Submission by

to

Ministry of Education

on

Potential for Digital Technology to Support Tailored and Personalised Learning: Long-term Insights Briefing Consultation

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**POTENTIAL FOR DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT TAILORED
AND PERSONALISED LEARNING: LONG-TERM INSIGHTS BRIEFING CONSULTATION**

EdTechNZ thanks the Ministry of Education for the opportunity to be part of its consultation process. We believe education technology has much to contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of New Zealand and we support the Ministry's efforts to engage fully with our sector.

ABOUT EdTechNZ

The Education Technology Association of New Zealand (EdTechNZ) is the voice of EdTech in Aotearoa New Zealand, supporting the growth of the sector.
Our mission is to improve the lives of people and increase the access to, quality and impact of education through innovative technology, for the benefit of educators and learners in New Zealand and around the world.

Our members, which include EdTech companies, educators and training providers, share a passion for the potential that education technology can bring for New Zealand's prosperity. Together, we provide an independent voice for the EdTech ecosystem.

EdTechNZ is a member of the New Zealand Tech Alliance and was launched in 2017. It is governed by an Executive Council.

We recognise and honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi, striving to work in partnership with Māori as tangata whenua. Tikanga and Te Reo Māori are highly valued, part of our organisational fabric and reinforce our unique position in the world.

INTRODUCTION

To help prepare this submission, we surveyed our members on how digital technologies are reshaping learning experiences and unlocking new possibilities for students and educators. Overall, the responses gathered reflect a deep sense of optimism among our members who recognise the potential for technology to create a more inclusive, future-focused education system. However, they also highlighted several challenges that need to be addressed to maximise the benefits of technology in education.

Rather than respond directly to the consultation document's specific questions, we have chosen to highlight our key insights and recommendations, alongside representative comments from members.

KEY INSIGHTS

1. **Personalised learning with AI and digital tools**
   AI and other digital tools offer unprecedented opportunities for personalised learning experiences. Technology can tailor educational journeys for each student, allowing learners to progress at their own pace.
   "AI can modify the next question depending on how the student answers the question before it. This helps in understanding and giving each student success for actual learning."

2. **A new approach to digital technologies in schools**
   We would welcome a reimagining of how digital technologies are managed within the education system – a more student-led approach that fosters independence and creativity.
   "We need a digital technology approach that does not assume an antagonistic relationship between school and student. The school should start with 'we trust you.'"

3. **Addressing "digital colonisation"**
   We are concerned about the dominance of multinational tech companies in education, which some of our members consider "digital colonisation". We would welcome a shift to locally developed tools better reflecting NZ's unique cultural and educational needs.

4. **Preparing students for an uncertain future**
   The rapid pace of technological change presents a challenge in preparing students for an unpredictable future. It is important to focus on critical thinking and adaptability—skills that remain relevant despite changing technologies.
   "Considering the rapid-changing tech landscape, we should focus on meta-themes like critical thinking and adaptability, which will always be relevant."

5. **Digital technologies and cultural relevance**
   Digital technologies have the potential to support culturally-affirming teaching practices, particularly through the integration of Te Ao Māori into digital learning environments.
   "Digital technologies can support equity across diverse communities. Imagine a VR field trip to an iwi's historical site, bringing Te Ao Māori concepts to life."

6. **Balancing digital and core skills**
   While we recognise the immense potential of digital technologies, we caution against overshadowing essential skills in reading, writing and mathematics. We believe in a more balanced approach to education that retains core competencies.

7. **Reducing barriers through AI-powered support**
   AI can reduce barriers in education, particularly for students with disabilities and those in remote areas, making learning more accessible.
   "AI tutors and automated marking can make learning more affordable and accessible, particularly for students in rural or underserved communities."

8. **The need for policy support**
   Government policies must evolve to support necessary changes for integrating digital technologies into education, including developing infrastructure and teacher capacity.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

To harness the full potential of digital technologies in education, we recommend the following:

1. **Equity of access**
    Every student should have access to the necessary digital tools.

    "Equal access to digital tools isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a necessity for all students to thrive."

2. **Teacher training and development**
    Continuous professional development for educators must be encouraged to ensure effective technology integration.

    "Empowering our educators with digital skills is the key to unlocking the full potential of technology in the classroom."

3. **Evolving the curriculum**
    The national curriculum must adapt to embed digital skills across subjects.

    "We need to prepare students for a digital future, equipping them with the skills to navigate an ever-changing world."

4. **Collaboration with industry**
    Ties between education and the tech industry must be strengthened to ensure relevance in digital tools and smooth transitions for students into tech careers.

    "Building bridges between education and industry will create pathways for students into tomorrow's workforce."

5. **Personalised learning**
    Digital technology must be embraced to allow for a shift toward personalised learning that celebrates individual strengths.

    "Digital technologies can help us shift towards a model of education that celebrates individual strengths and learning styles."

CONCLUSION

By focusing on access, teacher development, curriculum evolution, industry collaboration, and personalisation, we believe we can create a dynamic education system that ensures every learner is ready for the future – a future where technology enriches education for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the consultation process. We are happy to engage further to discuss our submission and provide any further assistance that might be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

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