

PRESS RELEASE: CONNECTICUT DIGITAL LIBRARY ("iCONN") OPENS ITS DOORS

April 2, 2001 (Hartford, CT) The Connecticut Digital Library - or "iCONN" - officially opened its doors on the Web at www.iconn.org, and Connecticut took a major step forward in making available over the Web a core set of information resources for all its citizens.

"Our goal for the Digital Library is to provide immediate, free access to timely and reliable full-text information. More important, we want to provide that access at each citizen's desktop, whether that's at home, the office, at their library or at school," said State Librarian Kendall Wiggin. "The Gale Group was selected because it can deliver the kind of enhanced databases we need to achieve those goals. This is a Digital Library that will support not only the educational and economic interests of Connecticut citizens, but their cultural and personal interests, as well."

The initial set of resources will serve a variety of needs, including readers' advisory, student research and homework help, business research, professional development for educators, and consumer health research. There are large periodical databases tailored to different age ranges as well as one devoted exclusively to the most popular Spanish periodicals. Other licensed information resources will be added as quickly as funding permits. reQuest, a statewide library catalog, allows users to search over 300 library collections in Connecticut simultaneously and to place requests for materials over the Web. There are also searching skills tutorials; a virtual reference desk providing Web-based dictionaries and encyclopedias, subject guides to Internet resources, and other reference works; and directories of Web-accessible library catalogs and library home pages in Connecticut and worldwide.

A component of the Connecticut Education Network which, over time, will provide high-speed telecommunications access to all schools, colleges and public libraries the Connecticut Digital Library is administered by the Connecticut State Library in conjunction with the Connecticut Department of Higher Education, under the auspices of the Commission for Educational Technology. In 2000, the Connecticut General Assembly appropriated \$2 million to this project. The Digital Library was one of several recommendations by Lt. Governor M. Jodi Rell in the fall of 1999.

For more information on the Connecticut Digital Library, visit www.iconn.org. To learn about the Connecticut State Library, visit www.cslib.org. For information about the Gale Group, visit www.galegroup.com.

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