

Teacher Generated FAQ's

Q: What functionality does SchoolWeb Provide the user?

A:

- Personal and public storage space for all users
- E-mail account
- Personal intranet web page
- Proxy/cache server for high-speed web page access.
Librarian, a search engine for finding information in the cached web content.
- Intranet and Internet server, for a school's internal and external web sites.
- URL filtering to prevent user access to undesirable web content.
- Automatic on-line backup – a complete backup of all files is automatically performed each night.
- Redundant storage system –if the primary disk is lost, operations can immediately resume on the backup system without loss of time and work.

Q: What is cache?

A: Cache is storage. Very fast access to web pages can be achieved by caching content to the school's server.

Q: What are the caching types?

A: - There are two types of caching – dynamic and policy.

Q: What are the differences between dynamic & policy caching?

A: – Dynamic caching automatically stores web pages to the server when they are accessed on the Internet. Policy caching allows pre-determined web sites and pages to be stored, catalogued, and regularly updated for a user-defined time period.

Q: What are the advantages of policy caching?

A:

- Whole websites can be stored via one request
- Cached pages are catalogued and searchable
- All pages are refreshed regularly
- The content is updated for as long as the requester specifies

Q: How is information cached?

A: - Whenever a web page is accessed from a networked computer, it will automatically be cached (this is dynamic caching). If a teacher wishes content to be cached and indexed for permanent or semi-permanent use, then she/he would use policy caching. To policy cache, web pages or sites are requested through the SchoolWeb interface at <http://uvic.advancedinteractive.com/> These web pages are then downloaded to the school's server overnight.

Q: Who can cache?

A: All users of the local network can dynamically cache content. Only teachers, librarians and principals can policy cache. There is a login procedure provided at the Ordering Site - <http://uvic.advancedinteractive.com> site for this function.

Q: What is Librarian?

A: The Librarian is a search engine provided on the SchoolWeb server to allow searching on the cached content.

Q: Do you have to cache every page of a site?

A: No. Dynamic caching only caches the pages that you look at, but you can cache a whole site via policy caching, i.e. through the "order a site" interface on <http://uvic.advancedinteractive.com>.

When you are ordering the site, you can specify how many pages 'deep' you wish to have cached (recursion level).

Q: How do we share files with the kids?

A: The SchoolWeb system provides a number of methods for this to be achieved - via the intranet, via a public folder, or via the external website. Your school administrator will decide how best to set this up.

Q: How do you know if a site has already been cached?

A: The easiest way is to logon to the Ordering Site <http://uvic.advancedinteractive.com> and look at Requested Sites and then click "Details"

Q: Can I post a site from home or do I need to be on the school network to order a site?

A: You can order a site from home providing you logon to <http://uvic.advancedinteractive.com> and have the school username and password.

Q: Can I search a site in the School Librarian from home or do I need to be on the network to search?

A: Yes you can search from home. Normally you would go to your School's website and click on a button that says SchoolWeb Librarian; this page is open for anybody to search.

Q: How long does it take for a site to be cached?

A: This depends on the size of the site and how many other requests the main server is processing; it is best to allow 24 hours. Caching takes place overnight.

Q: How long does it take for a site to be searchable?

A: This depends on the size of the site and how many other requests the main server is processing; it is best to allow 24 hours. Indexing of the sites for searching purposes is a separate process and always takes place after the daily download into the cache.

Q: With my username and password, can I see what the other schools have cached in a designated group of SchoolWeb installed schools, or do I only have access to the sites my school's posts?

A: Yes each school in a designated or designed cluster can see each other's cache (it may be called a common cache). The benefit is that one persons cached site can be shared by others.

Q: Can the Description of the cached site be changed?

A: No, because the *Description* is generated by the **Head End** server as it scans the site; however Grades, Notes, Dewey classification and Type can be modified.

Q: What kind of files can be indexed by the Head End Server?

A: Only files with these extensions - \.html|.htm|.shtml|.txt|.rtf|.ps|.text|.tex. are currently indexed. Files with extension .asp will be cached on the next upgrade of the Search Engine software.

Q: What are the other companies partnered with the SchoolWeb system

A:

- HP-Compaq - Equipment Provider
- WorldSpace - Satellite connectivity to Africa Europe and Asia
- InfoSat – Satellite connectivity to North America
- Commonwealth of Learning - Strategic alliance
- Global e-Text – Text-to-speech features for learning-disabled students

Q: Where have you installed SchoolWeb?

A: SchoolWeb is installed in more than 80 schools in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Switzerland and Kenya.

Q: What was the role of CANARIE in the development of SchoolWeb?

A: CANARIE sponsored the initial test installations in British Columbia.

Q: What is the difference between SchoolWeb and SchoolNet that is run by Industry Canada?

A: These are two different projects. SchoolNet belongs to Industry Canada. SchoolNet' s original mandate was to work in partnership with the provincial and territorial governments, the educational community and the private sector to connect Canadian schools and libraries to the Internet by March 31, 1999.

Q: Can teachers and students conduct collaboration projects?

A: Yes.

Q: Can students take distance education courses using the SchoolWeb system?

A: Yes, but we do not provide content. Some school districts are offering them. However, we are constantly upgrading our product offering, and we shall be adding content as this product matures. Content offerings may be based on a pay-as-you-use basis or other suitable sales models as offered by our content partners.

Q: Could organizations and teachers that are developing content partner with you since you have the "gateway" to schools in other regions?

A: Yes, we welcome such partners. Our model is based on a revenue-share model. You can contact us by sending an email to info@advancedinteractive.com.

Q: Some students require special attention e.g. learning English as a second language. Can SchoolWeb help in this area?

A: Our partner Global e-Text provides software for the learning disabled that can be loaded on the client machine. Students can therefore point at any text, and the content would be read to the student. At the same time the word read would be magnified. This helps those that have sight impairment. As well this help those that wish to learn languages. At a later date we shall be offering ESL courses through the SchoolWeb distribution channel.

Q: Can students play video games or listen to MP3?

A: Yes, as long as the client machine has a sound card and speakers. We do not supply this content, nor are we responsible for any installation, policing and maintenance of video games. We may, however, at a later date provide such content, but right now we do not.

Decision Maker Generated FAQ

Q: We have only 300 students in our school. Can we afford your system?

A: Yes. We have arranged for HP Financial Services for lease arrangements. They are committed to assess every application. Moreover we have developed methods to help turn a SchoolWeb installation into a viable School-Based Telecenter, and with it, the school may be able to sustain the installation.

Q: Do we need to buy Microsoft NT licenses?

A: You do not have to buy NT seats. However if your desktops have Microsoft software they all have licensing agreements.

Q: How fast can you install a SchoolWeb system once you have our order?

A: Depending on site surveys, it could be as fast as a couple of weeks.

Q: Typically how much does the system cost?

A: This really depends on what the school requires. A range of US\$15,000 to US\$20,000 per system is a reasonable estimate. There is easy payment Lease programs provided by HP Financial Services.

Q: What is the Maintenance Fee?

A: There are three levels of support. The entry level is about US\$250 per month over 36-month contract.

Q: Would HP Financial Services finance the Maintenance Fees too?

A: Yes.

Q: Would HP Financial Services finance the purchase of desktop computers too?

A: Yes.

Q: Would HP Financial Services finance the Maintenance Fees too?

A: Yes.

Q: How would I go about contacting HP Finance?

A: When you are in discussion with us, we will provide you with all the details.

Technician Generated FAQ's

Q: We do not have any communications in our part of the world. Can we use your system?

A: Yes you can; SchoolWeb can still provide you with Internet content because the content is cached in the SchoolWeb Server and broadcast via satellites that cover most of world today.

Another solution is if you can obtain the use of the **Vertical Blanking Interval** (VBI) of a television station, we can work with the TV station to imbed the broadcast signals of the Internet within the VBI. Then not only schools but also households can receive the Internet.

Q: What other infrastructures are needed for SchoolWeb to operate?

A: SchoolWeb is very flexible. It works with telephony, satellite, cable, TV signals and wireless signals.

Within the school, Ethernet or wireless is used to connect PCs to the SchoolWeb server. In remote areas we can use wireless components to connect homes to the SchoolWeb server

Q: How much room is needed to house the server?

A: A closet-size room approximately 3 Sq Ft would be sufficient; it should be secure, dry and not subject to high temperatures.

Q: What performance gains are expected from SchoolWeb's high-speed Internet service?

A: Users can access content on the SchoolWeb server at speeds of up to 100 Mbps within the local area network in the installed school. Tests showed that compared to pulling content from the Internet, pulling it from the cache could increase delivery speeds from 10 to 50 times faster.

Q: How are the SchoolWeb Servers monitored?

A: All SchoolWeb servers on the Internet are monitored from Burnaby (near Vancouver), Canada. The monitoring software detects any services or features on the server that are not functioning. If something malfunctions the monitoring staff is alerted, and either an email message or a page is sent out. Some malfunctions can be fixed remotely. If there is a hardware problem, assistance from our partner HP with 160 offices around the world, is available.

Q: If the SchoolWeb Server goes down, what do we do? How fast would we be up and running again?

A: Basically if anything happens to a server, it is normally the disk drives that malfunction. In the SchoolWeb Servers there are two drives running concurrently. If something goes wrong with the primary Drive, the system can be started from the second Drive and all the users data from the previous night backup will be there and the system will continue to operate. These are Hot-Swappable Drives. These Drives can be removed and re-installed without shutting down. Disabled drives can be sent back to us, and a replacement Drive would be send to you. Then it is simply plug and play.

Q: Can you block students from playing video games or listen to MP3 programs?

A: Yes

Q: We have 2000 students and 80 teachers in our school; can your system offer us high speed Internet content delivery in our school?

A: Yes.

Q: What type level of technical expertise would be needed to support the SchoolWeb system at our school?

A: A qualified or full time IT or Network person is not needed. A computer literate teacher or school administrator can be quickly trained to follow certain procedures for various tasks. However, we need to emphasize that we are only responsible for the SchoolWeb system, not the PCs of the school.

Q: What other value added services can be installed on the SchoolWeb server?

A: We provide the Text-to-Speech software for your client machines besides Internet service. Other added value services could include School management software.

Q. Do you also support the desktop computers at the school?

A: No.

Q: Firewall security: What are the implications and ramifications to a given board' s firewall setup? Can this system be configured inside and/or outside the boards firewall?

A: Each SchoolWeb server has a Firewall that protects the server from inside and outside hackers, etc. We configure the SchoolWeb server behind the board's Firewall or it can also be connected to the Internet and provide a Firewall function for the School. When we use the SchoolWeb server as a Firewall for a School we have a minimum of two Ethernet Cards in the server. One card is connected to the Internet and the second is connected to the School' s LAN. The Firewall also provides NAT (Network Address Translation) services. We also provide DHCP and DNS services on the server based on each School or Board' s requirement. Each SchoolWeb server is custom configured for the School' s requirement. We normally have a site survey that has to be completed by the School or Board personnel that enables us to customize configuration the SchoolWeb server so that it works within the network without disrupting the existing network.

Q: What are the pros and cons of each? Can the caching server also be configured to be a firewall? Would this provide extra protection or at the very least an alternate means of ensuring security?

A: When we first installed SchoolWeb server in Schools in British Columbia we relied on the Board' s Firewall to protect our server from the Internet. We soon found that we were fire-walling ourselves with the hackers within the school. We now have a Firewall on the server and have not been hacked since the firewall was installed. The Firewall on the server provides an added level of security even if the Board already has a Firewall. Our Firewall also has routing capabilities that allow us to do additional routing within subnets and with rules that allow access to certain machines within the LAN without sacrificing security for the complete LAN (i.e. One PC on the LAN can be access from certain IPs on the Internet without having access

Q: Static IP Address issues: If the system is to be setup outside of the Firewall real Static IP addresses will be required for the servers.

A: If a school requires email and web services, a real Static IP is required. Nonetheless, SchoolWeb works without a Static IP. The Server can be setup behind the School Board's Firewall with NAT service on the School Boards Firewall to allow the web servers and e-mail server on the SchoolWeb server to be accessible from the Internet.

Q: Machine/Log accessibility & Monitoring: The school board technicians are concerned about a few things surrounding the monitoring of these systems. Would they have access to the machines log files to verify performance?

A: We can provide daily, weekly and monthly statistics with graphs. They have access to daily statistics on the machine which are created nightly. They can view them via a web browser interface.

Q: Would they be able to monitor the systems as well as Ai for the sake of piece of mind?

A: We monitor the systems on a 24-hour basis. We monitor each of the services on the server and not just that the server is up and running. We would be happy to provide a username and password access for them to view their system status from the Internet. We can also add them on our monitoring system so that if a service fails they would be notified by e-mail of such failure. We have different level of notification from warning to critical. Each level can have an e-mail associated with each server. We also give the local technical people full access to the SchoolWeb server.

Q: Who is responsible for monitoring and maintaining the workstations associated with the system?

A: We do not monitor any workstations. The responsibility of the workstations belongs to the School or Board personnel. We advise that each of the Workstations be installed with Deepfreeze (<http://www.deepfreezeusa.com/>) so that teachers do not have to restore workstations that have been hacked by students. The only thing required to restore a hacked workstation is to power it down and up.

Q: How secure are the Win98 client machines attached to the SchoolWeb server?

A: Each user on the system is provided with a user ID and password to access the server. All WIN98 Clients have to logon to the WINDOWS NT DOMAIN (SchoolWeb) on the SchoolWeb Server. When the user logs on to the WINDOWS NT DOMAIN the users private drive is mapped to the "H:" drive. The public drive is mapped on the "I:". The user' s backup data is mapped on the "J:" drive. Each night the data on the user' s private drive (i.e. folder on the server) is incrementally copied to the student backup drive. If a user deleted a file on Monday and it is now Friday, the user would still access the deleted file in his/her backup drive. Users will not be allowed to write to the backup drive. They can only read the backup drive. Each user can only access his/her own private folder. We recommend that students/teachers do not save any data on the Client machines for security reasons. The data is lot more secure on the SchoolWeb server. By default each user is provided 50MB of storage space on the SchoolWeb server. The amount of disk space available for each user is controllable. All data stored on the" public_html" folder in the student's private folder is visible via in Internal Webserver. We provide two kinds of web servers on the SchoolWeb server. One is Internal and the second is External. Each student has a website on the Internal Web Server. The student' s website cannot be seen from the Internet. The School' s Website is normally on the External Web Serve and is viewable from the complete Internet. We also provide shared folders on the SchoolWeb Server. Once a user is a member of the shared folder group then the shared folders are automatically mapped to different drives and the user has access to those shared folders. We also synchronize the password on the SchoolWeb server and the Windows 98 Clients. Once a user changes his/her password on the Client machine it is also changed on the SchoolWeb server. We have only one password and the same password is used to logon to the SchoolWeb domain as is used access the users e-mail.

We support Windows Clients, Mac Clients and Linux Clients. The user data moves with them from client to client even when the client changes from Windows to Mac.

Q: Can the system be configured to work with wireless clients?

A: The LAN can be Wired or Wireless. We can configure the Access Points for maximum range within the school. We recommend that Schools use 802.11b for the Wireless Network since it is reliable and there are few if any holes in the coverage area. We have found that 802.11a has lots of holes and requires substantially more Access Points to cover a given area. The 802.11a Wireless Network does operate at higher access speeds but the speed drop off within a very short distance. The 802.11b Wireless Network has a lower max speed but the speed does not drop off as rapidly. Plus the antenna on the 802.11b Wireless Network can be changed to increase the gain and coverage area.

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