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Getting best value from your investment

A guide for school leaders

Securing value and performance from technology investment

Technology is a strategic asset in education. Maximising its potential and achieving best value from often substantial investments demands careful planning and thoughtful collaboration. This guide will help you understand the many support resources available to help you.

Improving schools through technology

The government is spending more than £50 billion improving schools in England over the next 15 years. Around 10 per cent of this figure will be spent on technology infrastructure and services.

Schools outside these capital building programmes will also continue to make considerable investments in technology, exploring the new teaching, learning and administration processes that it can make possible.

New technologies enable information and resources to be shared by learners, teachers, support staff and management teams in radical and transforming ways. Improvements in internet connections open up new ways of communicating within and beyond the school.

Your technology investment should help you achieve:

- better, more reliable technology for learners, teachers and managers

- better value and quality

- safe and secure access to a huge range of online educational resources

- new ways of handling student information, communicating with parents and children's services

- a route to personalising learning that helps every student to achieve his or her potential

- a direct means to extend learning beyond the school, involving parents and the wider community.

Becta's procurement frameworks

With ICT now funded from core budgets, schools and local authorities must ensure that all their purchasing is in line with EU and public procurement regulations as well as best-value principles. That might sound obvious but in the past ad hoc funding and purchasing meant it did not always happen.

Becta has a range of EU-compliant procurement frameworks to guide and support technology purchasing in schools. These offer:

- a listing of suppliers who understand the needs of schools

- products and services delivered at a high standard set by Becta

- a simplified and shorter purchasing route that ensures compliance with EU procurement law

- consistent contractual terms with controlled local flexibility

- ongoing monitoring of suppliers

- reassurance that Becta will arbitrate if conflicts arise

- better value from purchases through aggregation.

Becta's procurement frameworks follow and promote best practice. They also provide an auditable assurance of value for money, with suppliers continuously monitored for performance and value throughout the life of the framework.

We recommend that purchasing should not be done by individual schools but by a larger group, such as a local authority, regional broadband consortium (RBC) or purchasing organisation. In the case of schools that are being built as part of Building Schools for the Future, the purchasing will normally be via a local education partnership. Schools can still specify their individual requirements within this arrangement, but the bigger organisation can aggregate the requirements of many schools and so achieve better value.

"By purchasing ICT as an entire local authority as opposed to separate schools, we have been able to provide equipment such as interactive whiteboards at a fraction of the cost. Our staff and pupils have access to a huge range of quality resources, which could never have been bought within our LA alone."

Noureddin Khassal, School Effectiveness Team – Westminster City Council

Finding purchasing partners

- First contact your local authority. Does it offer a procurement service for schools? This is particularly important if your local authority is taking part in one of the capital investment programmes such as Building Schools for the Future, where procurement arrangements may already be in place.

- Whoever your partners might be, ensure that purchases are made from suppliers who comply with Becta's specifications.

For further information email **engage@becta.org.uk**

> There have been more than £40 million of transactions on our software licensing framework with average savings of 57 per cent.

Specifying technology to meet your needs

You should start with a comprehensive vision for technology in your school. This is all the more important at the beginning of a refurbishment or new build project.

This vision is not so much about the technology itself, but the changes in teaching, learning, communicating and administration that you want to achieve through your investment.

Relevant issues could include how:

- new technologies could contribute to personalising learning

- technology could enable students' access to resources from home

- technology investment could support new ways of working

- technology can be used to involve parents and the wider community

- technology can be used securely to share appropriate information about learners and their learning

- technology can help reduce a school's environmental impact – for example by reducing travel.

Self-review

You should review your current and planned use of technology in collaboration with all stakeholders. The wider the consultation, the better will be the final outcome.

We recommend that you use Becta's self-review framework. Its first section focuses on creating and reviewing a vision for ICT. The self-review framework is supported by a free online tool which will guide you through every stage of a review, helping you to assess the suitability of a technology to meet your needs and the best use of finite resources.

"The self-review framework has enabled us to check that we are getting value for money from our equipment, to enrich the curriculum and to see how to personalise learning through ICT."

Rekha Bhakoo, Headteacher – Newton Farm First and Middle School, Harrow

Institutional infrastructure

We have developed a functional specification for institutional infrastructure which sets out what schools can expect to do with their technology.

Use this alongside the Infrastructure Services Framework for purchasing products and services from suppliers that understand the needs of education. These suppliers can propose the technology solution needed to deliver your vision.

This framework is designed to:

- reduce the technical burden on schools
- increase the reliability of technology
- reduce time spent on technology management and support
- establish predictable costs to help schools plan for a sustained level of technology
- reduce risk (a service-based approach to technology transfers most of the risk to the supplier).

Products and services might be purchased individually or as a package and should include:

- the design of appropriate systems by qualified personnel, based on Becta's functional and technical specifications, taking into account legacy equipment

- the purchase of high-quality, warranted equipment including interactive whiteboards, network equipment, desktops, laptops and mobile technologies

- the installation and testing of equipment including integration of new equipment with existing equipment

- proactive maintenance of both existing and new systems

- reactive service and technical support that is compliant with Becta's Framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS)

- a selection of training options to meet the needs of technical and non-technical staff.

Note that alternative arrangements will be in place for schools participating, or preparing to take part in, some capital building programmes. Contact your local authority to find out more.

Environmental sustainability

We are all becoming more aware of our effect on the environment and schools will need to play their part in reducing public-sector carbon emissions. It is therefore important when purchasing ICT equipment to ask questions about energy consumption and efficiency. All suppliers need to conform to the EC Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), which requires them to make arrangements to dispose of waste electronic equipment.

Becta
**Infrastructure
Services**
Framework
Supplier

"I have been impressed by the benefits to my Authority of using the Becta [infrastructure services] framework and by the ability to take advantage of aggregation with other local authorities to secure significant savings. This will result in us being able to provide more pupils with computers."

Ian Ithurralde, E-learning Co-ordinator, Children, Education and Social Care – Stockton-on-Tees Local Authority

You should:

- consult your local authority if you are taking part in a capital building programme – there may already be support in place to help your planning

- use Becta's self-review framework to help evaluate your current position and what actions you need to take to realise your technology vision

- ensure your vision for the role of technology in learning and teaching is carried out with engagement from the senior management team, teachers, governors, parents and learners

- use Becta's Functional Specification for Institutional Infrastructure to help decide what you want your technology to do for you

- set targets and timescales and allocate budgets (Becta's ICT Investment Planner can help)

- ensure that your ICT maintenance and support, whether provided internally or externally, meets the best practice set out in Becta's Framework for ICT Technical Support

- give due consideration to environmental sustainability issues – for instance, by purchasing items with minimum packaging, and ensuring there are suitable power-save options when purchasing new equipment.

> In 2007, local authorities taking part in the Computer for Pupils initiative have achieved superb value and pricing by using the preferred suppliers identified by the Becta-run mini competitions under our infrastructure services framework.

Learning platforms and personalising learning

Enabling learners to learn at the pace and place that suits them has been historically difficult for education providers, but new developments in technology have brought exciting new possibilities for this personalisation of learning.

Learning platforms enable learners and teachers to share and store resources which can be accessed from within and outside the school. From March 2008, the government has said that all learners should have access to a personal online learning space with the potential to support 'e-portfolios' of their work. By 2010 all schools should have a learning platform that integrates these personal online spaces with their information management system.

Becta has developed functional and technical specifications for learning platforms.

Supported by a well-functioning technology infrastructure, a compliant learning platform enables:

- continuity of learning and out-of-hours learning

- increased parental involvement

- increased collaboration between learners, and between learners and teachers

- increased involvement of pupils in their own learning and opportunities for re-engaging those who are disaffected

- sharing of learning aims and progress with pupils

- access to a greater range of resources, which can be shared, adapted and repurposed

- reduction of administrative burden through more effective recording, communication and collaboration tools

- opportunities to engage remote and hard-to-reach learners

- opportunities for professional development through peer-to-peer networks and online research databases.

You should:

- complete Becta's Learning Platform functionality tool

- contact your local authority to find out about the personal online learning space it offers for your learners, and what plans it has for a learning platform

- consult your local authority to find out how it is supporting schools in making effective use of a learning platform.

www.becta.org.uk/schools/learningplatforms

"The Becta framework has given us a simple but robust path to procure a county-wide learning platform on behalf of Oxfordshire schools. Support provided by the Becta staff and website guidance has been tremendously helpful in the procurement process and to make sure the mini-competition runs smoothly."

Graham Shaw, Deputy Head – ICT Services, Oxfordshire County Council

- In only its first year, 50 local authorities have issued a contract under the learning platform services framework.

- A further 20 are undertaking a mini-tender, and 20 more are considering using the framework soon.

- 50 local authorities already had a learning platform or learning space. Of these nearly half were already using suppliers who subsequently became part of our framework.

Making the most of broadband

The National Education Network is a dedicated facility designed to provide every learner and teacher with secure access to resources, services and applications. It gives direct and easy access to high-quality educational content and helps to ensure that schools can maximise the return on their investment in broadband.

The National Education Network is delivered exclusively through regional broadband consortia and local authorities, in partnership with Becta and JANET(UK).

The JANET network connects schools and post-school learning providers across the UK, serving more than 18 million end-users. Within this infrastructure the National Education Network provides a huge range of new and exciting possibilities for schools:

- for learning and teaching, it joins teacher, learners and mentors to each other, including video conferencing between schools

- for management and leadership it joins schools to their partners, their local authority, government and agencies

- for professional development it connects education professionals, mentors, trainers and teacher educators.

Becta's Accreditation of Internet Services and the National Education Network

Broadband connectivity and internet access also bring potential threats to safety and security. The National Education Network offers a much higher level of safety and security than ordinary consumer connectivity.

Becta's accreditation of internet services scheme enables providers to demonstrate that they meet specific standards of service, including safeguards for secure internet access. Many regional broadband consortia and local authorities providing internet services to schools are already accredited. We are encouraging all providers of broadband services to schools to put their services forward for accreditation.

www.becta.org.uk/schools/ispsafety

Making the most of your data

Among the benefits of learning platforms should be an increased flow of useful data about all aspects of work in your school. Using this data well should reduce the workloads around many administrative tasks.

Becta is working to ensure schools:

- can share information about pupils and the school, safely and securely with appropriate people, institutions and services

- receive more targeted support from your local authority advisers, based on better access to the latest school performance data and pupil targets

- can choose appropriate information management system (including MIS) products and services from a range of suppliers

- receive improved support for information management systems

- can improve institutional processes through effective use of management information systems

- can share assessment data between the learning platform and the information management system to enhance whole-school reporting and analysis

- can adopt the use of the best information management packages with confidence that they will work seamlessly with existing and new software packages.

You should:

- review your current needs and anticipate your future needs for information management

- compare the functionality of your current management information system (MIS) solution with Becta's Functional Requirements for Information Management

- register with the online community for learning platforms and information management to join in discussions and participate in consultations

- work with the appropriate elements of the self-review framework to enhance your use of information management and realise the full benefits of your technology investment

- undertake NCSL's use of data learning modules.

http://communities.becta.org.uk/ learningplatformsandmis

Managing and supporting technology

Technology can enhance the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching, but will only do so if it is underpinned by a reliable infrastructure. This reliability in turn depends on high-quality technical design, technical support and service provision.

Becta's Framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS) is designed to help schools to achieve just that. It is based on the internationally-recognised ITIL standard and has been developed specifically for schools. It enables internal and external technical support providers to implement best practice and to measure the effectiveness of their support.

Schools that have implemented FITS processes have enjoyed:

- improved service reliability and technical support

- improved user confidence in the provision of services and technical support

- a change from reactive to proactive technical support

- more effective use of technical support resources

- improved communication and collaboration between technical support, users, senior managers and suppliers.

FITS options

FITS is for schools with an internal technical support team for most of their technology service delivery and support.

Primary FITS is for primary schools that don't have their own technical support staff. The guidance helps these schools to make the most of their technical support provision from whichever source.

FITS operations management is for schools that have implemented the FITS processes and would like specifically to improve operations management.

Evaluate your current provision.
www.becta.org.uk/schools/fits

All of our infrastructure services framework suppliers can provide services and support using the FITS processes. You can buy this package as an individual service, or add it to your requirements when buying new equipment.

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"Implementing Primary FITS has led to a noticeable improvement in the confidence of ICT users in the school. They are now able to plan for teaching and learning activities in the knowledge that they should be able to deliver what they plan."

Mark Lacey, Headteacher – Parson Street Primary School, Bristol

"Implementing FITS in our school has encouraged a greater use of technology in teaching and learning."

J G Porteous, Headteacher – Turton High School, Bolton

Further information

Becta's website highlights advice on procurement and Becta's procurement frameworks
www.becta.org.uk/schools/procurement

A Becta purchasing tool, 'ICT investment planner' is available on our website
www.becta.org.uk/schools/ictinvestmentplanner

A Becta publication, 'Managing ICT Costs in Schools' is available on our website
www.becta.org.uk/publications

Partnerships for Schools manages the Building Schools for the Future Programme
www.p4s.org.uk

Becta offer guidance about how to get started and help you make some decisions about how you are going to engage with the self-review framework
www.becta.org.uk/schools/selfreview

Specifications for learning platforms, institutional infrastructure, information management (including MIS) and connectivity are available on our website
www.becta.org.uk/schools/techstandards

A Becta commissioned research report, 'Thin client technology in schools: a summary of research findings' looking at the functionality, benefits, issues, impact on learning and teaching and the total cost of ownership of thin client technology
www.becta.org.uk/research/reports/thinclient

Personalising learning and learning platforms case studies are available on our website
www.becta.org.uk/schools/learningplatforms

A Becta tool, 'learning platform functionality' that enables you to conduct a self evaluation and develop an action plan, is available at out website
http://matrix.becta.org.uk

To find out about how to make effective use of data visit Becta's learning platform and information management community
http://communities.becta.org.uk/learningplatformsandmis

The National Education Network and JANET(UK) offer advice on making the most of your broadband
www.nen.gov.uk
www.ja.net/communities/schools/index.html

Find out more about Becta's Accreditation of Internet Services
www.becta.org.uk/schools/ispsafety

An introduction to e-safety is available at our website
www.becta.org.uk/schools/safety

NCSL's use of data learning modules are available at
www.ncsl.org.uk/managing_your_school/use-of-data/index.cfm

Becta's advice on managing and supporting technology, 'Framework for ICT Technical Support (FITS)' is available on our website
www.becta.org.uk/schools/fits

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Framework suppliers

	Software Licensing	Learning Platform Services	Infrastructure Services	Consultancy Services	
Apple	•				Apple Education Department uk.education@euro.apple.com – 0800 912 0207 www.apple.com/uk/education
Atkins Global				•	Miranda Reeves – Miranda.Reeves@atkinsglobal.com 01372 726 140 www.atkinsmc.com/becta
Brian Farrington Ltd				•	Stephen Ashcroft – s.ashcroft@brianfarrington.com 01744 20698 – brianfarrington.com
Cambridge Education Ltd				•	Eugene O'Connor – eugene.oconnor@camb-ed.com 01223 463763 – www.camb-ed.com
Centerprise International Ltd			•		Beatrice Hyams – beatrice.hyams@centerprise.co.uk 01256 378047 – www.centerprise.co.uk
Civica	•				Education Team – becta@civica.co.uk – 020 7760 2802 www.licencetoclick.com/education
Computer Systems in Education Ltd (CSE)			•		Graham Sox – sales@cse-net.co.uk – 0845 345 8775 www.cse-net.co.uk
Core Education		•	•		Ed Collins – ed.collins@coreuk.co.uk – 07976 952111 www.coreeducation.co.uk www.talmos.net
Deloitte MCS Limited				•	Jo Mann – ukdeloittetenders@deloitte.co.uk 020 7303 7114 – www.deloitte.co.uk
EdICTs				•	David Sutton – david.sutton@edicts.com 0870 243 0013/07720051490 – www.edicts.com
Edunova				•	Martin Coleman – martin.coleman@edunova.co.uk 020 7314 5000/07787155070 – www.edunova.co.uk
Egton Education			*		Peter Anderson – peter.anderson@egtoneducation.co.uk 0113 380 3291 – www.egtoneducation.co.uk
Ergo Computing Limited			•		Kate Cooper – katec@ergo.co.uk – 0115 914 4144 www.ergo.co.uk
Etech Group		•			Mike Damiano – info@etechgroup.co.uk – 0845 434 8087 www.etechgroup.co.uk
European Electronique Ltd			•		Mike Gill – sales@euroele.com – 01865 883 300 www.happyICT.co.uk
Faber Maunsell				•	Iain Emmerson – iain.emmerson@fabermaunsell.com 020 7645 2000/020 3170 2725 www.fabermaunsell.com
Fronter		•			Jennifer Gordon – uk@fronter.com – 0845 241 8090 www.fronter.co.uk
Gaia Technologies plc			•		Kevin Evans – becta@gaia-tech.com 0845 867 4792 – www.gaia-tech.com
HBS Business Services Group Ltd			•		Tim Smith – tim.smith@hbs.uk.com 01522 836 808/07881660169 – www.mouchel.com
Insight Direct	•				Education Team – becta@uk.insight.com 0800 336688 – www.insight.com/uk/becta
Joskos	•				James Ray – bectasales@joskos.com 020 7424 6960 – www.joskos.com
Linetex Computers Ltd			*		Simon Platt – education@linetex.co.uk 01483 253000 – www.linetex.co.uk
LogicaCMG UK Limited				•	James Grew – james.grew@logicacmg.com 07792 120390 – www.logicacmg.com/uk
Mason Communications Ltd				•	Richard Cooke – consulting@mason.biz 0161 877 7808 – www.mason.biz
Misco	•				Education Team – education@misco.co.uk – 0800 035 0799 www.misco.co.uk/microsites/publicsector/education
Mouchel Services Ltd (incl. Hornagold & Hills)				•	Kim Babb – bectaict@mouchel.com 01932 337148 – www.mouchel.com
NCC Group				•	Charley Wardle – charley.wardle@nccgroup.com 0161 209 5288 – www.nccgroup.com
Netmedia Education		•			Regional Account Director enquiries@netmediaeducation.com – 0800 912 2321 www.netmediaeducation.com
Northgate Information Solutions			•		Stuart Gunning – education@northgate-is.com 028 9085 9085 – www.northgate-is.com/education
Novatia plc				•	Richard Sambrook Smith – 07831 722214 richard.sambrooksmith@novatia.plc.uk www.novatia.plc.uk/education/bectaframework
On-line Computers	•				John Crowe – olcsales@softbox.co.uk 01524 386600 – www.olc.co.uk
PC World Business	•				Jarrod Cairns – jarrod.cairns@equanet.co.uk 0161 447 3304 – www.pcwb.com
Pearson Education Ltd		•			Tracey Dingwall – phoenix.info@pearson.com 01722 344804 – www.pearsonphoenix.com
Phoenix Software	•				Jodie Wharton – info@phoenixs.co.uk 0845 265 1265 – www.phoenixs.co.uk
PTS Consulting				•	Roger Hutchinson – roger.hutchinson@pts-consulting.co.uk 020 7539 6200 – www.pts-consultinggroup.com
Pugh	•				Regional Account Manager – sales@pugh.co.uk 01974 200201 – www.pugh.co.uk
PWC				•	Ian Rolland – ian.james.rolland@uk.pwc.com 020 7213 4753 – www.pwc.com/uk
Ramesys	•	•	•		Rob Wileman (All other frameworks) – 0115 971 2000 rob.wileman@ramesys.com – www.ramesys.com Matt Parkes (Consultancy) – matt.parkes@ramesys.com 01902 390844/07977 203567 – www.ramesys.com
RM Education plc	•	•	•	•	Barry Taylor (Consultancy) – btaylor@rm.com 01235 823548 – www.rm.com Sharon Sutton (All other frameworks) – ssutton@rm.com 01235 854553 – www.rm.com
Serco Limited (Serco Learning Solutions)		•	•	•	Peter O'Hagan – peter.ohagan@serco.com 07718 195107 – www.serco.com
Socitm Consulting				•	Peter Hunter – peter.hunter@socitm.gov.uk 01935 881820/07889 752768 – www.socitm.gov.uk
Stone Computers Ltd	•		•		Simon Pettit – sales@stonecomputers.com 01785 812100 – www.stonecomputers.com
Tribal Group PLC				•	Bernard Dady – bernard.dady@tribalgroup.co.uk 0114 281 6100 – www.tribalbecta.co.uk
TrustMarque	•				Matthew Seddon – 0870 121 0325 matthew.seddon@trustmarquesolutions.com www.trustmarquesolutions.com
UniServity		•			David Meredith – david.meredith@uniservity.com 0870 855 5751 – www.uniservity.com
Viglen Limited	•		•		Cheryl Lapham – softwarelicensing@viglen.co.uk 01727 201890 – www.viglen.co.uk
VT Four S			•		Trevor Hood – trevor.hood@vtplc.com 01372 834 430 – www.vtfours.co.uk
XMA Limited		•			Ash Merchant – ash.merchant@xma.co.uk 0115 846 4000 – www.xmaonline.co.uk

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Framework and accredited suppliers

Where you see a Becta supplier mark you can be sure that:

- the suppliers understand the needs of schools

- products and services will be delivered to a high standard set by Becta – and we've evaluated suppliers rigorously to ensure their capability

- products and services will meet Becta's functional and technical specifications, developed in consultation with industry and educators

- you will benefit from a simplified purchasing route that ensures compliance with EU procurement law and best-value principles

- you will benefit from better value through purchasing in bulk

- you will get consistent contractual terms but retain local flexibility

- Becta will be closely monitoring suppliers and will arbitrate if conflicts arise.

Who can use the frameworks?

The frameworks are available to any UK school, educational organisation, local education partnership, local authority, government agency, or agents acting on their behalf. We strongly encourage individual schools to purchase via their local authority or another consortium, in order to achieve best value for money.

If your school is involved in an authority-wide capital investment programme such as Building Schools for the Future, purchasing arrangements are likely to be in place already. Contact your local authority to ensure that you participate in these arrangements.

Software Licensing Framework

This service provides a straightforward, user-friendly method to get the most appropriate licences for your needs at preferential educational discount prices. It is specifically for operating system and office productivity software, covering a broad range of applications. The framework offers the choice of both proprietary and open source (free to use) options. It does not cover teaching aids, national curriculum content, learning environments and management information systems.

Learning Platform Services Framework

A learning platform offers access to learning resources, online storage and tools for communication and management not just within school, but from outside it too. A learning platform brings together hardware, software and supporting services to enable personalised learning and more effective ways of working. We strongly recommend that you ask your local authority if there are already plans to develop and implement a learning platform in your area. If there is, you will save time and effort, and achieve better value for money. You will also benefit from additional local support arrangements.

Infrastructure Services Framework

This framework can be used to buy a range of services and equipment that make up your school's ICT infrastructure. The framework covers infrastructure design, provision, implementation, maintenance, service and support, and training. The full range can be purchased as a 'managed service'. You can also buy individual services that can be integrated with existing ones. This framework is particularly useful for single schools that are part of new-build programmes, such as academies or One School Pathfinders.

Consultancy Services Framework

This framework is for those who need consultancy services to provide advice on educational technology, technical issues or procurement. Often this will be when an extensive rebuilding or refurbishment programme leads to major investment in new technology. It will also be useful if you need support to review your current technology provision, to plan your future investment, or if you need support buying a managed ICT service.

Accreditation of Internet Services

(Please note that this is a Becta accreditation, not an EU-compliant framework.)

This service identifies suppliers that meet the special requirements of the education sector for content filtering and service performance. Schools are advised to contact their local authority or regional broadband consortium, which may provide or purchase this service. Our accreditation includes both commercial internet service providers (ISPs) and public bodies such as local authorities and regional broadband consortia. We also accredit providers of filtering products. Accreditations are for one year. See our website for the current list.

www.becta.org.uk/schools/ispsafety

www.becta.org.uk/schools/procurement
Email **engage@becta.org.uk** for further information.