

## ICT Skills for Rent Works schools

**Sponsored by Microsoft**

**October 2007 – November 2007**

Rent Works, a company that rents refurbished computers to schools, has launched a Corporate Social Investment initiative in partnership with ISASA whereby they facilitate the IT sponsorship of underprivileged schools. To encourage Rent Works to include some Partners in Learning training as part of the “package” when a corporate sponsor provides a school with computers Microsoft agreed to sponsor the initial training for three schools who received computers through this initiative.

Teachers from each of the following Gauteng schools received training at a centralised training session conducted at the first school on October 2007:

- 13 teachers from Palm Ridge Secondary in Alrode
- 8 teachers from Parklands in Vosloorus
- 9 teachers from Masithwalisane Secondary School in Vosloorus



The training venue was equipped with 30 networked computers, a server and an administrator’s computer. The first two days were problematic because the administrator did not give the trainer access to the network, file sharing was not possible and teachers were not able to save their work. In addition MS Publisher and MS FrontPage were not loaded onto the computers and teachers could therefore not complete some scenarios.

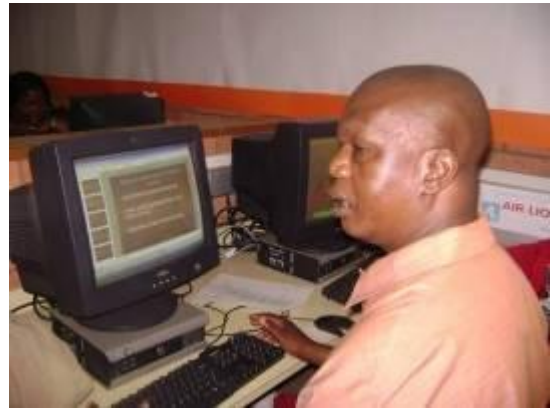


The following weekend was much better; the trainer was granted access to the network and individual file folders were given to each teachers so they could save their work and via the administrator computer to showcase their work. Also Front Page and Publisher were installed and teachers were able to complete fun and interesting scenarios. The lack of a working air conditioner was problematic for all sessions, however by the follow-up training the school arranged to have a fan in the room which helped with the heat.

On the first day teachers battled working through the “write a letter” scenario as this involved navigating between multiple windows and many of the teachers did not know how to move the mouse. The trainer employed just in time learning and dealt with these issues whilst working through the scenario and by the end of the day all teachers were able to complete the scenario by themselves. As the training progressed, teachers developed more confidence and started to use the CD to help themselves. Other scenarios that proved popular were “create a simple presentation” and “create a markbook”. Teachers not only followed the instructions to produce these documents, but were also paired to critique one another’s work and to help improve the documents – thus ensuring that teachers were proud of the documents they created.

By the final session all teachers were able to complete good pieces of work to showcase. The teachers were very proud of their work and printed copies of their work to show their family.

Prior to the training only 6 teachers had previous ICT experience and many teachers had never used a computer before. One teacher said “we have a computer at home, but I don’t go near it... the children are always busy, busy...” All teachers were very eager to attend this course and their enthusiasm was displayed throughout the training sessions. By the showcase however, the trainer noted:



*“most teachers were able to work with word, spreadsheets, PowerPoint, publisher and some even dabbled with database. I am very proud of these teachers. They really worked hard and were committed to learning as much as they could.”*

Whilst some participants said they would have liked to learn more about “teaching through the Internet” and “database and programming”, and many expressed a desire for more training, the comments were overwhelmingly positive:

*“ICT Course was very useful to me, I can type and do many scenario tasks on my own. Thank you for this great experience.”*

*“I liked this course very much and hope it should be ongoing. The organisation and material suited the course. I learned new tricks and hope to apply them from hereon”*

*“I had a wonderful time exploring new tech”*



*“It was and is very benefiting. It makes us more independent”*

*“It was an eye opener for me. I now declare myself a computer pundit”*

*“I really enjoyed the course because I’ve learned a lot, and I feel more confident and independent. I wish we can have more training sessions in the future.”*

*“I enjoyed this course. I feel more confident using the computer. It has broadened my knowledge of powerpoint, excel and word.”*

*“I wish this course can be offered to all because it is very good, useful, important and relevant to the world of teaching. It also makes life easy to the teaching environment.”*

*“the course is just the beginning of computer skills for me”*

Compiled by:  
Megan Rademeyer: Programme Manager – SchoolNet SA