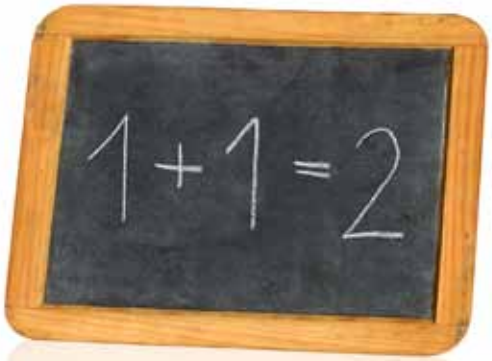


Does your school's Information Technology prepare your students for *their future* or for *your past*?

Your K-12 educational environment will face some major challenges in the next five years. You will be required to:

- **Meet students' expectations for more technology in the classroom.**
- **Keep up with emerging technology trends.**
- **Make the right investment in your IT staffing to better prepare for the future of technology in schools.**
- **Tighten your budgets — do more with less.**

In This White Paper

Meeting students' expectations for more technology in the classroom.

SOLUTION: Understand that students are merely a product of their environment, and as a result, they are learning using technology in ways that previous generations have not.

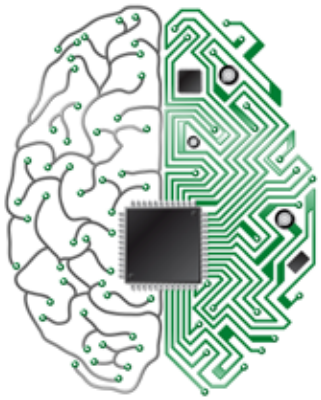
Upward trends in media consumption

Like it or not, students have become digital learners almost overnight. Today's students are growing up with technology in just about every aspect of their lives — cell phones and mobile devices allow them to text or chat with friends and family, digital television allows them to watch programming whenever they like, and the Internet allows them to find whatever information they want, whenever they want.

The amount of time children and teens spend on the computer tripled from 1999 to 2009. 65% of high school students use mobile phones in school. 25% of text messages sent by teens are sent during class.

A Ratheon study shows that 72% of U.S. middle school students spend more than three hours of each day outside of school in front of a TV, mobile phone, or computer rather than doing homework or other academic related activities. Today there are 31 billion searches on Google every month (up from 2.7 billion in 2006). Facebook has 500 million users, of which 50% are active every single day. 200 million of those users access Facebook from a mobile device.

Meanwhile, the amount of time students spend with print media has gone down. The percent of people who read a printed newspaper dropped from 58% in 1993 to 34% in 2008.[1]



With a constant infusion of technology, our brains are now wired to learn in a different way

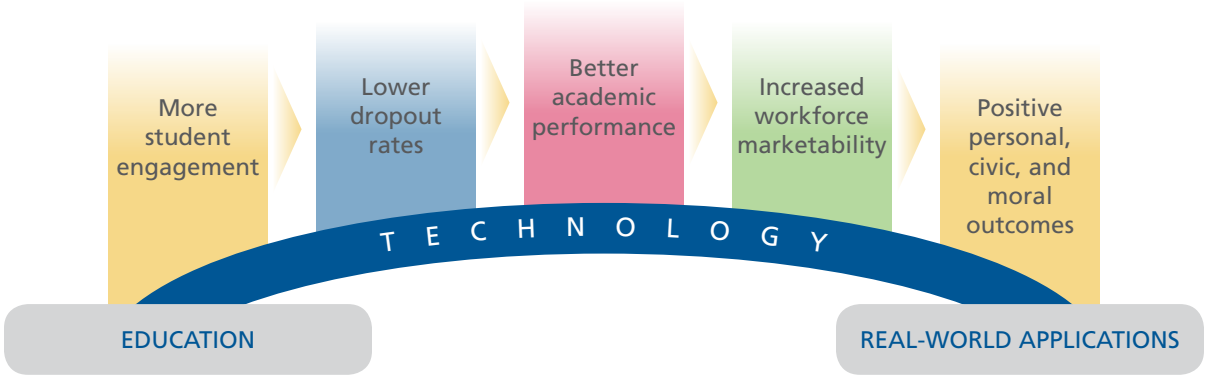
Recent research on neuroplasticity (the ability of the human brain to change as a result of one's experience) suggests that the brain is extremely malleable. As today's students have never known a day without these advanced technological tools, their brains have been physiologically conditioned to communicate and learn with these devices.

Educators and IT administrators who do not embrace the technology lifestyle of students will lose the ability to reach and educate them effectively.

The classroom of today, not even the future, must be able to educate students who have grown up with newer technology. Students are interacting and learning using technology in ways that previous generations have not. You will not be able to reach students adequately by using yesterday's mediums instead of the mediums of today and tomorrow. If you fail to grasp the needs of this generation, you risk the effectiveness of your educational efforts. [1]

Keeping up with emerging technology changes.

SOLUTION: Realize IT's role in student performance and achievement, and make major decisions about your IT program accordingly.



Empowering student learning now

The way students think about technology is changing the classroom. The use of technology, especially mobile devices, empowers and engages students in their learning experiences. Teachers become facilitators and educators as students engage in a wider, more self-directed path of learning.

Discovery learning and peer tutoring have become more feasible, thanks to information technology. Technology use allows many more students to be actively thinking about information, making choices, and executing skills than is typical in traditional teacher-led lessons. Moreover, students are in the position of defining their goals, making design decisions, and evaluating their progress.

Driving student achievement in the future

Daily technology use in core subject-area classes, frequent technology use in intervention courses, and a low student-to-computer ratio were found to play a critical role in reducing dropout rates, a study by Project RED reveals.[2] In addition, studies have linked student engagement with positive academic, civic and moral, personal and social, and work-related outcomes.[3]

What we are really seeing right now is a true paradigm shift," said Sean McDonough, director of information technology for the Harrisonburg School District in Harrisonburg, VA. "In some ways, we have a whole new way of thinking about how we're truly using technology in today's world because of the omnipresence that technology gives us."[4]

The infusion of technology in intervention programs was the top predictor for improved high-stakes test scores, lower dropout rates, and improved discipline.[5]

The top ten in-demand jobs in 2010 did not exist in 2004. Students must be prepared to solve future problems using technology that does not even exist today.[6]

Making the right investment in your IT staffing for the future of technology.

SOLUTION: Honestly assess your IT leadership on several key factors.

The truth about IT staffing

In the early days of the information technology, much more of the budget was devoted to hardware than to software, service and support. Today, hardware and software prices have dropped, but service and support costs have risen.

So a question must be asked. Do schools have not enough staff or the wrong staff and strategy? If your school has the wrong staff, adding more resource makes the problem worse. If you have the wrong IT strategy, you will need more staff. If you have too many obsolete computers, you need extra staff to maintain them. If you don't have enough of the right skill sets or visionaries, you will need more staff.

Are the right people in the right place?

Just as having the right teachers in the classroom can be critical to the outcome and performance of students, having the right people to manage your IT is just as crucial. Is your IT operation staffed properly, with people who have the right skills, vision and attitude?

"You want the right people on the bus in the right seat...Failure comes from having the wrong people, or sitting in the wrong roles. Success comes from having the right people in the right roles."

— Jim Collins, Management Guru and Author, *Good to Great*

POP QUIZ

Assess your current IT program:	Unacceptable	Below Average	Acceptable	Exceptional
1. Forward-thinking and innovative	1	2	3	4
2. Response time for service requests	1	2	3	4
3. Proactive vs. reactive	1	2	3	4
4. Implementation of best practices	1	2	3	4
5. Time you spend managing IT issues	1	2	3	4
6. Knowledgeable in all areas of IT support	1	2	3	4
7. Managed and properly forecast IT budget	1	2	3	4
8. Adequate staffing levels	1	2	3	4

If your program scored less than 24, it is time to consider a new IT solution. **TOTAL** _____

Tightening your budgets and doing more with less.

SOLUTION: Realize that newer technologies will help you think creatively about reducing cost.

School systems are asked to cut costs everywhere. Taxpayers are asking school systems to deliver more for less money. How can a school system cut costs without losing quality of education and even teacher's jobs?

Although IT is a small part of a school district's budget (approximately 2%), there are several reasons to review the IT budget:

1. Proper planning of IT can increase savings as new technologies are introduced, such as the migration from textbooks to electronic media.
2. Many schools systems have inadequate control over IT budgets and thus have room for savings.
3. Every saving outside of the classroom expenditures provides better savings for teachers and the classroom.
4. Uncover hidden costs that come with extra support, quality, and productivity loss.

Many schools believe they are saving money by maintaining and not replacing older computers. Unfortunately, the opposite may be true. What might be saved in slowing computer refresh rates is lost due to higher support costs and lower productivity in the classroom.

Cost Comparison of Textbooks and E-Readers Per Student

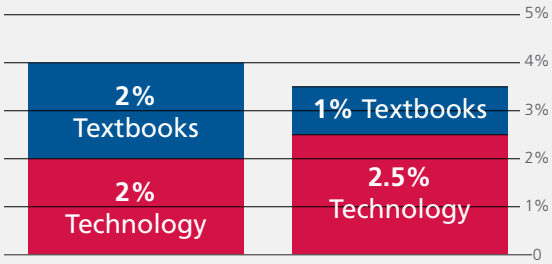
Textbook ($50) x 4

= $200

E-Reader ($100) + 4 digital textbooks ($40)

= $140

This example shows a .5% overall budget reduction through a 50% conversion to electronic textbooks.



Typical school district spend of technology and textbooks

New model of fund reallocation to integrate electronic textbooks into the classroom

"You need to look at the total cost of ownership. Slowing down the refresh cycle may look good on paper, but it's not a great solution if you look at support costs and from the perspective of the end user."

— Richard S. Kaestner, Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)

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TMS consists of the following components:

- **IT Strategic Five Year Planning**
- **Hardware, Software, and Licensing**
- **Warranty Repair**
- **Service Level Agreements with Guaranteed Uptime**

Managed and Reduced Cost

- A budget to allocate the right amount of resources to execute the strategic plan
- Innovative expertise to save costs and locate sources of funding

Performance

- The right level of trained resources to execute and support your IT
- A dedicated service desk that responds to requests faster
- Local staffing levels to meet the unique demands of the school calendar

Innovation

- A strategic roadmap for transition into new and emerging technologies
- A multi-year plan for IT designed specifically for your school district
- A tracking mechanism to measure the results and effectiveness of best practices

If you wish to spend more time on curriculum and less time on Information Technology, then call or email VARtek today!

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