

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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The Heller Reports Announces 2004 *EdNET* Industry Award Recipients

Four organizations recognized for their significant contributions to the advancement of the educational technology industry and their success in helping students learn

DENVER (Sept. 28, 2004) – The Heller Reports, a QED company and leading provider of education market news and events, announced today the 2004 *EdNET* Industry Awards recipients, four organizations that have made a positive impact on education and have made important contributions to the educational technology industry. The finalists and award recipients were recognized today at a luncheon ceremony during the 16th Annual *EdNET* Conference at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago.

Established in 1992 by *EdNET* conference hosts QED and The Heller Reports, the Industry Awards are given in three categories. The *EdNET* HERO award recognizes two organizations (one for-profit and one not-for-profit) that have made the most remarkable impact on education through educational technology and telecommunications. The *EdNET* Pioneer award recognizes an organization that has contributed most significantly to the growth of the educational technology and telecommunications markets during the previous year. *EdNET* Rookie of the Year award honors a small or start-up organization, either for-profit or not-for-profit, that has the greatest potential to become a significant player in the educational technology industry in the coming years.

The 2004 *EdNET* Industry Award recipients are:

***EdNET* HERO For-profit**

- Kurzweil Educational Systems, Inc., Bedford, Mass. (<http://www.kurzweiledu.com/>);

***EdNET* HERO Not-for-profit**

- NASA's Center for Distance Learning, Hampton, Va. (<http://dlcenter.larc.nasa.gov/>);

***EdNET* Pioneer**

- Funds For Learning, LLC, Arlington, Va. (<http://www.fundsforlearning.com/>);

***EdNET* Rookie of the Year**

- Questia Media, Inc., Houston (<http://www.questia.com>).

While the human side of school operations—teachers and staff—is the most critical factor in improving student achievement, the effective use of technology in the classroom can empower teachers and enhance students' education experience as well as help students gain important skills for jobs in the digital age. All of the 2004 *EdNET* Award recipients have fervently taken up the charge to support and inspire school leaders and teachers in their efforts to transform the classroom through the effective use of technology.

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“Our company has worked to help schools and companies navigate through the complicated E-rate program since it started in 1997,” said Sara Fitzgerald, vice president of Funds For Learning. Fitzgerald explained the company is an *EdNET* Pioneer because it ‘pioneered’ in the development of E-rate Manager, a suite of web-based tools that help E-rate program stakeholders appropriately use the \$2 billion available in approved funding. After receiving the award, Fitzgerald commented, “I can think of no more satisfying award than to be singled out by your peers for recognition. *EdNET* represents the best gathering we know of that is designed specifically for companies working in the educational technology market.”

Ellenann Haughey from Kurzweil Educational Systems, Inc. agreed, “The prestigious *EdNET* Awards program is an opportunity to bring together industry leaders dedicated to improving the academic experience for all students, everywhere.” Founded in 1996 and the recipient of the *EdNET* HERO award, Kurzweil is the leading developer of reading technology for people with learning disabilities and those who are blind or visually impaired. “Kurzweil has helped transform peoples’ lives by changing the way teachers support students, opening up a world of knowledge for those students who struggle with the printed word,” said Haughey. “The benefits of Kurzweil products spread far beyond reading and writing. Students say that Kurzweil has helped improve their entire academic experience, giving them confidence, independence and a sense of participation in the school community.”

Besides helping schools more efficiently manage school operations and enabling students of various abilities to have a positive learning experience, educational technology has the power to equalize student access to academic resources regardless of location and student background.

Questia, which has become the world’s largest online academic library since it was founded in 1998, offers 50,000 peer-reviewed, full-text books and 400,000 articles to secondary students in the United States. With Questia, “educators can offer every student equal access to a first-rate library 24/7,” said Helen Wilson, vice president of marketing at Questia Media, Inc., the *EdNET* Rookie of the Year recipient. The online resource allows educators to expand their school library collections with a substantive, cost-effective solution. “With a powerful set of customizable digital tools, Questia is redefining the research process and enabling students to do higher quality research while they develop critical thinking skills,” Wilson explained.

Another organization that gives every student the ability to access high-quality educational content through technology is the *EdNET* not-for-profit HERO, NASA’s Center for Distance Learning. “We provide educators with free technology-related materials to complement their curriculum and compel students to learn,” said Randall Caton, NASA cooperative agreement coordinator at Christopher Newport University. The Center, which has grown rapidly from one to six programs in eight years, provides more than 100,000 educators with traditional and emerging instructional technology. The programs cover a wide range of age groups from young children to adults, but the Center’s strongest concentration is on early education. Caton and the Center’s stakeholders believe it is essential to reach students at a young age to foster a lifelong love of science. Noting that the Center was a previous *EdNET* Award finalist, Caton added, “We have staying power and will continue to be a strong contender as we work to improve programs.”

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A 10-judge panel reviewed the nominations and selected the award recipients. Rita Oates, president of Oates & Associates, and Tom Schmeltzer, founder and managing director of Technology Solutions, Inc., contributed their time and effort to coordinate the *EdNET* 2004 Industry Awards program. Oates holds a doctorate in education technology and has several years experience working with some of the largest school districts in Florida. Schmeltzer is a prolific writer and speaker with over 30 years experience with educational organizations.

For more information about the *EdNET* conference, the presentations or the award recipients, contact The Heller Reports at 877-435-5373, ext. 1, or visit www.hellerreports.com.

About the EdNET Conference

EdNET provides a variety of venues for executives to network and to build strategic business partnerships that ultimately help educators increase student performance. The conference program is structured and developed through the input of an Industry Executives Advisory Board to ensure that the important issues facing schools and businesses are addressed. The focus of the 16th Annual *EdNET* Conference is on seizing new opportunities and on adapting offerings to educators' changing needs, which are a result of several years of budget cuts and a new emphasis on accountability and assessment in the classroom. Conference speakers include Daniel Burrus, futurist, president and CEO, Burrus Research Associates, Inc.; Margery W. Mayer, president, Scholastic Education; Anita Givens, educational technology director, division of curriculum, Texas Education Agency; and Jack Lynch, president and CEO, Pearson Education Technologies. New this year, *EdNET* attendees get an exclusive look inside "The Technology Purchasing Forecast," QED's annual report on technology purchasing trends, prior to its release. For more information about the *EdNET* conference, visit www.hellerreports.com or phone 877-435-5373, ext. 1.

About The Heller Reports

The Heller Reports, a QED company has provided unsurpassed coverage of the education market and a forum for education industry executives to meet, share ideas and grow their businesses for more than 21 years. Founded in 1981 by Nelson B. Heller, Ph.D., The Heller Reports' mission is to deliver up-to-date, reliable and unbiased information, news and services that meet the needs of today's education marketers. Headquartered in Denver, The Heller Reports is a division of QED, a wholly owned subsidiary of Scholastic, Inc., the global children's publishing and media company. For more information about The Heller Reports, visit www.hellerreports.com or phone 800-525-5811, ext. 9421.

About QED

Quality Education Data, Inc. (QED), established in 1981, is a leading provider of integrated marketing services for the pre-K through higher education markets. QED's landmark National Education Database™ covers U.S. and Canadian educational institutions and is at the core of all QED products and services. QED maintains lists and databases that are continually updated using more than 7 million direct education contacts each school year and utilizing over 700 phone representatives. Headquartered in Denver, QED is a wholly owned subsidiary of Scholastic, Inc., the global children's publishing and media company. For more information about QED, visit www.QEDData.com or phone 800-525-5811, ext. 9421.

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