

BYOT Savings

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BYOT can save schools and governments considerable monies and hassles forever on, while enhancing the quality and appropriateness of the schooling provided.

In brief BYOT, and the natural next step, digital normalisation forever removes the onus on the school funding, selecting, maintaining and replacing every student's rapidly evolving suite of personal digital technologies.

It recognises the reality that the young of the developed world have long normalised the use of the digital in their everyday lives, have in their hands a suite of digital technologies they will continually attune to meet their ever evolving needs and wants, and as a consequence have a set of universal expectations and practises they and their parents will increasingly expect to see respected in the classroom.

With BYOT and digital normalisation the school funds simply those students who can't afford to buy the requisite kit, the network infrastructure, bandwidth, the classroom digital presentation technology, the staff's personal choice of digital toolkit, the website and linked digital communications suite and if required any specialist instructional technologies.

The students provide, use, maintain and update their choice of digital technologies.

Significantly BYOT will likely save many families, particularly those in non-government schools considerable monies. Their children will use in class the technologies they are already using 24/7/365, and the families will not be obliged to duplicate technology simply to appease the school.

We'd stress 'can' and underscore that we are talking BYOT of the form that we have defined (Lee and Levins, 2012. P11) where the school collaborates with the student's homes and actively encourages and trusts the children to use astutely the suite of personal technologies the children are already using in the 80% of learning time outside the classroom.

Our research, particularly now we have schools that have moved beyond the BYOT phase and normalised the whole school of the digital and the student's choice of kit, underscores the importance of the school readying itself to successfully take advantage of BYOT and having an eco-system, a culture where there is genuine collaboration with the students and their homes, and which trusts, respects, recognises and builds upon their teaching and resources.

To realise the full financial benefits of BYOT one needs a teaching environment where all the teachers, and not merely a percentage make apt use of the digital technology in their everyday teaching. The research reveals not surprisingly that if teachers don't use the digital technology in their teaching and vitally in a way that encourages the children to use theirs the students will not necessarily bring their kit to those teacher's classes.

The 'activating' of all teachers and students takes time and astute and concerted effort, requiring the simultaneous addressing of near fifty key variables.

One will thus only accrue the fuller financial savings only when there is normalised whole school use of the student's own technology.

BYOD, where the school specifies which technology the children must acquire and use can save some money but invariably the approach carries with it a reluctance to trust, and invariably the mandatory use of procedures to control the student usage, such as expensive virtual desktop systems, the buying of specific software and the continuing purchase of proxy services.

Moreover as a 'top down' model imposed on the parents, that invariably duplicates the preferred technology already in the home BYOD is unlikely to be tolerated very long by increasingly digitally empowered parents watching nearby schools embracing BYOT.

In calculating the financial savings for your school look at the

- Cost of the personal digital technology the school does not have to acquire,
- Insurance on the technology not required
- Cost of the software, software licenses and apps not needed
- Reduction in the staff time spent on the help desk, equipment support and maintenance

Consider also the considerable staff time and effort spent on seeking budget cover, the selection of gear and software, the configuration of each child's kit, troubleshooting, the provision of back up gear and the eventual upgrade the technology.

Give thought to the savings and efficiencies that come with digital normalisation and the movement from a paper operational base. For example, consider the approximate savings in:

- postage
- purchase of paper
- photocopying, photocopy and print technology
- staff time wasted on paper based administration/communication
- the efficiencies and economies made possible with the digital and ever tightly organizational integration
- staff time spent preparing and producing paper-based teaching materials
- adopting a highly efficient inexpensive digital communications suite and opting for electronic communiques.

Many new to the BYOT concept make the claim that the school has to spend considerable money readying the school's infrastructure.

The experiences of and research with the pathfinder schools doesn't bear that out. Yes if a school succeeds in getting every child and teacher to use the suite of digital technologies naturally across the school it will need ample and increasing bandwidth, ever denser campus wide Wi-Fi and apposite support technology but any school wanting the all pervasive use of the digital technology will need that anyway.

Tellingly by every child having in their hands the technology they use 24/7/365 the school positions itself forever to

- provide an ever higher order mode of learning and teaching, and continually enhance learning
- better individualise each child's learning, teaching and assessment
- teach anywhere, anytime, 24/7/365
- achieve ever greater efficiencies, economies and synergies in the teaching, assessment, communication and administration
- accrue ever more savings
- remove the burden on the school of providing the apposite current suite of digital technologies for each child.

Tellingly the genuine collaboration with the school's community that accompanies the successful uptake of BYOT invariably brings with it considerable unintended additional 'riches'. Many of those riches will be in the form of markedly increased social capital but in virtually all the schools studied the school received unanticipated material windfalls. One state school for example had an ex student give the school \$30,000 in case there were students in need of support.

While rightly one can say the 'savings' came from the collaboration rather than BYOT per se but the point remains that when schools are prepared to genuinely collaborate with their communities, to pool resources, to trust, respect and recognise the parent's contribution they position themselves to forever acquire significant additional resources.

BYOT reflects a historic shift in the financing of the student's personal digital technologies and in removing that burden from schools people will in a few years ask why didn't we make the obvious change earlier.