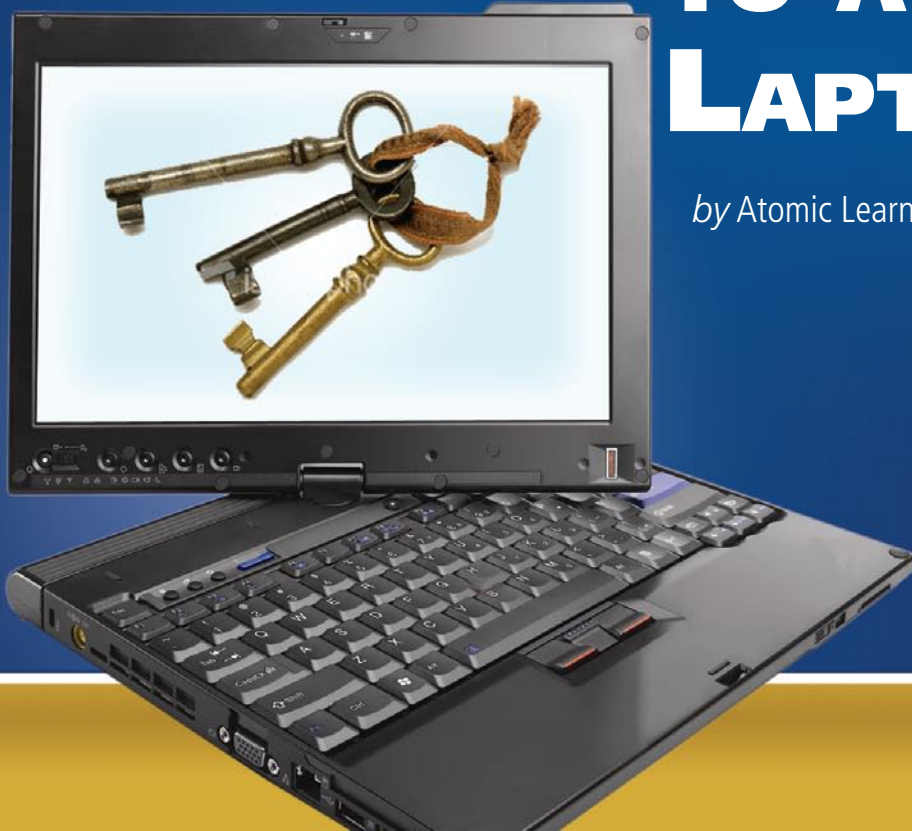


THREE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL LAPTOP INITIATIVE

by Atomic Learning: Award-Winning technology training provider





© Copyright 2009 Atomic Learning.

All rights reserved.

Founded in 2000 by a group of technology educators, Atomic Learning serves over eight million individuals in over 40 countries worldwide. Atomic Learning is dedicated to providing educational resources that allow teachers, pupils and learners of all ages to embrace technology. An integral part of your continuing professional development programme, Atomic Learning's online training resources make it easy to train teachers to train pupils on the 21st Century Skills needed to succeed in the 21st Century. For more information, visit www.AtomicLearning.co.uk

CONTENTS

Introduction	iii
Key 1: Be Realistic	1-3
Key 2: Be Prepared	4-5
Key 3: Be Supportive	6-8
Review	9-10



INTRODUCTION

Today's pupils are living and learning in a Web 2.0 world that demands understanding and application of 21st century skills. To meet this demand, schools around the globe are evaluating continuing professional development programmes and pupil instruction to identify ways to infuse technology and work towards creating 21st century-ready pupils.

For many schools, 21st century readiness necessitates providing a computer for each child—but these programmes are about more than computers.

Setting up a successful laptop initiative requires a solid plan and a dedication to seeing that plan through to completion.

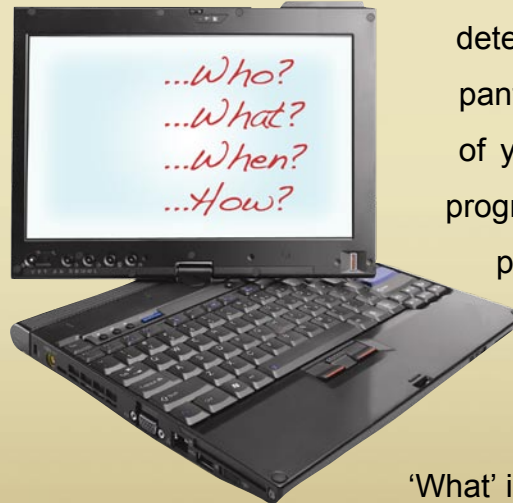
While there are many challenges in a project of this magnitude, the resulting impact on pupils is well worth the effort. To help start your initiative off on the right foot, there are several key items you'll want to consider. These keys, outlined in this ebook, will help you *unlock the full potential of your laptop initiative*.



KEY 1: BE REALISTIC

While still in the planning phase of a laptop initiative, it is important to be realistic. Unattainable or immeasurable goals, insufficient training, or lack of support can all lead to the failure of any programme. To get started, there are several important questions you'll want to focus on—namely who, what, when, and how.

The 'who' portion of planning asks who will coordinate the initiative and who will participate. While an



ICT Coordinator or another member of a technology department may seem like the best person for this task, a programme leader should be determined. The other 'who', participants, will vary based on the breadth of your initiative. For example, the programme may be limited to a few primary teachers or include many teachers and pupils across multiple years.

'What' involves research into the actual hardware. A variety of solutions are available from standard laptop PCs to more compact netbook



KEY 1: BE REALISTIC (CONTINUED)

options. No matter what technology solution is chosen, you'll want to be sure to evaluate what software and resources are available with that particular solution. Solutions for continuing professional development and technology support should also be considered.

The timing of your initiative will depend on a variety of factors unique to your situation, but one main question looms large: 'When' will funds be available? If you are lucky, money isn't a concern for your school. If it is, you need a concrete plan in

place to seek out funding opportunities available in your area.

The 'How' of your plan is vital to overall programme success and encompasses a variety of important issues that will need to be addressed: How will laptops be used? How much training is needed? And most importantly, how will success be measured? Once you've answered these questions, you'll be able to clearly see that the "How" portion of your plan will ultimately be closely tied to overall programme goals. If your goals seem unattainable, they might well be, and the initiative is likely destined for failure from the start. Be sure that your answers are realistic and honest, and you'll be well on your way to success.



KEY 1: BE REALISTIC (CONTINUED)

To give the initiative, teachers and pupils the best chance for success, consider the items listed here. If your laptop initiative plan is already developed, it is not too late—but it may call for re-evaluation.

Items to Consider... 6/1/09 1:15 PM
Title Created

Who will coordinate this initiative?

*Who will participate? (Teachers?
Pupils? Both?)*

*How do you plan to use the laptops?
(1:1 or shared, school-only use or
home check-out, etc.)*

*How much experience do your
teachers have with technology?*

*Will your pupils have had access to
computers prior to implementation of
the laptop initiative?*

*Are teachers and pupils familiar with
the software and technology being
made available?*



KEY 2: BE PREPARED

If you were able to answer the items for consideration listed in Key 1, you are well on your way to planning and implementing a successful laptop programme. You've evaluated the basics and know whether or not your teachers and pupils are able to operate the technology you will provide for them.

Next, you'll need to verify that teachers are equipped with the training and resources necessary to operate and integrate the technology in the classroom. This will involve continuing professional development activities and should include resources to assess the effectiveness and overall success of training and the laptop initiative itself.

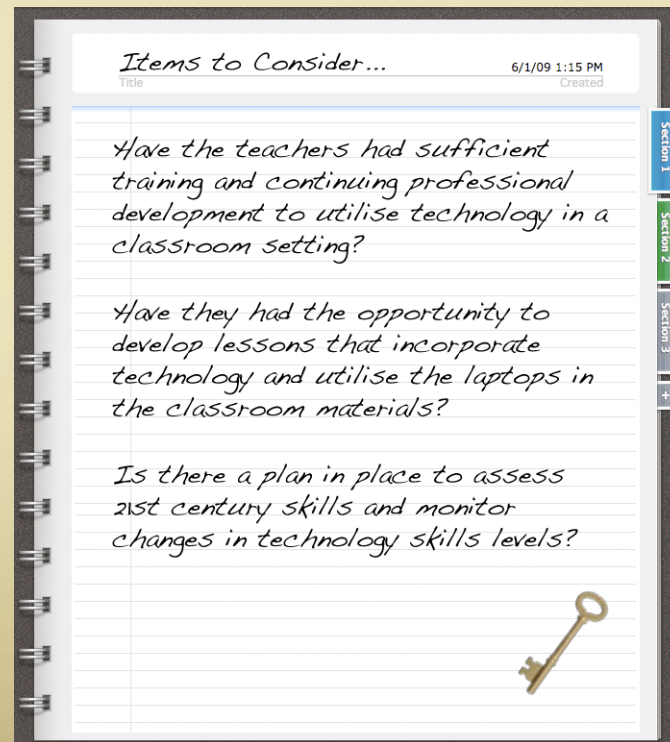
By preparing teachers before laptops enter the classroom, you'll be certain that teachers are able to apply that technology. This will provide pupils the opportunity to learn skills needed to succeed in today's technology-driven world and ensure that your school is realising the full potential of its technology investment.

As mentioned, part of Key 2 is preparing the organization with resources to measure success. Though you can develop custom resources specific to your initiative, consider continuing professional development solutions that include teacher and pupil assessment tools. A reporting system to monitor progress is also integral to measuring the impact of your initiative. Education partner companies, such as ebook sponsor Atomic Learning, offer both such tools.



KEY 2: BE PREPARED (CONTINUED)

Before moving on to Key 3, consider the questions listed here. Keep in mind that the training needs and resources required for your laptop initiative to succeed will vary and will strongly depend on the existing technology skill set of those participating in the programme.





KEY 3: BE SUPPORTIVE

At this point, you've decided on participants, determined how you will measure success, hosted training and brought in resources to make sure teachers have the resources they need. With a well thought-out plan underway, all the pieces begin to fall into place.

One of two emotions will affect your programme from this point forward. One being the excitement generated by participating teachers and pupils that are ready and waiting to get started learning with their new tools, the other being concern about po-

tential failure of the initiative. You and your school have dedicated a significant amount of resources to laptops, hardware, software, training and other related expenses at this point and these concerns are normal—lucky for you this is where key three comes in.

The final key is a simple one: Be Supportive.



Being supportive is a long-term commitment, but it is also the most rewarding. This is the phase where you are working with teachers and pupils who are driven by a curiosity about the technology available to them and a desire to learn and accomplish more than ever.



KEY 3: BE SUPPORTIVE (CONTINUED)

Two questions commonly arise at this point:

How do I do that? and *How do I apply that?*

Both can be easily addressed through ongoing support, including continued professional development programmes.

The first questions will focus on learning how to use the technology—*How do I do that?* These questions can be addressed through traditional ICT support methods or through an outside support resource such as just-in-time tutorials that address common software and technology questions anytime, anywhere.

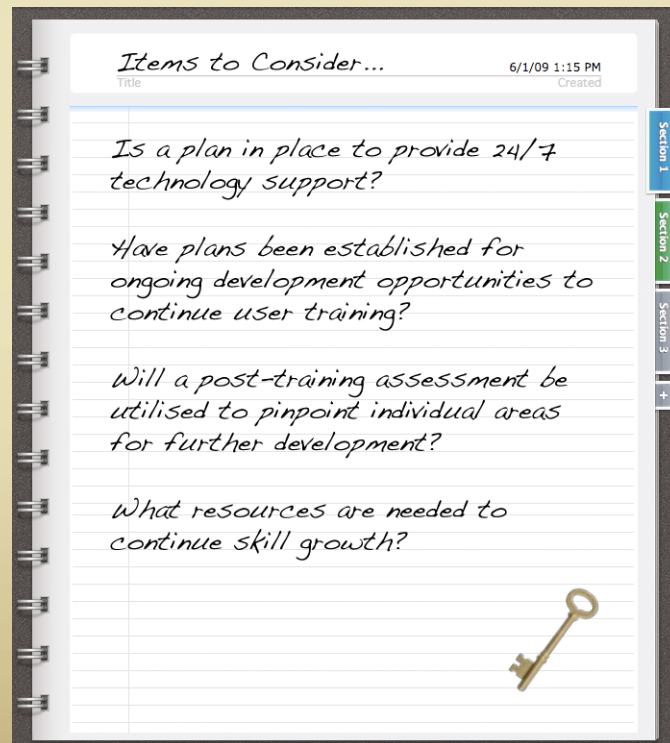
As teachers become more comfortable working with their laptops, a new set of questions will arise—*How do I apply that?*

Though they can be intimidating, these questions are a positive sign. There is a growing expectation that simply knowing how to use technology is no longer enough, and when teachers ask these questions it is an indication that they recognise technology is a tool. Individuals asking these questions are well on their way to understanding that 21st century success lies in knowing how to apply technology, along with other necessary skills—such as critical thinking—to impact pupil achievement.



KEY 3: BE SUPPORTIVE (CONTINUED)

Answer these questions through one-on-one training or by providing continuing professional development opportunities, and you are giving you teachers the tools and resources they need to be 21st century-ready—ultimately ensuring the success of not only your laptop initiative, but pupils.





REVIEW

There are many parts to a successful laptop initiative programme. These three keys are intended to help you unlock the full potential of yours.

In summary, the key phases to consider in your planning process are:

Key 1 - Be Realistic

Determine programme participants and goals

Before your school begins to plan a laptop initiative or 1:1 implementation, it is important to designate who will be participating in the programme and establish how you will measure the success of your initiative.

Key 2 - Be Prepared

Understand and address training and development needs

Before introducing your laptop initiative into the classroom, you need to provide training and development to assure that teachers and pupils are ready to use the new resources and measure current skills to provide an indicator of where participating individuals need development.



Key 1 - Be Realistic



Key 2 - Be Prepared



Key 3 - Be Supportive



REVIEW (CONTINUED)

Key 3 - Be Supportive

Provide support and ongoing development

Throughout the laptop initiative, participants will have a variety of questions as they gain 21st century skills and work with new technology. For example, they may have questions on how to create a blog or wiki or seek assistance finding technology integration resources. It is important to have resources in place to answer these questions in a timely manner.

Throughout this ebook, you were provided Items to Consider with each of the three keys. To assist you

in gathering your resources and solidify your laptop initiative plan, we've created a [Planning Worksheet](#) that compiles these questions into one convenient resource.

We hope you've found this ebook helpful. If you would like assistance evaluating resources available to ensure the success of your laptop initiative, [contact Atomic Learning](#) today for complimentary technology integration and continuing professional development consultation.