

e-learning

Issue 7
June 2008

ICT News and Information for Bedfordshire Schools

**The aim of this newsletter is to highlight new developments and good practice and alert schools to new learning opportunities.
Please display this on the staff board.**

Security of Online Information

When system suppliers offer simple assurances about their 'secure' systems, what does this really mean? It is now relatively simple for the unscrupulous to circumvent user names and passwords and the potential for hacking school computer systems and attacking online data is increasing. Schools need to understand the actual risks involved in the introduction of new systems and additional functionality.

Risk Assessment

EICTS recently commissioned a report on the risks of information shared within and beyond school hardware systems being compromised. It confirms that the development of internet facing systems (like learning platforms and web-based MIS systems), has led to substantial increases in the risk of serious information security breaches. The rapid growth of inter-active links between home and school computer systems exacerbates these risks. In addition, the current focus in the media on information security breaches means that any incident is now likely to lead to extensive and damaging negative publicity.

Areas of Risk

The report identified the following risk areas as requiring policy development at school and local authority levels:

Web-based MIS systems:

- legitimate login and password details



being stolen from home computers

- the hosted systems being hacked from the internet
- systems being compromised by legitimate users who break the access control

Pupils hacking systems from within schools:

- use of hacking tools which are readily available and difficult to detect

- attacking MIS data or even accessing teacher HR records

Wireless network security:

- hacking into school systems through open wireless networks even via hand-held devices
- hacking encryption levels which are no longer satisfactory (WEP)

Use of memory sticks:

- teachers copying pupil information for use at home thus compromising security

Use of laptops:

- removal of data from unencrypted hard disks

At the heart of many of these risks is the use of any system accessible from the internet. The e-Learning Board will review information security protection mechanisms in line with new threats and vulnerabilities and offer specific guidance to schools for each of these risk areas.

Please refer queries to Neil Turner
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Information Management Strategy (IMS) Framework

Becta is developing an Information Management Strategy (IMS) Framework to help support the effective use of Information Management Systems in schools.

The approach is consistent with the existing Self Review Framework based on a maturity model, providing self audit and associated actions. Examples of the potential benefits to schools are:

- ✓ Helping schools to develop the capacity to support effective use of new and existing systems
- ✓ Supporting school development of meaningful, quality assured information to share with parents
- ✓ Supporting school leaders in embedding these systems as a tool for school improvement and institutional effectiveness.

Involvement of Schools

Becta is working with a number of local authorities and schools to develop the Information Management Strategy Framework content. Hastingsbury Upper, Gilbert Inglefield Middle and The Hills Lower schools in Bedfordshire are involved with this work.

It is hoped that the Framework will be ready for release to all schools in September 2008.

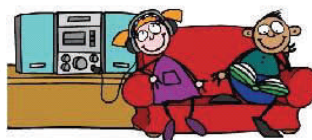
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Annual Conference

24th - 25th June 2008
The Robinson Centre, Wyboston
Important (and free!) opportunity to move your ICT plans forward
<http://conference.e2bn.org>

Espresso Home Access for Teaching Staff



As part of the continued development of this service, all schools using the Netmedia learning platform will be able to use the 'Espresso at home' service via the learning platform rather than having to remember a username and password (which changes every half term). This development should be available to all teachers (a new property will be put on all teachers' desktops) by the end of July.

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Bedfordshire's First Learning Platform Conference

Tuesday 15th July 2008

09.00 to 16.00

**Conference Centre
Priory Business Park**

- * A celebration of exemplary e-Learning practice with particular reference to learning platform developments
- * An opportunity to share and collaborate with colleagues as we go forward into the new school year.

More details soon on the learning platform and the schools website.

Software of the Month

Do you struggle to reduce the file size of your images for email and websites? If so, you can download Google's free software:



Picasa™ Picture Simplicity

Picasa is simple to operate and it helps you to:

- ✓ Locate and organise all the photos on your computer.
- ✓ Edit and add effects to your photos with a few simple clicks.
- ✓ Resize photo files to share your photos with others through email, prints and on the web: it's fast, easy **and free!**
<http://picasa.google.co.uk>

The next e-learning newsletter will be issued on Friday, 11th July, 2008

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