The BYOT – BYOD Difference

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This is one of the most commonly asked questions, and one that many have trouble getting their minds around.

The difficulty lies in many respects with the mindset of those of those approaching the question and links to an earlier post that mentioned the very different outlook displayed by teachers and indeed school administrators in schools operating at the lower end of the school evolutionary scale compared to those at the upper end.

In 2013 the vast majority of schools across the developed world are still bunched at the lower end of the evolutionary continuum with most still to succeed in getting all the teachers in the school to use the digital everyday in their teaching.

Just to remind everyone this is the definition of BYOT that Martin and I created - conscious when we were doing our research for the book in 2011 no definition for BYOT or BYOD existed.

> Bring your own technology (BYOT) is an educational development and a supplementary school technology resourcing model where the home and the school collaborate in arranging for the young's 24/7/365 use of their own digital technology/ies to be extended into the classroom to assist their teaching and learning and the organisation of their schooling and where relevant the complementary education outside the classroom (Lee and Levins, 2012, p11).

I should also stress at the time of writing the terms BYOT, BYOD and indeed BYOC - bring your own computer - were used interchangeably. The latter with ist limited use has all but died.

In retrospect we went out on limb and differentiated between BYOT and BYOD

Since the writing of that definition the differentiation has become ever more evident.

The main difference lies in the underlying educational philosophy

BYOT is based on a philosophy of distributed control of the teaching and learning process - a model that sees the teachers working in collaboration with the students and the parents in the 24/7/365 teaching of the young. It recognises the parents, increasingly the young and the school all play a vital part in that education and that the best way forward in a digital and networked world is for all parties to genuinely collaborate, both with the teaching and the provision of the technology.

BYOD is based on the belief that the professional educators should unilaterally control the teaching and learning. Only the professional educators know what is required. The students and parents should do as the school bids. It builds on the insular, stand alone model of schooling that schools have employed for generations where there is but token collaboration with the home. It assumes that the only real learning occurs within the school walls.

BYOD also assumes teaching has to be based on a distrust of the students and the need to control their every action.

BYOT is based on trust in and respect for the learner, and the educational belief that the job of schools is to assist every young person gradually take control of their own learning.

BYOT also recognises the current reality in society that outside the school walls the young from an ever younger age choose, learn to use, care for, maintain and update their own suite of digital technologies when they prefer and use that technology everywhere but the classroom. Vitally their parents trust them to use that technology responsibly unfettered.

In essence all of us in our general lives use a 'BYOT' operational mode.

As indicated in **Bring Your Own Technology** we consciously opted for the term 'technology' rather than 'device' because we could see the trend was away from the single 'device' as seen in the 1:1 situations to a suite of multiple digital technologies that included both the hardware and all manner of software and apps.

Indeed we recommended schools judge their likely bandwidth needs on at least three devices per student.

Think about how many items you have in your own kit.

A significant part of the BYOT - BYOD challenge is that the international technology industry - fast loosing its profit making from PCs - is seeking a new source of income from the schools' market by heavily marketing solutions that maintain the school's control of the student's every move in the school. The promotional literature is adorned by offerings from many of the major information technology corporations promising to reinforce the control over the children's technology. Many of those solutions, such as that for virtual desktops, are expensive.

The firms full well recognise there is not the same kind of profit to made with BYOT - which largely removes the need for that control.

Rather BYOT operates on that inexpensive solution called trust.

The developments need to be viewed within the wider evolution of schooling I've mentioned.

The BYOD - control over model - is evidenced in the early evolutionary stages where schools are still working within the traditional insular mindset. In this stage schools typically focus on the technology - not the education sought.

The BYOT is evidenced in schools that have reached the stage where they have adopted a networked mindset, are working with their homes and are pursuing an educational vision that seeks to best educate the kids for digital and networked world where learning and teaching can occur anywhere, anytime.

As you'll appreciate this is a big difference between BYOD and BYOT.