1. **Who are the GAATN participants?**
   The current GAATN participants are Austin ISD, City of Austin, Travis County, Austin Community College, State of Texas DIR, University of Texas, and Lower Colorado River Authority.

2. **Why was GAATN developed?**
   GAATN was the outgrowth of an initiative that began in the 1980s to deliver reliable and economical communication services to the public sector. Each one of the participating entities was facing rapidly rising costs for leased voice and data service coverage in the growing Austin area. The coaxial Institutional Network that had been relied on for data and video service delivery had become increasingly unreliable and subject to frequent outages that often lasted several days. Coupled with the looming 1996 cable franchise renegotiation, which promised to eliminate several of the "free" video channels for school and municipal use, the future participants had to find another solution.

3. **What models did Austin examine (if any) in developing GAATN? What other models are there now that you might recommend?**
   Austin ISD and other early participants were not aware of any similar network collaboration projects underway or existing at the time. After much evaluation, Austin ISD chose to follow the recommendations of their engineering consultant to construct the shared fiber optic network that would become GAATN.

4. **What is GAATN legally and who can and cannot participate?**
   GAATN is an Interlocal Agency, created pursuant to Section 791.001 et seq. of the Interlocal Cooperation Act of the Texas Government Code, and signed on June 10, 1993 by various cooperating agencies and other governmental entities (referred to as participants). Participants are limited to those governmental entities with valid governmental purpose that would be served by construction and operation of the network to provide state-of-the-art technology communications capability while achieving economy of scale. No private individuals, associations, corporations, or any other non-governmental entity may be included.

5. **Can GAATN acquire new participants?**
   Yes, additional participants may be admitted to GAATN by the unanimous approval of all current participants, with the provision that no additional participant shall be admitted which would cause any other participant to violate any provisions in Article 3 (52) or Article 11 (3) of the Texas Constitution. Furthermore, a participant may not lease, assign, license the use of, or provide capacity on any portion of the network (including, without limitation, individual strands or bandwidth) to a private individual, association, or corporation expect as necessary to facilitate a governmental use by or on behalf of the participant owning the network rights.

6. **Is there any private sector participation?**
   There is no private sector participation in GAATN at this time.

7. **What was the financial justification used to build GAATN?**
   Costs for providing Austin ISD voice services in 1988 approached $1 million. Projections indicated that it was likely those costs would triple over the next 10 years. The ensuing engineering study on possible solutions recommended construction of a network that could be utilized not just for voice, but for data and video as well. The recommended fiber installation offered a seemingly limitless potential compared to copper cabling (fiber limitations are based on terminations and equipment specified, not on the medium itself).

8. **How was the GAATN project financed?**

   A participant was chosen to be the financial manager for the agency and entered into contracts as needed to complete the project. The Interlocal Agreement defined the original capital and variable network operating costs. Each partner used varying means (CIP, Bonds, etc.) to fund its individual obligations. The GAATN construction experience was typical for large public sector projects – it was built in stages and paid for incrementally. City of Austin contributed Right of Way (ROW) access instead of an initial cash contribution.

9. **How much did GAATN cost to build?**

   The original construction was projected to cost $12.2 million, but the actual construction costs were $14.2 million.

10. **How much does it cost to maintain and operate GAATN?**

    GAATN operation is divided into three parts. First, there are normal recurring costs associated with maintaining the existing fiber infrastructure. Second, there are costs associated with the need to move or change infrastructure to comply with the local construction affecting the ROW. Lastly, there are costs associated with GAATN initiated changes of the infrastructure. Figures below do not include equipment costs as those costs are determined and borne by each participant.

    Annual operating costs: Approximately $1.8 million
    Annual costs per mile: Approximately $5,145

11. **How are GAATN maintenance and operational costs shared between participants?**

    Costs are shared based on each participant's percentage of network rights. The computations for ascertaining individual participant's costs and percent of network rights are directly related to each ring and are based on three basic factors:

    1) Participant's presence on a ring
    2) Participant's number of sites on a ring
    3) Participant's number of fibers on a ring

12. **Who is responsible for the operation, management, and maintenance of the GAATN network?**

    GAATN has an active Board of Directors who are responsible for setting policies and making financial decisions for the network. The Board has a Technical Subcommittee to plan, review, and make technical recommendations to the Board. The Board solicits proposals for fiber plant maintenance, network management, legal services, insurance services, fiber locating services, and other agreements as needed.

13. **Does GAATN require any supporting ordinances from the City of Austin?**

    Yes, Ordinance 950809A established in 1994, regulated use by third parties of city-owned infrastructure.

14. **What are the future plans for GAATN?**

    The GAATN network continues to grow as the Austin area expands and participants add new facilities. Since its initial construction, GAATN has added approximately 50 miles of GAATN ring fiber. In the past five years an additional 119 connections have been added to the network. The GAATN Agency actively seeks participation from qualifying neighboring entities.