

SA tests minimally invasive education

BY STAFF WRITER, ITWEB

[Johannesburg, 18 December 2002] - A new education project, which is a joint undertaking between the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST), is set to bring computer literacy into the ambit and experience of all South Africans.

The minimally invasive education project seeks to verify – in a South African context – results of research conducted in India, indicating that children possess the cognitive ability to acquire functional computer skills without formal training.

The project entails providing access to a multimedia kiosk, which in turn provides access to various applications, including the Internet. It could serve to inform policies and methodologies to introduce alternative mechanisms for computer literacy.

The CSIR says it could also suggest another pathway towards building human capacity in support of the advancement of the information society in South Africa and its adjacent regions.

Working closely with the DST, the CSIR's Information and Communication Technology Unit believes that the Indian experience can be successfully replicated in South Africa, with due consideration to the demographic, social and cultural issues unique to South Africa.

The objectives of the project include testing the viability of minimally invasive computer literacy in SA, determining the efficiency of information and service delivery and identifying the learning methodology of the users.

In implementing the project in this country and to ensure its success, assisting educators in facilitating the process and offering minimal (human) guidance is of paramount importance, the CSIR says.

A demonstration of the pilot project, situated in Cwili Township on the border of Morgan Kay and Kei Mouth in the Eastern Cape, will take place on Saturday, where Ben Ngubane, Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, will give the keynote address.