

GETN: Government's Digital Campus

Today, distance education is recognized worldwide as a vital ingredient to maintaining a strong, well-trained workforce. In the U.S., one noteworthy program that is using broadband networks and the latest audio and video technologies to provide distance learning is the Government Education and Training Network (GETN). Developed by the Government Alliance for Training and Education (GATES), GETN is a network of Federal agencies that use a common satellite carrier for an interoperable, interactive network that enables agencies to share distance learning programs using common facilities.

Under a recent agreement with the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), Hughes is now providing an audio and video communications network for broadcast training to GETN students in locations across the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, and the Caribbean. The network solution, which uses Hughes broadband satellite technology to broadcast compressed digital video and audio programs, supports viewer response systems, including audio conferencing and integrated voice and data response. The system also accommodates agency-specific needs with advanced capabilities such as interactive television, streaming video to the desktop, large file transfers, and encrypted video.

The Hughes agreement, which was issued through the U.S. General Services Administration's SATCOM-II vehicle, has a potential value of up to \$16 million over a five-year period of performance. Joining Hughes as part of the GETN team is Convergent Media Systems, a

GETN User Agencies

The roster of GETN user agencies currently includes:

- ◆ Air National Guard
- ◆ Air Force Reserve
- ◆ Bureau of Indian Affairs
- ◆ Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute
- ◆ Defense Logistics Agency
- ◆ Department of Justice
- ◆ Environmental Protection Agency
- ◆ Federal Aviation Administration
- ◆ Internal Revenue Service
- ◆ National Park Service
- ◆ U.S. Air Force
- ◆ U.S. Army
- ◆ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



unit of Technicolor Network Services that specializes in custom media distribution networks for business television, interactive distance learning, and out-of-home advertising, such as digital signage.

Serving Diverse Government Needs

With 12 digital Ku-band satellite uplink broadcast centers reaching over 2,300 fixed-dish downlink sites, GETN currently serves 13 agencies including defense as well as civilian organizations. Courses in the program are agency-based and can be as diverse as medical training, aircraft maintenance, hazardous waste management, civil engineering, and contract management, to name a few. The network is also ideal for panel discussions, guest speakers, and agency meetings, such as broadcasting a department-wide address to thousands of employees who attend in conference rooms at several hundred sites nationwide.

Building a Top-Notch Workforce

"GETN's mission is to provide its user agencies with a cost-effective and efficient means to distribute training and education nationwide," said Tony Bardo, assistant vice president of government services at Hughes. "We look forward to supporting the needs of the GETN program—leveraging our heritage as the leading provider of broadband satellite networks and services to deliver cutting-edge distance learning and business IPTV solutions."

Already a major player in distance education in the commercial space, Hughes is now expanding its leadership in the government distance education sector, helping organizations of all kinds to build and maintain their most valuable asset—a top-notch workforce. ■