and multifaceted: to connect schools and educate teachers on the use of ICT; to implement IP-based applications to improve education services and administrative efficiency; to increase teacher proficiency and productivity; and to create a student-centric environment that will promote academic excellence.

Solution and Results

Bulgaria has created the National Educational Network (NEN); a unified academic network connecting 3200 schools with a control centre and 28 regional inspectorates. Built using Cisco® routing and switching technologies, and security solutions, this highly available IP infrastructure provides about one million users with broadband Internet connectivity. Schools have also been provided with laptops and projectors. Importantly, the NEN has opened up exciting new possibilities, such as the Cisco [Digital Media System](#), which would allow teachers to create their own multimedia learning content to support lessons and assignments.

Cisco is also collaborating with the government on the Bulgarian Internet Generation (BIG) project, a pilot of audio/videoconferencing, unified communications, and wireless technologies involving three schools. In this highly collaborative, virtual learning environment, students can access specialized subjects delivered by experts from other schools, while teachers are more freely able to exchange information. BIG is also focused on freeing-up teachers to teach. For example, Cisco IP phones are used to reduce administrative burden by monitoring class attendance (via web applications) and automatically forwarding information about grades, parent meetings, and student absence from school.

Besides donating equipment, Cisco is supporting BIG indirectly through the [Networking Academy](#), whose students have helped to install the equipment and cabling. One student has even become the system administrator for a BIG school.

For more information about how Cisco is helping to build globally focused, student-centric institutions of the 21st century, [click here](#)