



WHITE PAPER

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Education Device Trends

By Bob O'Donnell, TECHnalysis Research Chief Analyst

SUMMARY

Today's schools offer students a wealth of technology offerings, but as many high profile cases have shown, not all device deployments in education are successful. The key is to find flexible devices that can meet a wide range of educational needs, while offering reliable operation at prices that schools can afford.

"Educational institutions use computing devices as a core driver of their curriculum, so they need to be conscientious about selecting the right devices and right suppliers in order to meet their specific needs."—Bob O'Donnell, Chief Analyst

INTRODUCTION

For the last 15 years or so, technology products like PCs and tablets have played an increasingly important role in today's schools, from kindergarten through college. Students of all ages now use these devices as a regular part of their day-to-day learning activities, and teachers have integrated them into the core portions of their curriculum.

As a result, IT professionals in the Education field are under increasing pressure to choose devices for their institutions that they can count on to work reliably in their often challenging and unforgiving environments. At the same time, they require devices they can easily

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manage, that run the key educational software their teachers and students use, and that offer the flexibility to fit the wide range of needs that educational applications often demand.

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

To document and analyze the specific requirements for IT devices in public and private educational institutions, both K-12 and collegiate level, TECHnalysis Research recently undertook a study of nearly 150 US-based IT professionals from these organizations. The goal of the study was to better understand how and why Education IT professionals purchase and use different combinations of devices, and what factors were most important to them.

Whether public or private, most schools face limited budgets when it comes to device purchases, so the fact that Price was the top factor for both Tablet and 2-in-1s and ranked second for notebook purchases was expected. Given the critical role that these devices play and the heavy usage they receive, it was also not surprising to see that Reliability ranked first for notebooks and second for both tablets and 2-in-1s.

Top 5 Purchase Factors in Education	Notebooks	Tablets	2-in-1s
1	Reliability	Price	Price
2	Price	Reliability	Reliability
3	Performance	Battery Life	Performance
4	Functionality	Functionality	Functionality
5	Long life cycle	Performance	Battery Life

As one survey respondent noted with regard to computing devices, “They need to be very durable as they will be handled by many individuals for a year or more. And since they won't be the ones personally buying it, they tend to treat them a little less delicately than normal. Also, easily being able to track them as some will go missing from time to time, whether from misplacement, or theft.”

Another respondent described how important these devices are to their students. “I think that reliability is very important and can be a huge issue if the children are bringing these devices home with them now in order to work on projects. If they are not reliable then students will end up neglecting their schoolwork and may get discouraged by that.”

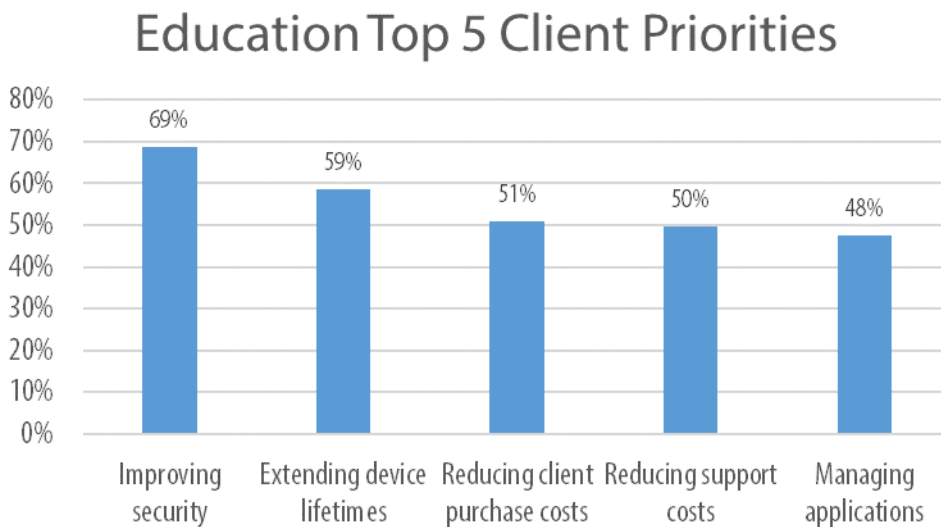
As for device types, Education buyers showed an increasingly strong preference for tablets, with the average number of tablet purchases not only expected to increase versus the previous year, but for many organizations, tablet purchase levels are expected to get near that of notebook purchases. One of the reasons for this is that many schools are transitioning more of their efforts from notebooks to tablets. The wider availability of tablet-friendly

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applications, as well as the increasing interest in touch and pen-based usage paradigms, are helping drive that move.

Another important factor is the tablet operating system. While iOS still leads in Education, strong interest in Windows 10 is expected to allow Microsoft's latest OS to become more common in schools than Android in new tablet purchases over the next year.

Many educational institutions also showed interest in 2-in-1s and convertible form factors. While only 44% of respondents said they had already deployed these devices in their organizations, the purchase levels are expected to increase by about 85% above the current installed base. The flexibility that 2-in-1s allow is intriguing to some of the more aggressive technology adopters in Education, and for those increasing their purchases of these new devices, the top reason was transitioning from notebooks to 2-in-1s.



As with most industries, security is also important to IT professionals in Education and Improving Security made it to the top of the list of client priorities. Having integrated capabilities to improve security built into the device, as well as a wide range of software tools to bring additional types of protection to both students and teachers is clearly a key issue for Education IT.

In line with their concerns around reliability, survey respondents also expressed a desire to extend device lifetimes and maximize the value of their purchases. Having a stable, reliable platform goes a long way towards helping achieve that goal and, with the release of Windows 10, previous concerns about the long-term viability of Windows have been erased.

The wide range of and familiarity with Windows-based device and application management tools can also help address the fourth and fifth-ranked overall client priority concerns that

Education IT buyers had regarding their devices. These tools can help reduce support costs through ease of management and tracking, as well as straightforward mechanisms for doing large-scale application deployments and upgrades.

MEETING THE NEEDS

Knowing the issues that Educational IT buyers have is one thing, but delivering products that they're interested in is another. Fujitsu has been serving both K-12 and university-level Educational institutions with IT products for many years now. It not only understands both elementary and higher ed, but also has products that are well-suited to each school's unique demands. For example, K-6 elementary schools want pen-free mobile devices that primarily



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FUJITSU LIFEBOOK® T725

focus on content consumption, whereas many higher education organizations need higher performance content creation-focused devices that leverage a pen. Fujitsu's new Lifebook T725 convertible, offers the kind of flexibility and reliability that's ideally suited for higher ed environments who are investigating Windows-based convertibles and 2-in-1s.

Fujitsu also has a range of traditional clamshell notebooks and stand-alone Windows tablets that function well in Education, with features such as optional fingerprint readers, integrated TPM (Trusted Platform Module) and more to address security-related concerns.

In addition, features like spill-resistant keyboards can make an important difference in reliability when the devices are used by younger people who may not always be very careful with the school's equipment.

CONCLUSIONS

IT professionals in Education have a wide variety of options when it comes to their device providers and, the truth is, there are a number of strong, and relatively similar offerings from many of them. However, the devil, as they say, is in the details, and this is where a few of the unique benefits of a more specialized vendor can make a difference.

Companies who understand the unique needs of Education users also better understand how their devices are going to be used in those environments and can adjust their product plans

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accordingly. With a long history of serving both K-12 and higher ed institutions, and a wide variety of products to fit different requirements, Fujitsu is well positioned to address today's Education IT professional's needs.

For more information, please visit www.education.fai.fujitsu.com

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