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## Research plays pivotal role with Dataseam

Business First of Louisville - April 22, 2005 by [Robyn Davis Sakula](#) Business First Correspondent

Schools everywhere have a vast, untapped resource at their fingertips that could bring the world its next groundbreaking scientific discovery: their computers.

That's the principle behind **Dataseam LLC**, a local computer consulting company that launched the nonprofit **Kentucky Dataseam Initiative Inc.** in 2004.

The company's founders partnered with researchers at the University of Louisville James Graham Brown Cancer Center in a pilot project using computers in the Caldwell County, Ky., school district.

There, after the last bell rings, school computers are used to run programs that will help researchers do their work faster and eventually help them commercialize their research. Researchers are using computers to aid in the creation of new cancer drug therapies, to increase existing drugs' effectiveness and reduce negative side effects.

"It's basically a math problem, and each machine is given part of it to work out. There is one machine that's in charge that aggregates the results," said Brian Gupton, executive director of the Kentucky Dataseam Initiative.

Performed on one computer, this giant math problem would take 6,700 days to solve. If the same problem is distributed across 1,000 computers in a school, that same problem could take about a week.

Other school districts, including those in Scott, Jessamine, Jefferson and Warren counties, are in the process of being added to the program, with more districts to be added in the future, according to Henry Hunt, director of operations of Dataseam LLC.

The program is designed to be funded by a collection of state, federal and private funding but so far has relied on private investments. Gupton declined to give financial information about the initiative.

"We are actively working with appropriate state and federal entities to organize and fund a statewide expansion of the Kentucky Dataseam Initiative," Gupton said. "We are currently operating the program with private funding and are encouraged that we will be able to secure state funding."

### Technology marries business

Dataseam's effort is one example of how technology can aid entrepreneurship, said Mark Crane, executive director of The Enterprise Corp., a subsidiary of Greater Louisville Inc. that provides support for fast-growth, entrepreneurial companies in the region.

The 2005 State of Entrepreneurship for Greater Louisville makes the case that advances in technology traditionally start at universities, private and public research institutions and large corporations.

"The University of Louisville is the community's only significant research institution, and in the

past its research and development expenditures have not compared favorably to those of other universities," the report said.

**Working to advance research, technology**

But Louisville is continuing to improve in the important area of attracting research dollars to the University of Louisville.

Dr. Nancy Martin, senior vice president for research at U of L, said she thinks the university has made large strides.

About \$107 million was awarded in grants to the university in 2004; Martin expects that to increase to \$200 million by 2010.

"For us to continue our momentum, we need additional investments in faculty and research facilities," Martin said. "Those are our challenges."

Martin also cited the state's Bucks for Brains program as important in attracting research talent to the community, which, in turn, brings more research funding.

The Bucks for Brains program, formally known as the Research Challenge Trust Fund, matches state funds with private donations to pay for endowed professorships and support research at state universities.

Facilities also is an area that needs improvement. About \$65 million was included in the 2004-06 Kentucky budget for a new research building for the health sciences campus at the University of Louisville.

Martin said \$39.1 million of that total comes from state bonds, about \$10 million in federal funds and the balance will come from the university. The estimated price tag for the project, which will require additional funding in the future, is \$110 million.

Martin said the project might have to be built in stages because of the large amount of funding needed.

**Assisting researchers**

Martin said the Datascan initiative has been an important element to helping researchers take their work to market.

"It has been of assistance to our researchers," Martin said. "They've been able to demonstrate that they can get useful data. Our researchers are also making a contribution in bringing science to these students."

That's one of the benefits of the program, Gupton said. Researchers have visited classrooms within the school system to explain the project to students and spur their interest in science.

These efforts inspire students to consider a career in science, which can result in more local talent for future entrepreneurial ventures, he added.

But private companies also should be involved in research, Crane said.

"We have to continue Bucks For Brains and look for other ways to increase the research and development base, but we need to do more in the private sector," Crane said. "Humana (Inc.) has interesting investments in research and development, and Jewish (Hospital HealthCare Services Inc.) is doing cardiovascular research.

"It's important to nurture the growth of existing companies and encouraging the ones who are large enough to do research and development and commercialize those results."

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