Benefits for teachers

Savings in time and workload
By providing one access point to all the data and information that teachers need

Professional development
Through peer-group networks and online research databases

Easier transitions
Less disruptive transitions between institutions as a result of easier exchange of information

Reduced administration overheads
All aspects of running a school are linked: the learning environment, management of information, registration, catering and the library

> "Students send completed work directly to their teacher, so never again will homework be lost!"
>
> Head teacher, St Paul's Catholic College, West Sussex

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> "We use and trust [our networked file service] as a tool which makes our day-to-day work easier …information and resources are accessible all over the school… Teachers can do their planning at any available computer… It has improved our work/life balance and reduced the need for printing and photocopying."
>
> *Butterflies for the use of ICT* (LGfL)

By March 2008 all local authorities will be offering their schools access to a personal online learning space.

A personal online learning space supports learning through a range of systems:

- Tools such as email, messaging, forums, wikis and blogs to support communication and collaboration

- An area personal to the user, for storing files and data

- Tools to support the creation, development and management of digital content

- Safe and secure anytime, anywhere access.

By March 2010 all schools should be using a learning platform. This is a system that incorporates all of the tools listed above whilst also integrating with the school's information management system (or MIS).

For more information go to:
www.becta.org.uk/schools/learningplatforms

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Learning platforms
how can they help you?

Learning platforms have taken education beyond the classroom walls. Class material and coursework can be accessed 'anytime, anywhere' and students can communicate and collaborate in a safe online environment.

See how learning platforms are used and some of the many benefits they can bring.

Benefits for learners

Learners can take a more active part in their education
Learning at a pace that suits the individual's capacity and needs

Anytime, anywhere learning
Email and internet access enable students to submit homework, as well as view timetables and outstanding tasks from home, with parent involvement

> **"I have MSN for chatting to my mate, emailing my mate. We like to gossip. It has helped me with my homework."**
>
> Sixth-form student in *The impact of e-portfolios on learning* (Becta)

> "It makes me feel proud that I took my time to do that bit of work and now people can see what I can actually do."
>
> Primary pupil, *The impact of e-portfolios on learning* (Becta)

Secure environment
Safe and secure access to protect users and their data, as well as to prevent bullying

Re-engaging disaffected learners
Instant messenger technology allows students to collaborate in a familiar setting (such as social networking) and the use of mobile phones and games consoles to connect with their learning environment

> "Use of the laptops and PDAs is initiating new forms of teaching and learning. As a result, our children are highly motivated and more reflective and analytical in all aspects of their learning. The school has experienced its biggest ever improvement in literacy…"
>
> Year 6 project in *Butterflies for the use of ICT* (LGfL)

> "We've used PowerPoint and they [the students] will upload these e-portfolios onto the school website, so hopefully for the transition from Year 6 to secondary, they will be able to show just what they can actually do."
>
> Primary school teacher in *The impact of e-portfolios on learning* (Becta)

Benefits for both teachers and learners

Collaboration
Having a personal online learning space encourages collaborative working both within and between institutions for teachers as well as learners

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> "You can ... send ideas to your friends. You can also send a message to the teacher and ask for help when you are stuck on a part of your coursework. I use my e-portfolio to send work there and back to my teacher. It is effective as my teacher can then review my work or help me with issues I am stuck on."
>
> Secondary student in *The impact of e-portfolios on learning* (Becta)

> "…collaborative delivery of courses to widen the curriculum offer to schools at KS4. It is practically impossible for one school to provide the wide choice of courses required by the 14-19 curriculum. Each school has therefore been able to widen their KS4 curriculum offer to their students by four more courses."
>
> *Butterflies for the use of ICT* (LGfL)

> "We show our parents the website and sometimes they go on and see what we're doing. Sometimes if we say we don't have homework, they can go onto the website and see if there's any homework on there, so they can check it out."
>
> Primary pupil in *The impact of e-portfolios on learning* (Becta)

Benefits for parents

Active engagement by parents and carers
Parents and carers will be able to engage in their children's education in the knowledge that all critical information will reach them

> "We are now using the system, linked to our attendance records, to contact parents on the first day of absence."
>
> *Butterflies for the use of ICT* (LGfL)

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> "..to cancel an after-school club, we send a text message to all relevant parents with just a few clicks of the mouse. This has been very effective in improving communication and releases office staff from having to make a long list of phone calls."
>
> *Butterflies for the use of ICT* (LGfL)