Becta

leading
next generation
learning

Becta

Our work, its impact

Foreword

Becta at work

Over the last year Britain has faced new challenges, and we find ourselves at a time where we must solve immediate problems and prepare for the changes ahead, to ensure that our society and our economy are stronger and more resilient in the future. Amidst all of the turbulence of the economic situation, and its repercussions, one thing has become clearer than before. Technology has a huge role to play. Whether it is in terms of enabling the education and skills system of today to continue to improve, but in a cost-effective and environmentally efficient way, or whether it is helping parents and adult learners to develop digital skills to use online services or gain employment, there is a consistent theme. Technology is a valued tool for learning, an essential tool of the teacher and trainer, and a tool of every employer. If our learners of today and tomorrow are going to make the most of technology, then schools, colleges and training providers need support, advice and guidance today.

Becta continues to play a key role in this. In *Becta: our work, its impact*, we review the major and important activity undertaken over the last year and demonstrate just what a difference this is making to learners, parents, school teachers, employers and all in the further education and skills sector. Our work is enabling the benefits of technology to be realised by and for learners of all ages across the system, and we are doing this in strong and productive partnerships with many other organisations.

Here you will find a selection of the many examples that show the impact Becta has had on improving learning and skills through the effective use of technology. In the last year we have provided clear advice for the Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum, led by Sir Jim Rose, and the government's Digital Britain Report, making sure that ICT is a top priority to provide learners with skills for everyday life.

We are supporting the government directive to prepare schools for online reporting by 2012 – the white paper *21st Century Schools, a world class education for every child*. We have been instrumental in encouraging large numbers of families to sign up to Home Access grants, helping those who don't have an internet-connected computer at home to get online. We are working with the government to implement the broadcasting and technology proposals in the informal adult learning white paper, *The Learning Revolution*. Our networks, awards and accreditations – including the ICT Mark and the FE Technology Exemplar Network – are being nationally recognised as the way for schools and providers to get the most out of their ICT and to keep on the road of continuous improvement.

Alongside these we have been helping to reduce costs by encouraging providers to use our buying power, saving over £55m across the education system this year. This is a significant achievement.

There are still important challenges ahead for Becta but we are well placed to make sure that this success continues. The interaction between learning and technology has significantly strengthened over the last year; we need to help that to continue to flourish. The economic upturn is coming; we need to take this and help the employees of the future be better placed to capitalise on it.

Becta's work makes an impact; like technology, it will continue to benefit learners, teachers, trainers and education and skills leaders in the year ahead.

01 Young learners

02 Schools

03 Adult learners and business

04 Further education & skills

05 System

06 Future work

01 Benefiting young learners

An important part of Becta's role is to create a more exciting, rewarding and successful experience for learners of all ages and abilities, enabling them to achieve their potential.

Becta's strategy, Harnessing Technology: Next Generation Learning,[1] addresses the needs of learners of all ages across the education and skills system.

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Children and young people

Children and young people spend much of their time using technology in their own ways to support learning. This is often independent from what they do at school. Constant access, to resources and knowledge networks, is becoming the norm. Learners are beginning to bring that expectation to their learning in school. When asked how they prefer to learn, students ranked 'using computers' fourth in a list of 16 options; the three other top choices were 'learning in groups', 'doing practical things' and 'with friends'.[2]

Becta uses robust and extensive research and evidence to help inform existing information and to influence new curriculum and assessment opportunities. These help ensure that learners are suitably challenged and their expectations are effectively met.

Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (the Rose Review):[3]
Becta advised Sir Jim Rose and as a consequence this review recommended that the use of information and communications technology (ICT) be identified as an essential skill for learning and life, along with literacy and numeracy. Pupils should leave primary school equipped with the skills they need to use technology to support their own learning.

21st Century Schools, a world-class education for every child (white paper):
By 2012, schools will need to be reporting to parents online. Becta is providing tools and guidance in support of this work, to help improve the dialogue between schools, parents and learners.

Improving attainment

Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Technology can support young people who are NEET most powerfully in three areas:

- tapping into young people's innate creativity

- getting them the right information at the right time

- improving their long-term career planning and the confidence they need to develop their aspirations.

As a result of these findings, a Becta research and development project is underway in partnership with Sunderland Local Authority and Connexions. Young people who are NEET are making creative affirmative videos on subjects that are important to them. They go on to develop an online, multimedia CV. The technology is designed in such a way as to help them think realistically about their long-term futures.

To ensure that technology continues to support young people in the future we are now working with DCSF, BIS and the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit on the Young Person's Guarantee.
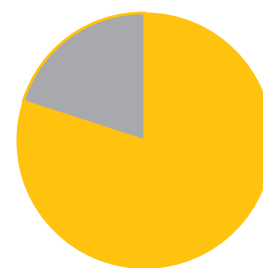
Online reporting: improving dialogue with parents

Schools and online reporting

Research shows that:
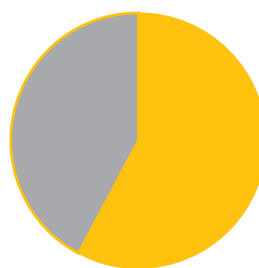
58% of school leaders believe ICT has improved the school's ability to engage parents in relation to their children's attendance.[4]

80% of schools are now using their websites to provide resources for parents – almost double the figures reported in 2007.[5]

Over two-thirds of parents would like schools to use technologies such as text messaging and the internet to communicate with them more frequently. However, only eight per cent of parents surveyed in 2008 were kept informed using these methods.[6] This percentage is steadily increasing, thanks to Becta's work in online reporting. Becta is helping schools to offer parents secure online access to information on their children's progress, achievement, attendance and behaviour. Every school now has an online reporting toolkit to support this work.[7]

Using approaches such as online reporting, parents can support their children's learning and work with educators as equal partners.

99 per cent of secondary senior managers and ICT leaders and 90 per cent of primary deputy heads say the learning platform will have positive impact on teaching and learning.[8]

CASE STUDY

Grays School

Grays Infant and Nursery School in Newhaven is keeping in touch with parents by using the internet, email and mobile phones.

"It's really important to us to engage parents in their children's learning. If our parents are partners in their children's learning, children will become more effective learners and this will affect their attainment throughout their education," says Christine Terrey, headteacher.

Parents used to receive termly reports on their children's progress. Now they get daily updates. The school keeps in touch using mobile phones, email and the school's learning platform. For instance, the school sends parents text messages to remind them about important events. Parents can send text messages to the school with their own thoughts and questions.

"We can use the school's learning platform to find out what our children are doing in their classroom every day," explains one parent. Parents can visit the school every Friday to attend courses on what their children are learning. "Parents are encouraged to think about what their children are learning and how they can support this at home," says Christine.

"For instance, children have been making multimedia presentations and taking them home to share with their parents. Parents have become involved by making presentations as well," she adds.

Staff point out that being able to find out what their children are doing at school each day opens a dialogue between parents and children.

"If parents are empowered to talk to their children about their learning, the relationship between the home and the school gets stronger and stronger," says Christine.

Safety and safeguarding: keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe online

69 per cent of children aged 7–11 claim to be aware of how to keep safe online, but only 34 per cent can give an example of how to do this in practice.[9]

Becta is helping children to stay safe in the digital world by helping headteachers:

- have the right safety policy in place and monitor their systems for effectiveness (through Becta's guidance for schools)[10]

- educate school staff (by producing resources for teachers, working in partnership with other organisations)[11]

- buy internet services and filtering products from accredited suppliers.[12]

Working with Local Safeguarding Children Boards

Becta is working with every Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in England to integrate e-safety into their safeguarding plans.[13]

These boards are represented across the range of children's services to help ensure that children are protected when they are not in school, including when they are using their mobile phones or surfing the web at the local youth club.

Becta is helping boards to:

- develop good practice

- set up a robust infrastructure

- train staff

- monitor the effectiveness of their e-safety work.

CASE STUDY

Making safety and safeguarding a priority:

East Lothian Council is involving parents in e-safety issues.

East Lothian is a small local authority serving a diverse population. It has a clear vision of the role of embedded ICT in school improvement, and ICT is part of the overall local authority strategy and plan. The area has a high level of computer ownership, but parental understanding of e-safety issues was previously patchy.

The authority developed a strategy – working with police, parents and children – to promote a balanced understanding of the risks and simple measures to counter them. The approach ensures that children feel confident about their use of technology.

www.eastlothian.gov.uk

This local authority was a runner-up in Becta's 2008 ICT Excellence Awards.

Engaging parents

Through the Next Generation Learning Campaign Becta is helping parents support their children's learning. When parents and carers get involved in their children's education at home, children can achieve more. Parents believe that technology is beneficial:
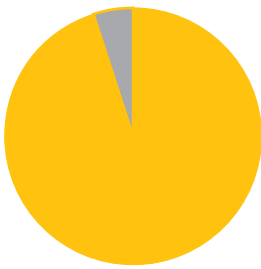
95% think it can help their children learn
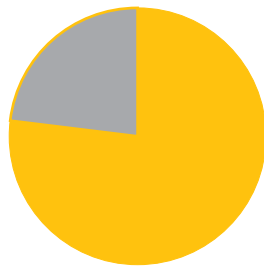
77% think it can help their children with difficult subjects
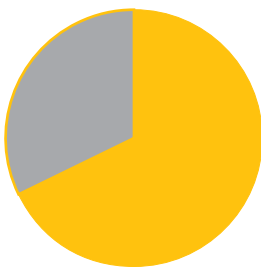
68% think using it effectively can help improve exam results
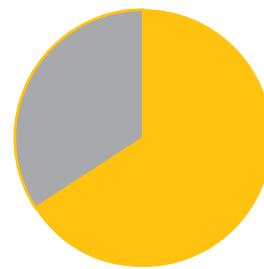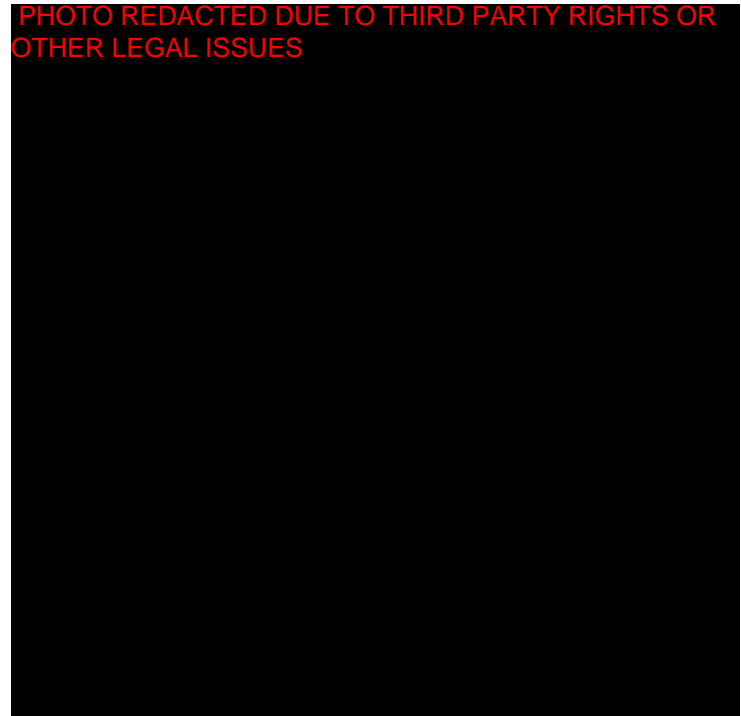
66% consider use of technology when choosing a school for their children[14]

NEXT GENERATION LEARNING

Helping parents support their children's learning

Becta has published advice and guidance to help parents:

- search smartly for information and evaluate its quality

- visit museums online

- use technology to expand their children's interests and hobbies

- ensure their children are staying safe online.[15]

Becta has also created the ICT Mark Postcode Search Tool[16] for parents. Becta's ICT Mark is a national accreditation scheme that recognises schools for their achievements in using technology. Parents can use the ICT Mark Postcode Search Tool to find out if their children's school or other schools have this accreditation.

Schools are getting the message

Only one in four schools currently uses technology to its fullest potential, but schools are hearing the Next Generation Learning message. They have requested nearly 50,000 copies of the materials that Becta has created for parents. These will help schools improve their own use of technology and will help them better communicate with parents about their children's progress.

HOME ACCESS

NEXT GENERATION LEARNING

Home Access

Becta is working with partners – as part of the £300m Home Access campaign – to reach the one million families who do not have an internet-connected computer at home.

The Home Access campaign

The Home Access campaign began this year with a pilot project to get computers and the internet into the homes of young people from low-income families in Oldham and Suffolk. As part of the project, parents applied for a Home Access Grant worth about £600. The grant paid for a computer and internet package designed to support learning. All the packages came with parental controls and the award-winning guide, *Know IT All for Parents*,[17] which explains what parents need to know about staying safe online. The computers have an enhanced warranty, and there is access to technical support. The Home Access pilot has been a runaway success – over 12,000 grants have been issued to parents, exceeding the target of 7,500. The project is helping over 90 per cent of low-income families in the area. Sustainability is a key aim and funding for the internet connection lasts for one year.

The link between using technology at home for learning and attainment

Using technology for learning at home has a big impact:

- Having a computer at home has a positive link with Key Stage 4 test scores. This association amounts to around 14 GCSE points (equivalent to 2 GCSE grades).

- Young people with a computer at home are less likely to play truant at ages 14 and 16 than those without computer access.

- Losing access to a computer at home is linked with a reduction of 20 GCSE points, even after the learner's prior attainment is taken into account.[18]

12,000 grants
The Home Access pilot has been a runaway success – over 12,000 grants have been issued to parents, exceeding the target of 7,500.

What parents say:

Single, unemployed mum Julie and her three daughters, Reisha, 18, Pyneish, nine and Polani, seven, have all seen the impact having a Home Access grant can have on their lives.

Reisha wants to go to university, but since the family's computer broke a year ago they have been saving to buy a new one for her to take with her. Mum Julie wants to get better at using computers to help her younger daughters when Reisha goes away to study.

Not only has the programme helped them buy a new computer, but Julie has been on an introduction to computers course to help her overcome her fears. Reisha can now type her essays and Julie can help the younger girls with school work, and playing computer games.

"It is fantastic, I was struggling to be able to afford a computer for Reisha for uni...thank you," says Julie.

Kit has been in foster care from the age of 11. Having successfully gained 10 GCSEs he is now studying a BTech at college and was in desperate need of a computer to do his coursework.

Until he got his Home Access funding he was reliant on friends or using the college computers, which limited him greatly. Now he has his own e-Notebook he can do research, or network with friends whenever he wants.

"I didn't have a computer before because I couldn't afford one, now I use mine every day."

The Home Access pilot was part of a partnership between Becta, government agencies and local authorities in Oldham and Suffolk.

02 Benefiting schools

Becta works with schools to support their efficient use of technology. 81 per cent of teachers agree that ICT makes learning more effective – an increase from 75 per cent in 2008.[19]

Professional development
Becta has been working in partnership to ensure that using ICT effectively is embedded in teachers' professional development. This includes working with subject associations, the Training and Development Agency (TDA) and Teachers' TV.

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Professional development is key to using the technology effectively. When teachers use the technology well, it saves them time.
- Integrated e-registration saves 18 minutes per day.[20]
- Information recording and report preparation for parents saves 45 minutes per week.[21]

ICT across the curriculum
The use of ICT across the curriculum is part of the entitlement that is the National Curriculum. To help support this Becta has produced examples of where technology can effectively support learning and teaching in all subject areas and at all key stages.[22]

Hard-to-teach subjects: working in partnership
Becta has been working with English, science and mathematics subject associations to develop materials on hard-to-teach subjects. Teachers across the country are using these materials for their own professional development. As a result of this work:

- over 30,000 teachers have benefited this year from case study materials and lesson plans on hard-to-teach topics
- thousands of teachers have watched good practice case studies on Teachers' TV.[23] With over 2,397 viewings of the maths programmes in just two months, these are in the top one per cent of programmes on Teachers' TV
- these materials will be available through all 105 City Learning Centres.

CASE STUDY

Getting at hard-to-teach subjects:[24]

"I can do it easily and confidently; every idea we have been learning and using was fun and creative." "I really enjoyed it."

These are just some of the comments of Year 9 students in Ruth Tanner's maths class at Wrenn school, Wellingborough. Ruth has been working with Becta and her subject association to use ICT to help learners grasp difficult concepts, such as circle theorems. Ruth's students have been using Geometer's Sketchpad, a dynamic geometry software program, to help them get to grips with circle theorems. Becta's support enabled Ruth to develop her own good practice in using this software with students.

Ruth found that using the software deepened students' understanding. For instance, by the end of the project, they could generate their own examples of circles and triangles. They could also form conjectures that they began to justify and prove.

Students got excited about circle theorems right from the start. Towards the end of the lesson, some students felt confident enough to go to the front of the classroom and use their own images to explain the properties they had discovered.

Ruth also found that some of the most interesting work was done by students who previously were among those in the class having the most difficulty understanding mathematics.

Next Generation Learning Charter

Over 1,500 schools have already signed up to Becta's Next Generation Learning Charter. A school that signs up to the charter is at the start of a journey, which consists of four levels: commitment, recognition, accreditation and excellence. The four levels of the charter are an effective way for a school to show parents the level it has reached in using technology.

The four charter marks:

1. The school has made the initial commitment to using technology effectively.

2. The school's progress is recognised.

3. The school has achieved the ICT Mark – the national standard for the use of technology across all aspects of school life.

4. The school has won the ultimate accolade: an ICT Excellence Award identifying it as a model for Next Generation Learning.

The charter mark is an effective way for a school to show parents the level it has reached in using technology.

CASE STUDY

The Next Generation Learning Charter: how schools benefit

Ullesthorpe Primary School was the first school to commit to the Next Generation Learning Charter. Headteacher Lynn Lockton describes how signing up for the charter has benefited her school:

"The Next Generation Learning Charter is a brilliant way for us to show pupils, parents and the wider community that we are committed to using ICT in the best way we can. We already use technology such as interactive whiteboards, computers and digital photography, but now we can move towards using the technology we've got in a more structured and strategic way.

"We know we can do more with technology to help our pupils to progress and achieve – and now we have the help we need to get there."

COMMITTED TO ICT NEXT GENERATION

ICT MARK ACCREDITED NEXT GENERATION

RECOGNISED FOR ICT NEXT GENERATION

ICT EXCELLENCE AWARD NEXT GENERATION

SELF REVIEW FRAMEWORK

NEXT GENERATION LEARNING

02

Schools

Becta's self-review framework

Over 16,000 schools (nearly 80 per cent of schools in England) have engaged with the self-review framework.[25] This year, some 7,000 of these schools have returned to the framework and made further progress.

Ranvilles Infant School is one example of how schools have benefited from the framework.

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Self-review at Ranvilles Infant School[26]

Using the self-review framework gave staff at Ranvilles Infant School a better view of how well they were doing in using ICT and how they compared with other schools. The framework gave them an easy-to-follow guide. "We quickly recognised that we needed more technical support to ensure we got the best from our ICT resources," says headteacher Wendy Collins.

The school appointed an ICT technician who keeps the equipment working properly, supports teachers and pupils in the classroom and organises staff training.

"We also recognised the need to continue developing access to our website from home. The self-review framework helped us to think about how we could improve parental access through our learning platform, for example by allowing parents to look at pupils' work and see what homework is being set."

The school's learning platform has now been developed to involve the whole community in school life. For example, many of the children have parents in the Royal Navy. The school has encouraged these parents to send emails, to become involved in aspects of their children's work in school and to learn about their children's progress through the school's learning platform.

The school also invites parents to contribute ideas through online message boards. The whole process, from identifying priorities for improvement through to acting on them, took staff about a year. However, the headteacher sees the need to keep ICT developments under continual review. Staff are already looking again at their progress.

CASE STUDY

The ICT Mark

The self-review framework tool not only helps schools improve but also indicates the levels required for schools to apply for the ICT Mark accreditation.

The ICT Mark is a national accreditation scheme that recognises schools for their achievements in reaching a standard of maturity in their use of technology.

Schools that achieve the ICT Mark tend to gain higher inspection grades and are more likely to be judged 'outstanding' in their inspection reports. Already,1,048 schools have achieved the ICT Mark accreditation.

CASE STUDY

Achieving the ICT Mark:[27]

Kesteven and Sleaford High School, Lincolnshire, has achieved the ICT Mark accreditation using the Becta self-review framework. School staff are in absolutely no doubt about the benefits of using the framework. The framework helped them to see the impact that ICT was having across the school. This affirmed their hard work. "We had moved forward quickly with ICT. The self-review framework gave us a wonderful opportunity to review what we had done, and to celebrate our achievements to date," says ICT Systems Manager Serle Frazer.

How the school benefited from using the framework:

- They kept the momentum of their ICT development.
- They quickly identified areas that needed further work, which contributed to the next version of the school development plan.
- Using the framework led staff to think about the role of ICT in their longer-term plans.

Visit the school's website at:

www.kshs.lincs.sch.uk

Managed services

Becta offers schools a framework for buying managed services to help make the most efficient use of technology possible. A managed service is any service that an educational organisation has specified, which is managed by someone else. A managed service approach to ICT offers benefits to schools such as greater reliability and improved staff confidence in using the technology.

CASE STUDY

A managed service approach at Ben Jonson Primary School:[28]

Ben Jonson Primary School has used a managed service for its ICT provision as part of its new building programme. It led to these benefits:

- **Time savings:** reliable equipment means the ICT co-ordinator can spend more time supporting staff and less time dealing with technical issues.
- **Quality standards:** the school knows what is to be delivered and to what standard.
- **Increased efficiency:** the office staff automated many of their procedures and can now address the requirement for greater electronic data flow with the local authority.

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Benefiting adult learners and business

Independent review of ICT user skills: This review by Estelle Morris, published alongside the Digital Britain report, proposes an entitlement for adults to digital life skills. Becta contributed professional support for the review and is working with the government to develop its plans.

The further education and skills sector has to be ready to help business and individuals gain the skills they need for a global economic recovery, when innovation and technology will be at a premium.

"If we consider the skills needs laid down in the Leitch Review of Skills," says e-skills UK Chief Executive Karen Price, "the cost of delivering those in the traditional way is unaffordable, but Becta's strategy will help us to reach the targets without putting up the cost...Our research found that eight in ten employers said e-learning provides a uniquely accessible, flexible and cost-effective method of delivering training."

More and more learners of all ages are using technology for learning. As Frank McLoughlin, Principal of City & Islington College says: "Technology is like a golden thread that runs through the college. It impacts on everything we do."[29] In the further education and skills sector, over eight in ten learners have access to a computer at home, with the overwhelming majority also having internet access (usually via broadband); around three-quarters feel quite or very confident in using technology for a wide range of tasks; and over 60 per cent believe that it is essential to use a computer on their course.

Becta is keen to ensure that adult learners influence our offer. Over 90 learner representatives from around the country and the National Learner Panel have contributed to the development of Becta's vision and plans for further education and skills.

Tackling exclusion

In the past year, much of Becta's work supporting adult learners has been focused on those who are digitally excluded and those for whom technology might encourage or enable participation in learning.

256 adult learners in Oldham have benefited from access to technology at home. This is as a result of a pilot Becta ran, at the government's request.

The Learning Revolution

Becta helped the government develop its broadcasting and technology policies for *The Learning Revolution*, the white paper[30] on informal adult learning and is now leading some of the proposals. It has set up a broadcasting and technology expert forum; launched a competition to generate ideas for an online informal learning information service; and is developing an online resources directory for adult learners, support for informal learning tutors and advice on the potential of digital television and internet protocol television. Becta has also engaged with the technology-related projects funded through the government's £20m Transformation Fund and is a partner in the government's informal adult learning autumn 2009 festival.

Towards Maturity

Businesses benefit from using technology efficiently and cost-effectively for staff development. To this end, Becta is a partner in the Towards Maturity project, which supports those responsible for delivering effective learning in the workplace. Organisations that are mature in their use of technology have a greater business impact, according to the Towards Maturity Benchmark Review. The review identifies ways of using learning technology to correlate with business success. It showed significant decreases in overall employer training budgets but increases in allocations for online learning. 40 per cent of those surveyed expected their overall training budget to decrease, yet 37 per cent actually expected to invest more in their online training.

Next Generation Learning @ Work

The Next Generation Learning @ Work campaign highlights the need for a new generation of learning and skills development and is raising awareness about how the effective use of learning technologies can boost efficiency, company loyalty and the bottom line.

Benchmarking is important "I've found that participating in the research programmes from the Towards Maturity team has always provided a good opportunity to 'take stock'. Their pragmatic approach to benchmarking good practice provides a very useful source of industry information and food for thought." Mike Booth, Learning Technologies Manager, Cable & Wireless.

Walsall College helps local employer with workplace learning: case study

Walsall College and its partner, local employer VIP Hair Limited, brought online training into the workplace and halved the time it takes for learners to get qualified. Learners also achieved 100 per cent pass rates.

Learners now have access to a website that contains over 80,000 pages of activities and visual material. They all have laptops so that they can use these resources at work and at home. Every student also has an email account with 24/7 availability to tutors, to the learning material and to each other. City and Guilds provided course material and study support.

The impact:

- Learners have been productive in the workplace earlier and have gained professional satisfaction from starting their careers.
- Learners have spent less time away from work, which has halved trainee costs for the business.
- Assessment has been simplified since assignments are all available online and there is automatic record keeping.

This case study is part of Becta's Next Generation Learning @ Work campaign.

03

Adult learners and business

CASE STUDY

04 Benefiting further education and skills

GENERATOR
Technology Improvement
Leadership Tool

NEXT GENERATION LEARNING

Becta's aim is that the further education and skills sector will reach the top quartile of international performance in the deployment of technology by March 2012. This means developing a system whose people are confident with technology, using it creatively, flexibly and efficiently. Next Generation Learning: The implementation plan for 2009–2012[31] (June 2009), a joint initiative by Becta and its national partners, sets out the key services and support available to help the sector. Becta has also worked with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to develop a vision for what learning might look like in 2020[32] and with the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces personnel to support common interests and interaction with the FE and skills sector.

Aiming for excellence

Becta launched Generator,[33] its free online tool created with the sector for reviewing and improving the use of technology and thereby helping providers maximise their investment for the benefit of learners. Some 530 English FE providers have already registered and Becta has met its March 2010 target of 350 providers working to achieve excellence early.

Aiming for excellence often needs support. Becta, with the LSC, developed the Technology Exemplar Network to bring together colleges and providers to learn. This has been shown in evaluation to be greatly valued by its members. A suite of multimedia resources has been published to support members. The Network is expanding – there are now 16 exemplars. In the first year, over 472,300 students and 20,200 staff were covered by the Network and the plan is to double this in the second year. FE and skills providers are also seeing the results of their achievements from the Next Generation Learning Awards, now entering their second year, which celebrate excellence in the use of technology.

Becta will continue to ensure that technology is used across the education and skills system to improve attainment. As part of this ongoing work, Becta will focus on enabling schools, colleges and learning providers to use technology to help them achieve high quality standards and value for money across all that they do. Becta is committed to ensuring its objectives will be met through inclusive values, policy and practice.

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> Generator provides us with the strategic framework to undertake [a review of our e-learning strategy] through assessing the college's technology capability, enabling us to concentrate on our areas for improvement and to better meet the needs of learners and staff.[34]

Keith Dennis, Deputy Principal, Castle College Nottingham
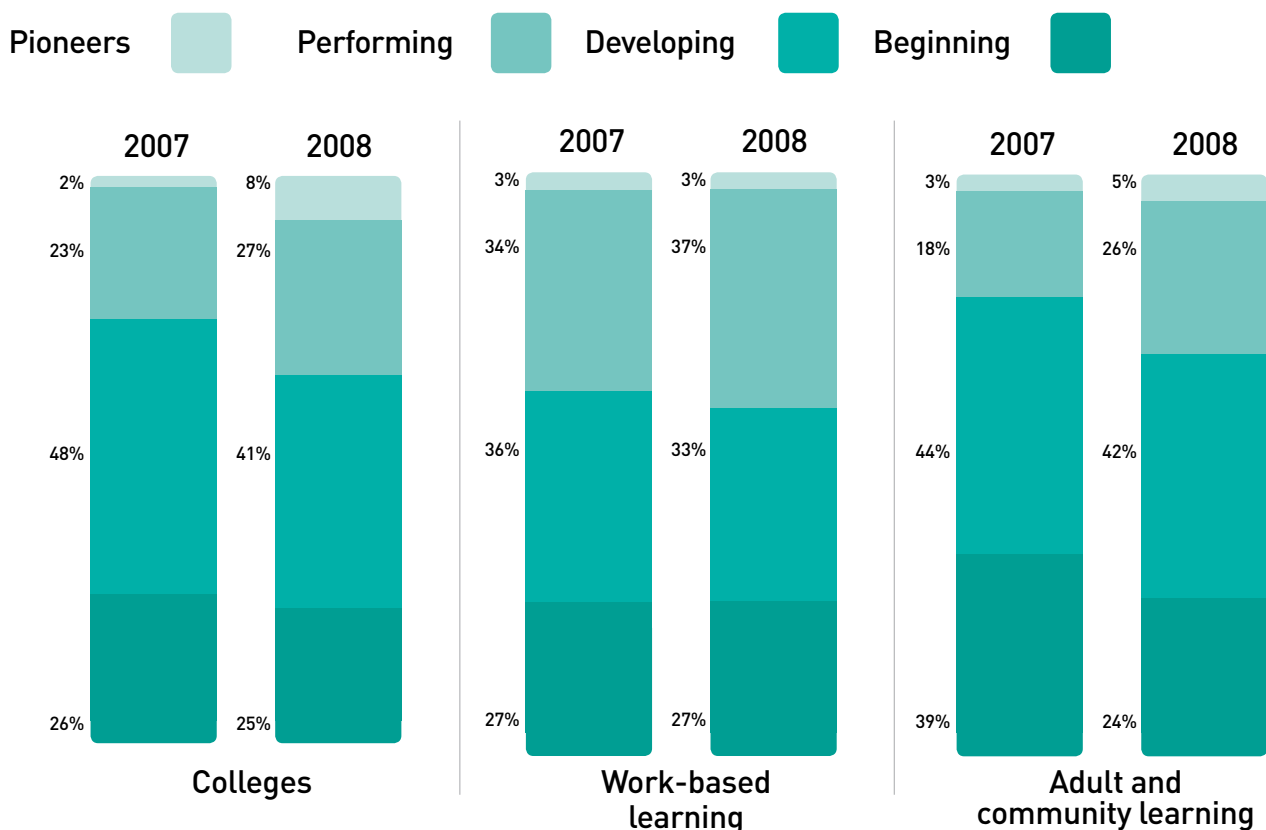
What they say about the Technology Exemplar Network
"Without doubt, being involved has been invaluable to us this year…The recognition that Becta gives ICT in the national arena provides much appreciated support, and strengthens our beliefs in the good work we all do for learners and colleagues."[35] Marion Plant, Principal of North Warwickshire & Hinckley College.

"At John Leggott College, we feel we have made considerable strides forward in terms of our e-maturity as a consequence of being involved with the Network."

Howard Darwin, Curriculum Manager, John Leggott College.

The FE and skills sector making progress

In 2008–09 colleges and providers have continued to improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which they use technology (e-maturity). The numbers of 'pioneer' and 'performing' providers are increasing, demonstrating good progress across the whole FE and skills sector.

Pioneers   Performing   Developing   Beginning

Colleges
2007: 2%, 23%, 48%, 26%
2008: 8%, 27%, 41%, 25%

Work-based learning
2007: 3%, 34%, 36%, 27%
2008: 3%, 37%, 33%, 27%

Adult and community learning
2007: 3%, 18%, 44%, 39%
2008: 5%, 26%, 42%, 24%

Figures have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

"Developing an e-confident workforce that has technology as an integral part of learning is an essential element of the workforce strategy for the further education sector in England.[36]"

David Hunter, Chief Executive of Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)

A capable and confident workforce

The effective use of technology is now a requirement for qualified teacher status in the sector and Becta has supported LLUK's application guides which consider how technology applies to the professional formation standards for practitioners and leaders.

The first ever national prospectus for technology-focused continuing professional development (CPD), developed by Becta and the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) is being tested by users.

Becta and LSIS are also collaborating on an e-CPD programme for leaders and a leadership programme for technical personnel which 60 staff have already attended. One participant described it as "an excellent course which has been very enlightening and thought-provoking."

Recognising the important role of college governors, Becta has published guidance for them on the use of technology in their institutions.

Technology and inspection

In dealing with the use of technology, Robin Ghurbhurun, National Chair of the Association of Colleges' National Information and Learning Technology Association (AoC NILTA), says: "If the inspectors are thorough, then senior management teams will have to sit up and take note." Becta and Ofsted are providing guidance on the use of technology in teaching and learning for inspectors. 97 per cent of learning and skills inspectors have attended new framework training and 69 per cent participated in additional optional workshops.

Supporting the 14–19 reforms

Becta has published a guide to the use of e-learning for Diploma delivery for 14–19 partnerships[37] (especially in rural local authorities) and continues to work with the government and others on prospectuses and the Common Application Process and the future technology challenges of the 14–19 reform.

Becta has updated and keeps under review its guidance on data security[38] to meet the needs of partnership working, and is working with the sector to help colleges and providers safeguard their learners.

CASE STUDY

Accrington and Rossendale College: winner in the general further education category, Further Education and Skills Next Generation Learning Awards 2009[39]

Across its three campuses, this college provides adult education programmes, higher education courses, job development training and classes for 14- to 19-year-old students.

The college is working with learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, and is exploring ways in which e-learning can engage them. For example, a group of young people with Asperger's Syndrome were identified as being interested in technology, but were having difficulties accessing the course and integrating with other students.

To address this, four of these students are now using mobile ICT devices. In doing this, they have discovered their aptitude for 'gadgets' and have become experts. They are now sought out by other students for help and advice.

Another group, with particular needs around retentive memory, organisation and time structuring, has been using PDAs to help develop these skills.

None of this could be achieved without staff being confident users of technology. The college holds cross-college staff development days that are dedicated to e-learning and mobile learning.

Award judges recognised a culture of learning in the college among staff and learners alike.

04

Further education & skills

05 Benefiting the system

Becta has achieved cost savings of £55m for providers across the education and skills system this year. These include schools, local authorities and organisations in the further education and skills sector which use Becta procurement arrangements.

Since 2002:
- £1.56bn has been transacted through Becta procurement arrangements
- organisations across the education system have achieved savings of £223m.

Becta's procurement frameworks are becoming increasingly popular. The proportion of local authorities using the frameworks to purchase ICT resources increased between 2007 and 2008 from 78 per cent to 89 per cent.[40]

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£55 million

Becta has achieved cost savings of £55m for providers across the education system this year.

Swindon Borough Council found a tailored solution

Swindon Borough Council used Becta's Infrastructure Services Framework, which offers ICT services from suppliers that are tailored to suit local needs. This reduces the burden on educators because they can purchase either a completely managed service or parts of a service. The framework also gives them value for money.

"The Becta framework provided us with an excellent procurement structure to place our requirements into the marketplace. Becta's procurement team helped us scope our requirements to ensure best value for money.

"The suppliers clearly understood our requirements, and some excellent responses were received. The project exceeded both our service level and commercial expectations, and the initial phase of implementation has been completed successfully and on time."

Adam Glass
ICT PFI Project Manager

"Quality technology in Swindon schools is a top priority for Swindon Borough Council as it will assist children and young people in expanding and enhancing their skills through a medium they understand and enjoy. Any process which helps the Council save funds will benefit schools, students and the wider community in the long run as part of our efforts to deliver excellence."

Ian Bickerton
Director of Access and Provision

CASE STUDY

Using Becta frameworks

Educational organisations have saved money using a variety of Becta's procurement frameworks. The Learning Platform Services Framework is one example – leading to £25m cash savings across the system since 2007. Around 95 per cent of local authorities who chose to purchase a learning platform used the Becta Learning Platform Services Framework.[41] This framework provides UK schools, colleges and local authorities with an EU approved supplier network to deliver high quality, value for money learning platform services.

"Using the Becta Learning Platform Services Framework, we saved time and effort. The framework – and the advice and guidance from Becta – gave us confidence that we would be able to find a supplier who could offer us best value, quality, reliability and deliver to our requirements. We were able to take full advantage of the beneficial terms and levels of service negotiated by Becta. The solution implemented meets the requirements of the national digital infrastructure for learning platforms."

Christopher Hilditch, Children and Life Long Learning ICT Directorate Manager, Staffordshire County Council

05

System

" We continue to make use of Becta services from seeking advice on recommended software to considering the Becta Infrastructure Services Framework in terms of new build projects.[42] "

Marion Plant, Principal, North Warwickshire & Hinckley College

Improving quality

The Framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS)[43] is another example of ensuring that high-quality services achieve value for money and are delivered effectively. This framework helps schools and colleges provide a reliable and robust ICT infrastructure. The benefits include:

- greater ICT reliability and user confidence
- better understanding of school ICT management responsibilities
- proactive and planned ICT management
- improved management of technicians
- identification of areas in which schools can compare ICT management.

The benefits for service providers include enabling technicians to be more proactive and spotting potential difficulties before things go wrong.

Systems Interoperability Framework (SIF): Sharing data quickly and easily

Becta is helping educators use a variety of technology applications to share data efficiently, regardless of the platform that may be hosting these applications. For instance, this framework could allow a college principal and the head of a secondary school to share data without difficulty, regardless of the differences in software they may be using. To achieve this, Becta is working with partners to develop the Systems Interoperability Framework.[44]

Becta has also sought to encourage Microsoft to fully adopt internationally recognised open standards that will enable files to transfer more easily between different software products.[45] Becta has negotiated a new subscription licensing agreement with Microsoft that offers schools more flexibility in the software they use along with the potential to deliver improved value for money.[46]

The efficiencies gained by using technology have saved over £1bn of teachers' time between 2005–08.[47]

Consultancy Services Framework[48]

This framework provides the education sector with quick, easy and efficient access to high-quality consultancy services from trusted suppliers. Suppliers have been rigorously evaluated for their capability to meet educational, technical and procurement requirements.

"Partnerships for Schools welcomes the announcement by Becta of the new framework," says Steve Moss, the Partnerships for Schools Strategic Director for ICT. "High-quality advice and consultancy are vital for local authorities and schools as they plan for the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and, in particular, as they make decisions about ICT that can help transform how students learn and how teachers teach. The Becta ICT Consultancy Services Framework is a valuable tool for helping local authorities to get good advice for their BSF projects."

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» Future work

Becta will continue to ensure that technology is used across the education and skills system to improve attainment. As part of this ongoing work, Becta will focus on enabling schools, colleges and learning providers to use technology to help them achieve high quality standards and value for money across all that they do.

Becta's ongoing work will provide effective leadership within the education and skills system to support senior managers and educators in meeting learners' needs.

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06

Future work

Becta's mission is to inspire and lead the effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning.

Through evidence and insight, one thing is clear: Becta's drive to inspire the effective and innovative use of technology for all learners is making a difference.

01 Young learners

For young learners, Becta will:

- deliver the Home Access programme which will provide grants to over 270,000 low income households in England to purchase a computer and internet package to support their learning by March 2011

- ensure that learners have the required skills, knowledge and understanding to safely and effectively access learning and teaching opportunities as a part of enabling a Digital Britain.

02 Schools

For schools, Becta will:

- ensure the number of primary schools using or considering using managed services increases by 2,000 next year

- support all secondary schools to report online to parents by 2010 and all primary schools by 2012

- support the schools workforce in developing the effective use of technology to improve outcomes for their students/pupils.

03 Adult learners and business

For adult learners, Becta will;

- develop the Technology Exemplar Network so that 750,000 learners benefit by 2010

- deliver its commitments for The Learning Revolution and help informal adult learners improve their technology skills by 2010.

04 Further Education and skills

For the FE and skills sector, Becta will:

- develop the further education workforce by ensuring technology leadership is a core part of the Principals Qualifying Programme

- ensure that teachers and trainers learn through initial teacher training and continuing professional development to use technology effectively

- support the FE and skills sector in England to reach the top quartile of international performance in deployment of technology by March 2012.

05 System

For the education system, Becta will:

- increase the three year cashable savings in schools, colleges and local authorities to £120m by the end of year 2010/11

- work in partnership to see how new school and college buildings can be carbon neutral by 2016.

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