



## **Newsletter - April 2006**

### **MassONE Keeps Growing!**

As of April 1, MassONE had over 94,000 active users! Are you taking advantage of MassONE to communicate and collaborate with your colleagues and students? You can easily contribute to a statewide discussion forum (just click the forums icon) or ask your district's MassONE administrator to set up a special forum just for your school. It's also easy to create private discussion forums for the students in your classes. MassONE is a secure environment, which means that you control who can access your materials and postings. For more information, follow the links on MassONE's home page or contact MassONE at [MassONEHelp@doe.mass.edu](mailto:MassONEHelp@doe.mass.edu) or 781-338-3020.

### **Help Improve MassONE**

MassONE is committed to providing the best possible system for educators and students across the Commonwealth. The MassONE development staff continue to improve the system, resolving a variety of issues that resulted from the 2005 redesign. If you notice any issues or problems with the system, please write to [MassONEHelp@doe.mass.edu](mailto:MassONEHelp@doe.mass.edu) or call 781-338-3020. MassONE will investigate the problem and work to resolve it. When contacting MassONE, please describe what you experienced in as much detail as possible, including the type of browser you were using, your operating system, and any error messages you received.

### **MassONE at the Spring Tech Conference**

If you plan to attend the Department's Enhancing Education Through Technology conference on April 26, consider attending one of MassONE's sessions! The morning session will offer case studies and demonstrations showing how MassONE can support your district's professional development activities. The afternoon session will focus on classroom applications of MassONE, with innovative examples illustrating

how teachers are blending classroom instruction, online collaboration, and electronic file sharing. MassONE will also be featured in the mid-day exhibit session, so you can stop by to ask questions or watch a quick demo of MassONE's new features.

### **Tips for Understanding Workgroups**

As a MassONE user, you probably know that the system is organized around workgroups. Most likely you use the workgroup drop-down menu (at the top of the screen) whenever you sign on to MassONE. There are two ways you can learn more about the workgroups that you belong to. One way is to click the Profile icon at the top of the screen and then click "Workgroups." You will see a list of all the workgroups you belong to, organized by category. You can also see if you are just a member of a workgroup or if you are also an administrator. Another, faster, way to do this is to simply look at the drop-down menu; individual workgroup names are indented under the main category. If you are an administrator for a workgroup, the name of the workgroup will be green.

### **Focusing on the Appropriate Use of MassONE**

Have you reviewed MassONE's Acceptable Use Policy recently? If not, this is a good time to do so. It is especially important to share this information with if you are using MassONE with your students. You can find links to the AUP on MassONE's home page (<http://massone.mass.edu/>).

As MassONE's policy points out, it is the responsibility of educators to teach students about safe and responsible use of MassONE and the Internet in general. Educators should also help students understand that it is important to maintain the confidentiality of their passwords so that others will not be able to use their account for malicious purposes.

Educators are also responsible for monitoring students' use of MassONE and for intervening if students are misusing the system. An example of misuse is posting a link to an inappropriate web site in a MassONE discussion forum. In such a situation, the teacher should report the misuse to their district's MassONE administrator or to MassONE. The teacher also has the option of deleting the message or moving it to a forum that cannot be access by students. Other options include removing the student from the discussion forum or closing the discussion forum by removing all of the members of the workgroup. For more information on how to deal with misuse of the system, educators can consult their district's MassONE administrator or contact MassONE directly.

### **Summer Content Institutes to Use MassONE**

If you are interested in taking a course this summer, keep an eye out for the Department's catalog for Content Institutes. The Board of Education recently approved funding for 37 institutes, including 8 in the humanities, 13 in mathematics,

and 11 in science and technology/engineering. All of institutes will use MassONE, in addition to face-to-face meetings, to enhance communication and collaboration among the participants. Principals will soon receive copies of the catalog, and it is also available on the Department's web site at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/cinstitute/> .

## **Trainings for MassONE Administrators**

If you are a MassONE administrator, you are invited to attend one of the May workshops taking place in Shrewsbury, Malden, and Northampton. These two-hour workshops will provide an overview of the MassONE online tools and resources, as well as details on registering and managing user accounts. Best practices and innovative uses of MassONE will be examined so that participants can brainstorm new directions and plan for possible district-wide MassONE training.

## **New PD Opportunities for 2006-2007**

The Department of Education is creating a new program that will offer high-quality technology professional development using MassONE and/or in the use of MassONE. Through a grant process, the Department is selecting one lead district that will contract with service providers to provide professional development to teachers across the state. Other districts will be invited to use their technology entitlement grant funds to participate in the training. Look for more information on these opportunities in the June MassONE newsletter, as well as in the headlines on the MassONE home page. (Information about the grant, which has a May 1 deadline, is available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=2810> .)

## **MassONE Creates Communities of Practice**

Project FOCUS Academy, a three-year federally funded professional development project, has been working in partnership with MassONE to develop and conduct courses focusing on helping students with disabilities. More than 100 participants from nine high schools are currently participating in the courses, which began in February. Participants include classroom teachers, special education teachers, parents, and other district personnel, such as school safety officers.

Three providers have developed courses for the project: CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology), ICI (Institute for Community Inclusion), and EDC (Educational Development Center). Although the courses are conducted primarily online, face-to-face meetings are used for the first and last classes to help reinforce the feeling of community. To provide even more ways for participants to collaborate, the courses also offer Internet-based voice conferencing using iVocalize and streaming narrated slide shows using Macromedia Breeze.

The MassONE tools most frequently used in the courses are announcements, the Virtual Hard Drive and the discussion forums. The three course designers have taken different approaches to organizing their course content in MassONE. In one course, the announcements tool is used to present weekly course content, such as main concepts, links to readings, and topics to discuss. In the other two courses, the course content resides in the Virtual Hard Drive, where it is organized in folders for each week of the course. The discussion forums are an integral component of all of the courses, and online participation is part of the grade for those who are taking a course for academic credit.

At the conclusion of the three-year grant period, the online courses will remain on MassONE. Districts and schools will be able to access the courses for professional development and training, providing a cost-effective, long-term vehicle for improving the capacity of school communities to help students with disabilities build sound career goals and learn skills to ensure successful post-secondary outcomes.

### **Back Issues of Newsletters**

If you missed any previous issues of the MassONE newsletter, you can now find them on the MassONE web site. To access them, click MassONE News Archives on the MassONE home page.