

Special Issue: iPads

Bronwen Cowie

University of Waikato

Email: bcowie@waikato.ac.nz

John Williams

University of Waikato

Email: jwilliam@waikato.ac.nz

It seems that all teachers now need to be technologically savvy. The rapidly developing ubiquity of mobile devices in education has resulted in many schools and teachers exploring ways to incorporate the affordances of these devices into the curriculum. Just as we have developed networked environments, it has all become unwired! At the school level, challenges include: who pays, who owns the devices, will the network structures support them, should all years of schooling be involved, and so on. For teachers, the issues include: how can I use these devices to enhance student learning, how can I take advantage of the different media and modes these devices make available, am I confident enough with the technology, how can I involve the whole class with limited resources, and so on.

It is argued that the digital divide remains at a range of levels: between school and home, between students' personal life and school life, between different classrooms within a school, and between generations. One of the roles of teachers now is to help students end up on the right side of the digital divide which will not only involve them in changing pedagogies, but also modifying notions of what it means to be knowledgeable and literate, and how future citizens will fully partake of their culture. We are already at a time in which the ability to use social media, and particularly social media as amplified through the power of the mobile web, has become a key literacy.

There is a developing understanding that the traditionally accepted stages of the introduction of information technology into a classroom apply in the context of

mobile devices. Initially, a more playful “get to know the technology” phase is common, followed by a period of time in which the devices are used for making normal classroom activity mobile. It is later that the affordances provided by the devices are recognised, and new forms of learning and pedagogy that were not possible before, are developed. It seemed that in the

early days of the introduction of mobile devices, the iPad maintained the market dominance that was reflected in its marketing and personal use. Lately, with the developing availability of a larger range of devices with similar specifications, educators are less concerned with uniformity and many different types of devices are being used. This is a focussed advantage for some schools in which students come to learn to choose the best device for the need they have. However, in this issue of *Computers in New Zealand Schools*, all the articles focus on the use of iPads.

The challenges and benefits above are reflected in the articles in this journal. The articles span the spectrum of education from the early years to tertiary, and include the school and the home context. Some of the articles report on original research or evaluation, and others describe school/classroom-based projects focusing on an ICT supported practice. All offer insights into the potential of mobile devices across the curriculum of which iPads are just one example.

All papers have been blind peer reviewed by two reviewers. We thank the reviewers for their careful reading and constructive responses and the authors for their thoughtful contributions

We hope that the papers in this special issue will help disseminate innovative practices and open up a space for the discussion and debate of further possibilities for mobile devices in teaching, learning and assessment.



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