



## ECIE6002 **Moving Away from the Traditional Classroom – The silent digital revolution in education.** Picture *(Cloudpoint Technology, 2023)*

### **Blog 1 - The Rise of the Machines.**

So, we're in the middle of the 4th industrial revolution and the world around us is changing all the time. Grandparents are living in a world unrecognisable compared to their childhoods (GOV.UK, 2019).

- The 1st industrial revolution, mechanisation, saw production and manufacturing speeded up, helping agricultural success and streamlining transport with the introduction of the railways (iED, 2019).
- The 2nd, seen as the most important to some, saw us utilise energy sources leading to more efficient engines, giving us cars and aeroplanes and methods of communication such as the telephone (iED, 2019).
- The 3rd? This is when we learned to harness nuclear energy, robots and PLCs (Programable Logic Controllers) to help automate our lives and lets not forget, the world wide web. Or, the internet, to you and me (iED, 2019).

The 4th is happening now! Since the wonderful Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web. Hang on Sarah Connor, this might be a good thing! Artificial Intelligence has been invented, augmented reality games are here to stay (iED, 2019). Picture (cenaLab.it, 2024)



So where do we start? Firstly, let's find out what digital competence actually means.

According to Anders Skov, an internet sociologist, being digitally competent covers a wide range of skills. Just because someone knows how to search their favourite film on Netflix, create a playlist on Spotify or navigates Roblox well it doesn't necessarily mean that they are competent in the digital world (Skov, 2016). Skov's understanding of competency combines different domains that mix capability in using hardware to interact digitally, the knowledge of where to get information from and how to access it safely and lastly having a critical understanding of the information they find, the creative potential within it and its strategic use (Skov, 2016). Anders Skov created a test for us to see how digitally competent we are using the Digital Competence Wheel.

Test yours here

[Digital Competence Test](#)

This is an example of what you can expect to see (Skov, 2016)



1 - (Skov, 2016)

So how can we make sure that Gen Z are going to have the tools to live in this future world? Picture (Kjaer, 2018)



In 2018 the Welsh Government requested a review of their current school curriculum. They were searching for advice on how to deliver skills that are useful in real life for its future generations and give them the tools to navigate the changing workplace (Donaldson, 2015). They turned to Professor Donaldson, who had previously headed Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education after being a teacher (BERA, 2024). He successfully reviewed Scotland's education system after retirement from government providing useful feedback and recommendations to primary and secondary state schools (BERA, 2024). He published the review for Welsh schools in 2015 which you can access here [Successful Futures](#) (Donaldson, 2015).

The take-away was that digital competency should be included not just as a stand-alone subject, but incorporated within every strand of learning, just like it is for literacy and numeracy (Donaldson, 2015). So, the Welsh government created a framework to outline the progression steps from primary through to higher education in the Digital Competency

Framework (Welsh Government, 2018). To make the framework easier to implement and understand it was split into 4 strands which have focused elements. The elements are split further into progression steps.

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- **Citizenship** - *This strand has four elements and focuses primarily on safety, identity, and behaviour. The progression steps start very simply with Number 1 being able to identify your own work and your own image and following simple rules. Year 7 schemes of work in secondary schools may include this in PSE class or health & wellbeing. The highest progression step in this strand is 5 where the user can use referencing techniques, knows about plagiarism and evaluates risks and benefits when using different software and web services (Welsh Government, 2018).*
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- **Interacting & Collaboration** - This strand is made up of 3 elements, all of them focusing on communication, collaboration, storing and sharing information. The first progression step here is being capable of using different methods of communicating online, such as email and video calls, saving and retrieving work and group work. The last progression step is merging and combining data to send to another, using online services to share content and using correct file types to suit what you need it for (Welsh Government, 2018).
- **Producing** - This is the part of the framework where you can let your creativity flow! It has 3 strands and it's all about creating your own stuff, like videos and graphics. Photos, animations. The world is your oyster! Progression step 1 is your basics, like finding images, basic animation and giving an opinion on work. The max progression step needs you to be able to use different software tools for different jobs and know their limitations, working with others and being able to critique yours and others work and make it better using that feedback. You also need to be able to create formal documents and be able to index and use referencing tools so you can avoid any plagiarism in your work (Welsh Government, 2018).
- **Data and Computational Thinking** - All of the strands so far have been transferable to work life, but this one most of all. The elements are problem solving, data and information literacy. There are 2 strands, Problem solving and modelling and Data and information literacy. This one includes data sorting, like using spreadsheets, analysing data for evidence, using tables and graphs. The really technical stuff could be used for spy skills! Like causing systems to fail, recognising patterns and trends (breaking secret codes?) and detecting algorithms (Welsh Government, 2018).

Thanks for reading. Keep scrolling to find out what the affects of the digital world have on our children and young people. Picture (ETGovernment, 2021)



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## Blog 2- How is the 4th Industrial Revolution Effecting the Next Generation? Picture (freewebheaders,2025)



We all definitely learned something from the COVID-19 pandemic, mostly, the importance of community and how to use Zoom! But I think it also made us realise the potential that the digital world had to offer in terms of real life. I, for one, had to learn how to use TEAMS for meetings, booking appointments and connecting with pupils who were struggling at home and this put me in good stead when I entered the world of higher education. I already had a basic understanding of how to get connected and access what I needed. But there is also a bad side to being constantly connected to the wide world where we see children and young people's mental health decline due to smart phone use. This has been highlighted recently in a social experiment conducted for a channel 4 documentary where year 8 pupils were asked to give up their phones and devices for 3 weeks (Channel 4, 2024). Although, as Rachel Aroesti, writing for The Guardian rightly states that "if your smartphone leaves you distracted, exhausted and anxious, chances are it's doing the same to your child (Aroesti, 2024)." What the documentary does do however, is show real evidence of the ease at which children and young people (CYP's) can access images and influences such as pornography and violence (Aroesti, 2024) and once seen cannot be unseen.

## Comparison of the Effects that Technology use has on Children & Young People (CYP's)

### Positive

Improved educational engagement (Global Trade, 2023)

Information is easy to access (Global Trade, 2023)

Easy to collaborate with a team (Global Trade, 2023)

Develops connections (Global Trade, 2023)

### **Negative**

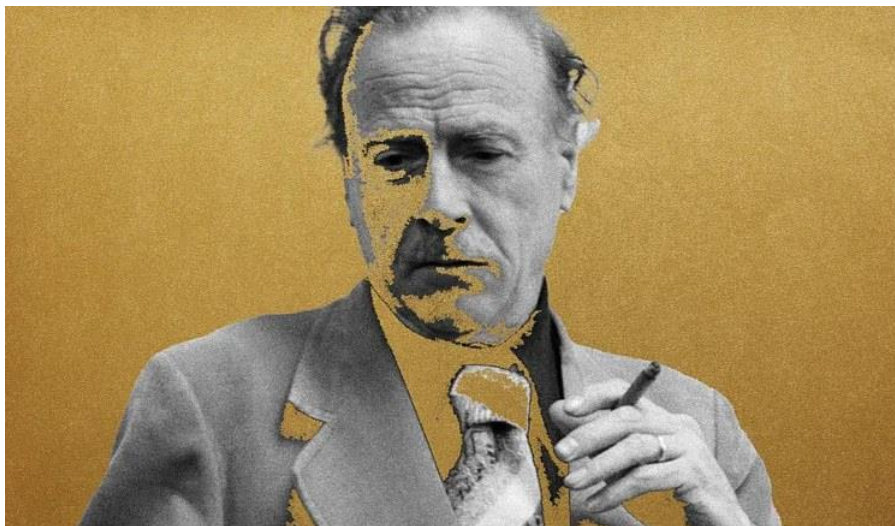
Decreased physical activity (Global Trade, 2023)

Social anxiety (Global Trade, 2023)

Exploitation / manipulation (Channel 4, 2024)

Decreased / disrupted sleep (Global Trade, 2023)

[Allow me to Introduce Marshall McLuhan.....](#)



*2 - (Declan, 2024)*

If you've never heard of Marshall McLuhan, you're forgiven. Until I was researching this I hadn't either. It turns out that he was a bit of a forward-thinking genius (McLuhan, 1967) and in his day, probably in the realms of science fiction! Just bear in mind that he wrote this stuff 22 years before the invention of the World Wide Web (iED, 2019). His main take-away was that the way that we use media is the most important aspect of digital living (McLuhan, 1967). Who would have thought that he anticipated the possibility of cyber-bullying and the false projection that people would display about themselves such as Instagram statuses in his legendary quote

“One big gossip column that is unforgiving, unforgettable and from where there is no redemption (McLuhan, 1967)”

Some of the biggest problems that our CYP's face is anxiety due to image and how they are perceived by their friends (YoungMinds, 2025) and in a digital world it is done through social media and WhatsApp. This can lead to school avoidance, eating problems and body image disorders (YoungMinds, 2025). McLuhan spoke of a Global Village before we even realised that a community could be built using digital technology (McLuhan, 1967). How could he have foreseen the power of these global villages is incredible! The Arab Spring uprising in 2009 is found to have been largely successful due to the number of social media promoting social change (UW NEWS, 2011). Leading up to the president of Egypt's resignation, Tweets about political change went from 2,300 per day to a staggering 230,000 (UW NEWS, 2011).

Are we doing anything about it? Picture (Kjaer, 2018)



A quick search online will get you to the CEOP website run by The National Crime Agency (CEOP, 2025). Not only does it give you an immediate link to report anything or anyone suspicious, it categorises links by age which then take you to games which you can play with your child which teaches them about online safety and for older children there are sections about how to identify stalking behaviour and sexual harassment to building healthy relationships (CEOP, 2025). In Wales's Digital Competency Framework, online safety is part of the curriculum in the Citizenship strand as reputation, image and online behaviour form part of our identity both in the physical and virtual world (Welsh Government, 2018)

*In order to make a real difference in keeping CYP's safe in the virtual world we ALL need to do our bit. Even down to placing age restrictions on our child's devices and looking at the content that they have been accessing (CEOP, 2025). Interestingly, Emma Willis one of the presenters of Channel 4's SWIPED asks her husband who co-presents the show what restrictions he has put on their 3 children's devices and a heated discussion takes place when Matt admits that it was too difficult for him to do and they realise that their children aged 15, 12 and 8 are able to access any content they wish (Channel 4, 2024).*

In the wake of the murder of Brianna Ghey, government ministers seem to have woken up about the negative impact that the digital world can have on impressionable CYP's (The Telegraph, 2024). Brianna was brutally murdered by two teenagers, one in particular who had accessed real murders using the dark web (The Guardian, 2024). In May 2024, the UK Government announced changes to the current laws within the Online Safety Act (Gov.UK, 2024). These changes will place responsibility to social media firms, gaming and messaging apps, and industries such as file sharing and pornography sites to have codes of practice in place to better restrict underage users accessing and using them (Gov.UK, 2024). The ball has started rolling as Ofcom have published the first codes of practise for BigTech to get compliant (Ofcom, 2024). At this moment in time both Ofcom and the UK Government are aiming to launch the revised Act in March 2025 (Gov.UK, 2024)

Thanks for reading. Keep scrolling to find out more about digital learning. Picture (ETGovernment, 2021)



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### Blog 3 Speaking From Experience....Picture (Shutterstock, 2025)



I've worked with children and young people (CYP's) for 10+ years and I've seen huge change in the way that digital advances have altered the educational sphere. At the start of my career, the only time that computers and other devices were used in class was during a dedicated ICT class. Since the introduction of the Successful Futures Review (Donaldson, 2015) schools have slowly been introducing other tech. One school had a photography course which provided cameras to use and needed a proficiency in using photoshop leading to a qualification at the end. When I moved to a slightly smaller, more rural secondary school with a larger budget, teachers had iPads at their disposal and a limited number of Laptops and Chromebooks. In the last few years though, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of digital technology in school has increased dramatically.

### What did COVID-19 ever do for us? Picture (Shutterstock, 2025)



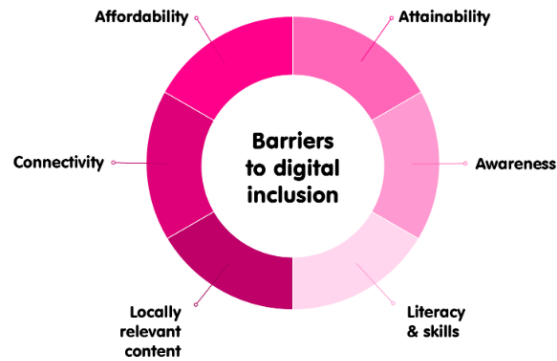
During the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21 primary and secondary schools were closed for learning and teaching was moved online (Senedd Cymru, 2024) concerns were raised, not only for wellbeing concerns for vulnerable children but for CYP's who couldn't access learning online (Welsh Government, 2020). This led to Wales releasing £ 3 million of funding released to local authorities and schools to providing connectivity solutions such as 4G Mifi and devices that CYP's can use to access lessons provided by school online. This benefited my school as after the pandemic there were enough Chromebooks returned to create a

stash for each department to use which allows departments to include a lot more digital literacy in day-to-day lessons. Donaldson recommended that digital literacy be integrated into every subject like literacy and numeracy are. For example, key vocabulary and grammar can be integrated into humanities, D&T lessons by writing evidence and creating graphs for survey results (Welsh Government, 2013). This can be expanded by transferring data onto excel and converting the into various charts and printing it off (Welsh Government, 2018). Something that seems simple to us but needs to be taught.

### GRASP Picture (Shutterstock, 2025)



Where I work currently, myself and another member of staff interact with pupils using our GRASP option. It stands for Guided Remote Access Pupil Support. A legacy from the pandemic, this is offered to pupils who are struggling to attend school. It is tailored to the individual student. I have had success with students in the past who have either gone on to be accepted into StepAhead and EOTAS facilities, used for CYP's with mental health problems (Swansea Council, 2020), provided with full home tuition or successfully integrated back into school. Before introducing myself to a new GRASP pupil I speak with their progress manager and form tutor to find out a few personal details. I would then call the parent or guardians to arrange a convenient time every week to meet using TEAMS and explain how to access it. If they have no devices fit for purpose we provide one. AS I get to know the CYP better I find out which subjects are their favourites and access the relevant resources to deliver a lesson during the TEAMS appointment. This works well for pupils with social anxiety as we can keep the camera off. For other CYP's, they enjoy the interaction and it helps them to get back into the swing of learning (L.S. Vygotsky, 1978). For pupils who who come back to school, I try to be available if they need me as we have built a relationship (Rogers, 1951)



3 - (Dweck et al, 2021)

There are barriers to digital inclusion too.

- Affordability – some households had to share devices (Welsh Government, 2020)
- Attainability – Parents / carers may be reluctant to share expensive equipment (Dweck et al, 2021)
- Awareness – Parents may fear for their child’s safety online and restrict digital exposure (Dweck et al, 2021)
- Literacy & Skills – Lack of literacy for how to search the internet or the skills use software (Dweck et al, 2021)
- Locally relevant content – Unable to source local reliable information (Dweck et al, 2021)
- Connectivity – Lack of bandwidth to sustain online lessons or download information (Welsh Government, 2020)



4 - (Welsh Government, 2020)

So, what are the advantages of digital learning?

- Flexibility – CYP's can choose different software to complete the work (ICT Steering Group, 2013)
- Cost-effectiveness – No need for paper copies (bytesroute, 2004).
- Personalisation – Teachers can easily differentiate existing work to suit the CYP (ICT Steering Group, 2013).
- Variety of Resources – Easy for teachers to upload examples of good work as well as instructions (ICT Steering Group, 2013).
- Increased Collaboration – Pupils can work easily as a group in real time and revise work (ICT Steering Group, 2013).
- Easier assessment & evaluation – CYP's can receive their results as soon as they are published as long as they have internet access. Pupils can send work virtually (ICT Steering Group, 2013).

## The Welsh Baccalaureate



5 - (WJEC, 2024)

Created to prepare students for higher education and employability (WJEC, 2024)

The equivalent to a GCSE grade (Welsh Government, 2022)

Increases digital skills to those not taking an IT option for GCSE (Welsh Government, 2022)

Helps students to analyse sources (WJEC, 2024)

Revised & updated in 2013 to reflect new curriculum for ICT (ICT Steering Group, 2013)

So, to summarise.....

I would say thanks to Donaldson (Donaldson, 2015) and COVID-19 (Welsh Government, 2020) education is starting to catch up with the 4th industrial revolution. In my setting pupils can record themselves using iPads, use basic stop motion animation, create mug designs and transfer them, use TEAMS effectively, create spreadsheets and PowerPoints and identify reliable sources. With the introduction of the new curriculum, this has expanded to include writing code, creating websites and digital assets (WJEC, 2023)

Thanks for reading. As always, keep scrolling for more. Picture (ETGovernment, 2021)



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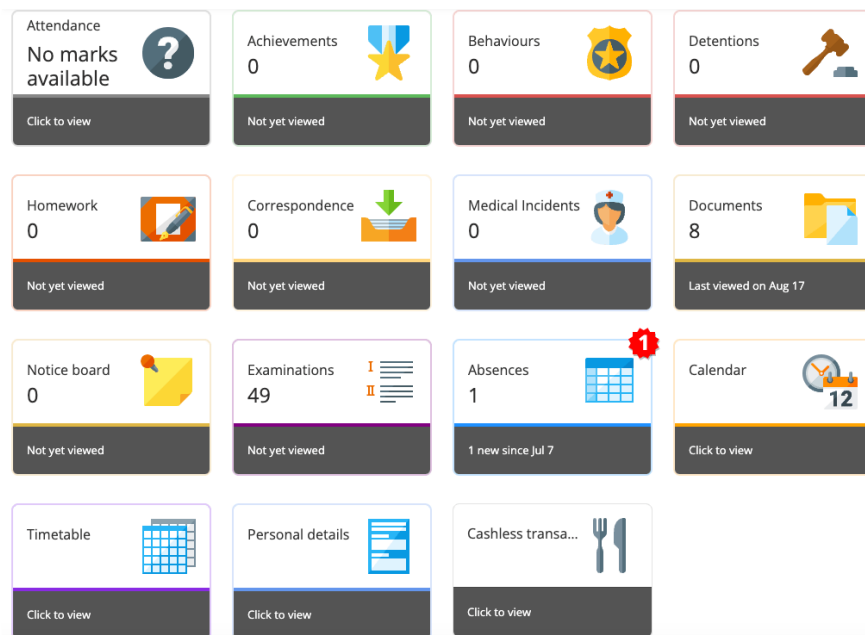
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## Blog 4. How Talaxy Transformed my School.

As the sun rises on the second quarter of this decade a lot of schools are using management software that can be accessed by parents via an app or easily on their smartphones. Apps like ClassCharts and data management software such as Talaxy are revolutionising the way that parents / carers and school communicate. Talaxy, created by tasc software is a system that can link together other programmes to collate information about, well, pretty much what you want (Talaxy, 2024). The beauty of it is that schools can tailor it to what they need.



6 - (School A, 2024)

How Talaxy has helped staff. Picture (Shutterstock, 2025)



## In the Classroom

Registers are much easier to take and any pupil who has medical, ALN, mobility issues, and free school meals have a tag next to their name. This helps staff to identify, at-a-glance, pupils who may need differentiated work, have toilet passes, have hearing or visual impairment which the teacher can take in at the beginning of the lesson giving more personal support to those who need it (Rogers, 1951) and perhaps more nurture to others (Maslow, 1943). It also saves the embarrassment of a pupil needing to tell staff of any issues they may have in front of the class. When a pupil or class does well it only takes a few clicks to select the reason why and 1-3 achievement points get added to their account (Skinner, 1984). Parents can have alerts for when this happens so that pupils can be rewarded at home too. As for behaviour, there are many options which support the positive behaviour policy of the school (School A, 2023). There are pre-programmed options which save the teacher typing time and they vary from verbal warnings escalating up to 'on-call' which will remove a pupil from the class. When a behaviour is logged there are options to notify their progress manager and a section to log if a detention is set – the software will even book a

day for the detention, where it is being held and again, notify parents. When the pupil attends the detention, it can be logged as attended. Academic work can be linked to Talaxy, which links to the schools Study Zone parents can access this too.

## Pastorally

Absences are logged easily and linked with SIMS which is the old platform for attendance. Pupils will see the percentage of their attendance which they haven't been able to before giving them some ownership over their choices (Dewey, 1897). Pupils and parents can access timetables through their phone at any time. Dinner money and trips can be paid for by card, online through the software and consent forms are uploaded easily.



7 - (Shutterstock, 2024)

## The benefits for pupils

Since launching Talaxy in school pupils have been a lot more invested in the achievement and behaviour points they have, and for good reason. The school has let it be known that pupils with over a certain amount of behaviour points will be restricted in out of school activities including trips. They can see when they have a detention and where it will take place. When registers are taken, any detentions that pupils in the class have will pop up, giving the teacher an opportunity to remind the pupil (Study.com, 2024). There are many times where I have been in an ICT classroom and the first thing that pupils have done is log on to Talaxy to check their achievement points (Dewey, 1897) and they even discuss them with minimum embarrassment. During the last day of term, the pupil in each year group with the most Talaxy points were awarded with a prize in front of the whole school and their points were read out. I could hear others discussing the total points that they had under their breath making me believe that they really do care!

## And Finally

Even though some are still sceptical about where digital technology will take us, there are some palpable benefits to its use. Putting comments on Talaxy for poor behaviour in itself can be a deterrent for some pupils (Skinner, 1984) and others thrive from the positive feedback and praise that perhaps they don't get at home (Maslow, 1943).

So, Viva, the digital revolution!

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