

## Getting ready for BYOD

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Most students have some sort of mobile device and preventing them from entering schools might just be fighting a losing battle. Anyway, if handled well harnessing these, often top of the range, machines to deliver education could just make a lot of sense.

As a phenomenon, bring your own device (BYOD) first surfaced in the corporate arena and was seen as a way of minimising costs and introducing efficiencies. In education, as the future of the government's funding for laptops is looking cloudy, BYOD might come to be one of the ways of covering off on potential shortfalls.

It's probably more helpful to think of BYOD as flexible approach to providing students with information technology and there are a number of forms it might take, each according to its own set of circumstances.

Multiple different devices on a network means a sufficient school IT infrastructure needs to be in place for BYOD work well.

Marist College Ashgrove, Queensland an independent, 2000-student Catholic boarding and day college for boys from grades 5–12, founded in 1940, was an early adopter of desktop virtualisation. Using virtual desktop infrastructure, users' desktop environments – applications, data – are hosted on a remote

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server and are accessed over a network using a remote display protocol.

A connection brokering service is used to connect users to their assigned desktop sessions so customisations and work in progress can be accessed by an individual user.

Users can access their desktop from any location, without being tied to a single device. Since the resources are centralised, users moving between work locations can still access the same desktop environment.

The school's IT administrators are happy because it delivers a centralised, efficient client environment where changes can be made across the network in one fell swoop.

More recently, Marist added Dell vWorkspace – MokaFive Suite which delivers networking, customisation and problem resolution capabilities to a virtual desktop environment to drive their BYOD program. The school plans to let students purchase recommended laptops and tablets for use anywhere across its 20-building campus, or at home.

Marist's IT team now delivers control and support all types of devices including PCs,

Macs, iPads, other tablet PCs, smartphones, and thin clients.

"BYOD can ensure educational excellence by making it easy for each student to communicate with teachers, collaborate with peers and complete course work based on their own needs," said John Lee, Information Technology Supervisor at Marist College.

"We can provision and manage secure application access in minutes instead of hours, which requires half the staff and much less IT infrastructure at a tenth of the cost of other similar BYOD solutions," he says.

1070-student Lowanna College in country Victoria's South East has as high number of low income families and has taken the co-contribution route to IT hardware delivery – parents pay part of the price of their child's computer on a finance plan. The computers, from Dell, have a three-year warranty with full support provided.

IT Manager at the school Matt Robinson says that uptake has been high, "Parents don't pay a lot of fees here. The laptop repayments come to \$430 stretched over three years. Students

look after their equipment, we've had about 30 breakages in the last ten months, most of them accidental," he says.

Lowanna is a heavy user of Microsoft One Note collaborative software in its delivery of curriculum and the Compass School Management system drives student profile management and administration.

The computers have a standard operating system, deployed with hard drive images, and are networked through the Victorian department of education's standard wireless network environment.

While embracing technology Lowanna still has a strict phone policy, using one in class is grounds for confiscation for the period.

The Western Australian Department of Education has seen the future and is preparing for BYOD by deploying a high-end standard operating environment (SOE) across its schools.

SOEv4.2 has nine upgrade elements, covering security, disaster recovery and business continuity, BYO device, mobile device management, Apple integration and increased roaming capability.

The department believes that as Apple iPads are iTunes based, the applications have been tested and are safe to use on a school's network. The grand vision is for students to bring their own computers to school, which is not allowed as yet.

Some school districts in the United States have successfully implemented BYOD. Katy Independent School District in Houston Texas rolled out its mobile learning strategy slowly, at first only focusing on the early adopters from the teaching staff, and a limited group of students.

The district gave out 130 mobile learning devices to fifth-graders. The devices were web-enabled, but could only access sites approved on the main network. Phone and text functions were turned off.

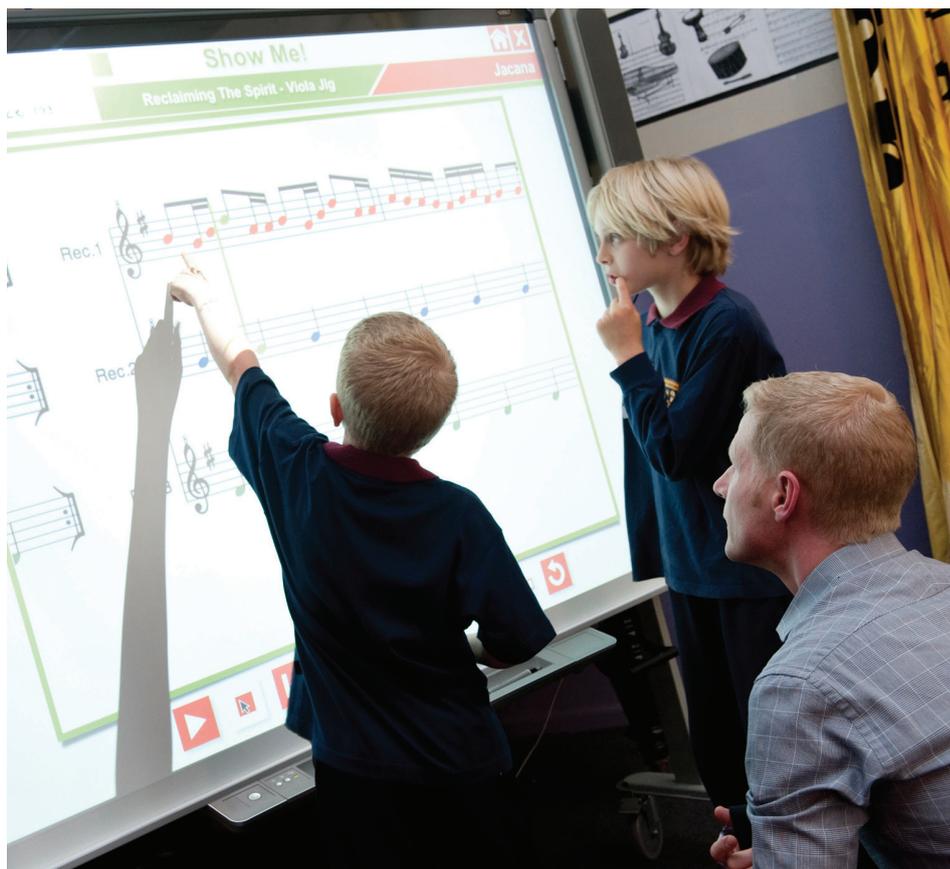
Students were immediately more engaged in the classroom and student achievement scores went up. So, in 2010 the district expanded the program to 11 campuses and handed out 1700 devices.

Katy put together an approved package of mobile learning tools for teachers, part of the Web 2.0 kits. They use Edmodo, a social networking site for teachers and students to share information about school work.

The research says that teachers didn't want to use BYOD if not everyone had a device. That was solved by having students work in teams – a student without a device collaborates with a student who does have one.

At the beginning of the program, middle school students were only allowed to use their devices when directed to by a teacher. They were not allowed to use them at lunch or when passing in the halls. However, high school students were allowed to have theirs all day.

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## Musica Viva invites teachers to test-pilot new digital learning resources

Not-for-profit music education company Musica Viva In Schools (MVIS) is set to roll-out new digital learning resources in May and is calling on teachers interested in test-piloting the program.

Developed by music education professionals, the new resources aim to make it easier for teachers to include music in their lessons. Each module has been aligned with both federal and state curricula, with a focus on making learning fun, interactive and accessible.

To make sure the resources deliver the best quality music program possible, MVIS is inviting teachers to give feedback on the modules.

Compatible with all computers and projectors, the digital modules range from Foundation to Year 8 and contain cross-curriculum links, assessment strategies and multi-media resources to support both music specialists and those looking to introduce their students to music for the first time.

Each 45-minute module can be used as a stand-alone teaching resource throughout the year or in tandem with a visit by a MVIS touring ensemble performance.

"These resources use state-of-the-art technology to give all students access to music, no matter where they live, what school they

attend or how established their music program is," says CEO Mary Jo Capps.

"What is crucial is making sure these resources are as good as they can be for teachers to use, which is why we are inviting teachers to try them and tell us what they think."

Teachers can have the resources sent to them or visit any MVIS state office and test the modules with a music education professional.

MVIS has been at the forefront of delivering and developing quality music education programs for more than 30 years. The impending release of the National Curriculum for Music prompted MVIS to spend the past three years developing a practical response to the need for an easy, curriculum-based music teaching resource that could be used by any teacher.

"This new development makes teaching music easy for teachers. There are no events to arrange, audio to search for, or instruments to source," Ms Capps said.

"It's everything teachers need to plan and implement fun and interactive music lessons, in the palm of your hand."

Applications to trail the resource close on 29th March.

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