

Corporate Plan 2002-05

Transforming teaching and
learning through ICT



British Educational Communications
and Technology Agency

Chairman's introduction

I am very pleased to introduce Becta's new Corporate Plan. Becta's Board and its Executive are grateful to all of those who have contributed to it.

As the new Chairman I wish to thank my predecessor, John Taylor, for his work in supporting Becta over the last five years, both as Board Member and as the interim Chairman. In particular John was instrumental in developing this plan which reflects new priorities for Becta, enhancing its role on advising and supporting schools and colleges in their use of ICT, as well as maintaining its role as the Government's lead body for ICT in education. I look forward to making a contribution to the ways in which Becta helps institutions to use ICT to transform teaching and learning. Over the next few years ICT will play a crucial role in extending the collaboration between schools and colleges and in supporting the networks of professional learning communities on which innovation and the exchange of best practice depend.

This Corporate Plan reflects Becta's maturity and increasing success since its creation four years ago. It outlines a stronger customer focus and an emphasis on performance measurement. Becta has grown significantly over these last four years, both in size and its influence through partnerships: with government and its agencies in developing and implementing the national strategy; with LEAs and other local and regional bodies in supporting and challenging schools and colleges; and with industry in encouraging strong provision of ICT services and products.



In particular the Board has welcomed the close partnership with government through the UK Education Departments in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. At no other time in its short history has ICT in education had such strong support from government or such continued investment. We look forward to strengthening the strategic dialogue between Becta, its Board and the four UK Education Departments.

David Hargreaves, Chairman of Becta's board

Chief Executive's introduction



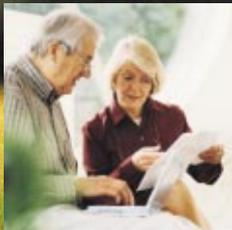
As the Government's lead agency for ICT in education, Becta promotes and supports the effective use of ICT to transform learning, teaching and management in UK schools, colleges and lifelong learning. Our Corporate Plan sets out our programme of work for the next three years. It demonstrates that Becta will meet this aim through supporting educational practitioners and policy makers.

ICT in schools and colleges has progressed significantly over the last five years with major investments in infrastructure, content and training. Increasingly this investment is making a difference to the quality of education. Becta has gathered evidence that ICT is being used more effectively in teaching and learning and in so doing is improving standards, providing a more inclusive set of educational opportunities and accelerating change in our schools and colleges. We are now seeing learners and teachers benefiting from investment in ICT.

Sustainability and innovation will be two key issues for the next five years. We must learn how to sustain and develop our ICT infrastructures and services while sustaining and embedding effective ICT practices. In part this will be achieved through innovation. There is no contradiction here. Innovation can sit alongside established practice. The task is for us to identify and embed best practice whilst challenging ineffective practice in order to improve teaching and learning through ICT.

In our educational future, technology will pervade learners' life experiences. As educationalists we need to learn how to mould the extraordinary advantages that ICT can provide in order to transform our educational establishments and the educational opportunities they offer. These opportunities will only be fully realised when head teachers and principals lead their schools and colleges through a process of change that develops ICT strategically and holistically throughout their institutions. Becta will do all it can to support them.

Owen Lynch, Chief Executive, Becta





Becta is the Government's national agency for furthering the effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) in the education system



Becta is a controlled, executive, non-departmental public body, serving the needs of the UK as a whole. It is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Becta is the Government's lead agency for ICT in education, and supports government departments and agencies with strategic advice and project management and implementation.

Government has, over the last five years, invested over one billion pounds into ICT infrastructure, content and training in UK schools and colleges. This has been complemented by contributions from schools' and colleges' own resources. This investment is set to continue and is driving a massive educational development which comprises:

- the provision of equipment, connectivity, technical support and services and educational content to schools, colleges, UK online centres and others
- programmes to support the integration of ICT into teaching, learning and educational management
- the training and development of leaders, teachers and other key educational professionals, together with the development of the curriculum to support the ICT skills development of learners.

ICT has the potential to transform many of the processes of education, but this potential can only be realised through the way it is implemented and utilised by educational users. Becta will therefore support government strategy by promoting the use of ICT to improve and transform learning, teaching and leadership in schools and colleges.





OUR AIM: *To promote the effective use of ICT to transform learning, teaching and leadership in schools, colleges and lifelong learning*

Whilst there is still much to do to sustain and expand the investment in infrastructure, the challenge for Becta in achieving its aim is to support educational users in the integration of ICT into their work and to stimulate their development and acceptance of new approaches. It is clear from Ofsted and other evidence that many schools, colleges and LEAs are only at the beginning of the process of integrating ICT into their teaching, learning and management and a key objective for Becta is to provide advice and support to them in meeting this challenge. Therefore Becta's first strategic objective is to support educational users of ICT.

Government education departments and agencies across the UK develop and implement ICT strategies that have a major impact on educational users. These policies involve Government in working in partnership with a wide range of bodies, including, ultimately, the many thousands of schools and colleges. As well as being a policy area in its own right, ICT also impacts on many aspects of education. Broader educational policies also need to consider the opportunities and costs of a rapidly changing technological and educational environment. As its lead agency for ICT in education, Becta's second key objective is to provide expert and timely advice to Government across all of these wide-ranging, overlapping areas.

Strategic Objective 1

To provide and promote a comprehensive national source of practical ICT advice and support to schools, colleges and education authorities.

Strategic Objective 2

To provide leadership and expert advice to UK education departments, their agencies and initiatives in support of their ICT policy development.



ICT developments work best when there is a strong group of suppliers competing in a marketplace of well-resourced and well-informed users. This leads to a constant improvement in quality and value for money. However, purchasers need educational and technological standards in order to identify the best supplier to meet their needs, and suppliers need these standards as benchmarks in order to improve their products for educational use. Learners need the protection of standards to ensure that ICT environments are safe and effective. The third key objective for Becta is to develop appropriate ICT standards, test provision against them and inform educational users at all levels.

Strategic Objective 3

To develop technical and educational standards for ICT usage in education, and provide information to users and policy makers on progress towards them.

Technologies are changing rapidly and their value and application to education expanding. Existing technologies can often find new applications and lead to improvements to teaching and learning many years after they have become established. Desk research and evaluation is needed to consider the newest technologies and their likely future impact on education. The fourth key objective for Becta is to study current trends in technology and education and carry out in-depth investigations where appropriate on the application of ICT to education.

Strategic Objective 4

To study the evolution of technology, and evaluate and assess the educational use of emerging and established technologies.

Becta needs to constantly review its work, its structure, its processes and staffing profile in response to evidence from its customers and the changing demands made on it. Its work needs to be implemented flexibly and sensitively, as the educational, social and technological environment within which Becta operates is itself subject to continuous change and innovation. The fifth key objective is therefore for Becta to continue to develop as an effective customer-focused organisation with efficient systems and creative, expert staff.

Strategic Objective 5

To continue to develop Becta as an effective customer- focused organisation with efficient systems and creative, expert staff.

To achieve these, Becta has set the following priorities, outcomes and success criteria for each strategic objective.



1 Strategic Objective 1

Supporting Educational Users of ICT

08 | 09

To provide and promote a comprehensive national source of practical ICT advice and support to schools, colleges and education authorities

Schools

A number of schools are beginning to integrate ICT fully into their teaching, learning and leadership but these schools are not the majority. Over the next three years Becta needs to move from a position where there are 'islands of excellence' to one where all schools are benefiting from ICT.

It is therefore becoming increasingly crucial that schools receive the necessary ICT support to ensure that they maximise their investment in infrastructure and training, and that this investment follows through into effective practice, raised standards and transformed schools. Evidence from Ofsted's inspections of schools and LEAs suggests that many schools lack access to the level of support needed and that, crucially, their teachers still lack confidence in applying their ICT to subject teaching.

Schools need an integrated source of information and advice capable of answering their specific questions. Many schools also require support and consultancy which recognises their individual circumstances and addresses their concerns and the need to manage change. Schools are now operating ICT installations that equate with, or exceed, the provision in small and medium-sized commercial businesses. Such schools need experienced and professional procurement and infrastructure management advice and support to ensure that they minimise the risks associated with owning and operating these services. Becta will therefore:

- develop and promote a comprehensive national on-line source of practical advice and conferencing to schools on ICT
- develop and promote to schools direct support services on ICT
- work with LEAs and other intermediaries to develop and promote a coherent, comprehensive, national network of consultancy to support the integration of ICT

- work with the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) to develop a national programme to deliver training and support in ICT for school leaders
- develop a national service providing advice and support to schools on ICT infrastructure management, technical support and ICT procurement.

Post-compulsory education

Most colleges now have the computer infrastructure considered necessary to support effective learning. The embedding of ILT into practice is becoming increasingly common, with e-mail and information searching on the Internet commonplace amongst staff and learners. Other uses of the network for e-learning are in evidence, but on a relatively small scale in most institutions. Over the next three years Becta needs to move to a position where all learners have appropriate access to e-learning opportunities.

The adoption of ILT Champions to lead development is widespread, but there is a clear need for substantial staff development built around a shared understanding of what constitutes good practice and what skills are needed to bring it about. There is a critical gap between skills in personal use of IT and ILT skills, defined as the use of ICT with learners. Nearly all colleges have ILT Champions who provide ILT support for staff, development of materials, identification of resources and training of staff. Becta recognises ILT Champions as a key resource within the sector and a vital implementation link between strategy and practice.

Becta's continuing support for the further education (FE) community has been central to the success of the first phase of the National Learning Network (NLN) programme. Earmarked funding by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for this sector has enabled Becta to develop new information services, including the Ferl web site and associated advice, guidance,

practitioner training and support activities, together with the NLN web site, to direct college-based ILT developments.

Becta has been commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council, Scottish FE Funding Council and the Department of Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland to procure and manage the distribution of high quality e-learning materials. This work now extends to guiding effective implementation of on-line materials within the post-compulsory curriculum.

Becta's brief for lifelong learning includes those engaged in adult and community learning, UK online centres and the greatly expanded learning community funded and regulated by the LSC.

Becta will therefore work with the LSC and other relevant UK departments and funding councils to:

- support providers of post-compulsory education, including adult and community learning, with comprehensive, authoritative, informative and up-to-date information services
- continue to procure high quality e-learning materials for the sector and promote the embedding of these materials into mainstream teaching and learning
- support the creation and delivery of effective professional-development opportunities for staff engaged in post-compulsory education.

Education authorities

Local education authorities (LEAs) have a key role in supporting their schools and the wider community to develop their use of ICT. However, Ofsted judged that support for ICT was one of the weakest aspects of the work of the LEAs it had inspected. There were many LEAs which were commended for their good ICT practice, but these were not the majority. All LEAs need to ensure that their ICT strategy is developed and implemented effectively to meet the needs of their schools.

There is therefore an important need for Becta to continue its work in providing advice and support to LEAs. As well as the provision and installation of equipment and infrastructure, LEAs need to provide support to schools for teaching, learning and school planning. A key issue is the provision of aids to pupils with communication difficulties. Becta is

working to provide coherent advice at strategic, tactical and operational levels, working in partnership with the DfES and Ofsted.

Becta will therefore work with the relevant LEA organisations to:

- provide a coherent on-line source of advice for LEA senior officers and advisers on ICT strategy and implementation within their LEAs
- provide an electronic newsletter and on-line conferences to keep LEA senior officers and advisers up to date on key ICT developments
- develop and run seminars and conferences for LEA officers and advisers to discuss and share good practice
- help those who provide ICT support to schools with ongoing advice through the ICT Support Network
- support LEAs and other providers in the delivery of aids to pupils with communication difficulties, through the Communication Aids Project.

Continuity in advice and support

The different education sectors have different approaches to ICT. However, there is a need for continuity in advice and support across the sectors and a need for the sharing of best practice between them. There is also a large and increasing number of electronic resources available on line for all types of educational user: students, parents, teachers, managers and policy makers. This enormous growth in on-line content and the extreme diversity of provision across the Internet will continue over the next three years, raising both real opportunities and problems for users. The NGfL portal uniquely provides a single point of entry spanning all ages of learners across all UK countries.

Becta will therefore:

- ensure that there is continuity in its advice, support and recommendations on standards across the sectors and encourage the sharing of best practice between them
- continue to develop the NGfL portal as a fast, reliable and secure route to a comprehensive catalogue of quality-assured on-line resources that covers all ages of learners across all UK countries.

1

Strategic Objective 1 Supporting Educational Users of ICT

10 | 11

Priorities for 2002-3



Working with others, Becta will:

- develop the ICT Advice web service as a comprehensive national on-line source of practical ICT advice to schools
- develop and promote Becta's direct support services to schools and colleges
- develop the pilot procurement advisory service for schools into a national service
- create a national programme to deliver training and support in ICT for targeted school leaders, leading to a national rollout in 2003-4
- develop a national advice and support service to LEAs on strategic planning and how best to implement ICT within LEAs, including conferences for chief education officers
- maintain an efficient system to support the delivery of aids to pupils with communication difficulties through the Communication Aids Project
- support those who provide ICT support to schools with ongoing advice, events and publications through the ICT Support Network and close liaison with NAACE
- maintain comprehensive, authoritative and up-to-date web-based information services for post-compulsory education, including adult and community learning
- support the creation and delivery of effective professional development opportunities for staff engaged in post-compulsory education
- promote the embedding of fully accessible e-learning materials into mainstream teaching and learning within the post-compulsory sector
- continue to develop the NGfL portal as a searchable single point of entry spanning all ages of learners across all UK countries.

Outcomes for 2002-3



June 2002	First phase of the NLN e-learning materials fully available
June 2002	The plan of work of Becta's support to schools developed and agreed with the DfES
September 2002	ILT practitioner training programmes launched
September 2002	ICT Advice web services extended
December 2002	Direct support services to schools operational
December 2002	NLN materials subject co-ordinator service operational
January 2003	ICT Advice web service relaunched for BETT in the light of evaluation
March 2003	National procurement advisory service structure operational
March 2003	National programme for training school leaders evaluated and recommendations made to government
March 2003	LEA on-line support service launched

Success Criteria 2002-3



- To identify those schools in England which are judged by Ofsted as needing better ICT support, and provide targeted information and links to support for 50% of them
- To increase usage of the ICT Advice site by 200% over the year
- To have established and promoted an on-line service for schools providing advice on key organisational ICT issues
- To have provided 800 places on the joint NCSL/Becta Leadership in ICT programme
- Procurement advisory service available to all schools in England that request advice
- To have agreed plans for a support service to LEAs and begun a national rollout to all LEAs by March 2003
- To have in place a secure system to refer, assess and deliver aids to pupils under the Communication Aids Project by September 2002
- To have agreed with the education departments in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland appropriate means of disseminating Becta's advice to practitioners
- To have 50% of UK colleges subscribing to ILT Practitioner programmes
- To have 90% of UK colleges incorporating NLN or Ferl on-line materials into their teaching and learning practice
- To have 75% of UK online centres making use of the Help is @ Hand web site
- To have met the targets laid down by the LSC in relation to Becta's work in the post-compulsory sector
- NGfL portal achieving 98% operational availability

Strategic Objective 2

Supporting Government Policy on ICT

12 | 13

To provide leadership and expert advice to UK education departments, their agencies and initiatives in support of their ICT policy development

Leadership and advice to DfES on ICT in schools policy

Recent Green and White Papers indicate the potentially powerful role that the DfES expects for ICT in supporting and delivering its educational policies. Over the three years of this plan, ICT will become increasingly central to the Government's education strategy and its implementation.

Its strategy for ICT in schools is based on investment through the Standards Fund in partnership with LEAs to ensure that all schools meet a minimum baseline of provision and to support broadband developments. The Standards Fund also supports a range of other ICT developments, including an ICT strand within the Government's overall Key Stage 3 strategy. Other resources are committed to the development of on-line resources for pupils and teachers through a number of initiatives including Curriculum Online and the NGfL portal. The DfES has also developed an information management strategy for government information and is carrying out pilots to consider the use of ICT to reduce teacher workloads. Substantial resources are also being committed to the provision of computers for teachers, headteachers and other educational professionals through subsidised purchase.

Technologies rapidly evolve and new ones emerge. Their value and application to education also changes rapidly. Existing technologies can often find effective and innovative applications in teaching and learning many years after they have become established. Technology depends on its use - both the quality and the extent of use. Many technologies are only cost effective when they are used widely across a system or by trained and supported users. There is a need to inform and guide government departments and agencies about the issues relating to the use and impact of ICT in education and, where appropriate, to encourage them to review their policies.

Becta will therefore work with the DfES and its agencies to:

- advise on all aspects of the 'ICT in schools' programme and policy
- encourage the review of broader educational policy in order to ensure that it continues to take advantage of technological change
- provide support to the 'ICT in schools' programme through a rapid response service to short-term need, and a briefing programme that anticipates forthcoming issues on key technological and educational changes
- collaborate closely with the SEN Division of the DfES in developing appropriate strategies to support special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) and teachers
- provide ICT advice to key government agencies and strategies including QCA, TTA and Ofsted and the literacy and numeracy strategies.

The development of on-line multimedia teaching and learning materials is fundamental to ICT development. The Government's Curriculum Online site aims to provide quick, safe access to on-line lesson materials, one-to-one support and individualised learning. Material for Curriculum Online will be provided by a number of content providers and developers, who will be working in partnership with a wide range of organisations from the private-sector educational publishing industry. Users will access on-line curriculum resources, including a library of e-learning materials through a web 'shop window'. Funding for schools to buy digital curriculum resources will be provided through e-learning credits.

Becta will therefore work with Government to provide:

- technical advice throughout development of the portal
- advice on the infrastructure requirements needed to support Curriculum Online
- advice on the mapping of existing material and support in achieving the migration of appropriate resources



- advice and support to the Curriculum Online initiative as a whole and to its component working groups.

Policy advice to Education Departments in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland

The National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly and their Executives have all invested heavily in ICT in their schools and colleges and have major developments under way. Whilst there are broadly similar policy issues in each country, there are distinct differences in their needs and implementation plans.

Becta will therefore work with the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales by providing:

- two-way communication on ICT initiatives, promoting collaboration, drawing together research evidence and ensuring that experience is shared throughout the UK
- the management of UK-wide projects and, where appropriate, UK-wide advice to schools and colleges
- when requested, the undertaking of work commissioned by the appropriate education departments.

Advice and support on lifelong learning policy

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is implementing the National Learning Network initiative for Government. The LSC has established the Distributed and Electronic Learning Group (DELG), a small high-level advisory committee, to report on the ways in which ILT can best contribute to its mission and goals. Becta provided the secretariat for the group, whose first major task has been to propose a co-ordinated strategy for effective delivery of new forms of learning, exploiting the innovative use of information technology, locally, regionally and nationally. At a sub-regional level this requires the 49 local LSCs to develop and implement an e-learning strategy to co-ordinate and direct ILT implementation and use within their areas. Parallel development has taken place in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, with consequent opportunities for improving effectiveness and efficiency through the sharing of experience.

The recent DfES Green Paper, *14-19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards*, has offered a clear vision of educational

provision bridging the divide between compulsory and post-compulsory phases. It proposes a significant role for ICT, and the teaching of ICT skills across a learner-centred curriculum which blends traditional vocational and academic elements into a unified structure of qualification routes.

Becta will work closely with the DfES Lifelong Learning Technologies Division, the LSC, the DfES e-Learning Strategy Unit and Post-16 e-Learning Unit, Ufi Limited, and relevant government departments and established sector bodies to:

- provide policy advice, as well as participating in discussions with key agencies and organisations to ensure that advice remains current and policy-aligned
- support the NLN Programme Board and DELG in their activities, both through the provision of advice and by acting as lead agency on a number of key activities
- work with local Learning and Skills Councils to help shape sub-regional strategies for e-learning, including ILT strategy guidance for specialist colleges and for adult and community learning institutions.

Managing Government Projects

As the Government's lead agency for ICT in education, Becta manages projects funded by Government or government agencies that are important to the development of ICT in education. This important role requires flexibility and capacity as well as project-management expertise. Becta will therefore:

- develop its project-management capability in line with the needs and processes of the funding bodies
- provide appropriate outcome and financial reports to support the needs of the funder
- advise on key issues and risks associated with each project
- undertake ICT procurement where Becta's expertise provides unique additional value that cannot be provided by the commercial sector or other parties.

In all of these projects Becta will work with Government to achieve its aims in promoting the use of ICT to transform and improve teaching, learning and leadership in the education system.

Strategic Objective 2

Supporting Government Policy on ICT

14 | 15

Priorities for 2002–3



Becta will:

- provide Government with a programme of briefings on the present educational and technological environment and advise on the future development of ICT educational strategy
- provide Government with a rapid-response information and evidence service on enquiries relating to ICT and education
- provide educational and technical advice on all aspects of the DfES 'ICT in schools' programme, including:
 - broadband
 - on-line ICT training for teachers
 - on-line approaches to assessment
- provide educational and technical advice to Government on all aspects of the Curriculum Online initiative
- provide management support for government projects, including:
 - information management strategy programme
 - support for leadership in ICT
 - direct support to the school workforce pathfinders
 - the GridClub project and its evaluation
 - the SEN Communication Aids Project
- undertake ICT procurement on behalf of UK education departments where Becta's expertise provides a unique additional value that cannot be provided by other third parties
- collaborate closely with the SEN Division of the DfES in developing appropriate strategies to support SENCOs and teachers
- provide ICT advice to key government agencies including QCA, TTA, Ofsted, and to the Key Stage 3 literacy and numeracy strategies
- in Northern Ireland, liaise with the Department for Education and its Education Technology Strategy Management Group on policy advice and a programme of work to support Northern Ireland
- liaise with the Scottish Executive Education Department on policy advice and a programme of work to support Scotland
- liaise with the Welsh Assembly Government Department for Training and Education on policy advice and a programme of work to support Wales
- provide policy advice to the DfES e-Learning Strategy Unit and the DfES Lifelong Learning Technologies Division and to other UK Departments on request
- publish analytical surveys of ILT implementation
- work to ensure the effective management, delivery and evaluation of the NLN by providing advice and support to the LSC.



Outcomes for 2002-3



June 2002	ILT strategy guidance published
July 2002	Programmes of work with Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland agreed
September 2002	A mid-term review carried out of all projects managed on behalf of Government
March 2003	The agreed series of briefings for Government and agencies completed
March 2003	An end-of-year review carried out of all projects managed on behalf of Government

Success Criteria 2002-3



- All advice to Government and agencies prepared to an agreed schedule and brief
- Seminars and briefings for Government rated as useful by 90% of participants and feedback provided to inform future modes of delivery
- Advice provided for all 'ICT in schools' programme work and used in developing project briefs
- All specialist institutions produce an ILT strategy based on Becta guidelines
- All advice and support provided to the LSC and the NLN rated as effective and appropriate
- The delivery of all government projects managed to appropriate quality levels

3

Strategic Objective 3

Developing Technical and Educational Standards

16 | 17

To develop technical and educational standards for ICT usage in education, and provide information to users and policy makers on progress towards them

Developing standards for ICT suppliers

The Government's ICT strategy for schools and colleges is based on allowing the end user to make their own choices on equipment, services and suppliers. This works best when well-informed, well-resourced users are choosing their services from a strong group of suppliers where there are agreed standards on what constitutes good quality. However, educational users rarely have the resources to test equipment or services thoroughly or develop their own views on standards in order to make the best purchase. There is a need to modify existing international standards, or where appropriate to develop new standards, to test equipment and services against these standards, and to inform educational users of the results. Another source of advice for users is the views of previous purchasers and it is important to collect and publish these views impartially.

Becta will therefore:

- test, accredit and monitor ICT suppliers across a range of services including Internet service provision
- carry out and publish surveys of customer views on services
- continue to work with the DfES and other UK bodies, to provide up-to-date advice on ICT safety for schools and parents, including the Internet Proficiency scheme.

Developing standards for content

Software developers and publishers need to create and sell software that is useful and attractive to teachers and learners. It needs to support the curriculum, improve accessibility, and match good practice. Schools need to be aware of these quality issues and know where to get software that meets them. Becta has played a significant role in promulgating the application of international standards and specifications to post-16 e-learning, whether in relation to the procurement of new ILT materials or to the development of managed and virtual learning environments. Becta regards the use of open standards as being vital to the development of a healthy market for content creation, not least because this secures public expenditure against the risk of supplier lock-in and associated restrictive practices.

Becta will:

- continue to develop advice for evaluating content and supporting its review
- advise schools and colleges through its on-line services on the range and qualities of available content
- provide advice and support to the industry, in particular to software developers, to create software which supports the curriculum, improves accessibility, and matches good practice
- support the use of open standards.



Curriculum Online requires a new style of partnership between education, industry and the Government. Content will be provided by a number of providers and developers, who will be working in partnership with a wide range of organisations from the private-sector educational publishing industry. There is a clear need to ensure compatibility, agreed standards and strong linkage between technical developments in broadband communication and content development. Curriculum Online also pioneers large-scale on-line purchase for the education system through e-learning credits.

Becta will therefore work with Government to:

- support the Metadata Working Group for Curriculum Online, and work with the Metadata Education Group to establish agreements about the structure and vocabulary of educational metadata
- advise on the mechanisms for e-learning credits expenditure
- advise on the standards for infrastructure needed to provide access to Curriculum Online including national and regional broadband developments.

Developing ICT standards for institutions

Schools and colleges need standards for their own infrastructure and connectivity. Now that it is becoming more central to the running of the school or college, ICT requires greater reliability and enhanced performance. Increasingly powerful communications linking previously unconnected networks will also require the wider adoption of standards. Institutions will need clearer guidelines and understanding of what standards of equipment, networking, connectivity and accessibility they need to adopt to make best use of the national infrastructure.

Becta will:

- develop standards for infrastructure, networking and connectivity for schools and colleges
- promote these standards to schools and LEAs.

Ofsted inspects the educational standards of ICT in English schools and, together with the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), colleges. ICT is judged both as a subject in its own right and on how it can support other subjects. Both inspectors and inspected need advice on the detailed criteria by which ICT is judged. Becta works closely with Ofsted on advice for inspectors of schools and, in relation to post-compulsory education, Becta has established a working party on the role of inspection frameworks for ICT in raising educational standards. It has also tracked progress within the Adult Learning Inspectorate's inspections of Ufl provision.

Becta will:

- support Ofsted by continuing to publish advice to inspectors and schools on ICT inspection
- work with Ofsted and ALI in the college sector to develop clarity about what is to be measured through inspection of the curriculum and management uses of ICT.

3

Strategic Objective 3

Developing Technical and Educational Standards

18 | 19

Priorities for 2002–3



Working with others, Becta will:

- work with the UK education departments and representative bodies to identify and accredit quality suppliers of ICT products and services to education
- monitor the performance of accredited suppliers, providing regular reports to the DfES and informing customers through the web site
- monitor the performance of accredited Internet service providers (ISPs), with regular reports to the DfES, and withdraw the accreditation from suppliers who do not meet the minimum standards for Internet safety
- carry out an annual survey of schools to assess their views on the quality of services provided to them by ICT suppliers
- manage the accreditation of suppliers for the Laptops for Teachers initiative, operate an on-line service for LEAs, monitor the performance of suppliers and provide regular reports to the DfES
- develop and operate a new electronic shop window that will allow educational institutions to compare and contrast the products, services and performance of accredited suppliers to education
- continue to define an educational framework for reviewing software and support developers with advice on curriculum, accessibility issues, and good practice
- support Curriculum Online through advice on standards, including metadata, e-learning credits and cross-sector compatibility issues
- develop guidance for teachers to enable more discriminating selection and purchase of content and software tools
- advise schools and colleges through its on-line services on software standards and the range and quality of available content
- continue to work with the DfES to provide up-to-date advice on ICT safety for schools and parents, including the Internet Proficiency scheme
- continue to explore and promote the use of specifications and standards relevant to the creation and inter-operation of learning materials and environments, including establishing appropriate standards for educational metadata for both formal and informal learning content
- work with Ofsted on the quality of ICT inspection in schools and support inspectors through on-line advice
- work with Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) to develop and enhance inspection frameworks for the post-compulsory education sector
- monitor the technical provision of UK on-line branded centres and support all centres through the Help is @ Hand web site
- manage quality assurance and dissemination activities for New Opportunities Fund (NOF) community access and to provide technical support to the NOF.digi programme
- continue to develop dialogue with content and software developers, providing information and advice through events, newsletters and the web channel to improve the quality and availability of electronic material for schools
- provide standards for infrastructure, networking and connectivity for schools and colleges.

Outcomes for 2002-3



May 2002	On-line catalogue of Laptops for Teachers (LFT) suppliers goes live
July 2002	Successful suppliers of ICT products and services announced
July 2002	Electronic shop window launched
November 2002	Second round of ISP accreditation announced
December 2002	Guidelines published on the effective use of ILT to raise standards
January 2003	Customer satisfaction survey conducted
February 2003	Guidance on software selection made available through key channels in support of Curriculum Online
March 2003	Three developer events and five industry newsletters

Success Criteria 2002-3



- Accredited suppliers provide an appropriate size and quality market for ICT users
- Electronic shop window operational on time and promoted and used by schools
- LFT-accredited suppliers identified and value for money achieved relative to other procurement methods
- Ofsted and ALI satisfied with Becta support and advice
- Ofsted and ALI endorsement of Becta guidelines on the effective use of ILT to raise standards
- Agreement by all key bodies of common standards for on-line content
- Every school able to assess its Internet service provision and supplier against accepted standards
- Developers informed of Becta software support and 80% of those attending events are satisfied with the support

4

Strategic Objective 4

Developing the evidence base on ICT in Education

20 | 21

To study the evolution of technology, and evaluate and assess the educational use of emerging and established technologies

Technology research and evaluation

Technologies are changing rapidly and their value and application to education is expanding. Existing technologies can often find novel and innovative applications to teaching and learning many years after they have become established. Desk research and evaluation is needed to consider the newest technologies and their likely future impact on education. As well as changes to computer technology, there continue to be significant developments in other areas such as communications, software and multimedia that will have an impact on the education system in the future. Compared to the business market, the education market is relatively small and tends to follow business in its application of technology. Research into the way other markets are adopting and adapting technology is a good test-bed for educational applications.

New technologies offer significant opportunities for the education system, but how they are adopted depends on many factors: funding, applicability, knowledge and expertise among the suppliers, and the knowledge and understanding of the users. The rate of take-up of any technology can adversely affect others. It is important that research is carried out to monitor the broader market and consider how technology is being adopted and used by schools and colleges. This needs to be carried out through fieldwork and surveys and also requires specific testing of individual products and services. A particularly important area for this work for Becta is the area of telecommunications, which also impacts on the whole area of content delivery as well as newer applications such as video conferencing.

Becta will:

- continue to study trends in technology and carry out in-depth studies to evaluate new applications, where appropriate
- continue to explore and evaluate the take-up of technologies, particularly telecommunications, and research how they are currently being used, their markets and their future potential within the education system.



ICT and education practice

The pedagogy and widespread practice of ICT are in their infancy. Only a small proportion of schools and colleges are confident in their use of ICT, and understanding of its application is incomplete. Research evidence is patchy on the ways in which ICT affects learning and the practices that increase its effectiveness. In particular there is a need for up-to-date research that takes into account newer communication technologies now being used routinely in schools and colleges, and that recognises the impact of ICT within the home. The development of e-learning and a new pedagogy around it requires in-depth evaluation. There are significant areas where research provides useful evidence for teachers, headteachers and governors.

Becta will:

- disseminate the research findings in a way that influences policy and practice, including developing a series of publications to inform schools and other audiences of what is known from research on ICT in education
- manage specific research projects that seek to explain and develop the evidence base and continue to draw together the research literature on ICT and pedagogical issues
- carry out research on the impact of use of broadband and multimedia educational materials.

There is an expanding research community interested in ICT and its application to education. There is a need to ensure strong communication between this community, the policy makers and funders of developments, commercial developers of products and practitioners.

Becta will:

- work to develop and support this network to stimulate relevant research in the educational research community and encourage practitioners to contribute to the evidential base.

While data from secondary sources and evidence from data analysis may provide a useful picture about the use of ICT in a given situation or subject area, it is often necessary to collect additional and original data. In particular, Becta will:

- continue to develop its awards schemes as a primary source of data on the effective use of ICT in teaching, learning, management and administration.

4

Strategic Objective 4

Developing the evidence base on ICT in Education

22 | 23

Priorities for 2002–3



Working with others, Becta will:

- carry out desk research and piloting of new technologies to evaluate their potential value to education to inform Government, users and industry through briefing papers and seminars
- monitor the current status of telecommunications and carry out a connectivity survey of users to provide regular information to schools and Government
- undertake research on content management, the hosting of on-line communities and the management, presentation and e-procurement of multimedia content
- develop a methodology for the practical assessment of total cost of ownership within the school environment and create a prototype decision-support tool
- expand and develop the ICT research network and its annual conference to steer the research community to meeting more closely the needs of practitioners and policy
- develop a robust, sound evidential base on the use and impact of ICT and disseminate key findings as practical advice to practitioners through a series of publications, including brief pamphlets called 'What the research says...'
- analyse national data on ICT usage from QCA and Ofsted including the impact on truancy and staying-on rates, to provide heads and school governors with support in their decision making
- continue to develop awards schemes as a primary source of data on the effective use of ICT across the spectrum of teaching, learning and leadership
- continue to research and report on the application of specific technologies to post-compulsory education.

Outcomes for 2002-3



May 2002	Expert technology seminar series, beginning with broadband
June 2002	Web awards ceremony and publication of Effective Web Publishing CD-ROM
July 2002	Publication of multimedia CD-ROM and report about using digital video in the classroom
July 2002	Research conference
July 2002	Publication of total cost of ownership methodology tested in schools
November 2002	Launch total cost of ownership tool for decision makers in schools
January 2003	Publication of 'What the research says...' series
January 2003	ICT in Practice awards ceremony and publication on disseminating good practice
March 2003	Creativity in Digital Video awards presented

Success Criteria 2002-3



- Policy makers 90% satisfied with briefings on new technologies and expert seminars
- 'What the research says...' publications produced on time and judged by recipients to be accessible, useful and high quality
- Research network grows by 50% in size and activity - in particular through recruiting more practitioners and researchers from outside the existing ICT field
- Awards schemes completed successfully, identifying and disseminating appropriate good practice
- All good practice captured through the awards schemes systematically incorporated into Becta's evidence base
- First school-level total cost of ownership research data published

5

Strategic Objective 5 Developing Becta

24 | 25

To continue to develop Becta as an effective customer-focused organisation with efficient systems and creative, expert staff

Understanding its customers

Schools, colleges, LEAs, Government, public services and the commercial sector are Becta's key customers.

To increase its effectiveness, Becta will:

- keep in close touch with schools and colleges (particularly those struggling with their ICT developments) through focus groups, visits and on-line discussion forums
- keep in close touch with LEAs through its existing on-line forums and newsletters, through the ICT Support Network and through regular meetings
- keep in close touch with Government through regular bilateral meetings
- keep in touch with the commercial sector and public services through seminars, on-line discussion forums and personal contact
- set targets for its work, measure the impact of this work on its customers and use the feedback to improve its services.

Corporate communications

Becta's customers need to be aware of Becta and the services it offers.

Becta will:

- develop a corporate communications strategy to promote its messages and raise its profile
- develop a strategy with the UK Education Departments to communicate the ways in which ICT can help transform and improve teaching, learning and management.

Working in effective partnerships

Becta needs to work actively with key influencers who share its commitment to the role that ICT can play in transforming teaching and learning. Becta will therefore:

- in carrying out its work, build formal and informal partnerships with government departments, other agencies, education authorities, public services, the commercial sector and others
- contribute to and, where necessary, organise meetings and activities that create a more cohesive approach to ICT developments nationally and locally.

Releasing the talent of its people and resourcing flexibly

Becta's main impact is through the expertise and professionalism of its staff. It needs to be a flexibly structured organisation that encourages and values cross-organisational and collaborative working. Through the promotion of new performance-management, managerial, financial and communication measures, Becta will:

- strive further to develop its staff as a creative, caring and bold workforce through ongoing staff development and recruitment programmes
- ensure that it makes the maximum use of secondments and other working relationships to give access to a diverse range of skills and attributes
- structure and organise itself to ensure that it has timely access to the relevant information skills and resources to deliver its priorities
- develop the performance-management system to encourage and value cross-organisational and collaborative working.



Project and programme management

Becta needs to continually review its overall strategy with its Board within the context of national developments. It also needs to organise its programme of work to implement this strategy, with effective project and programme management. It needs to work closely with government departments, partners and customers to set in place a coherent project-management system with shared objectives and targets.

Becta will:

- develop its strategic direction through its Board
- introduce new project- and programme-management systems to support the needs of the organisation and the needs of its funders.

Systems

Becta needs to maintain and develop its technical, financial and other systems to implement its strategic objectives and to comply with government requirements. This requires equipment, connectivity, software, and technical support systems to be in place, and a programme of review, repair, maintenance and replacement.

Becta will:

- continue with its rolling asset-replacement programme, removing obsolete equipment from service
- develop its internal systems to ensure that it supports government policy and requirements, including that of reducing the bureaucratic burden on schools.

Evaluation, review and development

Becta needs to constantly review its work, its structure, its processes and its staffing profile in response to evidence from its customers and the changing demands made on it. Its work needs to be implemented flexibly and sensitively, as the educational, social and technological environment within which Becta operates is itself subject to continuous change and innovation.

Becta will:

- carry out a programme of continual evaluation and review through user monitoring and tracking
- work with the Becta Board and sub-committees to carry out an annual review exercise to measure whether its objectives are being met and whether they meet the needs of educational ICT users, policy makers and the ICT industry
- constantly review its structure, processes and staffing profile in response to the evidence from its customers, the quinquennial review process and other changing demands.

5

Strategic Objective 5 Developing Becta

26 | 27

Priorities for 2002–3



Working with others, and in response to the quinquennial review process, Becta will:

- develop its corporate communications strategy to ensure that timely, well-targeted information on its role, function and work is provided to all stakeholders, including reviewing and re-launching the Becta web site
- develop a strategy with the UK Education Departments to communicate through planned marketing and media campaigns the ways in which ICT can help to transform the education system and improve teaching, learning and management
- run a programme of focus groups, direct visits and user tracking to measure whether it is meeting the qualitative needs of its customers and adapt its work to best meet these needs
- develop its strategic direction through its Board and submit a 2003–6 corporate plan to Government that clearly sets out Becta's strategy and priorities
- identify its key partners and work with each of them to develop a formal understanding of how to work together effectively
- review and monitor its human resources (HR) strategy and further develop its corporate training plan to ensure that its staff reflect the skills, attributes and values essential to the achievement of its objectives
- implement new financial and information systems to ensure that it can secure and monitor appropriate and timely resources to deliver its key objectives
- further develop its performance-management scheme to motivate and reward staff achievement and collaborative working practices
- develop and implement new programme- and project-management systems in order to meet its own objectives and to match funders' needs
- provide staff with an effective and IT-efficient working environment
- review all its communication and data-collection exercises in order to reduce to a minimum the workload on the school and college workforce and LEA staff
- carry out an annual review and user survey to measure whether its objectives have been met and whether it has met the needs of its customers.



Outcomes for 2002-3



May 2002	New finance system implemented
June 2002	New project-management system in place
June 2002	First year of performance-management system reviewed and revised in the light of the first year's experience
July 2002	Pay remit developed and approved
September 2002	Becta web site re-launched as a corporate site
September 2002	HR management system in place
March 2003	Corporate plan 2003-6 developed and approved
March 2003	User survey and annual review by Becta Board

Success Criteria 2002-3



- Papers to Board and Board sub-committees on schedule and appropriate to purpose
- Performance-management system rewards achievement and motivates staff
- New financial and project-reporting systems improve management of work and budgets
- Press coverage of Becta shows that the external image of Becta is favourable and authoritative
- Positive feedback on clarity, accuracy and usefulness from recipients of communications from Becta including Becta web site users
- Internal service customer satisfaction met to 95% level



Millburn Hill Road
Science Park
Coventry CV4 7JJ
Tel: +44 (0)24 7641 6994
Fax: +44 (0)24 7641 1418
E-mail: becta@becta.org.uk
Web: www.becta.org.uk

To contact a specific person at Becta, use the format:
firstname.lastname@becta.org.uk