Overall comments on the National Policy on ICT in School Education July 09[1]

We would like to commend MHRD for framing a *"National Policy on ICT in School Education."* In our view, overall, the policy is progressive especially in emphasizing that both the people for teaching ICTs (ICT teachers and teacher-trainers) and what gets taught (content), needs to evolve from, and developed from within the public education system, in manner that is integrated with regular non-ICT or rather pre-ICT teaching-learning systems and activity. It is in following this **integrated approach** to ICTs in school education that the policy is quite different from the previous draft which appeared to treat ICT education as an activity distinct from regular education. In particular, we would like to express support for the key policy goal stated to create '*an environment of collaboration, cooperation and sharing..*'.

While most of the policy details are keeping in with the above philosophy, a small section in the end on implementation may completely undo these main progressive elements of the policy. This is the part on 'preferring' a BOOT[2] model not only for equipment and maintenance manpower, **but also for software and content**. Constructivist adoption and development of software and content are central to ICT in schools activity, and proposing their outsourcing on a BOOT basis as the '*preferred model'* is not in keeping with the objectives, and most of the other elements, of the draft policy.

There could be advantages in outsourcing hardware setup and maintenance on a BOOT model. However we suggest that software and content should be excluded from 'BOOT model' and the policy should mandate internal teacher-training and teacher peer-group processes in the software and content area. **This 'integrated' model has been successfully demonstrated in Kerala**[3]. **Whereas, the BOOT model has been tried in many states and has invariably failed to integrate into the school's education processes** since content and transaction is done by the vendor's resource person and teachers have little role in the program.

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1 **source http://education.nic.in/secedu/ict.pdf**

2 Para 10.8.1 states *"Build, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) models for ICT infrastructure will be preferred. Different combinations of services like equipment only, equipment + manpower, equipment + manpower + **software and e-content** will be tried out and appropriate combination, based on feasibility and cost effectiveness, adopted by the States"*

3 In fact the Kerala model has shown that even hardware setup and maintenance can be managed in the traditional manner of managing other procurements through developing necessary in-house capacities. For more details on Kerala model, see http://itforchange.net/media/clps.pdf