



Free product enables digitised teaching

A growing number of schools are equipping pupils with notebooks or tablets, with teaching content increasingly only available online. In cooperation with Swiss schools, Swisscom is therefore hugely extending its "Internet for Schools" initiative to enable completely new forms of learning.

15 years ago, Swisscom launched its "Internet for Schools" initiative: Today, all Swiss schools benefit from free secure Internet access as a result. It guarantees that pupils can use the Internet safely, protected from cybercrime and inappropriate content. However, schools now face new challenges. The Internet is no longer only a means of visual instruction; it is increasingly becoming a work area. Whole teaching modules are only available online. Pupils and teachers also use the net for research, communication and saving documents. A lack of standardisation and alternatives mean that reports and other confidential data are often saved through providers that operate servers in the USA. Swisscom has now taken "Internet for Schools" to the next level to offer schools everything for secure online teaching, communication and data storage.

Vastly increased speed, digital homework book

Schools now have free access to speeds of up to 500 Mbit/s or the maximum speed available at any site: by 2021 Swisscom will provide all Swiss communities with fibre-optic technology ensuring that even remote areas have access to ultra-fast broadband.

A free licence for classroom videoconferencing is also included: so pupils in hospital can continue to follow lessons via Skype, for instance. It also lets experts easily join in teaching in the virtual classroom. In many countries, these live insights into practical worlds of experience are already the order of the day, letting practitioners and experts demonstrate the theory taught in class. Swisscom also supplies schools with a free basic version of "HelloClass" with data storage in Switzerland. HelloClass digitises homework books, weekly timetables and letters to parents, thus creating a secure and very user-friendly platform for communication and planning. So, there is no longer any need for telephone chains, letters announcing deadlines or sending timetables. Information is always



accessible and cannot be lost. Today, Helloclass is already used in more than 1,500 classes. In addition, Swisscom offers schools a discount-price cloud for data storage in Switzerland – for certificates, school reports or tests, for instance. As Michael In Albon, Head of “Internet for Schools” and media skills expert explains: "Information technology doesn't tend to be a subject in its own right nowadays; is simply part of teaching – just as IT is a natural part of our working lives now. “This is a radical change and sooner or later pupils will end up only working with tablets or notebooks. This, in turn, requires very different capacities which we provide to schools for free. "Many farther-reaching solutions are intended mainly for school administrations, whom we have long supported in their journey into the digital future," says Michael In Albon. “We have now standardised solutions for the most common demands, making them less expensive, easier and more readily available."

Support for schools continues

In addition to supporting schools with technology, Swisscom also constantly updates its “Medienstark” media skills initiative, which provides training for teachers and parents as well as pupils. As of this year, it is also possible to book a version compatible with Curriculum 21, which fits in with new structural requirements. Michael In Albon: "Computers, smartphones, digital technologies – they have all completely changed our daily lives over the past 20 years. And so it's only logical and necessary that schools change, too. We hope that our contribution will help make implementing change smooth, secure and straightforward." The services provided over the past 15 years are worth a total of half a billion Swiss francs in monetary terms. In the future, schools will continue to enjoy free services worth around CHF 30 million annually.

Audio and video interviews with Michael In Albon are freely available for use; background information on “Internet for Schools”: History, Use, Opportunities:

<https://www.swisscom.ch/en/about/medien/news/15-years-internet-for-schools.html>

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