

# Increasing our IT Budget

Ensuring finances match aspirations & enable growth

# What is being requested?

1. A restructuring of how the IT budget is conceptualised
2. A significant increase in the overall IT budget, to be phased in over various years

# Current budget

Until this year, the nominal IT budget included

- 60k EUR (Fixed Assets)
- 20k EUR (Consumables) - we actually spent over 35k EUR

On top of that, we have been able to access certain funds from the Teaching Resources budget, at the discretion of the Principals, to purchase hardware intended for student use.

Examples of this from last year include

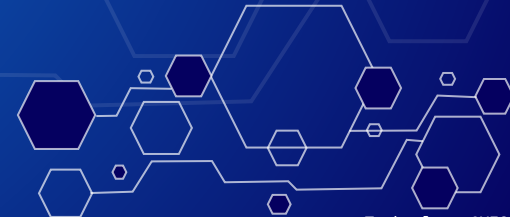
- New iPads in the ES
- New iMacs in the MS Design lab
- Replacement of a 7-year old class set of Windows laptops

# What proportion of income is spent on IT?

Counting the IT Fixed Assets & IT Consumables, we spend around 2% of our income on this area.

The average IT budget as a percentage of revenue in Education & nonprofits is 4.54% ([Deloitte Insights, Jan 2020](#)).

Another perspective is to look at the amount spent per student. We currently spend around 200 EUR per student per annum. Our incoming Director of IT Integration (2023+) spends around 700 EUR per student per annum.



# How much money do *WE* need?

We have attempted to predict what an IT budget would look like in order to maintain service at a reasonable level over 4 key components of the school - Network infrastructure, Student devices, Staff devices, and Classroom Technology

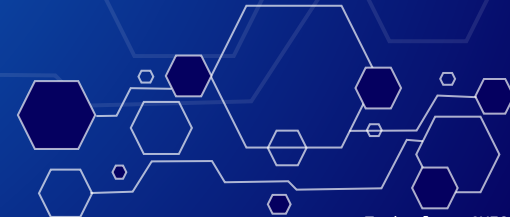
We are always assuming a 5-year lifespan which means we need to replace 20% of devices each year.

# Network infrastructure

The school can be considered as 5 physical zones including the anticipated new builds (HS, MS, ES inc ECC, New Admin, Steam building).

Due to evolving technologies, an estimate of annual network maintenance costs is around **20k EUR**. This includes replacement of switches, access points, cabling, etc.

This would enable us, on average, to upgrade one zone within the school each year.



# Student Devices

Ideally, we would like to see a 1-to-1 programme in the ES. Assuming the school owns them, this would require 280 devices for PreK1-G5. We would need to replace 56 devices per year.

iPads (including necessary peripherals) will cost around 1000 EUR each, meaning an annual cost of around **56k EUR** - not including additional items such as protective covers.

# Staff Devices

We are providing laptops to around 120 faculty. Until now, these have been fairly inexpensive Windows devices, with the average cost per device this year being around 720 EUR. However:

- Many, many teachers choose to buy a Macbook Air, costing around 1200 EUR (entry level, we probably need to spend more).
- Increasing use of Apple devices around the school makes Macs more and more suitable as the standard teacher device.
- Long-term, we should be aiming to own all devices used by teachers, for reasons of GDPR & data security.



# Staff Devices

The replacement cost would be around **30k EUR** per year. However, it is worth noting that Apple devices tend to have a longer lifespan which would reduce the long-term costs, despite the higher initial outlay.

We also need to consider moving towards 2-1 in the ES, as we need to provide teachers with their own iPads as the use increases of Seesaw for digital portfolios, and we see increasing use of video as a reporting tool.

And we have also had discussion about providing teachers with touch-capable devices across Secondary – very useful for marking work, for instance.



# Classroom Technology

We are currently spending about 700 EUR in each classroom - providing a projector and speakers. With around 50 such spaces around the school, giving us an average annual spend of around 7k EUR.

However, if we upgrade our classroom provision to include interactive whiteboards, we anticipate the cost per classroom increasing to around 3-5k EUR, or 30-50k EUR per year (assuming a 5-year lifespan, which may be an underestimate)

# Summary

Counting these 4 areas alone, we anticipate an annual need of **136k-156k EUR**.

This, however, does not make any allowances for other areas of increased cost which we anticipate would fall under the IT budget remit. Some examples of this are

- Security camera system
- Card-based access control
- Digital signage
- Additional technology throughout the 2 newbuild projects
- Innovation and trialling new hardware/software (e.g. VR)



# Not the whole story

These figures only focus on the Fixed Assets. We also have the Consumables line.

There is also a Subscriptions & Software section which seems to be a bit of a bottomless pit, which pays for a range of licenses and annual subscriptions such as

- core services such as ManageBac, OpenApply, SchoolsBuddy
- Service Level Agreements for managing our hardware
- Annual fees for MAP testing
- Subscriptions for websites used in teaching & learning.

# Not the whole story

Some out-of-date and incomplete figures for the 2021-22 year total 118k EUR, but we *guesstimate* a current average of around 75k EUR per year.

We haven't been considering this within the "IT budget".

We *have* been adding to this budget, as prior to Feb 2021 the IT Department was operating on an antiquated/manual approach to *everything*. We have needed to add in additional systems as a part of modernisation. These all incur additional costs.

# Not the whole story

## Examples

- **GLPI** - IT Asset management. We moved from the in-house version to an off-campus, hosted setup which improved reliability & service
- **Jamf** - management system for Apple Devices. Essential system
- **Google Workspace for Education Plus** - paid-for version enables additional features essential for GDPR & other aspects
- **SchoolsBuddy** - Improvement in school services
- **Sage Online** - Improvement in accounting capabilities
- **Alcatel SLA** - Support contract for core network hardware



# We are falling behind

We are striving to improve services but:

- Teachers don't like the laptops we give them
- Our network hardware is aging and struggling
- We are falling behind other schools (e.g. St Martin's has bought a set of VR devices which they're using in Science & Language learning)
- We have limited ability to fund innovation/experimentation

# Malta = increased costs

As stated, we're currently spending around 200 EUR per student per annum on IT, which is low compared to many other schools.

In addition, it is worth noting that IT equipment in Malta often costs more than elsewhere, and it is harder to obtain latest models.

We are starting to explore leasing options, but this will take some time, and may lead to increased quality but not necessarily a reduction in costs.

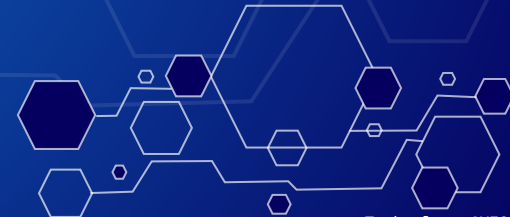


# Greater transparency = better planning

Money spent historically on IT appears to have been primarily reactive. We are trying to be proactive, but need access to much clearer & complete figures.

We also need clarity over who is responsible for making decisions for each budget area.

After researching & discussing with IT directors in schools around the world, the recommendation is that we re-structure to create the following budget lines:



# Proposed IT budget structure

	Information Technology	Educational Technology
Hardware (CAPEX)	E.g. Network infrastructure, teacher devices, classroom equipment	E.g. devices used by students
Operational (OPEX)	E.g. SLAs, internet connection, photocopier leasing contract, core software licenses (e.g. MB, OA, SB, other databases, Adobe Creative Cloud, management systems, etc)	E.g. software/websites used with students, such as Education Perfect, Turnitin, Inthinking, etc

# Proposed IT budget structure

Each area includes the following sections

- Maintenance - keeping things going
- Development - addition of new services/hardware/innovations/experiments

Subscriptions/annual licenses/etc are allocated to the relevant sections as required.

# From Teaching Resources to the IT budget

As outlined earlier, we have recently purchased around 40 iPads and 16 iMacs, out of the TR budget.

No further monies have been allocated beyond their initial purchase. This means that when they need replacing, funds may not be available.

This has happened previously, and causes challenges with maintaining quality equipment and service.

# From Teaching Resources to the IT budget

## A couple of proposals

1. When IT hardware is purchased from the TR budget, 20% of that amount is permanently added to the IT budget, providing the IT department with the funds to maintain these devices and replace them when necessary.
2. Alternatively, the IT budget is increased so devices are paid for from there instead of from TR. IT budget planning includes the allocation of funds to prioritise replacements in accordance with anticipated life spans.

# Conclusion

More of the school's income needs to be allocated towards IT expenditure if the school is to achieve our educational ambitions. Far from being a "nice thing to have", high quality IT systems and devices are essential as enablers of teaching & learning.

Until now, IT expenditure has been primarily reactive. We aspire to greater intentionality, but cannot embark on long-term projects or planning without the assurance that funding will be available.

IT at the school has stagnated and is deteriorating. We are asking that the Board commit to a significant & strategic increase in IT spending over several years.

