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Security Expert Gaggle Releases New Online Tools for K-12 Students to Communicate Safely

Gaggle brings students' and teachers' most wanted Web 2.0 abilities to classrooms in a safe and secure online social learning environment made specifically for schools

DENVER, June 28, 2010 – At the ISTE 2010 Conference, online communications provider Gaggle, announced a powerful collection of new online collaboration tools for K-12 teachers and students. Award-winning Gaggle is a security expert with over a decade of proven success in providing safe online communication to K-12 schools. Gaggle's online learning tools bring students' and teachers' most wanted Web 2.0 abilities to their classrooms in a safe and secure online social learning environment made specifically for K-12. The new *Gaggle Apps* tools are designed to help schools safely incorporate real world innovations in communication such as social networking and YouTube videos into education. The tools help schools meet technology standards such as ISTE's National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) without compromising security. Gaggle also gives teachers and schools comprehensive behind-the-scenes control while promoting student communication and collaboration.

Gaggle gained industry recognition for its secure e-mail service for students and now serves over two million users in all 50 states and 57 countries. The company is meeting the growing needs of K-12 educators and students by leveraging social networks and mobile and virtual learning tools. Gaggle is applying its security expertise to new and improved online digital lockers, homework drop boxes, message boards, blogs, live chat rooms, SMS texting, document sharing, social learning, mobile phones and YouTube. Since 1998, Gaggle has grown dramatically and is a leading provider for safe

online communications. Hosting a growing collection of communication and collaboration tools and services for schools, Gaggle provides an innovative component of students' learning experience.

"With Gaggle, schools do not have to choose between incorporating important online education resources and maintaining security," said Jeff Patterson, president of Gaggle. "Gaggle provides schools a way for teachers and students to teach, learn and collaborate with the best communication tools as well as the safety and accountability they need. All of Gaggle's features are designed specifically for K-12 schools. We provide a complete package of high-quality tools, content monitoring and extensive administrator controls that result in a safe, engaging and empowering experience for users."

With over a decade of online security and monitoring expertise, Gaggle has saved lives by catching students' written cries for help. Gaggle is growing to make more forms of written communication safe and accessible for students and teachers to use at school. User accounts are password protected and limited to students and educators at individual schools or districts. Gaggle provides controlled communication, giving educators complete control over whom their students communicate with. Options in deciding the access level they provide to students includes "class only," "school only," "district only," and "Gaggle wide."

Gaggle already featured safe and filtered e-mail that notifies teachers when students' messages are caught in the filter, rerouting the messages to teachers for review. All content is filtered through a constantly updated Blocked Word List. New ways to catch words and strategies students try to outsmart the filter are incorporated. Teachers can choose from three default blocked word lists and customize them by adding or overriding words. Gaggle also goes the extra mile with a proprietary Anti-Pornography Scanner that no other provider can match. The scanner protects students by analyzing images and URLs for the presence of pornography.

With new online tools that incorporate Gaggle's rigorous safety screening, students can now safely go online to blog, chat, text, share and store digital documents, post messages, create profiles and view YouTube videos. Another optional layer of security is a 24-hour per day Human Monitoring System that puts monitoring of blocked messages and activities in Gaggle's hands, eliminating the need for teachers to review questionable student e-mails. Multiple offenses and safety concerns are reported to the student's school or district.

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Safe New Tools:

Gaggle launched 10 safe new tools and updated other features. Gaggle now features an inviting, all-new user interface. With *MyGaggle* widgets, users can drag and drop to easily customize the look, content and tools on their personal interface, increasing student enjoyment and buy-in.

Gaggle's *Online Digital Lockers* help schools go green and save money on costly digital storage and paper. The digital lockers also protect school networks from viruses as all files are scanned on both the upload and download.

Teachers can implement new *Homework Drop Boxes*, for students to turn in homework online, creating a paperless classroom and increasing efficiency. With *Homework Drop Boxes*, students can submit assignments anywhere, anytime.

Gaggle SMS Texting provides safe teacher-to-student mobile texting, with all incoming and outgoing text messages filtered and logged through Gaggle. Users register their mobile phone number to their Gaggle account, so texting occurs without sharing private phone numbers. Individual numbers are protected with only Gaggle's number displayed.

Gaggle Office provides filtered online Zoho® Docs and Spreadsheets that enable multi-user collaboration in word processing, presentations, and spreadsheets.

The *Gaggle Social Learning Wall* is similar to today's most popular social networking experience, providing profile-based connections with sharing of content, text and communication. Schools control who can access the walls, and can create groups for classes, teams, clubs, or student support groups.

A *Gaggle Integrated Calendar* provides users with individual and shared calendars integrated with Gaggle's e-mail and *Homework Drop Boxes*.

Two new tools give Gaggle users handheld mobility. *Gaggle Safe iTouch* provides safe text, filtered Web browsing, calendar and e-mail for the iPhone and iTouch, integrated with the Gaggle Web desktop. *Gaggle Mobile* offers a version of Gaggle's desktop Web applications such as e-mail, blogs and message boards that can be accessed with mobile phones.

GaggleTube provides access for schools to the rich educational resources on YouTube even while direct access to YouTube.com is blocked. All YouTube access is logged, filtered, and monitored by Gaggle and can be controlled at the teacher and student level. Teachers can start class discussions with

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YouTube videos and dramatically engage students the way they prefer to learn. Students can use approved videos in blogs, presentations and other online collaborations.

Updated *Message Boards*, *Gaggle Blogs*, and live *Chat Rooms* let students communicate and express themselves. Message Boards support curriculum and extend learning with ongoing classroom discussions. Blogs provide a place where students can share their thoughts, ideas, and creativity in a secure environment. Teacher blogs can be shared with parents for easy home-school communication. Chats offer live communication for discussions during classes or after school. Teachers can create rooms restricted to specific students and classes, with all of Gaggle's filtering in place.

Gaggle Benefits to Schools and Districts:

Gaggle's secure online communication tools provide many benefits to schools and districts, while helping them leverage social networking and online learning. Communication, collaboration and social learning at school through Gaggle increases student engagement to improve achievement. Gaggle can instantly translate messages and documents into 40 languages, which can be very helpful for ESL and ELL students. Improved communication at school establishes a pro-social peer culture to foster school attachment. Gaggle ensures student safety both online and in the real world. It now safely addresses the issue of student-teacher texting. Schools can provide a true 21st Century learning experience for students through Gaggle. Schools save money by promoting paperless classrooms. Teachers save time and increase their productivity. Online communication enables schools and districts to distribute information to students district-wide in minutes. The increased communication fosters improved teacher-student relationships. Gaggle also encourages collaboration within the school and throughout the district. It provides tools that teachers and students need to meet curriculum standards.

Pricing and Availability:

Gaggle Apps are available now and tightly integrated into the complete Gaggle system. Gaggle offers a comprehensive suite of social and collaborative learning tools and professional development packages. Social and collaborative tools suites are offered in both site and sliding scale subscriber-based programs with subscriber-based packages averaging \$4 per user annually. For information and ordering, visit Gaggle at www.Gaggle.Net or call 800-288-7750. Free individual trial accounts are

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available upon request. *Gaggle* is a Cloud-based service for both Macintosh® and Windows computers. It requires Internet access and is optimized for *Internet Explorer 7* or higher, Mozilla's *FireFox 3.0+*, and *Safari 4.0+*. Professional development is available as an additional option and cost.

About Gaggle.Net, Inc.:

Gaggle.Net, Inc., is dedicated to providing safe online communication tools for the schools of tomorrow. Gaggle has been a leading provider of e-mail accounts to school districts throughout the United States since 1998 and currently hosts over 2 million e-mail accounts. The company is an expert in secure communications for schools and has developed proprietary technology and monitoring systems. Based in Bloomington, IL, Gaggle.Net's school e-mail system is the winner of numerous education industry awards, including finalist nominations for prestigious CODiE awards each year from 2007 to 2010.

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