



Prince of Wales Island International School

The future of personal computing at POWIIS

Background

When the school was established, a laptop strategy was put in place under which students from year 8 upwards were issued with a laptop provided by the school. After a minimum two years at the school, the students were entitled to retain the laptop.

At the same time, an ICT fee was introduced of RM600 per term. This fee was to offset the substantial costs of providing the IT systems within the school, and to offset the costs of our laptop provision programme. It was neither intended to be, or described as, a 'purchasing' plan for the laptops; the fee remained payable throughout a school career, regardless of the residual value of the laptop. The value of the laptops was depreciated by the school as an ongoing cost of our programme.

Today

In the few short years since the school opened, educational technology has move on significantly. Our laptop strategy has become outdated; the hardware no longer matches our expectations of portability and versatility, and our network has developed to allow a more flexible approach to connectivity and access. Increased software and application sophistication no longer demand the capabilities of earlier machines, and processors have become more compact, faster and more convenient.

As our uses of educational technology within teaching and learning have developed, so has our network and our external bandwidth consumption. We seek devices which are more agile, efficient and faster in access and processing. Many of our students prefer their own devices, and use them routinely.

New arrangements for 2016/17 onwards

'Bring your own device'

From September 2016, laptops will no longer be issued by the school. Those already holding laptops will be able to retain them after two years. Those held for one year or less, will be recalled by the school – or can be bought by the holder for a one-off cost of RM1500.

All students will now be required to provide their own device (which may be their existing laptop). The school will retain class sets of laptops where specific capabilities are required, but for more general use a modest capacity tablet machine will be adequate. **The primary requirement is connectivity to our school wireless network, and the ability to interact with the Google suite of applications increasingly in use in most subjects within the school both within school and elsewhere.**

For those wishing to move to a new device, with more comprehensive capability, the Macbook range of machines offer good battery duration and are the choice of many of our students.

However, it is consistent with the modern personal computing paradigm to allow complete freedom of choice, and we expect students and their families to have personal preferences.

What happens to the ICT Charge?

The element of the charge which supported the cost of the laptop provision, is being invested in network technology and upgrades as well as the licensing of advanced subject specific software. In common with most progressive schools, our focus is moving from user devices to infrastructure and applications.

What will happen to redundant machines owned by the school?

A number of machines will be allocated to specific departments in class sets where routine access to higher, or software specific, processing capacity is needed (eg DT), and also to our new computing courses where coordinated teaching on a common platform is appropriate.

Some machines will be offered for private sale.

The balance will be donated to charitable organisations. A particular link has been forged with an organisation which has sponsorship to refurbish redundant machines, before delivering them to remote island communities in Indonesia and surrounding areas. Delivery is made by the sailing ship Vega, owned by Shane Grainger and Margarete Macoun. Some may have seen the ship recently moored off Straits Quay, on their most recent voyage loaded with medical and educational supplies.

Their charity is supported by numerous other schools and commercial organisations. There is a book called *The Vega Adventures* which explains how their unique supply missions began after the great tsunami of 2004.

As POWIS transitions to a more modern and forward looking IT environment, we will be taking the opportunity to support others in real need.

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