
Universities: Research in the Fast Lane

A new internet network will boost university bandwidth 100-fold.

By Barbara Miracle

Scientists at nine Florida universities have joined forces to create a statewide, high-bandwidth research and education internet information network known as Florida Lambda-Rail.

The project will be part of a massive national research network called National LambdaRail. It is designed to allow university researchers to send huge amounts of data from one location to another at high speeds, enabling experts to collaborate on projects much more easily and quickly.

“More and more, the bandwidth requirements on campuses are increasing,” says Veronica Sarjeant, chief operations officer for Florida LambdaRail LLC, a consortium of public and private Florida schools developing the project. “This network is going to give them 100 times the bandwidth capability,” she says.

Florida State University Vice President for Research Kirby Kemper describes a scenario in which a patient with autism travels to Shands Hospital in Gainesville for a brain scan. “The amount of data contained in a typical brain scan is huge,” he explains. Doctors and medical researchers would be able to sit in Tallahassee, for example, and have the data from the scan transmitted to them. “Often you want a big group to look at the data,” Kemper explains. With LambdaRail, this could include experts in Atlanta, Cleveland or other network locations.

National LambdaRail eventually will link the nation’s technology centers across the U.S., connecting in Florida at Jacksonville. The first segment, from Chicago to Pittsburgh, used fiber purchased from Level 3 Communications and was “lit” in November 2003.

In Florida, LambdaRail will consist of a fiber-optic loop that, like the national project, will use “dark” fiber that’s already been laid. Sarjeant says that the consortium is in negotiations to obtain a 20-year lease of 1,493 miles of fiber from a private provider. The Florida network is scheduled to go live by this November.

Each participating university in Florida has purchased between one and four “shares” in the limited liability company, Florida LambdaRail. Sarjeant says the consortium’s working budget for the next five years, which includes startup costs, is \$19 million.

There are no plans right now to open Florida LambdaRail to non-university members, but the Scripps Research Institute is a participating member of the National LambdaRail project as part of its collaboration with San Diego State University. Scripps recently entered into a long-term research and

Click It!

World Wide Learn

www.worldwidelearn.com

Summer vacation may be just around the corner, but if you are making plans to learn a new skill, get an MBA, brush up on your Spanish or plan for a new career, you'll find a wealth of information at this site. There are links to online degree and non-degree study programs as well as continuing education and personal enrichment courses.

development partnership with Florida Atlantic University, which plans a campus at the Scripps site in Palm Beach County.

In some ways, LambdaRail is a return to the early days of the internet, when it was primarily a tool of university and government researchers. "Science has been driving this whole thing all along," says FSU's Kemper. "We need to do this if we are to remain competitive in research areas."

Participating Universities

Nine Florida universities have signed on as members of the LambdaRail consortium:

- Florida Atlantic University
- Florida Institute of Technology
- Florida International University
- Florida State University
- Nova Southeastern University
- University of Central Florida
- University of Florida
- University of Miami
- University of West Florida

Copyright © 1999. Trend Magazines, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

All contents of this Website are: Copyright © 2006 by Florida Trend or third-party content providers and are protected by international copyright law. All rights reserved. Florida Trend, and other names of Florida Trend products referenced herein are trademarks of Florida Trend. This Website is for the User's personal, non-commercial use. If you download any material, you must keep all copyright and other notices intact. The right to use it is not transferable to any other person or entity. Storing or archiving any significant portion of the content or creating a database using the content is prohibited. User is responsible for all use of User's account (under any screen name or password) and for ensuring that all use of this Website through User's account complies fully with the provisions of this Agreement. User may not modify, copy, distribute, transmit, display, perform, reproduce, publish, license, transfer, or sell any information, or other content, software, products or services obtained from this Website. You may hyperlink to FloridaTrend.com so long as the link does not state or imply any sponsorship or endorsement of your site by FloridaTrend.com, Florida Trend magazine, the Times Publishing Co. or any of their affiliates. Any linking which results in display of this site's content surrounded by or included with content of another site, organization or person is prohibited. You may not use the content in any way not specifically provided for in this agreement without the specific written consent of Florida Trend.

[**Back to Previous Page**](#)