JUST 15 MINUTES WASTED EACH DAY, CAN SEE YOU LOSE OVER 47 HOURS OF TEACHING TIME IN A YEAR.

Soft Egg Limited | August 2015

Time is a precious commodity in education, so why do we let poor connectivity; slow login times and ageing computers steal our time on a daily basis?

As an IT Support Provider, who work exclusively with schools, we know how to create robust, reliable systems that enhance learning and teaching.

In this guide, we will explain ten simple changes that you can make, which will help to revolutionize your schools IT infrastructure and start getting back that lost time.

#1 BE PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE

Too often schools only talk about IT when it stops working. This means that you are left with devices that don't work and without the money to replace them.

We suggest that you create a register of all the IT assets that you have in your school, think about when they will need replacing and begin a rolling programme of replacement. This means that you can plan future proof systems, which are always affordable.

#2 DUPLICATE YOUR LAYOUTS

When devices are inconsistent and layouts are different, pupils struggle to engage with learning. This often leads to the start of behavioural problems, which mean learning can be lost.

We suggest that to stop this happening you should create identical layouts on every device, by utilising device management software. This allows the pupils to all have the same experience of every device. It leads to easier management and less faults overall.

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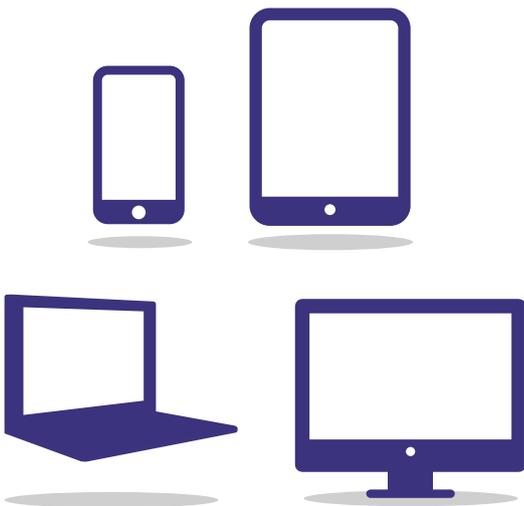
#3 ENSURE ACCESS TO QUALITY ONLINE RESOURCES

Historically schools have not had control over the web resources that are available to teachers and pupils. This has lead to missed learning, as teachers cannot use the resources that they need.

We suggest that you utilise an up to date filtering system, such as Lightspeed. This will allow you to set the resources you want teachers and pupils to have access to on an individual basis. This means that resources can be available without compromising online safety.
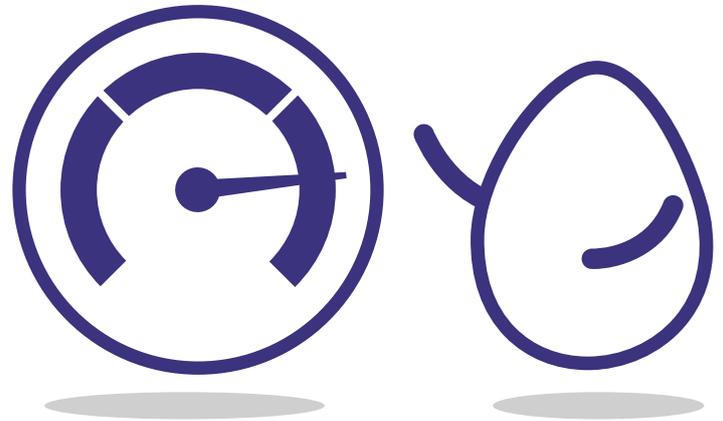
#4 SPEED UP YOUR BROWSING

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We suggest that you take a good look at your options. There is no obligation to get broadband from your local LEA, especially if they are overcharging and providing slow, unreliable connections. Remember not to just consider your broadband speed but also your allowance, what is included in the package and how easy it is to contact customer support.

It costs nothing to explore your options and see if you can get faster, cheaper broadband. For more advice on this, please call our broadband team on 0845 094 8492.

#5 GET YOURSELF CONNECTED

Logging on to the pupil devices can seem to take forever; sometimes this perception isn't that far from reality. Often this issue can be caused by poor connectivity. This means that network equipment is out of date, or unsuitable for use in the modern classroom.

We suggest that you invest in a robust managed wireless system, which enables you to get the most from whatever devices you are using. Of course, it's tempting to invest in the attractive stuff first, like new iPads, then try to save money on inadequate Wireless Access Points, but those minimal savings frequently translate into invisible costs, which waste time when wireless internet access is patchy, weak or unreliable.

A school with many individuals logging into the network from multiple locations needs to be strong. Unfortunately, the kind of Wireless Access Point (WAP) which are fine at home, simply aren't up to the job of dealing with a whole school. With a robust and solid network, professionally installed, you can support high volumes of connected devices safely and reliably, lifting overall performance.
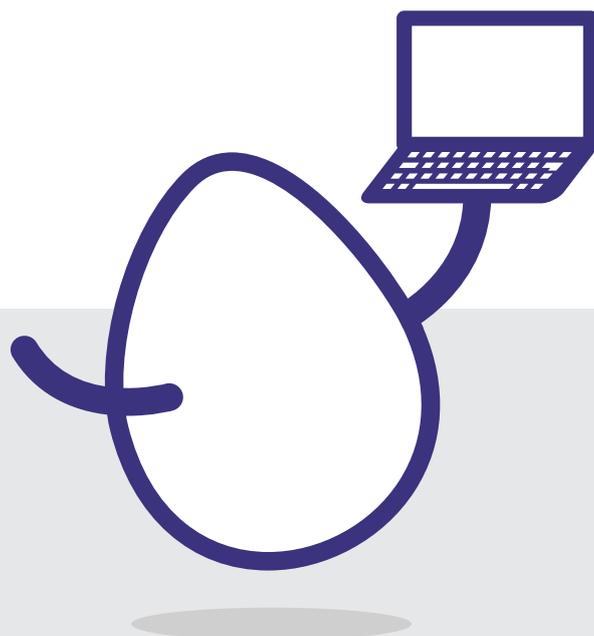
#6 DITCH SOFTWARE UPDATING ISSUES FOREVER

Installing updates and missing plugins are simple issues, which need not lead to lost time in learning. Sadly, too often schools do not have regular support and these issues occur.

We suggest that you make sure your IT support company runs diagnostics every single morning to check that computer software and printer drivers are up to date. Therefore classes are never delayed by software updating and valuable time is saved. If there are any problems, your technology partner should be able to fix the problem before you have even logged in for the day.

#7 MONITOR E-SAFETY AUTOMATICALLY

E-Safety is a tricky issue to get right, close everything down and students miss out on a real world experience, leave everything open and create issues for yourselves and your students.

We suggest that you implement intelligent monitoring software. Teachers want solutions, which monitor for them, not solutions, which add to their jobs. Teachers and staff also want to feel confident that they have the right tools available to protect and educate children. Use software, which empowers teachers to intelligently monitor behaviour in all applications on all devices – by automatically noticing and recording issues of concern. Where the software flags a potential issue, a screenshot will be taken, along with the date, time and identity of the student using the device.

This allows teachers to manage by exception, rather than through anxious and constant monitoring, allowing you to take decisions and action according to the nature of the event and its circumstances.

#8 TRAIN YOUR STAFF

Often the staff team in a school is less confident than the pupils that they teach and often this comes down to time. Teachers are capable, but they just don't get chance to sit, play and learn about the new software and technology that is coming online.

We suggest that when you invest in technology, you also invest in support, consultation and training for your staff. This will allow your staff the time to add confidence to competence and give them the skills they need to use IT creatively in the classroom.

#9 THINK BEFORE YOU BUY

Too often companies are so busy selling equipment to schools that they forget to ask what learning the school hopes to get out of the equipment. This leads to machines that are unfit for purpose, or simply languish unused in the IT cupboard.

We suggest that before purchasing equipment you speak to trained, experienced consultants who know the pros and cons of each device. Spending a little time and money on making the right purchase can avoid problems and ensure that any technology purchases have impact on learning.

#10 CHOOSE BESPOKE IT SUPPORT

All schools are different and this means that all schools need bespoke IT support. Too often schools are lumbered with a one size fits all solution, from companies that don't understand the realities of the classroom.

We suggest that you find an experienced IT support company who understands the challenges presented by the unique classroom environment and has years of experience in directly implementing solutions, which work.
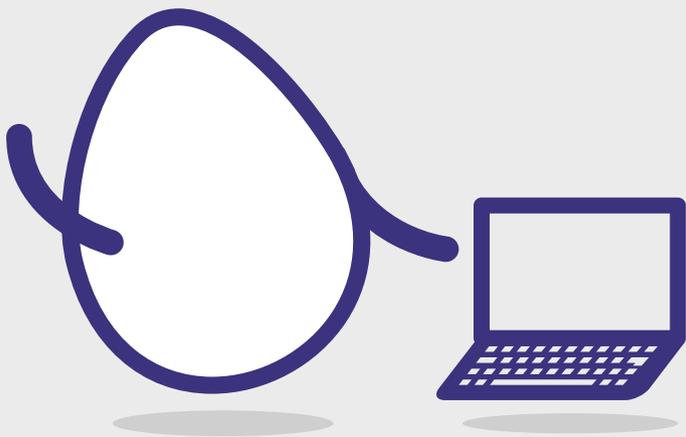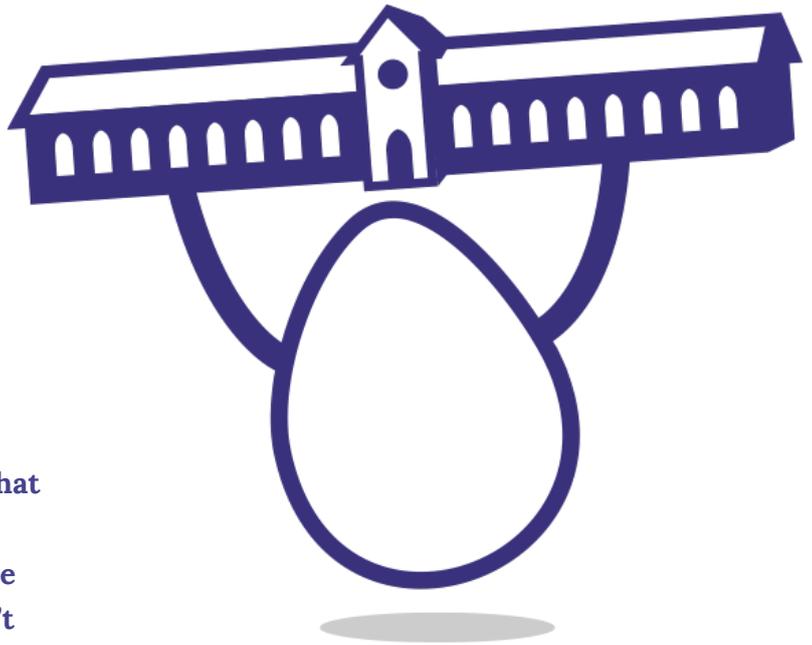
ABOUT SOFT EGG

In 2008, Soft Egg decided that school ICT support was our way of making a positive difference to the education system. Today, we're working with schools across the South of England, providing everything that is needed for schools IT. This includes schools broadband, mobile devices, interactive screens, IT suites, managed wireless systems and everything in between. Ultimately, we believe that technology isn't what makes the difference. People make the difference. People who care about quality outcomes and appropriate solutions that support outstanding teaching. And people who strive to make a difference for those around them. That's who we aim to be as a school IT Company.

www.softegg.co.uk
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