13 common misconceptions in education technology

As CEO, or CFO, of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) you need to provide leadership, direction, and take responsibility for the Trust's big financial decisions. Few of these decisions are more impactful than those involving ICT.

Yet without a technology background, you are reliant on the thoughts and opinions of those around you. Although some are helpful, others are ill-informed, some may reflect self-interest and bias, and some are just plain wrong. Our Learning Cloud looks at 13 common Ed Tech misconceptions and helps you put them into context.

→ **But first, you might like to test your knowledge with our quick quiz.**

Quick quiz:
How well informed are you about ICT in education?

	TRUE	FALSE
Cybercriminals don't tend to target schools	○	○
Digital transformation increases operational costs	○	○
Cloud ICT is inherently less secure than on-premise ICT	○	○
Having servers in the cloud is more expensive than on site	○	○
On-premise ICT is more environmentally friendly than cloud	○	○
Google Classroom is easier for staff and students than Microsoft Office	○	○
Young people naturally know how to use ICT	○	○
Google tools cost less than Microsoft	○	○
Technology doesn't change educational outcomes	○	○
Digital education requires every student to have a device	○	○
Digital change isn't possible without extra government funding	○	○
Technology moves too fast to keep pace	○	○
Changing to Cloud is risky, disruptive, and difficult	○	○

→ Scoring

Give yourself one point for every 'false'. There are a few grey areas here, so don't be too hard on yourself, but by way of a guide:

1-4: Oh dear!

It's time to improve your knowledge. Start by reading the Myths below. Then, if you're interested in improving ICT service, operational costs, and staff productivity, get in touch with Our Learning Cloud to find what others are doing.

5-7: You're perhaps not getting the best advice.

Unless you're completely happy with existing ICT service, costs, and staff productivity levels it's probably worth talking to someone else. Although that doesn't have to be Our Learning Cloud, as MAT ICT specialists they have a lot to offer.

8-10: Getting over half right is respectable, but there's still some room for improvement.

Are you getting the right advice on ICT? Could your ICT service be improved? Talk to Our Learning Cloud to learn what's practical and achievable.

11+: Great knowledge.

You're practically an expert. By implication, you know what 'good' looks like. Does your existing ICT service measure up, or is it time to discuss alternatives?

Myth 1: Cyberattacks don't target schools

The truth:

The Government's Cyber Security Breaches Survey reports that 'the prevalence of cybercrime in primary schools is similar to the typical UK business. Around one in ten have experienced any cybercrime in the last 12 months . . . [and] a third of secondary schools.' These attacks can be reputationally damaging, especially where personal data is involved, hugely disruptive, and costly to correct.

Myth 2: Digital transformation is too costly

The truth:

Yes, ICT is expensive. But investment in a secure, modern, education-focused infrastructure reduces day-to-day ICT running costs, prevents emergency expenditure, and improves staff productivity. Studies have also shown reduced expenditure on textbooks, paper, and other materials. Critically, the right technology enriches student's education.

Myth 3: Cloud ICT is less secure

The truth: :

Big cloud ICT providers, such as Microsoft, have to be highly secure: their business depends on it. Their cloud environments incorporate many clever technology tools that protect users and data. The technology is constantly updated to maintain optimum security, uses sophisticated AI monitoring and response solutions, and incorporates immutable backup and restoration.

Myth 4: Servers are more expensive in the cloud than on site

The truth:

On a like for like basis, cloud servers provide more benefit for less cost. A cloud server is secure, updated, backed-up, and managed for you, and its capacity can be altered as your needs change. Comparison with only the cost of an on-site server, overlooks the electricity cost (power and ventilation), technician time, and other costs required to operate a less robust and secure server.

Myth 5: On-premise ICT is more environmentally friendly

The truth:

Economies of scale, enable big cloud operations to be run very efficiently. 'The Carbon Benefits of Cloud Computing', a study by consultancy WSP and Microsoft underlines this. It showed that cloud platforms can be up to 93% more energy efficient and up to 98% more carbon efficient than on-premises solutions. As well as being better environmentally, cloud ICT offers MATs big electricity cost savings.

Myth 6: Google Classroom is easier for staff and students

The truth:

While Google Classroom is free and user friendly, its often said that it does less to prepare students for life outside of school. Parents are generally more familiar and better able to help with Microsoft Office, most employers seek Microsoft proficient staff, and Classroom isn't used by universities. Microsoft has created a self-paced curriculum to help staff and students get the most from their technology.

Myth 7: Young people naturally know how to use ICT

The truth:

In the right environment, young people will learn well. But poor training and low confidence can affect both young and old alike. Teaching staff need to be given the training and professional development to enable them to embrace ICT, so they can support their student's development, and use it to make their jobs easier and more efficient.

Myth 8: Google tools cost less than Microsoft

The truth:

Here, the 'truth' is nuanced. While Google Workspace Fundamentals licenses are free for education, Microsoft also provides free entry level licenses, which provide online access to email, OneDrive, and Office tools. Both require paid licenses for higher level functionality. Using Google for a MATs ICT infrastructure typically necessitates extra expenditure to implement several additional technologies.

Myth 9: Technology doesn't change outcomes

The truth:

Educationally, there's good evidence that technology doesn't improve grades. But should grades be the only measure? Used effectively, technology can make the curriculum more engaging, better prepare students for work, and improve their future opportunities in life. MATs are also companies and, like any company, with the right technology staff can operate more productively and efficiently.

Myth 10: A 1:1 student-device ratio is essential

The truth:

Although it is clearly desirable for every student to have a device, it is not essential. The Education Transformation Framework facilitates flexible classrooms and enables maximum-impact use of existing devices. Cost constraints can be eased through leasing and affordable parental contribution schemes: funding devices that can be used at home and at school through small monthly payments.

Myth 11: Change can't happen without extra government funding

The truth:

A reliance on government funding makes it even more necessary that Trust's move away from feast-famine, capital refresh programmes. Businesses with similar financial constraints, often procure ICT as a service. Hardware, software, training, staff/support, and other ICT requirements are all provided as an operational expense, through a single, predictable monthly payment. MATs could also do this.

Myth 12: Technology moves too fast to keep pace

The truth:

While the pace of change may be daunting, many MATs are benefiting from the use of ICT. The key question is, how can you? The answer can be found with an advisor that knows which technologies to use and when, understands both the educational and business needs of a MAT, and can bring them together in a practical, actionable, and low-touch strategy.

Myth 13: Changing to Cloud is risky, disruptive, and difficult

The truth:

It certainly can be, but it doesn't have to be. A good ICT partner will have the skills, experience, and process to mitigate risks, and make 'difficult' a success. When Our Learning Cloud does an ICT implementation, a surprisingly small amount of the work is undertaken in school, and the old and new systems are run in parallel until the changeover. As a result, there is minimal disruption to education.

→ Our Learning Cloud

Specialists in ICT for Multi Academy Trusts.

Helping MATs to align their digital strategy with their teaching and business needs.

Delivering a digital transformation that improves efficiency, enhances education, and lowers operational costs. Maintaining its reliability and security for a predictable monthly cost.

→ What next?

If you're interested in digital transformation for your Trust, get in touch to arrange a no obligation discussion around your challenges and needs.

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