



GemExchange

240 N Stone Av
Tucson, Arizona 85701
520-881-3317 voice
520-881-3047 fax



GEM Exchange Memorandum of Understanding Signed

Enhanced Gateway to Education Materials Portal (GEM) for Teachers to Expand
New Services and Projects under GEM Exchange Management Umbrella

April 21, 2005—Program directors from two university information schools and a non-profit education organization have agreed to work together to expand the Enhanced Gateway to Education Materials (GEM) educational web site, popular among teachers looking for lesson plans and classroom materials, and to offer a new array of services built around the technologies created to support it.

The GEM Exchange Memorandum of Understanding, signed by GEM administrators from the Information School of the University of Washington, the Information Institute of Syracuse University, and JES & Co., a tax-exempt non-profit education organization, creates a management team that initially will oversee the debut of the Enhanced Gateway to Education Materials web portal incorporating the contents of the current GEM site with new personalization and search features. GEM Exchange will also start to provide a wide range of services to school districts, state education agencies, and contributors built around technologies developed to support educational digital libraries and on-line resources centers.

Seeded with funding from the United States Department of Education, over \$9 million dollars have been invested since 1996 in open source software development, cataloging and other project development. GEMExchange team members are excited about the prospects of broadening access to the technology.

"Even beyond the 49,000 education resources now indexed by GEM, we have a valuable set of tools, software and knowledge that should be shared widely with the education community," said Dr. Stuart Sutton, Director of the Gateway to Education Materials (GEM) project. "The GEMExchange management approach will allow us to carry on the current GEM organization, while improving the functionality of the web site and establishing a framework of new services for educators and education service providers," he continued.

According to Diny Golder-Dardis, executive director for the non-profit organization JES & Co and acting director of GEM Exchange, "Building a digital library web portal, acquiring and cataloging the materials that go into it, and making sure they are all aligned to academic standards is difficult and expensive. GEMExchange will allow us to build on the capabilities of the current GEM web portal and to assist districts, states, and the many current contributors to GEM as they build and showcase their own collections of resources."

The new group's first order of business will be to manage the transition of the Enhanced Gateway to Education Materials to its new home on a fiber link network in Tucson and flip the switch on a number of new features now completing testing. "Teachers will love the new personalization, ratings, and alignment features of the Enhanced Gateway," said Sutton. "With GEM Exchange in place, we have the management team necessary to raise the investment in GEM to its fullest potential."

For more information visit GEM and the Enhanced Gateway at <http://www.thegateway.org> or visit JES & Co.'s website at <http://www.jesandco.org>.

<http://www.thegateway.org>