Becta

In March 2005, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published its e-strategy, Harnessing Technology. It set out a system-wide approach to the application of ICT in education, skills and children's services, and identified four key objectives:

- To transform teaching and learning and help to improve outcomes for children and young people, through shared ideas, more exciting lessons and online help for professionals

- To engage hard-to-reach learners by providing special needs support, more motivating ways of learning, and more choice about how and where to learn.

- To build an open and accessible system with more information and services online for parents and carers, children, young people, adult learners and employers, and more cross-organisation collaboration to improve personalised support and choice.

- To achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness through online research, access to shared ideas and lesson plans, improved systems and processes in children's services, shared procurement and easier administration.
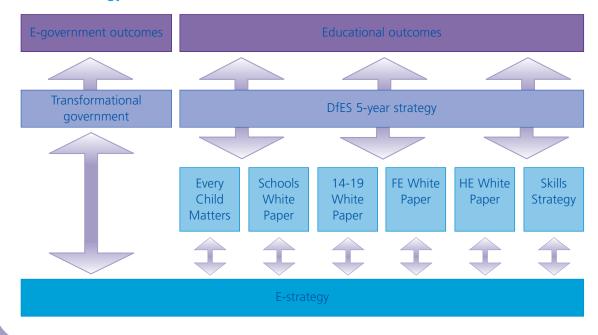
Harnessing technology – the role of leaders

Different sectors have made progress towards this at different rates; some areas of children's services are still developing their vision, while the use of ICT within higher education is ubiquitous.

There is compelling evidence from practice that the appropriate and effective procurement, deployment and use of ICT has major benefits in four key areas; it:

- leads to greater efficiency and cost saving across the system

- increases productive time for teaching

- increases learner choice and opportunity and improves the quality of the learner's experience

- raises standards.

The e-strategy should not be seen as an independent policy initiative, but rather as an enabler, directly supporting and connected with the country's main educational goals and policies. This strategy must therefore work in support of other DfES and wider governmental strategies, and this relationship is represented below.

The e-strategy as an enabler

E-government outcomes	Educational outcomes					
Transformational government	DfES 5-year strategy					
	Every Child Matters	Schools White Paper	14-19 White Paper	FE White Paper	HE White Paper	Skills Strategy
E-strategy						

The Challenge

Currently, too few schools, colleges and training providers take all the actions needed to reap the benefits of ICT consistently, and so there is now a strong moral argument that all providers should gain the clear benefits for learners and improve the effectiveness and overall efficiency of the education system. The e-strategy aims to help all involved in education to work together to make this happen in all institutions and wherever learning takes place.
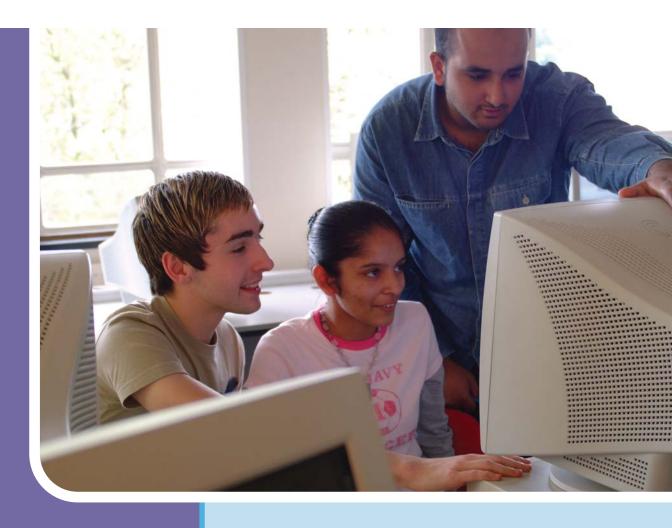
What this means for you

As leaders, you have the potential to be at the forefront of innovation. You have an opportunity to push the boundaries of what is possible in learning and teaching and lead the transformation of the current system, to put the learner centre stage and gear services and provision around the learners' needs.

By taking a personal leadership role, you can drive change through technology and speed up the spread of best practice across your sector.

To stay abreast of what activity is planned and how you can become involved, visit: **http://www.becta.org.uk/harnessingtechnology**

Becta – shaping policy, driving change

Becta's role is to work with Government and its key agencies to create the conditions in the system that will lead to the majority of institutions and learning providers making more effective use of technology. This in turn will help to create the foundations of an education system that will have both the capacity and capability to reinvent how, where and when learning and teaching is conducted. The aim of this is to offer a more personalised, high quality education for every learner.

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