How technology can help schools and students flourish

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Technology can revolutionise education. Just look at the last year. It's allowed students to join lessons from home. It's given teachers digital tools to engage students in new ways. And it's opened governors and headteachers' eyes to new and exciting possibilities. If they continue to invest in technology, schools can create incredible opportunities for staff and pupils alike.

Our recent study with the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) estimated that investment in digital technology within education could boost our economy by £10bn over the coming years. And the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recently found that innovative solutions like artificial intelligence and virtual reality can transform the classroom and enable every child to achieve their potential.

While the technologies have been around for some time, the advantages they bring for educators are not yet widely recognised and adopted. But that's changing rapidly. Century Tech is pioneering the use of artificial intelligence to automatically identify knowledge gaps and provide live recommendations to teachers on students who might require additional attention. This will make tracking pupils' progress easier and less time consuming for teachers while improving academic outcomes.

Virtual and Augmented Reality could also transform the learning environment. They could enable students to visit historical sites, museums and galleries with ease, making learning more immersive and helping improve access to high quality experiences regardless of where a school is based. For pupils excluded from trips due to their family circumstances at home, this could be game changing.

As we start to look to the next academic year, schools are asking themselves how best to support students and make up for any lost learning. Technology has an important role to play – but to capture its full potential – schools need to invest in the connectivity and infrastructure that support it. Fast, reliable and secure connectivity is crucial to making that happen.

Security is critically important

An increased focus on digital resources and technology enabled learning could bring new challenges – meaning schools need to ensure they're protecting themselves and their students. A recent investigation revealed there had been a surge in devastating ransomware attacks on schools since the pandemic, putting financial records, coursework and COVID-19 testing data at risk. This prompted the National Cyber Security Centre to publish an alert warning IT teams to be vigilant.

As Paul Jones, Head of Schools at Cisco, told us, "It is critical that the underlying infrastructure supporting innovation – networks, cloud and other IT solutions – offers schools the resilience they need as they embrace new technologies, protecting them from the growing number of cyber-attacks."

Schools can better protect themselves by shifting towards cloud-based security. This doesn't just remove hardware from site, but means that security updates are automatic and management is simplified from a single, simple portal – bringing convenience and peace of mind to headteachers with long to-do lists.

Smart investment in the right technology, supported by a secure and reliable connection, will give staff and pupils the tools they need to excel.

Together, they will make the classroom a space where any child can receive the right support, find inspiration and thrive.