

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JUNE 1, 2009

FLVS and 360Ed Launch Conspiracy Code – First-Ever Complete Online Game-Based High School Course

First-of-Its-Kind Course Poised to Transform Online Learning

(Orlando, FL) – Students who struggle to stay engaged in the traditional classroom will applaud the release of Conspiracy Code, the first in an innovative series of online game-based courses, released today by Florida Virtual School (FLVS), an established leader in developing and providing virtual K-12 education solutions, and 360Ed, Inc. a leading education game development company.

These revolutionary new courses, presented in 3D, combine proven instructional practices and academic content with the latest in online gaming tools to produce an engaging and active learning environment for high school students – 97% of whom are avid, self-proclaimed gamers. The first Conspiracy Code course to be released is for American History. This complete high school-level course fulfills a full credit of history and will be available in June 2009.

“Conspiracy Code is everything I would have liked to do in my brick and mortar classroom but didn’t have the time or resources to accomplish. It engages kids through game play, but challenges them to interact with history in the most creative, research based methods available,” said David Wilson, FLVS American History teacher. “There is higher level critical thinking involved, project based learning, student collaboration, authentic assessments, and plenty of reading and writing. At the end of the day, I know my students are becoming excited about history and I know that this course will inspire many students.”

Conspiracy Code courses offer an original learning environment where students can strengthen higher-order thinking, written communication, problem-solving, and collaborative skills through:

- Playing engaging concept practice games;

- Responding to a variety of question types;
- Writing assignments and essays;
- Completing authentic game-based assessments; and,
- Participating in discussion based assessments.

“As our world becomes more and more interconnected, students apply the critical thinking, cognitive and communications skills from video games to real-world situations. This new set of courses leverages the power of the technology within an educational framework to better prepare students for the next steps in life,” said Florida Virtual School President & CEO Julie Young.

In the first Conspiracy Code course, FLVS and 360Ed, Inc. offer students an American History class where they will play as fictional characters in an espionage-themed adventure game set in the fictional metropolis of Coverton City. In the game – or course – students must build their knowledge and understanding of American History in order to stop a vast conspiracy that is threatening to erase and change the course of history.

“The Millennial generation engages through media devices and interactivity. The emerging online environment in education will allow us to cost-effectively build and maintain compelling content, giving students and teachers exciting worlds for learning,” said Ben Noel, CEO of 360Ed, Inc.

Besides an engaging story, detailed environments, and a diverse cast of characters, Conspiracy Code offers new educational technologies to improve retention and increase comprehension. The course offers a number of unique and notable features, including the Data Map – a 3D visual mind-map complete with tags and keywords for each piece of historical information collected – that students populate with associations and complex relationships. Students strengthen their understanding of history by using a unique tagging system and through writing about information collected in the course note system. They also apply knowledge during interactive information modes, agent interrogations, and character interactions.

Conspiracy Code is built on a foundation of challenges and missions that allow students to learn progressively. Based on their own understanding of content and the use of clues – standards-based, historical data – students self-select their path and pace through the

course. As they follow a sequential learning path, they master complex ideas before moving on to the next level or mission. Conspiracy Code offers students multiple communication mediums and a variety of sensory-type game play activities that enable the use of their strongest learning attributes to build higher order thinking skills.

By leveraging online gaming tools and features, Conspiracy Code takes students into an interactive learning environment where through character play, they connect with characters, course plot, and content and absorb historical facts at a higher level of thinking. The ability to make these strong connections (coupled with the immediate and constant feedback provided by teachers) allows students to develop a deeper, more real, acquisition of content and a higher level of self-assurance – two key elements for academic success.

Certified teachers are wise guides or facilitators in Conspiracy Code courses and participate alongside students encouraging them, offering feedback and guidance and challenging their comprehension of content through a variety of assessment. Student work is tracked and documented using a web-based Student/Teacher Interface (SiTi). This system collects information about the amount of time a students spends on assessments and evaluation, the student-to-student collaborations, and time on task within each mission. Using the information and tools embedded in the web-based communication system, teachers give students immediate feedback on progress, provide interventions if necessary, and offer positive encouragement as they work through the course.

Teachers employ a variety of assessments—written and verbal—embedded in the course to determine how well a student is progressing, as well as their mastery of content and comprehension of concepts. Teachers use authentic game-based assessments to determine student knowledge and assign grades.

In developing Conspiracy Code, FLVS and 360Ed, Inc. pulled together a team of curriculum and subject-matter experts from FLVS, doctorates from the University of Central Florida, and seasoned game-developers. They used brain-based learning research from Caine & Caine and insights from Le Tellier about how technology can be used to boost long-term memory. The design team applied rigorous guidelines to ensure

the academic integrity of the new online gaming course would meet FLVS standards and that the course was academically sound.

The American History content meets state and national standards. Credit received from Conspiracy Code courses are transferable and will be accepted by a students' primary school transcript or on their home education portfolio. Additional information, including technical specifications, can be found online at: www.flvs.net and <http://www.360Ed.com>.

School officials interested in arranging a detailed demonstration of the American History course should send an e-mail to Erik Sand at esand@360Ed.com.

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About 360Ed, Inc.

360Ed is an award-winning interactive education company committed to providing compelling and effective learning tools that incorporate modern educational theories and high-production entertainment media. Based in Orlando, Florida, 360Ed, Inc. develops content, delivery systems and marketing for online education products. The founders of 360Ed bring with them years of experience in the development of software products and solutions from such companies as Electronic Arts, Microsoft and IBM. For more information, visit www.360ed.com.

About FLVS

Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is an established leader in developing and providing virtual K-12 education solutions to students all over Florida, the U.S. and the world. A nationally recognized e-Learning model and recipient of numerous awards, FLVS was founded in 1997 and was the country's first, public state-wide Internet-based program. Today, FLVS serves students in grades K-12 and provides a variety of custom solutions for schools and districts to meet student needs. For more information, visit www.flvs.net.

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