EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

October 2012

An

AASL

White Paper

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INTRODUCTION

When used appropriately, educational technology is a tool to assist with implementation of the Common Core Standards, help raise graduation rates, and prepare students for life beyond K-12 education. Technology employed in isolation, without direct instruction, or highly qualified guidance, fails to address these concerns.

It is the intent of this AASL white paper to provide a review of technology-related topics that can contribute to success and might serve to generate interest in further research on filtering practices, Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs), apps, social media, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD), and related subjects.

FILTERING PRACTICES

The Children's Internet Protection Act or CIPA (Pub. L. 106-554) is a federal law enacted by Congress in 2001 to protect minors from content on the Internet, deemed harmful or obscene, through filtering and AUPs.

> •**Filtering practices and compliance with CIPA requires students and their parents sign AUPs.** Schools should have AUPs that include appropriate and ethical use of the technology infrastructure, devices, including mobile technologies, and information resources while in school, and access to school resources from home.

> • **Filtering practices comply with CIPA and are in place to protect students and the school**. School staff should be aware of the filtering practices used in their schools to understand what is being filtered and how it is being filtered.

> • **CIPA compliance and some state technology standards require digital citizenship education for students**. CIPA mandates educating minors about how to be ethical, productive citizens. While a separate curriculum is an option, effective digital citizenship concepts can be even more effectively incorporated via an integrated model.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICIES/RESPONSIBLE USE POLICIES

Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) advise school staff and students of guidelines for use, and consequences of misuse of school technology.

> • **Typically, AUPs are lists of things users should not do, with consequences for misuse that can range from temporary loss of**

privileges to criminal liability. Many AUPs restrict student access to Web 2.0 applications and promote student anonymity.

• **Responsible, or Ethical Use, Policies advise school staff and students of what they are permitted to do with school technology**. If a use is not listed, it may not be permitted. The listing of ethical and responsible behaviors supports the AASL and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards and provides a platform for teaching students and staff to use technology in an ethical environment.

• **Policies that are too restrictive make it difficult to keep up with the rapid development of social applications**. They do little to foster an individual's understanding of the appropriate use of technology and Web-based resources.

• **It may be advisable to have layered policies. This might consist of a general district policy with more specific building level policies that undergo frequent changes to ensure appropriate flexibility for elementary and secondary levels**. Instruction is a critical layer, tying what students learn about using technology to school policies.

APPS

With the exponentially multiplying world of apps (applications; software or programs for computers and mobile devices), there is no single catalog or shortcut to find the most appropriate apps. But to assist in the search, there are resources are available.

• **The proliferation of apps for education offers a variety of resources, especially for mobile technologies.** Educators and parents ought to keep up-to-date on appropriate and useful apps through professional journals, websites, blogs and social networking (sharing relevant information with parents).

• **App reviews should be considered.** Apps are reviewed and recommended in blogs and journals specifically focused on education. Educators might want to visit the resources periodically to keep up-to-date. Wikis and bookmarking sites are available to keep track of app resources.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Being connected is a fact of life for younger generations. It is the responsibility of librarians, teachers and parents to guide students as they create a unique, effective, safe, and ethical digital footprint.

• **Social media was built for communication and collaboration.** Educators must address how social media can be used successfully in schools, deciding when it is appropriate to integrate social networking with the school setting as well as being aware of which tools are the best to use. Elements of digital citizenship need to be introduced and reinforced.

• **Mobile devices are banned in many schools and school districts.** A specific unit utilizing mobile technology might provide positive examples to drive future policy changes.

BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE (BYOD) or BRING YOUR OWN TECHNOLOGY (BYOT)

Personal technology devices are increasingly a part of the student toolkit. Arguments exist for both allowing and banning student owned devices in the school.

- **BYOD policies allow students and staff use of personal devices at school**. Educators should know how to accommodate different devices and platforms on the network and how to effectively integrate their use with the learning environment.

- **BYOD allows students to use devices.** Students' learning time will be maximized with only the need to learn how to employ apps for educational purposes.

- **BYOD implementation requires the school librarian to be a leader in the instruction and use of mobile devices**, ensure library policies support effective use of and support for mobile devices and select resources that work with mobile devices.

CONCLUSION

Educational technology should integrate digital citizenship education supported by well-defined responsible use policies. The policies must address the use of educational apps, social media and access to personal mobile devices, which will assist students in meeting the Common Core Standards.

If, as Jean Piaget asserts, "The principle goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done," then it is imperative that educators actively promote the use of technology in school libraries and classrooms. Our students deserve nothing less.