MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

This is the final bulletin from the DER-NSW Program Office (in this format). While we are exploring new digital forms of communication please continue to look at the intranet site where all information is stored.

This is an appropriate time to reflect on the achievements of the DER-NSW program since the Program Office inception in February 2009. They include:

- All orders for 2009 student laptops have been placed (65,609 devices) with 39,678 delivered to schools by 30 October 2009
- 463 schools are in the process of having Phase 1 wireless connectivity installed
- 405 of 439 full-time school-based Technology Support Officers and 55 of 57 Regional Staff have entered on duty. Advertisements for the recruitment of 44 part-time Technology Support Officers have also been placed.
- $10 million has been distributed for professional learning and curriculum support enabling state, regional and school based professional learning and the development of hundreds of resources, specifically designed for DER-NSW, posted on the Department’s intranet. Here you can see that we have actively engaged teachers, students and parents in the process:
  - 3195 participants have enrolled in DER-NSW Curriculum workshops
  - 1873 teachers participated in the Festival of learning with Laptops
  - 211 students participated in the Festival of learning with Laptops
  - A massive 12,469 views of our Parents youtube video
  - And the DER-NSW has been in the Newspaper 38 times – that’s an average of one story per week since February!!
- Following statewide consultation, laptop usage policies and procedures have been developed and posted on the Department’s website.
- The Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate (EMSAD) have completed planning a formal evaluation of the impact of the DER-NSW program on teaching and learning.

Dianne Marshall
Program Director

DER NSW WORKSHOPS ACROSS THE REGIONS

The comments below represent an across the board reaction to the 81 workshops that were conducted throughout Term 3.

"I enjoyed it, even though it was a lot to take in. Now the work begins!" said an English teacher at a DER-NSW workshop.

A PDHPE teacher with more than 16 years of experience commented that the workshop provided a “good snapshot of what is available and the possible uses in classroom. Bit daunting to think what is ahead, but now more motivated to ‘play’ and put resources together”.

The workshops were well represented with more than 2350 teachers participating.

Surveys which we conducted revealed that over 95% of science teachers indicated that the workshop allowed them to apply current knowledge and skills in the use of ICT in the classroom to meet syllabus outcomes.
However, there was an overall consensus that this merely signified the beginning of what is to come. There is lots of learning ahead of us!!

For example, the Lenovo laptops which are loaded with Microsoft and Adobe software, are powerful, personal learning tools which can represent challenges for teachers and students.

An email from an English head teacher offers us a strategy for a way forward. “I went to the Blacktown session of your DER-NSW TPL and at the end of the day I took the opportunity to thank you ... for all of the work that you and others had done in putting everything together. I sent two more members to subsequent sessions and they too were thrilled. Well, I have just been going through the files you put together and clearly I did not thank you enough. They are absolutely fantastic - and I cannot wait to get back to school (just a touch of hyperbole)!”. The effective integration of ICT into teaching and learning will take time. It requires an understanding of the relationship between curriculum, pedagogy and technology. It is complex, compounded by rapidly changing technologies. Curriculum leadership, ongoing professional learning and curriculum resources can provide support to teachers.

Curriculum resources – developed by teachers for teachers – for each KLA are now available on the Curriculum Support website at: www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/digital_rev/index.htm The resources are extremely helpful, “I’m in the process of making my way through the enormous number of resources up for the DER-NSW and I just wanted to say WOW, Congratulations and Thank you. ... as I make my way through them, I’m getting inspired on every page. Unfortunately, our laptop delivery has been delayed and up until now, I’ve been using that as my excuse for not getting to it. Now, I only wish I could rewind time and re-teach a few of the units from this year” said one Mathematics teacher.

One such resource, Leading my faculty, provides more support for teachers incorporating learning with laptops into their lessons. This resource has four modules with a range of activities which include discussion starters, stimulus materials, KLA examples and video clips.

• The teacher: Exploring teachers’ values and beliefs.
• The student: What do students think about the laptops?
• The laptop: What is the potential of the laptop?
• The pedagogy: How can we embed learning with laptops?

It is also available through Curriculum Support website at: http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au

There are more than 120 scheduled professional learning events across the regions in Semester 2 to support every KLA.


We are off to a great start!

Support for teachers and leaders continue to be a priority in this program. There are now 77 laptop wraps, 8 Tools4U, 3 UCreate and 5 video resources available on TaLe.

Laptop wrap resources will be doubled by Term 1, 2010 and there will be many additions to the teacher, student and leaders talk series – as well as to the Tools4U series.


The DER-NSW Professional Learning and Curriculum Support team will be collaborating with schools and regions to conduct a preliminary evaluation of professional learning and a quality assurance of the resources developed to date for teachers and leaders. The evaluation and quality assurance findings will inform planning for future activities and funding.
DER-NSW TERM 4 SCHOOL PACKAGE

A package will be delivered to schools this term to support DER-NSW professional learning and curriculum support for leaders and teachers. The package will include:

- Adobe magazine – including strategies such as Adobe Education Leaders, Adobe Ambassadors, Adobe Certified Experts, Adobe Certified Associates (including classes, schools) and the Adobe Innovation awards
- Microsoft newsletter including strategies such as IT Academy online tutorials (linked with CLI for teacher accreditation), Innovative Schools program
- CLI KLA information pamphlets outlining available online resources
- Introduction to Leading my faculty – Online resource
- OH&S Fact Sheets
- Charles Sturt University Graduate Certificate in ICT Education Information Package to schools – including scholarship information for term 1 2010
- One Note Tips and Tricks Information cards
- Other information as requested by schools.

REGIONAL UPDATE

A Regional SharePoint site has been developed to facilitate and promote collaboration and sharing of innovative and creative strategies between regions. Each region has their own site to create learning communities and the capacity to personalise their learning spaces in relation to their projects.

OH&S

The OH&S fact sheets regarding the safe use of laptops for students, staff and parents have been developed and are now available at: https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/adminandmanage/ohands/safeworklearn/riskmanage/index.htm

The fact sheets address issues such as recommended practices for using laptops, taking breaks, spinal health and transporting the laptop. We suggest that these would be a useful addition to school newsletters.

AUDIT

School based processes for managing the DER-NSW laptops have now been added to audit requirements. Please note the additions to the School Manual on Financial Management in Section 7.

SOFTWARE

The DER-NSW program is aware that schools have requested a range of additional software applications be made available in the future. Requests include both accessibility and curriculum software. The program has placed a higher priority on accessibility software for students with a disability and will address curriculum software in the near future.

We are in the process of developing a framework and procedures to evaluate and prioritise software. This is a significant task, some of the challenges include:

- The software must be compatible with the laptop hardware, software, operating system and the wireless environment.
- An appropriate critical mass of schools intend accessing the software.
- The software is suitable for the screen resolution and hardware specifications of the DER-NSW learning device.
- All software licensing issues are appropriately addressed.
- Funding sources for software licences are sourced.
- The software is evaluated as meeting NSW-DET curriculum needs.
- The software can be packaged for distribution.
- An appropriate ongoing process for teachers to make submissions for software to be evaluated.
- Software doesn’t duplicate functionality of existing software.

Term 4

School Professional Learning

If you would like some assistance with end of year professional learning advice please contact Barbara Bober or Ben Jones.

barbara.bober@det.nsw.edu.au
Benjamin.Jones21@det.nsw.edu.au
EVALUATION PROJECT

A formal evaluation of the educational impact of the Digital Education Revolution – NSW will begin in Term 4 2009. This evaluation is supported by the Department’s Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate (EMSAD). Evaluation strategies include:

- surveys of teachers and students
- focus groups of parents, teachers and students
- case studies of selected schools across the state
- benchmark data from year 8 2009
- analysis of external assessment and examination results over the duration of the evaluation
- longitudinal analysis of attendance, retention and suspension/expulsion data.

The terms of reference for the evaluation include:

- the effectiveness of the program in developing student-centric practices in teaching, learning and assessment that employ contemporary learning resources and activities
- the effect of greater access to global information resources and tools for information processing, communication and collaboration on student motivation and engagement in learning
- the impact of improved motivation and engagement on student performance in school, state and national assessments and on attendance, retention and behaviour.

In Term 4 2009 all high and central schools will be asked to participate in the evaluation to gather baseline data from all Year 8 students and all teachers.

Teachers and students will be emailed links to the surveys later this term which will allow immediate access to the online survey. Principals will be contacted with details and will be asked to facilitate this. All results will be kept confidential and opinions on the 1 to 1 laptop program will assist in identifying the effects that the laptops have on teaching and learning.

Windows7


Orders will begin shipping mid November. Please read the terms and conditions as they apply to all teachers.

FLEXIBLE FUNDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES 2010

Information on the process for applying for flexible funding in future years is included in the DER-NSW document Students with Disabilities in Secondary and Central Schools and in Schools for Specific Purposes (SSP) Procedures (see DER-NSW Policy and procedures). Starting in 2009, the Year 8 review meeting should include consultation with parents/carers regarding the suitability of a laptop allocation in Year 9. Parents/carers will be required to sign the Students with Disabilities Parent/Carer Consent Form: https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/technology/computers/l4l/disab_consent.doc.

Disability Programs Directorate has contacted schools requesting information about flexible funding. Schools will be required to report how many students with a disability (if any) require alternative equipment. Attachment B proforma: https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/deptresources/majorprojects/dernsw/policies/ict_disability.pdf

It is important that the flexible funding form is signed by a parent/carer and that they understand this means they have relinquished the laptop. A number of schools did not follow this in 2009 and were required to hand their flexible funding back when parents complained and requested a laptop.

As mentioned earlier, a solution is currently being developed to enable access to disability software on DER-NSW laptops.

Enquiries: Cheryl Stambolis, Disability Programs
TEACHER LAPTOP SOFTWARE REFRESH

The first teacher (T1) laptops were delivered to teachers just prior to the end of Term 2 in order to give teachers as much exposure as possible to the new laptops and software prior to the commencement of delivery of the student laptops. At the time there was an understanding that the software on the laptops was not entirely ready for release and that they would need to be reimaged at a later date. This was considered acceptable as it was more important to get the laptops in the hands of teachers.

The functionality to update the software on the T1 laptops was delivered during the school holidays, and as of today, 2549 laptops have been updated by the TSOs across the state. Whilst there were some early technical difficulties as a result of changes external to the DER-NSW program, these have since been resolved and the refresh program is proceeding without incident. As you can understand we are still in the process of updating all 9500 T1 laptops, and we would really appreciate your support in assisting your TSO with the refresh by making the laptops available to them.

It is important that all of the T1 laptops be refreshed as soon as possible as laptops with the old software cannot be supported and the new image will ensure that the laptops get the latest software updates.

An Important Caveat: Delays with refreshing a T1 laptop will result in the laptop ceasing to function at some stage, and will require the laptop to be sent away as the TSO will not be able to fix the laptop once it gets into this state.

WIRELESS NETWORKING

In Phase 2 of the wireless networking project, schools will be revisited by IBM to complete the installation of wireless infrastructure to eligible learning spaces not completed in Phase 1. IBM will also install wireless components into non-teaching spaces as part of any school funded discretionary purchase.

Phase 2 planning has commenced and some schools have already been contacted by IBM to verify the rooms to be wirelessly enabled.

Subsequent to Phase 1 many schools now have a local TSO who may be utilised to work with IBM when the Phase 2 installation work begins. Schools should consider the role that their local TSO can play and alert IBM during the early negotiation stages of Phase 2.

Schools that have been notified of fibre optic issues and had quotes approved should organise the work to be completed as soon as possible.

Scheduling and completion of Phase 2 is dependent on all inter-building fibre optic links being functional.

Demontable classrooms: A Project Manager has been assigned to implement wireless networking in demountables and it is expected that installation will commence in Term 1 2010 and be completed during Term 2 2010.

Schools for Specific Purposes (SSP): A Project Manager has been assigned to implement Wireless Networking for SSPs. The project design is in its final stages and a pilot run is being organised. SSPs will be contacted and consulted regarding DER-NSW allocations of access points to ensure their needs are met.

The schools wireless network is dependent on a number of components. The “DIP” server, mobility controller, head end switch, and building switches all play a vital role in network functionality.

An Important Caveat:

When holiday periods arrive these components must not be turned off to ensure the service will be available when school resumes.

Also DER-NSW wireless components must not be moved or reconfigured as this may void the warranties and service levels provided by the DER-NSW program.

LAPTOP LOANS

Following requests from Principals a Laptop Loan Charter has been developed for short and long term use of laptops to students who have not been allocated a laptop. The charter is to be signed by the student and parent, agreeing to an allocated period of time of use. This will commence once the HSC period has ended.

Schools will be encouraged to loan laptops over the Christmas holidays to teachers and students. We believe that the laptops will be safer out on loan than stored on school premises. The Laptop Loan Charter will replace point 5.7 in the revised version of the Implementation Procedures which will be issued later this term.


LAPTOPS TRAVELLING OVERSEAS

Implementation procedures point 7.2 refers to the Principals’ discretion (if a student is applying for long leave to travel) to require students to return their laptops. This does not apply if the student is moving to DET Distance Education to continue their education. In this case point 8.1 (Students moving to another government school) applies and students are permitted to take their laptop with them.
DAMAGED LAPTOPS

The NSW Treasury Managed Fund (TMF) Contract of Coverage states: “The Fund covers all losses, provided the loss is fortuitous, real and quantitative”.

The program office is hearing examples from schools which do not meet the criteria of fortuitous, but would in fact be classified as negligence. In many cases it would appear that the loss occurred from carelessness, inattention and an apparent disregard for the item. Damage or loss caused or partly caused by negligence is not covered by TMF.

The laptops provided by the DER-NSW program come with a two year warranty that does not cover accidental breakages or damage caused either by negligence or deliberate actions. Thus this type of damage if repaired will incur a charge, and the program has obtained a price list for the most common types of repairs: https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/deptresources/majorprojects/dernsw/techsupport/tso_resources/price_list.pdf

After consultation with the NSW Secondary Principals’ Council (SPC), the Digital Revolution Taskforce, and Lenovo, the DER-NSW program is advising schools that laptop repairs over $300 are not economical or cost-effective. In these circumstances the purchase of a replacement machine is preferable, and schools can purchase replacement laptops from the DER-NSW Procurement Intranet page at: https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/it/equipment/hardware_stds/derReplacement_order.htm

Two documents which describe the purpose of the state-wide pool of laptops and circumstances where the DER-NSW program will replace pool laptops are available at:


TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT OFFICERS

We have now moved into Phase 2 and 3 of the TSO recruitment process which will see the appointment of a further 44 part time and 34 full time positions. 17 of the full-time officers are re-advertisements from Phase 1 with a further 17 officers working as travelling TSOs. These ‘Travelling TSOs’ will support multiple schools within an allocated area. These positions have been established by 34 smaller schools, which were scheduled for a part-time TSO, working together to create 17 full time positions.

As we move towards the end of the year, preparation for the new school year and the rollout of next year’s laptops is already being made. TSOs will be busy over the summer holidays preparing for the 2010 laptop rollout and getting a better understanding of the backend systems that have been created to support the new technologies.