e-Learning@Parklands

Announcing the Introduction of the iPad Program for Years 6-12

LAUNCHING OFFICIALLY IN 2014 WITH THE OPTION TO COMMENCE IN 2013

Inclusions

- Heads of School introduction to iPads
    - Online Learning Platform
    - What is an iPad?
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Comments from Heads of School

Our Rationale

At Parklands, we understand that engagement with up to date technology for learning is essential. It forms a vital part of a high quality and relevant education in the 21st century for our students. We believe that students should ideally be able to access digital information, tools and resources from anywhere at any time as they learn – in ways that lead to a greater engagement and understanding. While we want our students to be highly skilled in the use of technology, we recognise that to truly educate our students we must develop a culture that provides a framework within the Christian world view around acceptable and appropriate use of this technology.

Cultures define what is normal, acceptable and viable. At Parklands Christian College that involves developing young people who:

- ✓ **use technology in an acceptable and responsible way;**

- ✓ **are discerning;**

- ✓ **have an ability to shape and influence the future use of technology in our society.**

Online Learning Platform

Google Apps is a web based platform that has enabled our teachers to create online resources with a focus on interaction and collaborative construction of content. Google Sites which is a web site suit in Google Apps, allows teachers to deliver content to students anywhere there is an internet connection. Modules such as sites, Drive, Calendar, Groups and more can be used to build richly collaborative communities of learning around subject matter. It was important that our learning platform was in place to enable learning experiences suited to the students' personal needs prior to decisions being made about which device would suit our Parklands environment. A 1 to 1 learning model will enable Google Apps to be accessed anywhere at any time. Google Sites allows students access to rich information if they are absent or to assist progress at a pace more suited to their own personal needs.

What is an iPad?

The versatile and feature-packed iPad has the capacity to resolve many of the computing needs of students, and is powerful in meeting many of the needs of staff. The Apple iPad is small, has a long battery life, features software that is educationally valuable, is light and stable and needs little maintenance from highly trained computer specialists. There is no valuable time lost in logging on as the iPad is instantly on when activated. These are all valuable features and the iPad has book-reading capacity that outperforms many far more expensive computers. We do not see the iPad as the solution to all school and student needs. We will still need to support and continue to upgrade many specialist areas. Nevertheless, the iPad should be a brilliant and convenient way of servicing the needs of many users. The iPad's internet searching is fast, its presentation tools are easy to use and it shares information with ease. These are key assets in schools, and learners love the ease with which it can be carried and turned on and off without waiting and missing the moment where learning comes alive. We feel the iPad has a great future and are enjoying the exploration of how it can add to our learning environment here at Parklands.

The importance of personal ownership

Each learner is a unique individual with their own needs and background. If a student owns their own device they can have more responsibility for their own learning by choosing Apps and organising their information in a personal way that addresses their own learning needs. This allows them to focus on experiences best for learning from the learners point of view. The responsibility of learning should reside increasingly with the learner. (Glaserfield, 1989). Students will also be more likely to take care of a device that is their own and for which there has been personal, financial outlay.

Protecting your Investment

As with all their belongings, students will be asked to take responsibility for the care, safety and security of their iPads. We emphasise the importance to all who bring an iPad to school, that they have considered the level of insurance cover that meets the requirements of family expectations. The College does not have insurance cover on any personal items that are brought to school.

Textbooks

Our ultimate goal is that the iPad will replace the need for students to carry textbooks. However, with textbook publishers still catching up with the technology, we will see 2013/14 as a transition year

where we hope some texts will be available on the iPad, while others will still be in the traditional textbook form. We will be endeavouring to move as many texts as possible to iPad as is practicable.

The College's broadband network and bandwidth

Providing online access to rich resources anytime while on campus requires a reliable and fast internet connection through a wireless environment. The College has completed an upgrade of our broadband connection to cater for many iPads connecting to our network.

Mr Grant Jakins, Mr Colin Elvery & Mrs Rebecca Wallis
Heads of School

From the Deputy Principal

Dear Parents,

My own experience with the iPad device has been very positive. I see potential for our students to develop academically, to become media savvy, and to grow in personal responsibility. I believe there is a crucial need for schools and families to form an alliance, so the educational opportunities of media use are optimised while the inherent risks are minimised. As with the introduction to any tool - be it a circular saw, or an iPad, operators must first be trained in safe and responsible use. With regard to the launch of our iPad program, safety is paramount and training is essential. Important tasks include equipping students to be discerning about information, make wise choices online, and engaging responsibly with media.

After visiting several schools with existing iPad and online learning platforms, I have a confidence that our students will embrace this technology and make effective use of both the iPad as a learning tool, and our Google Apps online learning platform. I have included a set of frequently asked questions that other schools have found useful. I look forward to discussing these with parents further should the need arise.

Mr Gary Cully
Deputy Principal

FAQs concerning iPad use in Education

Below is a series of frequently asked questions regarding the capabilities of the iPad. Please take the time to browse through, as it might cover some of the questions you have been asking yourself.

Why should I get an iPad and not a laptop?

We have considered our unique environment at Parklands and visited schools using both laptops and iPads and believe that the iPad could achieve all that we require in regular class situations. For example, the iPad will access the Internet, School Email and our Moodle Online Curriculum. It will allow you to Word Process, create Spreadsheets and complete Presentations. The iPad is very light, only 601gm, and with a battery life in excess of 10 hours, it will last all day on a single charge. You can also run all of the Apps from the iTunes store – these Apps will not run on a laptop.

Do I need wireless Internet at home?

The iPad is a wireless internet device; we will have ample wireless coverage at school. However there are some things you might consider for home. If you already have wireless internet at home, the iPad will easily connect to this. If you do not have wireless, you can still access iTunes from your PC, and then download Apps to your iPad. Wireless routers are not expensive; you might consider talking to your Internet Provider about options.

What sort of Internet Plan do I need at home?

It is very important to check what type of Internet Plan you are on. Some plans charge you if you go over your monthly download allowance; others give unlimited downloads and slow your connection down if you go over your monthly limit. The unlimited plans are by far the safest and the best value. We strongly advise checking with your ISP (Internet Service Provider).

Why would I need to use eBooks?

There are a number of advantages in having books loaded onto the iPad. If for example, we put the Maths book, Science Book, Dictionary, Thesaurus, Atlas, Bible and the odd English novel onto an iPad, we decrease the weight of the school bag by several kilograms. Students will always have access to all those resources in class, and perhaps most importantly eBooks are significantly less expensive than hard copy books. We will also be using eBooks in Years 10-12. You can read these from a laptop, but it is much easier to use an iPad, and the iPad is lighter, and the battery lasts all day.

Will reading books off my iPad hurt my eyes?

Don't forget, you will give your eyes a rest between classes, and the iPad can be adjusted for brightness to suit your personal preference. People regularly use the iPad to read newspapers and journals from around the world; many actually prefer the iPad to newspaper print.

Will I use my iPad for all my school computing?

We envisage that for 90% or more of your time, the iPad will be the device that will meet your needs in the classroom. In specialist areas for example, such as, but not limited to, Music, Visual Art, Maths, Graphics or that use specific software such as, Sibelius and Auto-CAD, the College will provide access to computers that will complete these tasks. We also have a bank of Laptops available for other specialised tasks. At home, for typing up larger English or History essays for example students might use their home PC or Mac, then transfer those files to their iPad to take to school. The advantage of the iPad is that it is light, portable and will last all day on a single battery charge.

An iPad has no USB; how do I transfer files?

The iPad does not have a USB, but that does not mean you cannot easily transfer files. There are a number of ways to do this:

- o The iPad can plug into (via the supplied USB cable) your home PC or Mac and copy files across.
- o You can email the file to yourself from your iPad, then open it on a PC or laptop.
- o We have found many new ways of manipulating files as more and more apps are released, and will share these with students progressively.
- o Students can also access their 'Home' file located on our server online

Our experience at school is that students lose USBs, forget to bring them, or sometimes the USB fails and all work on it is lost. Files are actually safer stored "in the cloud" on the Internet.

How do I print from an iPad; wouldn't a laptop be better for printing?

Currently students who wish to print at school log on to a school computer in the library or a location around the school that has desktops or laptops connected to a printer; they load their file, and then print it. This method won't change. To print an iPad file, you either save it to the Home file or Email it to yourself, log on to a school computer and print. If you have your own laptop, the process will be the same. You will still need to

send the file to yourself and log on to a school computer. Only school-owned computers connect to the school printing system.

An iPad can't open Microsoft Office documents such as Word, Excel or PowerPoint.

Wrong, the iPad opens all of those documents, and Pages, Numbers and Keynote all save in Microsoft Office format. The iPad is compatible with all your Office documents.

You can't save to an iPad.

Wrong again. Any file you create on an iPad is saved to it. In fact, when you use the Pages word processor it saves every word as you go. You can Email in Word, Excel and PowerPoint formats. The iPad actually has a safer, more regular saving mechanism than most other devices.

Can I plug a keyboard into an iPad?

Yes you can plug in a keyboard. We have found the built-in screen keyboard works well, especially when you get used to it. However, if you are wanting to type up a large piece on your iPad rather than your home PC, you can buy an iPad keyboard dock, or you can connect a Bluetooth keyboard.

Should I get the Wi-Fi-only iPad, or pay more and get the 3G model?

The Wi-Fi-only model would be recommended for a number of reasons. We have spent a deal of time and money putting in place a wireless network throughout the school. Your iPad will connect to this easily, and you will not be charged for any downloads. If you buy the 3G model, not only is it more expensive, you also have to go onto a plan and get a sim card, just as you do for your mobile phone. When you are not connected to a wireless network, the 3G model will kick in, and your plan will be charged for any downloads. More importantly, with the Wi-Fi-only model, the iPad connects to the Parklands network and passes through all our Internet filters and security. A 3G model can bypass these filters. You can use a Wi-Fi iPad with any wireless hotspot, such as those found at Coffee Houses, McDonalds, hotels etc.

What size should I get, 16, 32 or 64GB?

For school purposes, the 32GB should be ample.

I have a PC at home, not a Mac; will the iPad work with my PC?

The iPad connects to either a Mac or a PC via iTunes. It doesn't matter what you have at home. The iPad will sync, backup and talk to either PC or Mac desktops or laptops.

Have you compared the iPad with other devices?

Yes. As part of our pilot program, we compared a number of devices, taking into account the numerous factors relevant to Parklands, including the relative merits of a multi-purpose device compared to a single-purpose device. The comparison therefore paid particular attention to the broad range of educational uses of any proposed device across many subjects within Parklands. Other considerations include classrooms dynamics between students and teachers, the physical layout of Parklands teaching spaces, maintenance needs and cost. Taking all factors into account, the overwhelming support was for the iPad. While other multi-purpose tablet devices are now entering the market and can also cater to the learning styles of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners, our comparison shows that of the current models, the iPad is currently superior.