

Digital Transformation and Disruption

Digital natives – the bulk of today’s students – have high expectations of educational technology; demanding developments such as mobile devices in the classroom, virtual learning environments, teaching via video, and online assessment.

Rapidly evolving technology is transforming the way that knowledge is imparted and absorbed. The internet, the growing popularity of social media and Big Data now play a crucial role in the digital educational ecosystem and online course providers report all-time high engagement rates.

Another important advantage of this digital wave in education is the increased scope of adaptive learning. Giving feedback and requesting information has become so much easier these days, thanks to knowledge sharing systems and social media. With improving technology, students can even become content creators by being able to add their own thoughts to platforms that support and encourage adaptive learning.

This ongoing disruption is both a challenge and an opportunity for schools and districts. School IT departments have become a key component of transformation, working to modernize legacy IT systems that deliver digital solutions. They strive to meet the needs of all students, and help staff work productively on any device they choose, from home, on the go, and across campuses. In addition, there is the need for robust cyber-security enforcement which protects staff and students’ personal data, and minimizes vulnerabilities to the institution’s networks.

It is a particularly complex environment for IT teams to operate in, and they must deliver manageable, scalable and secure solutions across diverse networks and devices. IT departments must also take care to ensure the user experience is intuitive and consistent, and helps boost student outcomes.

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Detractors of online learning and digital tools point out valid reasons like quality of study resources, privacy and security against such technological advancements. However, schools that bring together good technological expertise and quality content will best be able to reap the benefits of this wave. Only if the educational ecosystem consisting of policy makers, institutions, students, parents and teachers embrace new and developing technology can this digital transformation be used to its full potential to bring about systemic and institutional changes.

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