

DON'T SET OFF FOR BETT WITHOUT A STRATEGIC SAT NAV

Don't set off for Bett without a strategic sat nav

Comment by **AL KINGSLEY, MD of NetSupport**



Since the first iteration of Bett way back in 1985 the show has grown to be the global meeting place for the education community. Visitors to the show gain unprecedented access to ideas, insight, debate and discussion and this year's show is set to provide much food for thought; applications such as Augmented Reality, Voice Recognition, debate over AI and robotics and the complex, ethical questions these technologies can pose.

However, educators at Bett are often exploring innovation within a sector that rewards short-term wins based on rearward measures of success - the importance placed on annual league tables being just one

Schools consider their digital strategy first and foremost as they explore what's on offer. If not, I'm afraid any edtech implementation the show inspires is destined for disappointment and wasted resources when implemented.

Teachers are hungry for technologies that enable them to teach in a more engaging, efficient and impactful way. However, a piecemeal approach based on ad hoc purchases is unlikely to deliver on the promised results. Any edtech decision needs to be considered within a much wider context. What are we trying to achieve in the classroom? What will be the impact on infrastructure, support services or teacher training? Will it save precious time? How often should it be refreshed, and how can you measure its effectiveness?

Investing in educational technology without a defined digital strategy is rather like relying on your sat nav for directions without first entering the destination. You can keep on driving, but you're unlikely to end up at the right location.

Devising and implementing a digital strategy can seem like a daunting task. It certainly requires concerted effort, however, like so many challenges once the first steps are taken the dividends become obvious. A school's digital strategy is a long-term journey, with multiple milestones along the way. Take heart in the fact that you are not alone on this journey. There are experts, school leaders, technologists offering advice and support.

A digital strategy can act as a valuable tool to guide your visit to Bett. That is why, with ICT Evangelist Mark Anderson (former school leader and renowned advocate for the purposeful use of technology linked to pedagogy), we've launched **A Guide to Creating a Digital Strategy in Education**, a free resource any school can use to ensure use of technology is as effective as possible in supporting teaching and learning.

Visit us at **Stand NL44** to receive a copy of the guide to take away, ask any questions and to share your experiences of embarking on a strategic path towards edtech success.

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However, educators at Bett are often exploring innovation within a sector that rewards short-term wins based on rearward measures of success - the importance placed on annual league tables being just one example. In this climate, long-term strategies that may take years to achieve can seem daunting, especially when it comes to taking strides with new technologies.

In my experience, not only as MD of an edtech company but as a multi-academy trust Chair, attending Bett without a clear digital strategy front of mind can waste time and make decisions about technology more challenging.

My mission in the run up to Bett 2020 is to encourage all schools to consider their digital strategy first and foremost as they explore what's on offer. If not, I'm afraid any edtech implementation the show inspires is destined for disappointment and wasted resources when implemented.

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