



Entrsekt Worldwide Article

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Challenges and Opportunities for Global EdTech Development

We all know how difficult and challenging implementing Educational Technology projects such as blended learning can be. Even in the USA and Europe not all are successful or they take a while to bear fruit. In developing countries the challenges are even greater because teacher training and professional development programs have yet to address educational technology; technical support is little or non-existent and the curriculum has yet to be adjusted.

I was at an international conference a few months ago in India and I encouraged experts from around Asia to share their impressions about the success rate on initiatives for EdTech development projects. The consensus was that the experts estimated about 80 to 90 % of EdTech programs were overall failures with the majority of the schools being unable or unwilling to use the technology effectively.

Recently, in Asia we have had official confirmation of the cessation (or failure) of two mega projects. Thailand began an initiative to equip all students with tablets. The lack of training, integration with [curriculum and lack of support materials](#) hindered the program so it was cancelled. In [Malaysia](#) it was recently announced that their flagship [1Bestari Net](#) program which featured expanded broadband for all schools and a Virtual Learning Environment for students, teachers and parents has achieved a less than one percent usage by all parties and unlikely to reach critical mass to take off and sustain itself.

These are just a few recent examples that show how countries are trying to improve and update their educational systems but are struggling with deploying newer technologies. I have worked in international educational development for several decades. During this time I have observed that models which have been applied successfully to development projects in the past are lacking when it comes to those involving newer educational technology.

It seems there are certain common mistakes, specifically, lack of programs to train the teachers and failure to upgrade content to match new technologies. The lack of good systematic EdTech implementation frameworks results in projects being launched on a mass scale without proper development, planning or testing.

So how can ISTE contribute to International EdTech?

The situation provides a potential area where ISTE can make significant contributions globally by acting as a beacon to bring together experts, agencies, stakeholders and concerned parties at events around the world. Recently I have started to work with ISTE in Asia to explore this issue. We are hopeful that new frameworks can be conceptualized and tested to improve the successful and sustainable development of educational technology throughout the developing world.

Countries need experienced partners and opportunities to discuss and exchange best (and worst) practices, to consider effective policies as well as deployment strategies, to help determine which technologies are most appropriate to national goals, and to help develop localized teacher training programs rather than repurposing programs developed for more experienced countries. ISTE can be a leader in these areas and many others as countries move forward with new initiatives.

We all believe that educational technology holds a huge potential to improve teaching and learning in many countries, but there are significant obstacles in implementation across national school systems. Over the coming next few years, we hope to gather together at selected events to share best solutions on sustainable and successful project implementation. In Asia this year, Tony Brandenburg (International consultant for ISTE) and I will be organizing meetings with senior officials in several key Asian countries and doing a series of workshops on EdTech planning and teacher development. From these meetings and workshops we hope to develop new initiatives where ISTE can become involved in Asia. We also have public speaking and panel events scheduled at major regional conferences in 2015 that include [GESS Dubai Feb 24 to 26](#), [World Didac Asia \(Hong Kong\) March 18 to 20th](#), [GESS Indonesia Sept 30th to Oct 2nd](#) in which we will address these issues. We invite all interested parties to come, participate, connect and share their experiences at these events and future sessions.

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