Limpopo TV White Spaces Pilot Project: Status Report 2

(March 2014 – June 2014)

Contents

Introduction

This status report for the Limpopo TV White Spaces Pilot Project follows on from Status report 1 – which reported on training and events that took place between November 2013 and February 2014. This report covers events and training sessions that took place between March 2014 and June 2014 after schools participating in the project received the connectivity and equipment that were provided as part of this project.

Installation of Equipment

Dates: 11 – 14 April 2014

In April 2014 each of the five schools participating in the Limpopo TV White Spaces project received their bank of Windows 8 devices; charging trolley, screen and data projector. Schools were asked to have the five learners who had attended the initial training to be on hand when their schools received their devices so that they could help with the technical set-up and receive some on-site training in basic technical trouble shooting. Whilst champion teachers had had access to two Windows 8 loan devices per school the champion teachers and principals as well as the learners were very excited to finally be receiving the equipment which would belong to the schools.

Office 365 Orientation

Dates: 11 and 12 April 2014

Two rounds of Office 365 Training were run by Jaye Richards-Hill of Tablet Academy who is an expert on Office 365 for Education having written the materials used for this training course. On the Friday afternoon each school was asked to send one or two ICT champions with the most technical skills to learn how to administer Office 365 at their schools. On the Saturday the full group were invited to learn more about Office 365 and how they could use it to enhance communication and collaboration between staff and students.

By the end of the Office 365 sessions delegates were able to...

- Log in to Office 365, and know where the portal page can be accessed from
- Understand that Office365 is hosted in the Cloud, and what that means in terms of any time anywhere any device access
- Use Outlook for sending and receiving email and creating contacts
- Use 'People' tab for creating and storing contacts as well as sending email and scheduling meetings
- See contact cards used for sending instant messages
- Use Calendar for storing events and meetings
- Use OneDrive for creating and storing files, as well as knowing how to share them, or their whole drive, with others by using their email addresses

Whilst the group were eager to learn, for many this was their first experience with sending and receiving email or using a form of instant messaging. Teachers will need to practice what they covered in these sessions to ensure that they retain what was taught and are able to make using electronic communication an everyday occurrence.

Windows 8 in the Classroom

Dates: 13 April 2014

During this workshop, Jaye Richards Hill presented the Tablet Academy course on using Windows 8 in the classroom. Whilst teachers had had some prior experience of using Windows 8 on the tablets that had been loaned to their schools, this workshop gave them some hands on experience in using Windows 8 for educational purposes whilst at the same time practicing their Windows 8 navigation skills.

By the end of the session delegates were able to...

- Navigate their way around the basic functions of the devices (Camera, sound, swipes, charms, etc)
- Work between Desktop and Tiles screens
- Access the internet and search for resources/information
- Use the 'Split Screen' function
- Understand the difference between Live Tiles, Tiles and Apps
- Appreciate the wealth of learning material in the 'Bing Live Tiles' (Health, Travel, Finance, Food)
- Pin and Unpin apps to the Start Screen. Resize and delete apps.

- Re-order tiles and categorize them with headers on the start screen
- Change the Apps display mode (date, category, etc.)
- Search for apps from the Windows Store and download useful apps
- Understand the difference between free apps and Paid-for apps, and the need to consider carefully before downloading.
- Know that user reviews are good for appraising the potential of an app
- Know how to find help and advice from the Partners in Learning Network site.

Using Content and Connectivity for 21st Century Teaching & Learning

Dates: 9 and 10 June 2014

During the two half day sessions of this workshop session champion teachers learnt about finding and creating educational resources using the content that had been preloaded on to the Windows 8 devices as well as how to use the internet to find appropriate materials. Teachers were encouraged to visit the Microsoft Educators Network to find ideas for learning activities and free tools which they could incorporate into their lesson plans and they were presented with a range of innovative learning activities which had been developed by other South African teachers to provide them with ideas and inspiration.

A range of innovative teaching practices were discussed including:
- student-centred learning – exploration, research, application of knowledge and ideas
- creating anywhere, anytime learning
- personalised learning
- learning is connected to the real world and authentic
- project work linking different subjects for meaningful learning

As an activity, teachers were divided into groups based on the subjects that they taught and they were presented with the following challenge:

- Think of a topic you have coming up
- Look for pre-loaded resources that will support it
- See if there are learning activities or tools you can use on the Microsoft Educators Network
- If you really can't find anything – do an internet search
- Find something you can SHOW
- Think of something the learners can DO
- Share your idea on the Limpopo TV White Spaces Facebook page

Getting Ready for the Next Steps

Date: 11 June 2014

During this workshop, Richard Thanki a Postgraduate Researcher from the University of Southampton explained the concept of TV White Spaces to the champion teachers and school principals as well as other stakeholders from the district and University of Limpopo. This better helped to contextualize the project and painted a picture of the possibilities that affordable internet access brings to communities. In order to aid the research process which Richard Thanki will be driving a Facebook group was set up and teachers were asked to use it as a platform to share their ideas, challenges and best practices with the rest of the group and a wider community of stakeholders.

Limpopo TV White Spaces Launch Event

Dates: 18 June 2014

At this event the project was officially launched and the TV White Spaces Building was officially named. The launch event provided an opportunity for the wider community of stakeholders, including funders, members of staff from the University and Department of Education Officials to learn more about the project. As part of the proceedings, Simon Matlebjane of Mountainview High School presented on some of the ways in which he was integrating technology into his lessons and sharing his skills with his colleagues. The group then visited Doasho High School where they were able to observe another teacher presenting a mini Science lesson that showed the audience the type of lesson made possible by the devices and connectivity.

Conclusion

During this visit to Limpopo each of the schools (with the exception of Ngwanalaka) was visited by Megan Rademeyer from SchoolNet SA to get a sense of how the equipment and connectivity was being used at the schools. Whilst all schools appear to be keeping the equipment safe and most have a system for registering who has access to which device, to date the equipment is not being used as fully as it could be. Some teachers are showing PowerPoint presentations or videos using the data projectors and a number of teachers are typing exam papers or worksheets on the devices and in some cases learners have been allowed to use the devices to do research or to complete tertiary applications.

In the coming months we would like to see teachers making more use of the devices to create 21st century learning opportunities for their learners and opportunities for classes to use the devices as part of lessons. We hope that the Facebook group will help to create a community of practice where teachers can share their lesson ideas and challenges with others. We also hope that increased use by teachers will lead to increased confidence and that as the months pass we will begin to see teachers making better use of the content and connectivity that has been provided as well as access to Office 365. We hope that continued training and mentorship will also assist teachers as they continue their journey towards ICT integration.

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SchoolNet SA – July 2014