



**“Digital technologies change the way students learn, the way teachers teach, and where and when learning takes place. Increasingly, mobile devices equip students to take charge of their own learning in a context where learning occurs anywhere, anytime, and with access to a wealth of content and interactive tools”. (Future Focussed Learning Report)**

## **Internet NZ Final Report**

**31 March 2016**

GCSN thanks Internet NZ for its support of this project that has formed an essential part of the larger Te Tihi o te Mātauranga (TToM) project.

The aims of this project have been achieved. We now have a working parent/whānau chromebook lease programme in place. All 31 schools in the five lower decile communities in the TToM project are able to access this lease programme. Schools have expressed gratitude and in our consultation with them have asked that we continue overseeing it.

The result of this has been new internet users, and students being able to take advantage of digital technologies in a more appropriate manner.

### **Completion of the project plan**

The following commentary is based on the major components of the project plan.

As noted in previous report

#### **The RFI and RFP processes**

Completed in May 2015

#### **Appointment of a preferred vendor**

The Noel Leeming Group (NLG), was appointed by the GCSN Board in mid-June 2015 and a contract was agreed in early August 2015.

## Working with Schools and Whānau/Parents

### **The process of informing the schools involved in the lease program**

This process began in November 2015. Schools are now able to explain to their communities, whānau/parents and students how this programme operates.

### **Neighbourhood meetings for whānau/parents held at four locations**

These meetings in November and December 2015 educated whānau/ parents about ICT supported e-learning curriculum for their children and how the lease programme would operate

### **Initial trial of leasing programme at Hoon Hay School**

The pilot programme with 15 students and their whānau/families from Hoon Hay School was completed late in 2015. One important outcome of the pilot was that early on we confirmed the complications for the GCSN Trust in being directly responsible for leasing arrangements for parents. The Trust does not have the financial backing to sign a master lease, and the insurance and administrative costs involved for GCSN were prohibitive. Although this is 'history', the outcomes informed our process of establishing the current leasing programme

## Consolidating the leasing programme in 2016

### **The NLG Deal**

Each month, NLG updates the lease information for schools, and provides their latest offer, and indicates likely delivery times. They also provide GCSN with a report on which schools have had devices ordered.

The leasing process with NLG has not been without a series of significant hiccups. The close working relationship between GCSN and NLG has meant we continue to resolve these in a timely manner.

Examples of the issues we have resolved include the following.

- The complication of a GCSN deal for sales people at stores. On occasions, these staff have tried to upsell to whānau/parents which is strictly not allowed in this relationship.
- Cheaper models on sale at NLG. We have selected a model with specifications that cost a little more but which make the chromebooks far more suitable for a school

student – for example, the processing speed and the spill proof screen. However, this can be confusing to whānau/parents.

- ACER withdrawing the then ‘current’ model and replaced with another, non-stocked item, during the peak purchasing/leasing period in January.
- A lengthy wait for the Google Management Console licences. Parents/whānau have not been able to take the chromebook with them when they leave the shop.

### **Implications for schools.**

Schools do not have the time to individually organise a system such as this. Despite the hiccups, they are extremely grateful for the support. They have appreciated GCSN’s research and selection of an appropriate device model on their behalf, and for GCSN’s arrangements for the Google Management Console, insurance, warranty, and for a strong carry bag as well as white glove setup.

### **Impact for whānau/parents**

We now are seeing families in low decile communities of the TToM project who have never owned a computer, now owning one. It is our view that, without GCSN’s support, this outcome may not have been able to be achieved.

At this stage, takeup has been relatively low, concentrated in about one third of the TToM schools, but we are expecting this to ramp up over the next 12 months as schools become more prepared for and committed to working with 1:1 devices.

### **Families/whānau who cannot meet the NLG credit test and a developing relationship with Work and Income New Zealand**

Initially, GCSN had expected to run the leasing programme itself, and thus cover the potential bad debt and credit risks of some whānau/families. However, as mentioned above, as a result of the pilot, the GCSN Board determined that this was not a possibility.

GCSN has met with Work and Income NZ staff, and we spent considerable time negotiating the ‘exact’ process needed for whānau/family to apply for a benefit advance to purchase a device. If approved, Work and Income take a small payment out of each benefit payment towards the cost of the device. We trialled the process with one school, and then shared it and the required documentation with all schools in the TToM communities. We have since shared this information with all secondary schools and will be rolling the process out to all Canterbury primary schools at a meeting in May.

NLG monitors uptake and reports back to us on the numbers of families successful in their Work and Income applications, a small number at this stage.

The gap remains, however. On the one hand, there are parents/whānau who can:

- afford to purchase a device
- or meet the NLG credit requirements for leasing

- access an Work and Income advance.

On the other hand, there are parents who have no access to any of these funding arrangements. At this stage, we have no solution for this group. The size is difficult to ascertain. We are working with schools individually to find solutions.

GCSN remains absolutely determined that every student can access a device and use the internet for learning 24/7 no matter what their background. We believe there is a moral imperative – it is completely unfair that a student’s learning can be so disadvantaged, especially with the move to 1:1 learning in so many schools, and NCEA ‘going digital’ in 2020

## Continuing concerns impacting on leasing arrangements

### **Whānau/Parent engagement**

For families who have not owned chromebooks, or even computers, the prospect of a leasing programme is daunting. As noted above, we have supported schools in holding meetings with parents/whānau to explain what was involved. Continuing whānau engagement in their children’s learning is a hugely significant need moving forwards. GCSN hopes to obtain further funding for such a programme. We have reached the second stage of an application to the Todd Foundation for this funding.

### **Students owned or lease devices but no Internet at home**

A chromebook without an internet connection is not of great use at home. Parallel to the leasing programme, GCSN has been investigating ways of providing Internet access to families who cannot afford it. The Rātā foundation has funded this work.

During 2015 we spent considerable time investigating the issue of providing Internet into homes and ran a small pilot programme with t-sticks. This aspect of the TToM project is being expanded into some research with Canterbury University in 2016.

Research from other projects around New Zealand has also shown that as some families who have never had a device or accessed the Internet they realise the value of devices and Internet access at home for their children’s learning. They often reprioritise their spending in order to obtain devices and Internet access.

## Ongoing Work

### **Operation of the leasing programme**

GCSN will continue to monitor the operation of the leasing programme. This programme does require further management to sustain the brokering role that GCSN will need to play despite the fact that leasing costs are met by NLG. Schools have agreed that we include a very small 1.5% admin fee to fund this programme going forward.

## Other programmes

In addition to the leasing programme, TToM continues to run PLD for teachers, and the 'Me and My School' survey on student engagement in learning. These programmes are in addition to the priority we are giving to a parent/whānau training programme and to ensuring that all parents and students have access to computers and the Internet.

## Acknowledgement

We are extremely grateful for the support of Internet NZ in this project. We know that it has made a significant difference to schools, and therefore to students and their learning.

The digital divide continues to be a significant issue in New Zealand. GCSN is determined to do what it can to support learners so that they can reap the enormous benefits of the internet and the proven impact it can have on the learning of students and on the understanding and awareness of parents and whānau.

## Financials for the entire leasing project (part funded by Internet NZ)

Legal costs	3345
Accounting and administration Fees	7234
Disputes Resolution Service	1686
Project management costs (approx 420 hours)	37800
Other GCSN contractor support (approx 120 hours)	18000
Total	68065

Funding from InternetNZ \$47000

We would be very happy to provide further information if required. Thank you very much for your support. It is greatly appreciated.

Linda Tame

GCSN General Manager

March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016