



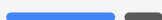
The schools guide to choosing the best supplier of digital devices



Setting up your digital classroom

If you have never implemented tablets, laptops or computer technology in the classroom, then choosing the right supplier is key. In this guide, we look at why it is so important to choose the most appropriate supplier and give tips and advice on how to find the right ICT company for you.

You may have already used a supplier and wish to explore the options of using a different company. The advice in this guide will help you make the right decision.





What makes edde qualified to offer this advice?

- ✔ We do not sell digital devices, school applications, we do not offer training, ICT support or sell trolleys or wi-fi solutions. We are not connected to a manufacture or operating system; hence we are independent.
- ✔ We have worked with a wide range of suppliers of E-Learning digital devices in the UK.
- ✔ We have witnessed first-hand how digital learning has been successfully rolled out in schools, and sadly, seen mistakes that have been made.

What makes edde qualified to offer this advice?

01 Undertake a credit report on the supplier. Look at:

- ✔ How long have they been trading?
- ✔ How strong are they financially?
- ✔ How many people do they employ?

02 Look at their website

- ✔ Does it make specific reference to working in the education sector?
- ✔ Do they clearly say what products they sell and services they offer?
- ✔ Does their website give access to free guides and advice, showing they know what they are talking about?

03 Undertake a Google search on the supplier.

- ✔ Do they have any reviews, if so, are they positive?
- ✔ Are there any comments about them online?

04 Ask around for people's feedback

- ✔ What does the Local Authority say?
- ✔ What are your local schools doing?
- ✔ Are you a member of any user groups that might help?

05 Prepare for a meeting

You have done your research on them, now put a list of questions together. Print this out and then document your findings. We use "Decision Analysis." Here we rate the importance of each question/answer and then rate the supplier out of ten for each question. Add up the total to see which supplier gets the best score.

When meeting the supplier

Key questions you might wish to ask about them:

- ✔ How long have you worked in the education sector?
- ✔ How many education customers do you have?
- ✔ How many devices have you supplied, what manufactures have you used?
- ✔ How many people do you have working in the education space?
- ✔ Do they outsource training and maintenance?
- ✔ What is the main part of your business, education or commercial sales?



Key questions to ask about their product offering:

- ✔ What operating systems do they recommend and why?
- ✔ What management software do they recommend?
- ✔ What would they suggest as the best device?
- ✔ How do they arrange training and support?
- ✔ What accreditations do they have, for example, are they authorised as an education specialist via Google or Apple?

Actions for you, the customer

- ✔ Make sure you meet at least two suppliers.
 - ✔ Make sure they provide a written quotation.
 - ✔ Write up your notes on the meeting, start your decision analysis to help you decide.
 - ✔ Follow up with reference sites they have given you.
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Helping you with implementing digital devices, from the very beginning

We have written a number of guides on how to successfully implement a digital 1:1 learning program in a school. Starting with a strategy, digital leaders, parental buy in, how to fund the devices, how to support and insure them. The list goes on. Any serious IT company operating in this sector will be able to provide you with a lot of documented resource to help you. Make sure you ask for this information. The better quality the guides, the higher the chance they will know what they are talking about.

What we have seen at edde

We do not wish to put you off, but hopefully some of the following stories will help you make the best decision for your school, college or academy.

01 Not using a supplier, doing it all yourself

There is logic here if you have an ICT Manager and you can source digital devices via some discount website. There might be a financial saving. However, we met one school with 60 iPads in a store room, all in their box's, never used. The ICT Manager was too busy to implement the roll out.

02 A supplier who has just jumped on the digital "bandwagon."

This is by far the biggest issue we have seen. A lone sales person in an IT supplier stumbles upon a school looking to go live with a classroom mobile learning. They win the business, normally on price, then have no clue as to how to successfully implement digital learning in the classroom.



03 A big IT company with one person working in education

All the research you have done illustrates that the supplier is large, well established and reputable. Their sales person is experienced in education sales and very credible. However, he/she is the only person working in the so called "Education Division." The individual moves onto another company then the department shuts down.

04 Manufactures terminating a product line

We have seen this with Samsung and Apple on numerous occasions. A school signs up to implementing an Apple iPad 2 for example, then mid-way through our edde shop facility being open, Apple announce they will no longer be selling the iPad 2. We then have to go back to all the parents to recommend another product. (It's not a problem as the pricing is the same.) Always ask about the future plans of the device you are looking at.

05 Constant changing of staff

Sales people notoriously move around from supplier to supplier. Trainers, implementers and support staff at these ICT companies less so. It's worth asking how long your contact(s) at the supplier has been working there. Some education establishments deal with one person one month, then someone else the next month.

How does your supplier make their profit?

Being fair and giving a balanced view, the education space is highly competitive. We have heard of suppliers selling 1,000 iPads and only making £5.00 gross profit per unit. Sometimes, a supplier will even offer the device at cost, just to win the business.

Most of their profit will be in the training, installation and support. Typically, there is not a lot of profit in the hardware or software licences. You should find that the quotes you receive are similar in price, however, supplier one might recommend two days training and supplier two, three days training.

From what we see, being totally independent, even for big rollouts, these suppliers make a fair and reasonable return, certainly not an obscene profit.

How can we help you choose the right supplier?

Hopefully this guide has given you some ideas and advice on how to find the best supplier for you. The vast majority of schools are already getting it right by choosing a good supplier. However, for those schools looking to start out on their digital journey, or ones looking for a change of supplier, we can offer advice and recommend a company to you. We do not charge you – the school – for this service. In addition, we do not receive any financial inducement from the supplier from making a recommendation.

Where does edde fit in then?

We finance, administer and insure digital devices in schools. We work alongside your supplier, making sure that the solution they implement is tracked, insured and funded correctly.



For more information

Please contact a member of the edde team
01494 611 465 or hello@edde.education