

Microsoft Offers Free Computer Training and Email to 5.5 Million Brazilians

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An alliance between Microsoft and the government of the state of São Paulo, in southeastern Brazil, is going to result in free e-mail, access to new digital technologies, information about education and Internet for all students and teachers in the basic and technical education network in the state.

This grants Brazil the title of first country to offer this kind of service and should not bring cost to the government, according to a press statement by the state government.

The agreement, whose objective is promotion of public education with the support of information technology, was signed by state governor José Serra and by the global president of Microsoft, Steve Ballmer, at Bandeirantes Palace, in São Paulo.

The services are going to benefit 5.5 million students, teachers, directors, supervisors, leaders in education and coordinating teachers of the state education network, as well as the Paula Souza Center, which manages the Technical Schools (Etecs) and Technology Colleges (Fatecs) of the state of São Paulo.

For the creation of e-mails, which may be accessed from any place, by webmail, students and teachers may visit site www.educacao.sp.gov.br and type in their public school registration number and their personal data. The student's and teacher's registration number will work as access passwords to the site for creation of the account.

The capacity of each e-mail is 5 gigabytes. The program uses the same blocking technology used in Hotmail e-mails, which avoids the person receiving risky messages. The e-mails include the name and surname of each user and will be in domain @acessaescola.sp.gov.br and @professor.sp.gov.br.

In the case of Paula Souza Center, the formats for students and teachers will be the same, but in domain @etec.sp.gov.br or @fatec.sp.gov.br.

The partnership should also provide students in the Paula Souza Center with access to a distance learning portal with software Learning Essentials, with clues about compositions, formats for reports, presentations and basic content for digital inclusion, as well as free access to tools developed by Microsoft.

This access is through program Dreamspark, which can guarantee that the student is enrolled in the course and has the right to free access and development software, with the objective of improving their technological education.

The agreement should also allow 14,000 students free computer training for the labor market, in a project named Students to Business (S2B).