EDUCAUSE Expert and Others Testify Before Congress on Cyber Security Awareness and Education

Rodney Petersen, EDUCAUSE policy analyst and security task force coordinator, provided Congressional testimony today on the importance of increased support for a broad range of cyber security awareness and education initiatives. Testifying with other proponents of security awareness during a hearing on "Protecting Our Nation's Cyber Space: Educational Awareness for the Cyber Citizen" held by the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations, and the Census, Petersen said, "If the improvement of cyber security is indeed a national priority, then we need to see an infusion of public and private support flowing to our schools and institutions of higher education."

"The present challenges of cyber security require the establishment of a life-long culture of security from the cradle to the grave," declared Petersen, who serves on a national task force on cyber security awareness, co-chairing the Subcommittee on Schools and Institutions of Higher Education. Other key points in the testimony were:

- Colleges and universities have a stake in supporting their future students in the K–12 setting, and

- Security information should be effective, easy-to-understand and have minimal impact on learning styles and level.

This same testimony also covered efforts of CyberSmart!, a nonprofit organization that provides curricula and training programs for administrators, teachers, and students on secure, responsible, and effective computer and Internet use. According to Jim Teicher, executive director of CyberSmart!, "In the past, cyber security has been the domain of computing professionals and law

enforcement agencies. But with the mainstreaming of the Internet, cyber security is now a shared responsibility of adults and tech-savvy children alike."

In a related initiative, the Consortium of School Networking (CoSN) in partnership with Mass Networks Educations Partnership has also developed Cyber Security for the Digital District to provide schools and school districts with vital information on education networks in order to ensure the privacy and security of data within their systems. Steve Miller, executive director of Mass Networks, warned, "It is vital that K–12 leaders be concerned and careful in protecting their students' safety and their system's security, but we can't over-react. Instead, we must adopt straightforward security practices that recognize risks and deal with them proactively, providing our children with access to information and ensuring their freedom to learn."

On yet another front, the EDUCAUSE/Internet2 Computer and Network Security Task Force has established an Education and Awareness Working Group to implement and publicize various methods by which awareness of information technology security issues are raised among college and university computer and network users, administrators, and executives. Most recently, the working group encouraged colleges and universities to observe Cyber Security Day and is generating momentum toward the next Cyber Security Day on October 31, 2004. The working group is also building a collection of College and University Education and Awareness Resources. The working group also contributed to the Awareness Task Force report that is available at http://www.cyberpartnership.org.

About EDUCAUSE

EDUCAUSE is a nonprofit association whose mission is to advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology. The current membership comprises nearly 1,900 colleges, universities, and education organizations, including more than 170 corporations. EDUCAUSE has offices in Boulder, Colorado, and Washington, D.C. Learn more about EDUCAUSE at http://www.educause.edu/about/.

About Internet2

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