Founded in 1966, Merit Network began as a collaborative effort between MSU, U-M and Wayne State University to network the mainframe computers of the state’s three largest universities. This vision for a connected, accessible world has since grown to include all Michigan’s public universities with support from over 400 affiliate members and anchor institutions. Merit is a completely independent, non-profit organization.

Fifty-seven years later, Merit owns and operates America’s longest-running research and educational network, providing high-performance services to educational communities and beyond. We continue to leverage our past experience from managing NSFNet, the catalyst for the modern internet, to move Michigan to the forefront of networking technologies. Merit played a key role in the evolution of the internet and was the first Internet Service Provider (ISP) in Michigan!

**WHO IS MERIT?**

**CONNECTING MICHIGAN**

Statewide broadband access for job creation, enriched education, world-class healthcare, improved public safety & government savings

**Supported by**

400+ Higher Ed, K12, Government, Libraries, Non-Profits

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**CONNECTING MICHIGAN**

While the world, and our state, have come a long way since the internet’s infancy, Michigan ranks 33rd in the nation for connectivity. This lack of connectivity brings with it broad social and economic implications especially for rural and low-income students.

With over 4,000+ miles of fiber optic, foundational infrastructure, Merit supports public-private partnerships to expand community networks across Michigan. To that end, Merit and MSU are working collaboratively on the Michigan Open Optical Network (MOON-Light) which will provide affordable, reliable high-speed internet to 17,000 underserved households in 74 counties across the state. MOON-Light enables commercial ISPs to interconnect to the high-performance Merit network.

We are creating a digital autobahn — the “on ramps” for other ISPs and communities to connect!

**MOON-LIGHT**

33rd in the nation for connectivity

4,000+ MILES of fiber optic, foundational infrastructure

Michigan Ranks

4,000+ MILES

Supported by

400+

Higher Ed, K12, Government, Libraries, Non-Profits

**MOON-LIGHT**

17K underserved households

for 74 counties
As a state legislator, you have the power to close the connectivity gap so that all Michiganders have access to the internet. From Ishpeming to Adrian and every town in between, every student, family, business and town deserves access to education, growth and a reliable connection to the world.

CLOSING THE CONNECTIVITY GAP

If you are traveling from Point A to Point Z, will you take the side roads or the highway?

STUDENTS WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS HAVE LOWER OVERALL GPAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Internet Access</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast Access</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Access</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Access</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Phone Only</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT ARE THE FUTURE IMPLICATIONS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Internet Access</th>
<th>% of Students Who Play College or University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast Access</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Access</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Access</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Phone Only</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Students without home internet access have less opportunity to collaborate with peers on projects
- Students without home internet are less likely to attend college or university
- Students without home internet are less likely to pursue STEM or STEAM career paths
- Students from low-income families are less likely to have home internet access.

LEARN MORE
Homework Gap Study

CONNECTS ORGANIZATIONS & BUILDS COMMUNITY

MOON-Light is propelling Michigan as a national leader with the FIRST STATEWIDE OPEN ACCESS NETWORK run by a research & education network.

Michigan can really #FixTheDamnInternet!

Merit’s Mission is connecting organizations and building community. We provide networking, security and community services to member organizations that help make our society a better place to learn, discover, work and live – while upholding the principles of an open internet.