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Becta leading
next generation
learning

Harnessing Technology funding 2009–10

Guidance for schools



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1. Introduction

Harnessing Technology is a national strategy led by Becta on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). It aims to bring about a step change in the way technology is used across education and skills, to ensure that investment in technology delivers benefits for children, young people and adult learners.

Technology now plays a central role in the lives of children, young people, adult learners, and the lives of parents, carers and employers. Just six years ago, only 8 per cent of homes had access to broadband. Today that figure is above 60 per cent, with 90 per cent of parents reporting an internet connection at home. Three-quarters of internet users over the age of 14 report that they use the internet for learning. And the use of computers and the internet is now a constant feature of most young people's lives, with three-quarters using social networking sites regularly, and 90 per cent using the internet and messaging services daily.

In this context, there are exciting opportunities to harness technology to improve and develop services in response to the needs of children, young people and adult learners. That is what the Harnessing Technology strategy is about, and what the Harnessing Technology Grant is designed to support.



2. Harnessing Technology goals

Technology plays a key role in supporting effective professional practice, enabling access to good learning resources, engaging children and young people in learning and underpinning effective learner management and performance management in schools.

Where schools have improved, technology-based strategies have often played a central role. Schools, teachers and local authorities are increasingly recognising the valuable part that technology plays in delivering benefits for learners. These are reflected in the goals for Harnessing Technology in this sector:

- greater flexibility in and choice of learning options – using technology to offer differentiated curricula and learning experiences that help meet children's and young people's needs and preferences
- tailored and responsive assessment – both formative (for example, more immediate feedback on learning, better information about progress) and summative (for example, flexible end-of-stage assessment)
- engaging learning experiences – for learners of all abilities, in all contexts, including children and young people who are hard to reach
- strengthened relationships between families, schools and learners – with an emphasis on the adoption of information systems and use of online tools to improve parental involvement.



3. What the Harnessing Technology Grant can be used for

The Harnessing Technology Grant is capital funding and can be used to support purchases of ICT infrastructure and equipment or upgrades, as well as software and digital curriculum resources where these count as capital expenditure. For a precise definition of what is classified as capital, advice should be provided by local authority accountants who interpret accounting principles and guidance.

The grant can be used to purchase computer software and digital learning resources provided that the resource being paid for (or the perpetual licence to use that resource) passes into the ownership of the school or local authority at the end of the service period; or that payment results in the school or local authority receiving a licence to use the resource for a specified time period longer than one year. This applies to both one-off purchases of software resources, and subscriptions to services that provide digital curriculum resources on an ongoing basis.



4. Key investment priorities

Becta has identified the following priorities which local authorities and schools should consider when determining local investment:

- **Broadband services** appropriate to need, with sustainable plans for further development of local and regional networks to ensure that the necessary capacity and services are available.
- **Learning platforms, email services and personal storage areas** for learners and staff. Services need to conform to Becta's functional and technical specifications and be available for all users inside and outside educational institutions, including users' homes, and must be available outside core school hours.
- **Simplified sign-on for users:** Shibboleth [<http://shibboleth.internet2.edu/>] – an authentication and authorisation infrastructure capable of granting individual learners with secure anywhere/anytime access to educational resources – must be implemented in conjunction with the UK Access Management Federation, with the local authority or Regional Broadband Consortium acting as identity and service provider.
- **Parental reporting:** online access to reporting systems and information. Schools should provide timely, meaningful and manageable information to parents through appropriate and secure use of management information systems, learning platforms, managed learning environments, messaging services and other suitable online reporting systems.
- **Integration of learning and management systems** at institution, local authority and, where appropriate, regional level so that data is available securely when and where it is required.
- **High-quality digital learning resources** in line with Becta's quality principles, taking advantage of national and local aggregation opportunities.



5. What every school should know about technology

The Harnessing Technology Grant provides funds for schools to develop technology and maximise its benefits for learners. This guidance provides more information on where to find advice and support.

The top technology priorities for schools in 2009–10 are listed below followed by more detailed guidance on each area:

- improving your school through technology and managing your technology well (Becta's Next Generation Learning Charter and self-review framework)
- ensuring that learners and staff are safe online
- obtaining best value – purchasing technology through aggregated approaches
- meeting parents' expectations for online information and reporting
- making sure that technologies are able to work together and deliver what is needed
- ensuring that technology solutions are sustainable and meet the environmental agenda
- integrating your technology within your whole approach to making learning personal.



Improving your school through technology and managing your technology well

At the heart of effective whole-school improvement should be a leadership vision for using technology, and the drive to translate this strategy into effective action.

All schools are encouraged to actively commit to exploiting information and communication technology (ICT) to ensure that they provide Next Generation Learning opportunities. The Next Generation Learning Charter supports progression in eight key areas: leadership and management; curriculum; learning and teaching; assessment; professional development; extending opportunities for learning; and resources and Impact on outcomes. It has four stages:



www.becta.org.uk/nextgenerationlearning

- *Commitment:* All schools are encouraged to make a public commitment to provide Next Generation Learning for all their learners.
- *Recognition:* When a school has reached the nationally agreed standard in three elements of the framework, including leadership and management, it can apply for recognition that it is progressing through the charter.
- *Accreditation:* The prestigious ICT Mark is awarded to schools that have reached the nationally agreed standard in all eight elements of the framework.



www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/en/ICT-mark-schools

- *ICT Excellence Awards:* These offer further recognition for schools that demonstrate evidence of excellent practice above and beyond the levels of the ICT Mark.



www.becta.org.uk/excellenceawards



Becta's self-review framework helps schools progress through the charter. This online tool, which gives access to a wide range of resources and advice, is available free of charge to schools. It has already been used by more than 15,000 schools. It will help you to:

- benchmark your school against others
- develop a shared school vision for technology
- prioritise and set realistic goals
- establish a fit-for-purpose investment
- ensure safe and secure use of technology
- command confidence from staff, learners, parents and governors
- develop evidence to inform your Ofsted self-evaluation framework submission
- provide evidence to support accreditation to the prestigious ICT Mark.

Schools are strongly encouraged to adopt Becta's self-review framework to support their long-term evaluation and planning of technology development. Schools can register online to use the self-review framework.



www.becta.org.uk/schools/selfreview



Ensuring that learners and staff are safe online

To give children, young people, staff and parents maximum benefit of technology, it is crucial that, as a school, you have policies and practices in place to minimise exposure to risk. It is incumbent upon you as a school under your 'duty of care' responsibilities to have appropriate measures in place so that everyone is able to enjoy the benefits of using technology safely and responsibly.

Becta recommends a whole-school approach to safeguarding children in a digital world, one that addresses both technical and educational approaches:

- Develop an **acceptable use policy** that staff, parents and students are aware of (this is a minimum requirement for all schools). The policy should outline what is and what is not acceptable and highlight the sanctions for breaking the guidelines set out in the policy. The latter should be reviewed, monitored and updated to ensure effectiveness.



AUPS in context: Establishing safe and responsible online behaviours

www.becta.org.uk/publications/aupsincontext

- Ensure that your networks are as safe and secure as possible and use a **Becta-accredited** internet service provider and or a Becta-accredited software product – for example, filtering or a monitoring product. Further information on Becta's accreditation schemes can be found at:



www.becta.org.uk/schools/accreditedinternetsuppliers



- **Teach children and young people** about the potential dangers and how to empower themselves in the online world. Staff and parents also need to understand the risks and issues and how to support children and young people.

Signposts to safety: Teaching e-safety at Key Stages 1 and 2

Signposts to safety: Teaching e-safety at Key Stages 3 and 4



www.becta.org.uk/publications/signpoststosafety

- Ensure that you have **appropriate reporting mechanisms** in place should an e-safety incident occur. It is essential that schools make links with their local authority and or their Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to ensure consistency and coherence.

Safeguarding children in a digital world: Developing an LSCB e-safety strategy



www.becta.org.uk/publications

- The leadership team in the school should take the lead on **embedding e-safety across the school** and continually evaluate the effectiveness of all policies and practices.

AUPS in context: Establishing safe and responsible online behaviours





www.becta.org.uk/publications/aupsincontext

- Find out what your school should be doing to **protect personal information** and minimise the risk of data being misused.



Obtaining best value – purchasing technology through aggregated approaches

It is recommended that schools meet the following requirements to achieve the best standards in technology at the best value:

- Use buying arrangements that meet Becta advice.
- Consider ICT as a service-based solution (incorporating implementation, support, maintenance, etc.) rather than as a simple equipment purchase. Becta's functional specifications and framework suppliers have been specifically developed to support this approach.
- Before you buy anything, contact your local authority to establish if they have any suitable procurement arrangements or if they are planning any aggregated purchasing that will save you time and effort and deliver better value.
- Look for opportunities to focus valuable school resources on teaching and learning rather than managing and supporting ICT. Recent evidence from institutions benefiting from a managed ICT service reports an increase in the adoption of e-learning because their ICT is more reliable and robust. Furthermore, the more comprehensive managed services, where most or all ICT provision is outsourced, show the greatest positive impact on staff and learners, making a greater contribution to the development of the establishment's e-maturity.
- Collaborate with other schools to aggregate purchasing requirements. Becta recommends that purchasing should be done by relatively large groups, preferably at local authority level, to achieve best value. Many schools are already benefitting from this collaborative approach.
- Ensure the best possible solutions for the best possible cost, accessing up-to-the minute, best practice advice on procurement at  www.becta.org.uk/schools/procurement
- Follow best practice in IT technical support by implementing a structured management process such as Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) or Becta's Framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS).  www.becta.org.uk/schools/fits

Meeting parents' expectations for online information and reporting

All schools are expected to exploit technology to improve parental engagement. By September 2010, secondary schools – and two years later primary schools – are expected to offer parents secure online access to information about their children's learning. Schools moving towards online reporting should:

- target investment to deliver to parents improved communication and access to information about their children's learning progress, positive and challenging behaviour, attainment, special educational needs and attendance
- ensure that technology systems used for parental communication, such as email, websites and SMS text messaging, are robust and fit for purpose, and that other processes are in place to manage communication effectively and efficiently
- ensure that systems used to support learning, such as learning platforms, can be integrated and used as an online source of information for parents
- consider how information held within management information systems is best communicated and made accessible and understandable to different groups of parents consider the following principles put forward by Becta:
 - Extend what is already good parental engagement practice.
 - Make best use of what is already in place and available.
 - Develop efficient and effective practice (enter once, use many times).
 - Develop sustainable approaches and processes for recording and reporting.
- consider areas in which capital investment will make an impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of recording and reporting processes and practice. For example, establishing the need, or business case, for technologies enabling: e-registration, cashless catering, access control systems, behaviour management systems, reward systems, e-assessment, electronic report writing, managing special educational needs, providing home access to staff and learners, mobile recording and reporting, etc.

Schools moving towards online reporting will have used the Becta parental engagement toolkit to support their progress. This includes the self-review framework for online reporting, which can support schools to develop in four areas:

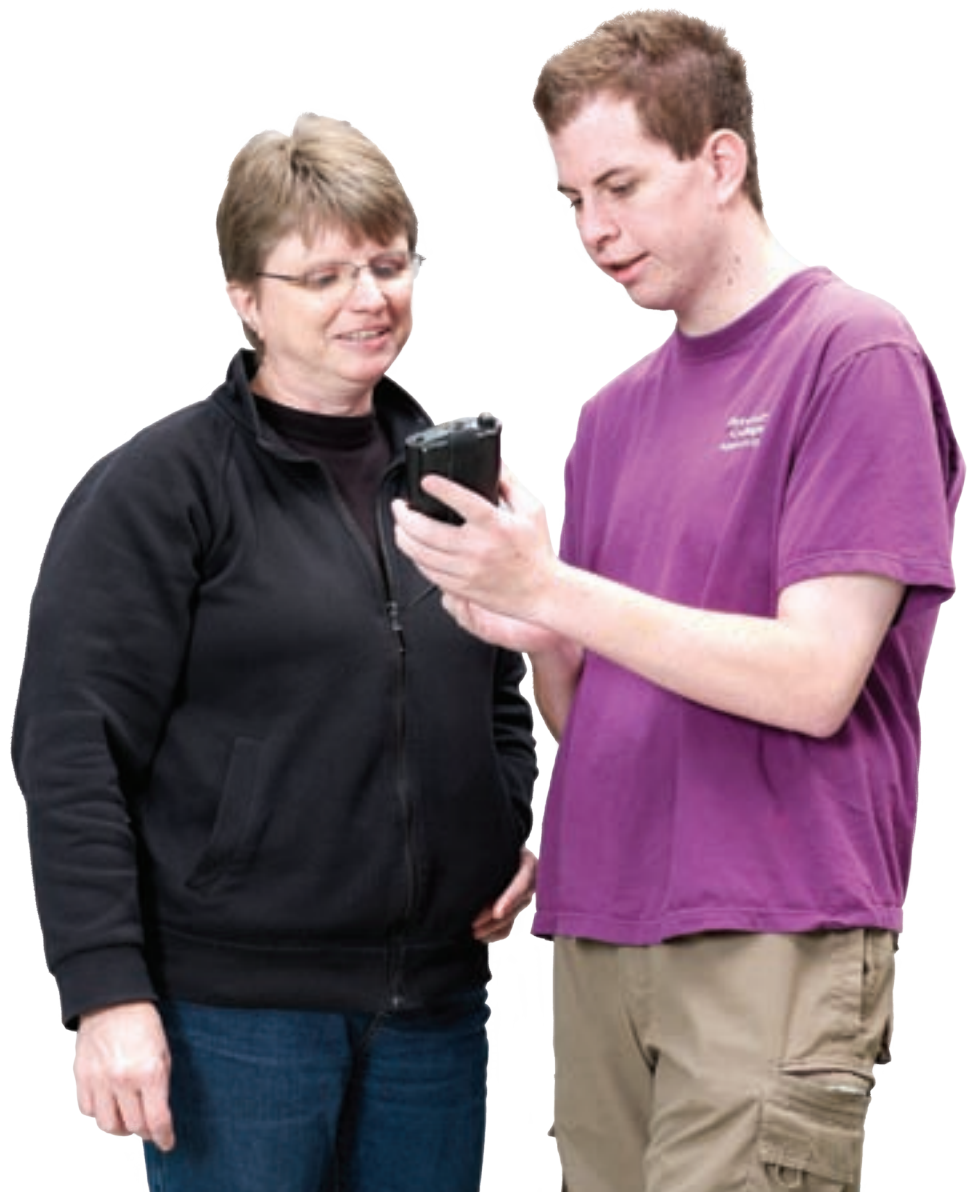
- recording and reporting
- parental dialogue and engagement
- workforce involvement
- exploiting technologies.



This toolkit, together with the 'Getting started' guide to online reporting, is available on the Becta website at www.becta.org.uk/engagingparents

Making sure that technologies are able to work together and deliver what is needed

- Compare the functionality of your current management information system with Becta's functional requirements for information management.
- Use Becta's functional specification for institutional infrastructure to help decide what you want your technology to achieve.
- Use Becta's self-review framework to help evaluate your current position.
- Review your current needs and anticipate your future needs for information management by using Becta's information management strategy framework.
- Contact your local authority to find out about any personal online learning space it offers your learners, and any aggregated learning platform procurement that the local authority or regional broadband consortium (RBC) has implemented.



Ensuring that technology solutions are sustainable and meet the environmental agenda

- If you are part of a capital building programme, engage with your local authority to ensure that your requirements are fully considered and that designers and construction contractors base their proposals for new and refurbished buildings on the school's vision for transforming learning and delivering improved outcomes.
- If you are part of a capital building programme, plan and consult fully. Building Schools for the Future (BSF) provides a very high level of capital funding for technology – equivalent to £1,675 for every pupil place provided in the new and remodelled schools. Schools then commit to providing ongoing revenue funding to maintain this managed service.



www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk/library/ict.jsp

- Academies that are being built as part of the BSF programme are expected to join in the area-wide managed service. Where there is no BSF-managed service available, academies and One School Pathfinders are expected to use the Becta Infrastructure Services Framework to procure their infrastructure, equipment and supporting services.
- Technology is an integral part of the primary capital programme; however, unlike in BSF, there is no specific budget for it. Local authorities should ensure that a suitable proportion of primary capital funding is allocated to technology to ensure that their primary schools are equipped for Next Generation Learning.
- Further information on the Primary Capital Programme can be found at:



www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/resources/financeandbuilding/Primary_Capital_Programme

- Consider sustainability/environmental issues when preparing and implementing technology plans, giving due consideration to your requirement to become an environmentally sustainable school.



www.becta.org.uk/schools/environmentalsustainability

Integrating your technology within your whole approach to making learning personal

- Use your vision for the school to focus on the outcomes for learning, teaching or management to ensure how you deploy and use your learning platform reflects on the priorities, needs and context of your school and the achievement of benefits for children and young people.



www.becta.org.uk/schools/learningplatforms

- Ensure that you have sufficient and sustained resources to support the development of staff, and seek opportunities through collaboration between colleagues and other schools.
- Use technology to create and share quality resources and learning materials. Many schools are already benefitting from this collaborative approach in financial terms, but this can also result in time savings for your workforce.
- Work towards increased integration between your management information system and learning platform to increase efficiency, productivity and address new requirements such as online reporting. Appropriate data and resources should be securely available within and beyond the school to allow for increased opportunities for learners, flexibility for teachers and greater engagement opportunities with parents and carers.
- Use EU-compliant buying arrangements for learning platforms underpinned by functional and technical specifications developed to meet educational needs. These enable schools and local authorities to choose from approved suppliers who have been selected for their capability to deliver high-quality, standards-based ICT solutions and managed services specifically to meet educational needs.



Annex: Further information and publications

For a range of information and support for schools, please visit:
www.becta.org.uk/schools

Strategy

Harnessing Technology: Next Generation Learning 2008–2014

www.becta.org.uk/publications/harnessingtechnologystrategy

Harnessing Technology for Next Generation Learning: Children, Schools and Families Implementation Plan 2009–2012

www.becta.org.uk/publications/childrenschoolsandfamilies

Next Generation Learning

Online information:

www.becta.org.uk/nextgenerationlearningcharter

Improving schools

- *What is the self-review framework? A guide for school leaders*
- *How to use the self-review framework*
www.becta.org.uk/improveyourschool

Planning sustainable success

- *Information management strategy framework: Guidance for schools*
- *Planning technology into your building – a guide for school leaders*
www.becta.org.uk/plansustainablestuccess

Achieving best value

- *Getting best value from your investment – a guide for school leaders*
www.becta.org.uk/achievebestvalue

Home Access

Online information:

www.becta.org.uk/homeaccess

Safeguarding learners online

- *Safeguarding children online – a guide for school leaders*
- *Safeguarding children in a digital world: Developing an LSCB e-safety strategy*
www.becta.org.uk/safeguardlearnersonline

Inspiring parental engagement

- *Exploiting ICT to improve parental engagement, moving towards online reporting: Toolkit*
- *Exploiting ICT to improve parental engagement, moving towards online reporting: Getting started with using ICT to support parental engagement*
www.becta.org.uk/inspireparentalengagement

Making learning personal

- *Getting started with your learning platform: Advice for schools*
- *Learning platforms in action* (DVD)
www.becta.org.uk/makelearningpersonal

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