



Technology Decision Makers Hold the Keys to Successful Implementation

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Webinar Overview

- Share common challenges faced by administrators when acquiring technology
- Introduce the Consumer Guide and demonstrate how it can be used to guide purchasing
- Distinguish between types of research and gauge the participants' opinions about the importance of research

National Center for Technology Innovation (NCTI)

NCTI aims to promote assistive and learning technologies by fostering relationships among technology developers, manufacturers, publishers, and researchers.

AbleNet, Inc.

AbleNet provides solutions for classrooms and districts that help students with severe/profound to moderate disabilities achieve.

Solutions are:

- K-12 curriculums
- Assistive technology
- Professional development



NCTI/AbleNet Collaboration

- Administrators need support to make decisions regarding technology acquisition
- Teachers and teams need support and new language to acquire technology
- Vendors need support understanding the needs of districts/schools

Themes from Administrators

- A. Alignment
- B. Implementation
- C. Scientifically Based Research
- D. Funding
- E. Legislative Mandates

Alignment

Issue: Educational tools, including technology, must help students perform to meet academic standards.

Sample Quote: *“Everything must align with standards. AT will not be used unless this alignment is clearly understood.”*

-Superintendent

Implementation

Issue: Learning technologies must be carefully selected and implemented into the classroom appropriately.

Sample Quote: *“The biggest disappointment is investment in AT that never gets used.”* -Special Education Director

Scientifically Based Research

Issue: NCLB has made administrators recognize the need to search for scientifically based research to support the efficacy of their products.

Sample Quote: *“[Technology] Must be researched based for even classroom level purchase. Some companies have gotten to be very good at presenting research first and then introducing curriculum, software or AT in alignment with the research.”* –County AT Administrator

Funding

Issue: Learning technologies, especially for students with special needs, are often viewed as expensive educational resources that fall outside of budget constraints.

Sample Quote: *“[I’m] worried the perceived high cost of products gets in the way of viewing [AT] as a tool to be used in differentiated learning.”*

-State AT Administrator

Legislative Mandates

Issue: Administrators need learning technologies that help students achieve AYP as mandated by NCLB requirements while serving the individual needs of students as mandated by IDEA.

Sample Quote: *“[I] am increasingly concerned with how the special education students are meeting general education requirements...”*

-Special Education Director₁

What are your top 3 concerns when it comes to technology acquisition?

- A. Alignment
- B. Implementation
- C. Scientifically Based Research
- D. Funding
- E. Legislative Mandates
- F. Other _____

Buying Assistive and Learning Technologies

Use this decision support tool as your one-stop source to become an informed consumer of assistive and learning technologies. Find questions and solutions to move through the decision-making process.



	HELP!	GETTING STARTED	QUESTIONS TO ASK VENDORS
Alignment	<p>We are aligning our entire curriculum to the state standards. How can I determine which technology products will support these efforts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the standards leaders in your state whether they have any guidance on aligning technology products and classroom curriculum. Consult your curriculum coordinator for guidance on aligning standards to technology products. Consult with colleagues about how they have aligned standards to particular products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you provide ongoing support in aligning products to curriculum standards? If so, what does this support consist of? Can you provide me with references to clients who have aligned your product to curriculum standards? Can you give me a specific list of the topics that your product addresses so that I can create the alignment to specific standards for my agency?
Implementation	<p>With so many technologies on the market, selecting the right products and integrating them into the classroom can be a mystery. Plus, each time our department acquires new technologies, the staff needs to be trained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact your local education agency (LEA) assistive technology (AT) resource center for guidance. Contact your LEA curriculum department for a list of technology products that address state and agency standards. Request training from your LEA AT resource center to help teachers use devices and integrate them into the existing curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What types of individualized and group training do you offer to help teachers and students use your products? What types of support do you offer for integrating your products into the classroom? Do you offer an extended support plan that will provide technical assistance to our school after the products have been purchased?
Scientifically Based Research	<p>Because of NCLB, our district is emphasizing the need for products that are supported by scientifically based research (SBR). How can I ensure that legitimate SBR exists to support the efficacy of products that our district is interested in purchasing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to technology-focused resources for guidance, such as www.TechMatrix.org and journals including <i>Journal of Special Education Technology</i>, <i>Closing the Gap</i>, <i>Special Education Technology Practice</i>, <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i>, and <i>ATIA Outcomes and Benefits Journal</i>. Refer to curriculum development resources for guidance, such as <i>ACLD</i>, subject area journals, and literature on differentiated instruction. Make certain that the research you use to make decisions has been conducted by unbiased investigators. Consider initiating or participating in studies that test a product's effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you provide SBR that supports the efficacy of your products? Can you provide research that guides the implementation of your products to maximize student outcomes? Who conducted the research to test your products? In what setting was the research conducted? Which journals have published findings about your products? What current research activities are you engaged in and for what purpose regarding the technology we are considering?
Funding	<p>Budget cuts and changes in outside financial support have made paying for technologies difficult. What are some alternative sources of funding and technology?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider low- or mid-tech devices that can meet the needs of students with lower purchase and maintenance costs. Collaborate with other departments and other agencies to reduce unnecessary spending by eliminating duplicate purchasing. Take advantage of trial periods to ensure that technologies meet the needs of students. Apply for grants from your local school district, state, and foundations to purchase technologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are your products being used in our school or district? Do you have "try before you buy" options so that we can test drive your products before purchasing? Is your company engaged in research activities that offer opportunities to participate in exchange for free or reduced-cost products? Does your company offer discounted prices to underfunded schools? Does your company offer discounted prices for volume purchases? What is the most cost effective way to purchase what we need for our school/district over time?
Legislative Mandates	<p>How can I address the adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements of NCLB and still ensure that instruction for students with disabilities is individualized so that they can receive specially designed instruction?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with your instructional technology coordinator to identify technologies with universal design features that address the needs of students who do not have an identified disability but could benefit from the support offered by the devices. When considering a computer-based curriculum for general education students, inquire about the level of compatibility with adaptive technology so that students who use such devices can also have access to and benefit from the curriculum. Look for innovative solutions that have been used to enhance student achievement at www.cited.org, the QIAT listserv, and www.google.com/educators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will you help our schools determine which products and services best meet our specific needs? How do we embed your products with our curriculum to help all our students achieve? What universal design features does your product include? Which of your products are compatible with adaptive equipment, such as screen-readers and alternative input devices?

Consumer Guide for School Administrators and Ed Tech Vendors

<http://www.techmatrix.org/resources/consumerguide.pdf>

Consumer Guide Overview

- **Two sides, one for each audience**
 - Administrators (orange)
 - Vendors (blue)
- **Five Rows**
 - Alignment
 - Implementation
 - Scientifically Based Research
 - Funding
 - Legislative Mandates
- **Three columns**
 - Help
 - Getting Started
 - Questions

Using the Consumer Guide: Implementation *Help!*

The image shows a screenshot of a website titled "CONSUMER GUIDE SCHOOL A". The main heading is "Buying Assistive and Learning Technologies". Below this, it says "Use this decision support tool as your one-stop source to become an informed consumer and learning technologies. Find questions and solutions to move through the decision-". The website has two main sections: "HELP!" and "GETTING STARTED". A callout box is overlaid on the "HELP!" section, containing the text: "With so many technologies on the market, selecting the right products and integrating them into the classroom can be a mystery. Plus, each time our department acquires new technologies, the staff needs to be trained." The callout box is positioned over the "HELP!" section, which is also labeled "Alignment" and "Implementation" on the left side of the screenshot.

Using the Consumer Guide: Implementation *Getting Started*

CONSUMER GUIDE SCHOOL A

Buying Assistive and Learning Technologies

Use this decision support tool as your one-stop source to become an informed consumer of assistive and learning technologies. Find questions and solutions to move through the decision-making process.

HELP! | **GETTING STARTED**

Alignment

- Contact your local education agency (LEA) assistive technology (AT) resource center for guidance.
- Contact your LEA curriculum department for a list of technology products that address state and agency standards.
- Request training from your LEA AT resource center to help teachers use devices and integrate them into the existing curriculum.

Implementation

Using the Consumer Guide: Implementation *Questions to Ask Vendors*

CONSUMER GUIDE

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Buying Assistive and Learning Technologies

Use this decision support tool as your one-stop source to become an informed consumer of assistive and learning technologies. Find questions and solutions to move through the decision-making process.



HELP!

GETTING STARTED

QUESTIONS TO ASK VENDORS

Alignment

Implementation

- What types of individualized and group training do you offer to help teachers and students use your products?
- What types of support do you offer for integrating your products into the classroom?
- Do you offer an extended support plan that will provide technical assistance to our school after the products have been purchased?

Vendors' Usage of the Consumer Guide

- Facilitate good needs assessment and discovery
- Recommend full and targeted solutions
- Assure implementation is successful and as a result provide long term value with each purchase

Vendors Provide Research

- Anecdotal Evidence (e.g. testimonials)
- Research Based Evidence (e.g. proof of concept)
- Scientifically Based Evidence (e.g. impact in real settings)

AbleNet Research Consortium (ARC)

- Purpose of the ARC is to proactively seek scientifically based evidence
- Purpose of advisory board is to achieve objectivity and learning

Tell Us What You Think...

How important is it to consider anecdotal evidence as part of your purchase decision?

1. Extremely
2. Somewhat
3. Not at all

How important is it to consider research based evidence as part of your purchase decision?

1. Extremely
2. Somewhat
3. Not at all

How important is it to consider scientifically based evidence (research on a particular product) as part of your purchase decision?

1. Extremely
2. Somewhat
3. Not at all

<http://www.ablenetinc.com/arc>

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Questions?