Education Technology Review - 2011

The education ICT sector saw many innovative developments in new technologies and digital media in 2011. The sector continues to make significant progress and its impact on the education sector remains undiminished.

Cloud computing

Even though cloud computing has been with us for many years, 2011 finally saw cloud computing being offered more generally to the education sector. Schools, colleges and universities can now buy a range of hosted education ICT services such as backup services, learning platforms, email and online storage. More than a third of IT departments in the higher education sector are now taking advantage of cloud based services.

Office 365

As a response to Google's cloud based services, Microsoft launched Office 365. Office 365 features cloud-based versions of its productivity and communication suite which includes Office Professional Plus, Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, Lync Online and Office Web Apps. Schools, colleges and universities will become more dependent on cloud based services to deliver mainstream education services.

1Gbps broadband speeds

The growing affordability of broadband services the UK saw a rising number of schools signing up to 1Gbps. With the advent of cloud based services the demand for ever faster broadband services will continue to rise.

Mobile computing

A growing number of schools are making use of mobile or post PC devices. iPads, tablets, iPod Touches and smartphones became part of everyday learning for many teachers and pupils. The mobile computing model has yet to have a profound impact on school pedagogy, but the rise of education applications, lower unit costs and the growing awareness of the potential of these devices mean that mobile computing will continue to make waves in the year ahead.

Demand for revenue based services

With the education sector holding smaller ICT capital budgets, we have seen a growing demand for ICT services that are financed by revenue streams. Schools, colleges and universities are attracted to an ICT service model where there is a greater degree of certainty over ICT spending. Education ICT suppliers have remodelled their services to reflect this demand.
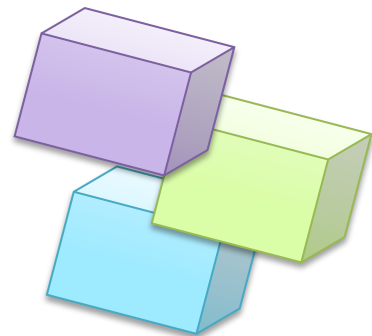
Smaller learning management systems

Schools, colleges and universities have widely adopted the use of web based education services that are hosted on learning management systems, virtual and managed learning environments and learning platforms. Education establishments now seek best of breed ICT services and they are not always provided by traditional learning management systems. The learning management system will continue to provide a vital web based service but it will sit alongside an array of other services such as social media, web based apps and cloud based services.

3D Technology

The growing affordability of 3D ready projectors and active 3D glasses alongside improved access to 3D content channels has made 3D projection an attractive and viable option for schools.

Augmented Reality

The use of augmented reality in the education sector is set to explode in coming years. Access to hardware such as visualisers and smart mobile devices is already in place. This and ready access to free AR software applications will enable every school to take advantage of marker based and gravimetric AR applications.

For Further Information
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