

ST. PAUL, Minn., Oct. 1, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) and 3M today launch Sparticl.org, a new online and mobile destination offering teens the best in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) the Web has to offer. Developed to address declining student interest in STEM, Sparticl invites teens into a community of learning, where they can contribute to the content collection as they learn from it. A completely free, online and mobile destination for STEM, Sparticl features articles, videos, games, and hands-on activities from hundreds of sites, all vetted by a team of experts who scour the Web for quality teen-appropriate content.

Science, technology, engineering, and math are the foundation of innovation and problem-solving in this era of global competitiveness, and essential skills for success in work and in life in the 21st century. Yet test results the world over consistently show that student interest in STEM subjects dramatically decreases in middle school.

"The Web can be bewildering and frustrating for students searching for STEM content, yet there are excellent STEM websites that students never find because they're not on the first page of Google," said Dr. Richard Hudson, executive producer at TPT. "Sparticl makes search simple by bringing together the best of the best – it's great for homework or satisfying a curiosity about anything from nanotechnology, to rainforests, to baseball physics. Even more important are the social and gaming features we've created to keep kids coming back again and again."

Teens play a critical part on Sparticl. They can rank content, comment on it, share it on social media and recommend new content, all the while earning points and status. The site has been extensively beta tested by hundreds of teens and reviewed by the Sparticl Teen Advisory Board, who give the site high marks:

"One great thing about Sparticl is that it includes both fun activities as well as educational resources. If you want to write a research paper, you will find great information on Sparticl, and it's all credible," said Hanna Endrias, 14, of Washington, D.C.

"There's also a point system, so while you're checking out these great links, you can also get rewarded for actually looking at the stuff, which is really cool," adds Kyle Tamondong, 14, of Woburn, Minn.

Funded by St. Paul-based 3M, Sparticl has been in development for more than two years.

"STEM education is critical to our success at 3M, as well as sustaining global communities. Sparticl helps create the next generation of innovative thinkers," said Kim Price, vice president of 3Mgives. "Science and engineering education is a priority of our giving and volunteer programs. 3M sponsored TPT's production of the classic science series *Newton's Apple*, and we're delighted to partner with TPT once again on another ground-breaking STEM initiative."

About Twin Cities Public Television Based in St. Paul, MN, TPT is one of the highest rated PBS affiliates in the nation, reaching more than 1.3 million people each month through multiple broadcast and online channels. The mission of TPT is to "enrich lives and strengthen our community through the power of media." Over its 50 plus year history, TPT has been recognized for its innovation and creativity with numerous awards, including Peabody awards and national and regional Emmys.

TPT's Science Unit has created PBS science media for 30 years, beginning with the long-running family science series *Newton's Apple*, and continuing with the children's series *DragonflyTV* and *SciGirls*, all national Daytime Emmy Award winners. Prime-time documentaries have included the PBS *NOVA* specials *Absolute Zero* and the *Conquest of Cold*

and

Hunting the Edge of Space

. TPT is a recognized innovator in multimedia and transmedia, having created interactive learning products based on

Newton's Apple

, early adoption of digital distribution on

DragonflyTV

and the award-winning transmedia series

SciGirls.

For more information about TPT, visit

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About 3M 3M captures the spark of new ideas and transforms them into thousands of ingenious products. Our culture of creative collaboration inspires a never-ending stream of powerful technologies that make life better. 3M is the innovation company that never stops inventing. With \$30 billion in sales, 3M employs 88,000 people worldwide and has operations in more than 70 countries. For more information, visit

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About 3Mgives 3M is not only a company that creates; it is a company that cares. 3M's philanthropic and community engagement effort, recently reorganized as 3Mgives, helps improve lives in communities around the world. Celebrating 60 years of formalized giving, 3M and the 3M Foundation have invested more than \$1.3 billion in cash and products to education, community and environmental organizations. These donations have been bolstered by thousands of employee and retiree volunteers. In 2012, 3M awarded \$56.6 million

to non-profit organizations. For more information, visit

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New Website Sparticl.org Launches to Grow Teen Enthusiasm for Science

Written by Australian Business

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