

The RM Annual NGfL Review  
1999



[www.rm.com](http://www.rm.com)





*The RM Annual NGfL Review: 1999*

---

# Contents

---

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword	3
Two Years On	4
Impact on the Market: facts and figures	7
The Way Forward	10
<hr/>	
<b>Three key issues</b>	
<hr/>	
Managed Services: the future of ICT provision in schools?	11
The Power of Content	12
NOF ICT Teacher Training Initiative: continuing professional development	13
<hr/>	
<b>Case studies</b>	
<hr/>	
Wakefield LEA: Go Wild	14
Bracknell Forest Learning Network	15
East Dunbartonshire	16

# Foreword

In the year since RM published **The National Grid for Learning: One Year On**, the position of ICT in education in the UK has moved forward significantly. It is rare today to hear teachers or school managers questioning the value of ICT and, for most, ICT now takes its place in the yearly planning and budgeting cycle. The targets that were set out in **Connecting the Learning Society**, which many people considered bold at the time, are seen as reasonable and achievable. Crucially, the debate has moved forward and is now about how to make ICT deliver real and measurable educational benefits for pupils.

This wide acceptance has been driven by two key factors - government enthusiasm, backed up with funding and the development of ICT to the point where it can really make an impact. Many of us in the educational ICT industry view the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) as the right project at the right time. At RM we are sure that - in partnership with teachers, schools and LEAs - we can deliver against the very high expectations the NGfL has set.

RM's **G7 Reports** have shown that the UK has been extremely successful at integrating ICT into education. And education systems around the world see the NGfL as a blueprint for major ICT development. However, as



in all new technology areas, this lead is fragile. The UK will only retain its position - and its competitiveness in the Information Age - with continuing development of the NGfL.

This document reviews the state of the NGfL, discusses new developments - including managed services and the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) teacher training initiative - and considers the crucial areas of software and content. The NGfL programme recognised from its inception that excellent software and content would be vital to delivering real educational benefits from ICT. There is already an excellent foundation of infrastructure being put in place and the NOF programme will touch many thousands of teachers. It is now time for the focus to move to software and content.

*Phil Hemmings*  
*Director of Corporate Affairs*

# Two Years On

*When the Government first launched its vision of a National Grid for Learning in October 1997 there were many sceptics. Not everyone was convinced that the targets proposed could be achieved and they were certainly not convinced that ICT and the online resources the NGfL would provide would make a significant change to the teaching and learning process. After two years of development, backed by substantial investment, it is rare to hear such criticism. Most importantly, teachers - those ultimately responsible for delivering the NGfL - are embracing the concept that using ICT really can help raise standards.*

Two years on from the Government's first commitment to the NGfL, the face of ICT in education throughout the UK has changed, permanently, irrevocably and for the better. The most up-to-date equipment is finding its way into thousands of classrooms and more schools than ever before are connected to the Internet. RM itself now has over 10,000 schools connected to the Internet and estimates that overall about 95% of secondary schools and almost 60% of primary schools are now connected. Whilst two years ago less than 5% of primary schools had any kind of Internet connection, a significant number of primary schools now have networked connections to the Internet, and over two thirds of RM's primary connections are via ISDN. This enables teachers and pupils to use both ICT and the world wide web as an integral part of the school day.

*\*Published by RM in January 1999.  
Copies are available on request.*

The Prime Minister's strong commitment to establish the NGfL was driven by the acknowledgement that, for the UK to play a leading role in the 'Knowledge Economy' there needed to be widespread change in many areas, such as business and education. As it states in **Excellence in Schools** (White Paper 1997), 'We cannot prepare our children for the world of tomorrow with yesterday's technology'. The belief that this change was necessary to participate in the 'Information Age' has since been borne out by the appointment of both an eMinister and a Minister for ICT in Education and the creation of an eEnvoy.

The fact that the Government chose education as the starting point for its IT revolution highlights again the emphasis it places on education and its ability to equip UK plc for the world economic stage. It is the building blocks set in place by the NGfL today that will ensure that future generations - those pupils in today's UK education system - will be equipped to play a leading role in the Information Age.

Local education authorities, councils and individual schools have many different approaches to getting connected to the Grid. The case studies in this publication and in **The National Grid for Learning: One Year On\*** provide examples of a number of these approaches taken over the first two years. The majority

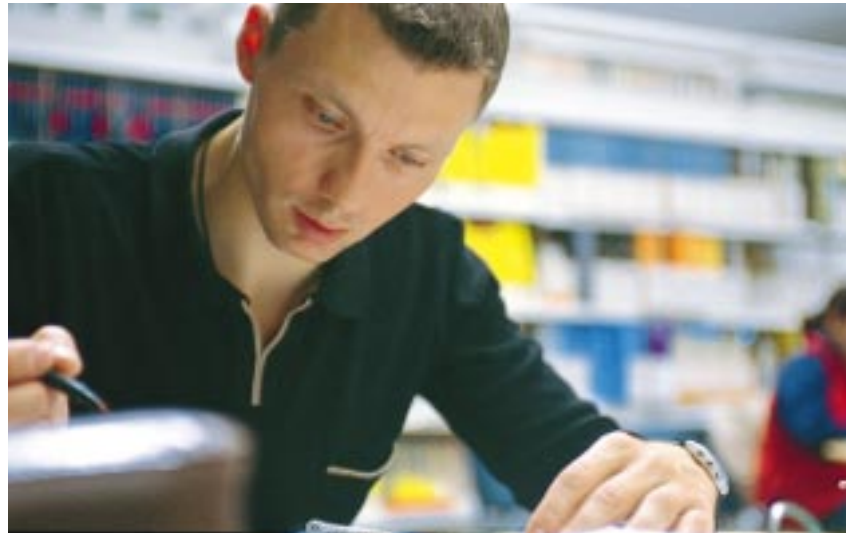


of authorities have concentrated on getting their primary schools online, although interestingly, in East Dunbartonshire the Council chose to focus mainly on secondary schools in the first year. What stands out is the importance of finding a solution that is right for the particular set of circumstances in each authority or council. Although many of the problems and challenges faced are common to all authorities, they exist in each in different proportions and with a different emphasis.

A number of education authorities have used a portion of their NGfL funding to carry out individual skills training programmes for teachers. Others, like Wakefield LEA, have also encouraged the creation of useful content, much of it with a local emphasis. No matter what approach has been taken, the underlying belief is the same - ICT will have a huge impact on how and what we teach in schools.

This belief is supported by a growing body of evidence from LEAs and individual schools - mainly anecdotal - that shows tangible benefits from increased ICT resources in schools. Through the use of software like Integrated Learning Systems, it has been proven that ICT can help raise standards. The Internet is a valuable research tool that pupils and teachers can use to enhance the teaching and learning process. And, we should not ignore the exceptional motivational power that ICT in the classroom has, for both the gifted and the excluded pupil.

The wealth of information that ICT can bring to the learning environment and the huge motivational impact of ICT on learners is also one of the factors driving community learning projects. In addition to schools money, the Government has earmarked funding



for libraries, community learning and lifelong learning initiatives in order to capture the unique learning benefits offered by ICT. Investment is being made in both the provision of content and access to these resources.

One of the biggest debates during the first two years of NGfL was around the issue of bandwidth. A consensus of opinion has now been reached on the minimum bandwidth necessary to allow schools affordable, fast access to the materials available on the web, with a BECTa taskforce recommending ISDN2 (128k) as a minimum for primary schools. RM's experience is that this bandwidth is sufficient for small primary schools, while for middle schools 256k is more realistic, and secondary schools need 512k or 2MB. At the rate of current growth of Internet use in schools, RM predicts that within two years, secondary schools will be using 8MB. At present, however, schools are limited by the current costs of bandwidth and although they are bandwidth hungry - they have hundreds of concurrent users - with current costs, they will always need more bandwidth than they can afford.



As we go into the third year of NGfL funding in England and Wales and the second year in Scotland the debate is turning to content - both software, like integrated learning systems, and online resources. It is content that will determine the success or otherwise of the vision of the NGfL. With the majority of schools connected to the Internet and many of them updating old and obsolete ICT equipment and with the Government underwriting the ICT training of every full-time teacher, good content is a must. Indeed, many

schools and LEAs have already recognised this, illustrated by the numbers of LEAs and schools choosing to provide their teachers and pupils with resources like RM's *Living Library*<sup>™</sup> - more than 30% of schools in the UK now subscribe to this service and the number continues to grow.

In the NGfL the UK education system has embarked along a road that is already giving schools access to online materials, is motivating and training teachers in the potential use of ICT in the classroom and giving schools the equipment they need. It is now time to ensure that the content exists to make it all worthwhile. There needs to be a rigorous and concerted drive to create and deliver good quality content for our pupils and teachers.

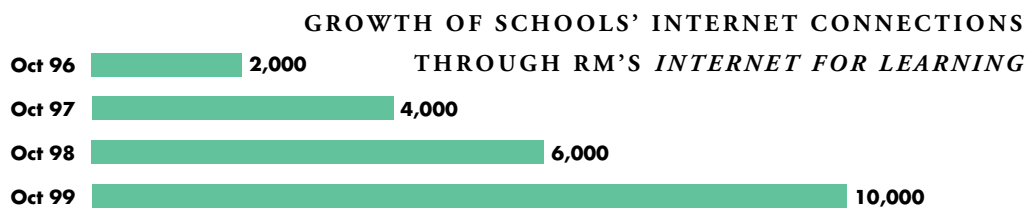
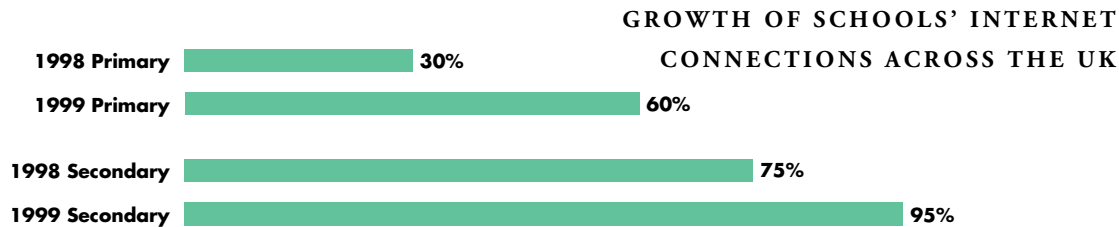
Just as traditional publishers have provided education with a wealth of printed materials, there is now a need for those publishers to provide their resources online. And just as we expect to pay for text and reference books we should reject the notion that educational online content should be free. Quality learning support materials, whether software, online resources or learning systems must be professionally created and delivered and, crucially, they must be kept up to date. A huge amount of effort has gone into connecting our schools to the NGfL and it is beginning to show results. Now that the infrastructure is in place, it is vital that attention turns to the provision of world class, world beating content.

# Impact on the Market: facts & figures

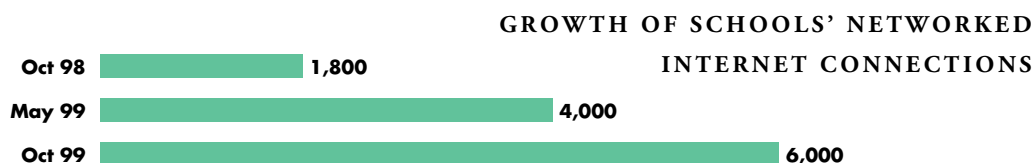
## INTERNET CONNECTIONS

When RM launched its *Internet For Learning (IFL)* service in January 1995 only a handful of schools expressed an interest in connecting to the Internet. In the first couple of years take-up was mainly among pioneering schools that maybe had a member of staff with a particular interest in ICT. Even then most schools only had a single dial-up connection. By November 1999, however, the number of schools connecting to the Internet through RM was over 10,000.

RM estimates that in total 95% of secondary schools were connected to the Internet at the end of November 1999 and coming up for 60% of primary schools had an Internet connection. This differs slightly from current government statistics for primary and compares with an estimated 75% of secondary schools and 30% of primary schools at the same time in 1998. What the figures don't show is the tremendous growth in networked Internet access, which the trend in RM's own Internet connections business indicates is a strong area of growth.



The interesting figure, however, is the amount of schools now connecting to the Internet through networks. Many now recognise that only through networked connection to the Internet can the full benefits of online teaching and learning be realised.



What may be even more important here is the substantial number of primary schools that have made the invest<sup>TM</sup>ent in networks (nearly 4,500 at the end of November 1999). This has been driven fundamentally by the demand to use the Internet in whole-class teaching and become part of the National Grid for Learning.

Once schools are connected to the Internet they then need good, relevant and educationally specific online content. RM launched *Living Library* at BETT 97 and today over 30% of all UK schools subscribe to *Living Library*. Other online services from RM, such as *Netpals*, have also demonstrated phenomenal growth in the past 18 months, showing that there is a real demand for these types of services.

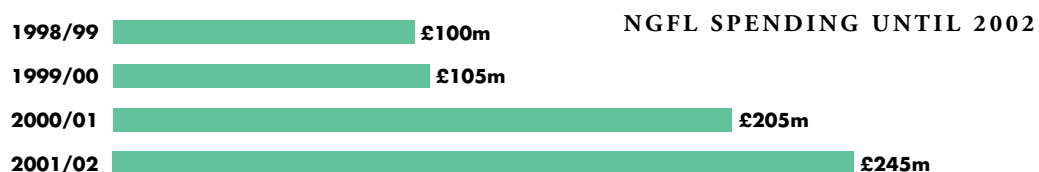


The government plans to have 50% of all pupils with their own email addresses by 2002. Again we have seen rapid growth in the recent past in the take-up of this type of service. Almost half a million pupils and teachers had *RM EasyMail* accounts at the end of October 1999.



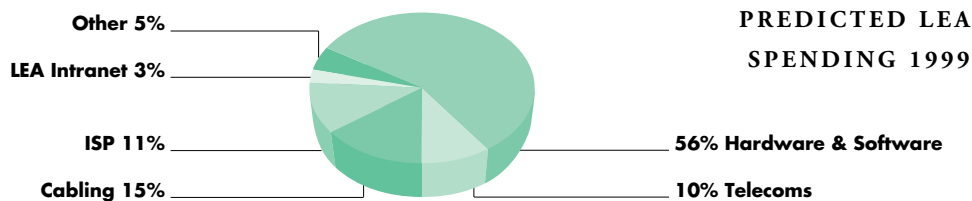
**NGFL SPENDING**

Funding for the NGfL has been allocated as shown:

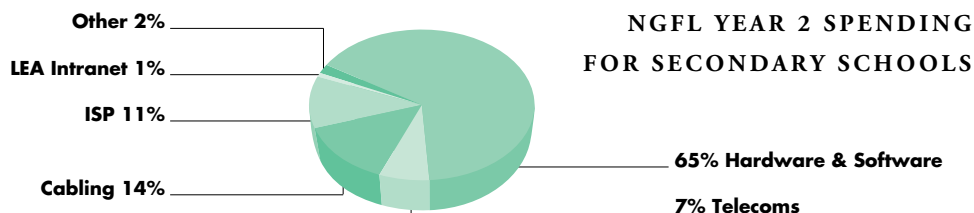
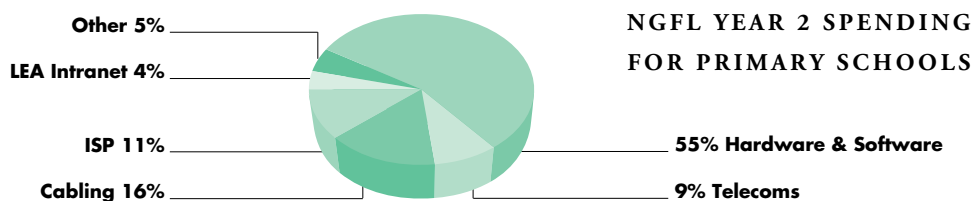


\*funding for 2001/02 has not been confirmed yet; this figure is extrapolated from announced government funds to date

At the beginning of 1999, RM carried out a survey of 78 LEA ICT advisors and asked them to predict how their authority would spend their share of the £105m NGfL funding for the coming year.



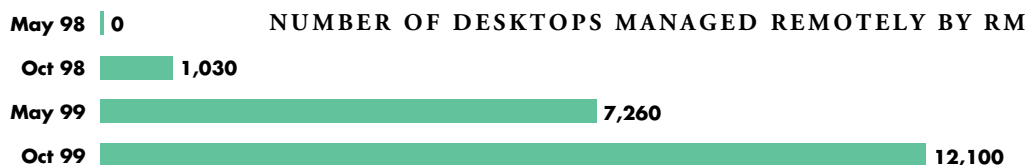
This figure can be broken down for both primary and secondary schools in England and Wales.



### GROWTH IN MANAGED SERVICES

Managed Services has emerged in this second year of NGfL in England as a major component in ICT in education thinking. To encourage the take-up of Managed Services and to ensure that schools and LEAs get the best possible service, BECTa has launched an accreditation process for NGfL Managed Services providers.

The growth of Managed Services in education has been exponential over the past 18 months. At the end of October 1999, 56 secondary schools, 124 primary schools and 30 colleges had Managed Services with RM alone, amounting to a total of 12,100 desktops being managed in this way.



# The Way Forward

*In looking to the future it is no longer enough just to talk about the potential transforming benefits of educational ICT. These benefits are well documented and, at least at a conceptual level, broadly accepted. It is also clear that well-developed technology skills will be essential if the UK is to maintain a leading position in the Information Age. Today, the key questions revolve as much around execution as vision. The issue is delivery. Teachers and pupils are increasingly used to an environment permeated with technology. The goal now is to make ICT work educationally - not just technically - to raise standards.*

Three key themes have emerged in this document: the very real value of managed services as a delivery mechanism for complex infrastructure; the need for a confident and competent teaching force motivated to use ICT; and the importance of excellent software and content products that deliver measurable educational benefits. These three areas will be fundamental to delivering the promise of the National Grid for Learning.

RM predicts that over the next few years managed services will become the preferred route for schools procuring ICT equipment. Paradoxically, whilst the end-user's experience of ICT becomes simpler and more intuitive all the time, constructing and maintaining ICT systems gets more complex. Managed services address this paradox and transfer the technical risk of ICT systems to the people best qualified to deal with them.

The need for lifelong learning is universally accepted and it applies equally to teaching as to any other profession. Continuous enhancement of knowledge, combined with the reappraisal and reinforcement of skills will become part of every educationalist's life. Under the current NOF initiative ICT is the 'subject' of training but RM also sees ICT increasingly being used as the method of training - for educators as well as for their students.

More than anything the educational benefits of ICT are driven by the availability of software and educationally relevant content. Infrastructure and training are, in effect, threshold conditions. Without them ICT cannot deliver any benefits - but, in themselves, they have little value. Of course, much good content already exists, and the NGfL is providing an excellent route for educationalists to find it. However, there is still a great deal left to be done.

In looking towards the future - and understanding how the benefits of ICT will be delivered in schools, colleges and the home - RM firmly believes that content has become the crucial ingredient. The possibilities of interactivity in content and embedding pedagogies into software products are only just beginning to emerge and there is no doubt that tomorrow's software and content will be a leap ahead of what is already available today. As we move into the delivery period of the NGfL, software and content is the area where everyone involved - practitioners, policy makers, product designers and end users - needs to focus their effort.



# Three Key Issues

## MANAGED SERVICES: THE FUTURE OF ICT PROVISION IN SCHOOLS?

It is becoming increasingly clear that managed services offer a real means of helping schools manage their ICT resources more efficiently. As educational networks and software become more sophisticated, many schools are recognising that their ICT provider could take away the burden of actually managing the day-to-day running of their ICT facilities. By outsourcing its ICT facilities in this way, a school not only transfers the risks of managing a system; it also allows teachers the freedom to concentrate on teaching using the resources available and ensures that schools are better able to keep up-to-date with advances in technology. The opportunity to discuss long-term requirements with a specialist in the field of educational ICT can also help schools to better define and plan their ICT resources.

The government announcement in July 1999 of the first NGfL Certified Managed Service suppliers will lead to a step change in the way in which schools make complex ICT purchases. A significant number of schools and colleges had already made the decision to implement some form of managed service for their ICT provision prior to certification. Indeed, RM alone was contracted to deliver 'full' managed service solutions to over 100 primary schools and some 50 secondary schools in the UK. However many of these were among the original pioneers of using ICT in education and are fairly advanced in their use of technology.



The great strength of the NGfL Certified Managed Services scheme is that it will provide a benchmark for those schools - particularly primary schools - considering making a large investment in ICT but unsure how to go about it. The scheme also provides schools that are nervous at embarking on such a large project with the assurance that a government agency - BECTa - has put its stamp of approval on the services each of the twelve certified companies offers. It allows schools to compare more easily the services each company is offering and provides them with the peace of mind of a standard framework contract.

Schools now have greater flexibility about the way in which they resource their ICT facilities. In the next few years the NGfL Certified Managed Services scheme will surely have a strong influence on the way schools purchase their ICT services and systems. The more schools that experience the greater sense of partnership and trust that develops between customer and provider - key to the whole process - the more schools will ultimately choose to go down the managed services route.

## Three Key Issues

### THE POWER OF CONTENT

Content-rich software and Internet resources are crucial ingredients in the educational ICT mix. In today's changing educational environment few would deny that tools such as learning software, simulation packages and online information resources have a real place in the teaching and learning process. Many claim that the Internet has the potential to play an even more important role in the classroom than it does in the business world. Both education authorities and schools have quickly identified the Internet's value, not only as a powerful teaching tool with the scope to radically change the way children are taught, but also as an administrative tool with the capacity to cut down on bureaucracy.

Many of those schools that have been using ICT in the classroom for some time and have already established a bank of resources - tried and trusted websites, software that reinforces learning gains, lesson plans incorporating ICT that motivate and interest pupils - find that they are using ICT more and more. For the National Grid for Learning to deliver its true potential, however, it is important that every school has access to good, educationally relevant and professionally developed content material.

In the last year or so, both the Government and the educational community have recognised that, as with traditionally published and printed educational resources, there is a real need for properly developed and resourced materials. Many organisations, including educational publishers, are looking at how they can offer materials they would normally have provided solely through traditional methods, using new media and often building in extra functionality into the process. The Parliamentary Education Unit's 'Explore Parliament' website

([www.explore.parliament.uk](http://www.explore.parliament.uk)) is a good example of how accessing information can be made more interesting by introducing an element of interactivity. Children can find out about the workings of Parliament through a series of activities and quizzes. They can also take part in formulating and voting on a fictional Act of Parliament through an online debating process which follows the complete life-cycle of a Bill.

In the first few years of the NGfL the focus has been on establishing an ICT infrastructure in schools. Alongside this, the NOF teacher training initiative is already beginning to provide teachers with the skills to use ICT in the classroom. With these two 'phases' on track and as the NGfL takes root in schools, the emphasis is now being placed more heavily on the provision of educational resources, particularly via the Internet. *RM Maths*, *SuccessMaker*<sup>®</sup>, *EduWeb*<sup>™</sup>, *Living Library* and the new *RM Window Box*<sup>™</sup> *OnLine* are all excellent examples of the kind of quality educational material that already exists through commercial sources.

As time goes on it will be the demands of teachers and pupils, as well as changes in the curriculum, that drive the development of content-rich resources forward. The kinds of tasks and activities pupils and teachers carry out, more and more online, will diversify still further as technology becomes more sophisticated and schools are better equipped to take advantage of these advances. They will make greater use of software that actually promotes learning gains rather than using computers solely to





carry out less challenging tasks such as word processing. What is certain is that the market for advanced educational software products and educational services online is only just beginning to emerge. There is no doubt that tomorrow's software and Internet resources will be a leap ahead of what is already available today. It seems clear that the focus now needs to be on the best way of expanding and promoting the burgeoning content market so that as the use of ICT and the Internet become more widespread in schools, there is a clear, cohesive way forward.

#### NOF ICT TEACHER TRAINING INITIATIVE: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) ICT teacher training initiative really began to take shape in 1999, with the announcement of the approved training providers in April and the first teachers commencing their training in the Summer term.

Funded by £230 million of mid-week Lottery money, the NOF initiative aims to train all 500,000 practising teachers and school librarians in the use of ICT in subject teaching by April 2002. Its goal is to give teachers the competence and confidence to use ICT in their teaching by developing their knowledge, skills and understanding of how to make the best use of educational technology in their classroom.

While some have criticised the scheme, many others have welcomed it as long overdue. Few would dispute that the initiative is an ambitious one. The first time such a wide-ranging programme of professional development for teachers has been offered, certainly in the use of ICT, it is seen as backing up the government's commi<sup>TM</sup>ent to expand the use of ICT in the UK's schools. The result of this commi<sup>TM</sup>ent is that a wide range of organisations have invested substantial amounts of money to create good training materials.

At the outset, there was a certain amount of uncertainty within the educational community about how the scheme would be accepted among teachers. There were concerns over the additional pressures it would place on teachers already in the middle of implementing initiatives such as the numeracy and literacy strategies. However, the numbers of teachers signing up for the training in just the first year is extremely encouraging. Alone, the *Learning Schools Programme*<sup>TM</sup> - the partnership between RM and the Open University - already had over 18,000 teachers signed up to take part in its training programme by the end of November 1999. The Programme estimates it will train in excess of 100,000 teachers over the three-year period.

The fact that schools can choose from a number of different training providers also means that a variety of different methods of study are on offer, allowing individual schools and teachers to choose the method that best suits them. Some schemes, for example, offer teachers a combination of school-based training, supported by self-study and new facilities such as online conferencing. Before starting the training, each teacher will have gone through a process of self-assessment to identify their own specific needs, which then allows them to tailor their training accordingly.

Working in partnership with the Open University and over 150 education authorities across the UK, RM has wholeheartedly embraced the NOF teacher training initiative, which it believes will do much to increase the confidence, competence and motivation of teachers to use ICT in the classroom. This, in tandem with the growing number of schools accessing technology through the NGfL and initiatives like subsidised PCs for teachers, announced in November 1999, is doing much to raise expectations about the ways in which ICT will transform teaching in our schools in the new millennium.

# Case Studies



## WAKEFIELD LEA - GO WILD

Wakefield LEA finished rolling out Year 2 of their NGfL solution in November 1999. This saw more than half the schools in the authority equipped with ISDN access to the Internet, including RM's *Living Library*, and a network of at least eight RM computers in each primary school. The remaining schools will be connected in years three and four.

When they embarked upon the project, the baseline of ICT provision in Wakefield schools was poor so the decision was made to bring a number of schools up to a good level of provision in each year rather than providing a little to each school every year. 'A strong feature of the NGfL project in Wakefield has been the collaboration between schools and between RM and the LEA. This has really helped Wakefield's NGfL model to work' says Keith Watson, Education Officer (ICT).

The project has already significantly raised the profile of ICT among the teaching community, with teachers enthusiastic about using ICT across the curriculum and keen to explore what the NGfL can offer. Some schools have raised extra money to extend their NGfL provision or to adapt existing school facilities to accommodate the new ICT equipment.

Wakefield LEA emphasises that its NGfL programme is very much a curriculum-driven project. Enter the Wakefield website at [www.gowild.org.uk](http://www.gowild.org.uk) and you can see just how much importance they are placing on developing curriculum resources. A particular emphasis has been placed on developing local projects and resources.

'Sharing knowledge and resources is what the NGfL is all about, hence our decision to locate our curriculum website on the Internet,' says John Smith, Senior Adviser with Wakefield LEA.

Teachers from each school involved in the NGfL project so far have worked with ICT and curriculum specialists at Wakefield Advisory and Inspection Services to put together a large collection of pages on curriculum topics. This has meant that whilst teachers are using their expertise and knowledge to create useful curriculum resources, they are also learning to use the technology. The last year or so has seen teachers' confidence in producing web materials for use in lessons and for homework increase dramatically.

Keith Watson says 'We chose RM because they offered significant value-added options in terms of training, software and reputation. They also understood what we were trying to achieve from an educational point of view.'

John Smith agrees, emphasising the partnership that has developed between Wakefield and RM which, he says, has been crucial to the development and implementation of the project. He lists some of the statistics from research carried out recently among the schools already online: '96% of schools are very happy with RM's resolution of queries and 97% are happy with the resolution of complaints. With the team at RM we have just the type of partnership we want and it's good for schools'.



## BRACKNELL FOREST LEARNING NETWORK

Bracknell Forest is a good example of an authority that chose a relatively straightforward NGfL solution and, in partnership with RM, implemented it well. Within the first year of the project, the authority connected each of its 40 schools to the Internet, 'ensuring that pupils in the Borough were using state-of-the-art computer technology to access the very latest educational material'. New computer facilities were opened at schools across the Borough and many are now developing their own web sites following teacher training on the use of the Internet and web page design.

In addition to their own training programmes, Bracknell Forest is also one of the first authorities to be involved in the NOF teacher training and has agreed to support the *Learning Schools Programme*. Once the training is complete, the LEA expects to see major gains from the increased use of ICT and its power to reduce teachers' workload.

The ability to make full use of the Internet formed an important aspect of Bracknell Forest's solution. They chose to connect schools via RM's *Internet For Learning* to give pupils the benefits of filtered Internet access, and have also set up an LEA intranet. Importantly, in many



schools the resources have been opened up to the community and parents have been able to come into schools to use the resources with their children. One junior school, College Town in Sandhurst, has established 'Café ICT', a very successful after-school-club for both parents and pupils.

By April 2000 most primary schools will have enough computers to establish an extended network, with either Internet access in every classroom or in clusters, opening up the possibilities for further using ICT across the curriculum. The ultimate goal is to have a trained network manager in every primary school.

Bob Welch, Senior Adviser at Bracknell Forest says 'The LEA awarded the contract to RM following a rigorous process of tender specification and bidding because they were able to meet all our requirements and project deadlines. We have developed a mutually supportive relationship where regular liaison meetings provide good opportunities for emerging issues to be resolved.'

The project is now entering its next stage, which has even more ambitious targets now that both teachers' and pupils' competence and confidence in using ICT is steadily increasing. To help keep the project on track and monitor levels of competence, the LEA commissioned an external review of its progress, for which the findings were very positive. They highlight the rapid progress that has been made in schools across the LEA and show teachers welcoming the new resources and the benefits they can offer.

Bob Welch says 'The success of the project, to date, is largely due to the roles played by all of those involved - RM, teachers, pupils, parents, the LEA and the Borough Council - and the relationships that have developed between them.'

### EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE

In Scotland the National Grid for Learning is being rolled out over a three-year period. East Dunbartonshire's first-year NGfL implementation focused primarily on providing ICT equipment and services to the council's secondary schools. This strategy follows a different model to many authorities in England and Wales which in the first one or two years of the NGfL have concentrated mainly on primary school provision. For East Dunbartonshire, the decision was made to provide for secondary schools in the first year because it was felt that using ICT would help pupils meet the demands of the new Higher Still curriculum.

The main emphasis of East Dunbartonshire's NGfL solution is pupil entitlement and equality of provision. They felt strongly that all pupils in East Dunbartonshire should enjoy similar access to the learning opportunities afforded by ICT so the education authority defined a level of provision which would apply in all of its schools. In this way East Dunbartonshire was able to ensure that all schools would be able to develop their use of ICT at a comparable pace and share identified good practice. The primary schools will begin to receive their first computers in the second year of the project and they will also have a defined level of entitlement, which will allow them to progress at a common pace.

The key to this approach was ensuring each school had the right number of computers over the next three years that would enable them to meet the requirement of one modern computer for every five secondary pupils. This resulted in a year 1 requirement for 520 new computers. Schools were then given the choice of a managed service

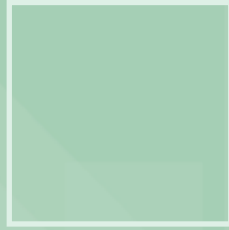


based on an *RM Connect*<sup>™</sup> network or an unmanaged service based on the Apple Macintosh platform. Out of the total of 520 computers originally needed, the overwhelming majority of schools chose the combination of a managed service and the PC platform. Some 460 computers are now connected to *RM Connect* networks, which will also support schools' existing up-to-date equipment.

Jim McGregor, who worked on the implementation of the council's NGfL strategy, said that one of the main reasons RM was selected was its track record in the provision of educational ICT. He said 'RM was chosen on the basis that schools and education authorities that had already opted for RM were able to attest to the added value provided by *RM Connect*'.

East Dunbartonshire has chosen to operate a three-tiered support system for its secondary schools which gives schools access to some elements of RM's managed service offering. Everyday issues will be handled by the school ICT technician but the authority is also developing its central ICT support service for schools so that its engineers are themselves expert in the management of *RM Connect*. For more complex or unusual issues the RM managed services team will be on hand and a close working partnership between all three bodies is already beginning to develop.





RM plc  
New Mill House  
183 Milton Park  
Abingdon  
Oxon OX14 4SE

Telephone: +44 (0) 1235 826000  
Fax: +44 (0) 1235 826999  
Internet: <http://www.rm.com>

Company Number 1749877

*The SuccessMaker trademark is owned and is licensed to RM by Computer Curriculum Corporation.*