

Greek School Network (GSN)

The **Network** in the service of **Education**





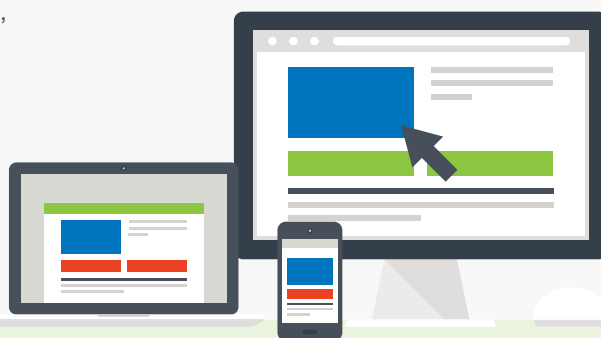
Greek School Network (GSN)

The Network as an Education Tool

1. General Info

The Greek School Network (GSN) (<http://www.sch.gr/en>) is the national network of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs (MoE) (<http://www.minedu.gov.gr>). The GSN safely interconnects:

- all the schools of Primary and Secondary education, including the educational units abroad,
- all the services and entities supervised by the MoE at central and regional level,
- all the service providers of lifelong learning,
- all the students and teaching staff,
- all other educators and entities of MoE.



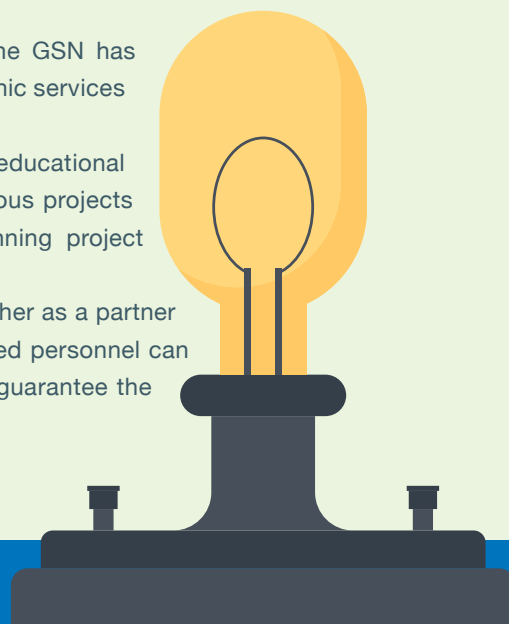
Through GSN, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs provides the educational community with e-learning, communication and collaboration services, e-government services as well as helpdesk and user technical support services. Therefore, GSN provides electronic services to more than 200.000 users (>20.000 schools and administrative units, >110.000 teachers, >70.000 students).

Since 2011, the administration and management of GSN is performed by CTI (Computer Technology Institute and Press “Diophantus”). For this scope, CTI found the Greek School Network and Networking Technologies Directorate (GSN-NTS) (<http://nts.cti.gr>), which cooperates with Universities and Technological Institutes in order to provide, support and extend the demanding GSN services.

Moreover, the GSN-NTS as the coordinator and principal operator of the GSN has extensive experience in the design and development of high quality electronic services used by students, teachers, schools and educational authorities.

Additionally, the GSN-NTS has close connections with schools and educational authorities at national and European level, through its involvement in various projects promoting the transnational cooperation among schools like the eTwinning project (<https://www.etwinning.net>).

Furthermore, the GSN-NTS has the required experience in participating either as a partner or as a coordinator in a variety of EU projects. The GSN-NTS's experienced personnel can ensure the effective and efficient implementation of EU projects and can guarantee the on-time achievement of planned results.





2. Main operation of GSN

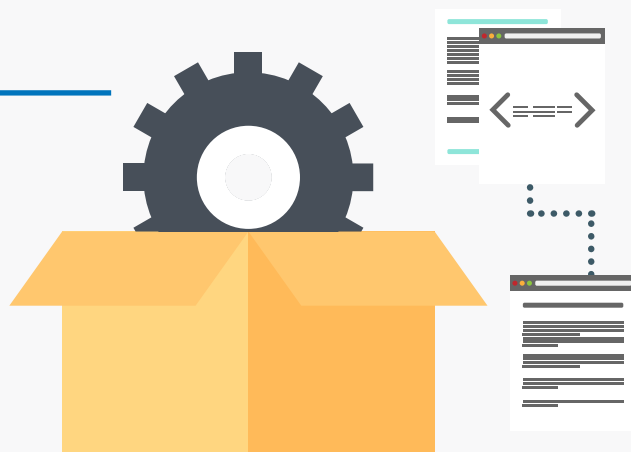
As mentioned already, the GSN interconnects all schools of Primary and Secondary education, services and entities supervised by the MoE, service providers of lifelong learning, students, teachers and all other entities of MoE. The GSN provides the educational community with e-learning services, communication and collaboration, e-government services as well as helpdesk and user technical support services.

The GSN is the largest public network in Greece in terms of users that it serves. In particular, it interconnects and also connects to Internet more than 20.000 schools. Hence, it interconnects a community of 1.350.000 students and 160.000 teachers. This is performed through free broadband connections that are provided in all public schools and administration offices across Greece. The connection technologies used are ADSL (mainly), optical fibers and selected lines (rarely). The GSN applies state of the art web technologies and is one of the first five school networks in the world that adopted IPv6 protocol.

The GSN owns more than a hundred and twenty (120) nodes in all country capitals and in the largest Greek cities. The sixty-eight (68) nodes are members of Metropolitan Optical Fiber Networks of the Municipalities of Greece. The technical team of GNS is responsible for the proper operation of the backbone network and it manages more than 200 network devices daily. Therefore, the average network traffic of GSN to the Internet is more than 5.5 GBytes daily.

3. Services

The GSN cooperates with Universities (Unis) and Technological Institutes (TIs) in order to support the corresponding educational community of their region. The GSN and Unis or TIs, work closely together in order to develop and support specific web-based and online services. An indicative list of the available services is shown below:



Broadband access: In all public schools and administrative units, free broadband connection is provided. The broadband connectivity status for 14.015 school units is shown below:ng service gives schools, administration units and teachers the opportunity to create and easily maintain their website.



Web Hosting: The Web hosting service gives schools, administration units and teachers the opportunity to create and easily maintain their website.

- More than 16.000 active websites



Email: This is the most popular service of GSN and aims to the handling of users' emails i.e. schools, teachers, administration units, administrators and students.

- Service's members: 215.000
- Daily average number of users: 42.000
- Formal unit's email accounts: 16.996
- Other unit's accounts (i.e., school's libraries ets): 5.857
- Personal accounts: 192.421



Central user authentication service: The <https://sso.sch.gr> provides access to a member of GSN from a single point (Single Sign On) in all integrated applications of GSN and in authorized services of MoE and other educational partners.



Teleconference service: The <http://meeting.sch.gr> is fully localized. It supports audiovisual communication and allows presentation view, file and application sharing amongst participants. This service is in operational use, since September 2014 and has hosted more than 400 teleconferences and has more than 11.000 users.



E-Learning Service: The <http://e-learning.sch.gr> is based on the world's leading Learning Management System (LMS) Moodle. It provides a convenient interface through the internet, which promotes participative and collaborative learning. This service has been certified according to SCORM LMS-RTE STANDAR and is integrated with the open source web-conferencing system BigBlueButton.

- Available more than 1.400 courses
- More than 17.000 end-users.



Learning Activity Management Service: The <http://lams.sch.gr/> allows teachers to create lesson plans in the form of flow charts of learning activities sequences. These activities can potentially include a range of individual tasks, small group work and whole class activities based on content and collaboration.



Electronic Classroom service: The <http://eclass.sch.gr> enriches the course that takes place daily in the classroom with modern educational ICT tools. The teacher can create online courses and fully interact with students. This service can also be used for training, collaboration etc., between teachers.

- More than 11.000 teachers and 11.000 students
- School year 2014-2015: 6.265 lessons formulated by 1.365 schools



Educational Communities and Blogs: The GSN provides <http://blogs.sch.gr> exploiting the open source platforms WordPress and BuddyPress. A key feature is that it provides equivalent functionality to other popular social networks (Facebook, twitter etc.) but in a completely secure environment.

- More than 33.000 users and blogs, about 710 groups and more than 210.000 posts written since 2010.
- More than 300.000 unique visitors per month.



Electronic school press: The <http://schoolpress.sch.gr> is based on the open source platform WordPress, and enriches the classical teaching process with group collaboration tools, the publication of a group's activity etc. Students are encouraged to express themselves and potential advance their skills in writing.

- Electronic Magazines: 1.045
- Articles: 15.564
- More than 22.000 unique visitors per month



File Sharing Service: The <http://myfiles.sch.gr/> enables the storage, management and sharing files among users of the Greek School Network.



Collaborative Documents and Calendars Service: The key features of <http://grafis.sch.gr> are mainly oriented to the efficient management (i.e., create, save etc.) of files, images, shared calendars complemented with sharing and collaboration functionalities.



Video services and live broadcasts: The <http://vod-new.sch.gr> provides the functionalities to search, post and play video data. It allows users to enhance digital material with metadata, thus offering a personalized service to all certified members of GSN. This service is offered to schools and teachers who can also create their own radio and TV channels and their own groups in which video material is distributed only amongst its members. A critical feature of the service is the live broadcasting functionality (<http://vod.sch.gr/live>), thus allowing the efficient organization and support of online events provided by Moe's supervised entities and schools.

- More than 90 education-oriented events broadcasted live during the last three years (2013-2015).
- More than 3.700 videos are available
- Number of users: 1.246





Multimedia Presentations Service: The <http://mmpres.sch.gr/> provides a set of tools to create enriched audiovisual content, integrating different types of digital media such as video, audio and images. This new digital content, taking the form of multimedia presentations, notes and exercises can be used to enhance the overall educational process.



Communication and Cooperation Service: The <https://www.uc.sch.gr> offers schools and teachers with calling options, either with voice or video, telephone conference between multiple users, sending voice messages (voice mail), receiving fax with automatic forwarding to email, instant messaging and marking presence feature.



Internet Safety: Since 2006, GSN operates the informative hub “Internet Safety” (<http://internet-safety.sch.gr>), thus providing reliable and targeted information, as also support and quality educational material to students and teachers. Furthermore, GSN participates (2013) as a national coordinator in eSafety Label action of the European Schoolnet. Through this action, Greek schools can attain a special certification which aims to the support of schools in order to provide a safer online environment for students and teachers. Quantitative indicators of eSafety Label rank Greece in the first place in Europe. A complementary initiative of the GSN is the action “Call an expert for Safe Internet” (<http://internet-safety.sch.gr/call-an-expert>), which enable schools to call a certified instructor in safe internet issues, thus formally organizing an event to inform and enlighten the school community. The body of experts mainly consists of appropriate trained and certified teachers and education officials.



User Support (Help-Desk): The user support service is provided nationwide by the GSN in close collaboration with Unis and TIs and efficiently address a vast number of tickets regarding requests for technical support in school’s ICT infrastructures as also requests for GSN electronic services. The overall support scheme (Help-Desk) is established via telephone (801 11 801 81), email, fax and is complemented with a management ticketing system (<http://helpdesk.sch.gr>), thus allowing the immediate resolution of any technical-oriented problem / request (i.e., encountered in network connection, electronic services and their use, etc.) that is formally announced.

- Remote support (A): 52.202 requests
- On-site visit to schools (B): 13.966 requests
- Total Tickets (2014) (A+B): 66.168 (Phone calls are not included)

4. GSN Personnel

The personnel of GNS are highly skilled and experienced executives, such as:

- Academic staff,
- Computer and Electrical and Electronic Engineers (holding PhDs and MScs),
- Technology Engineers,
- Computer and Network Technicians,
- Undergraduate Students.



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