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# Viva la revolucion

*With many parents – and teachers – wary about the role technology plays in the classroom, **MATT BRITLAND**, director of ICT at The Lady Eleanor Holles School, explores how to convince the naysayers of its true value*

**A**s school leaders, how do we keep up with the new technology that our students want to get their hands on and use? It's a difficult question and one I ask myself all the time. A new device, website or app seems to be released every month and our students want to use or adopt them very quickly. It can be quite intimidating, especially for those who don't feel like they're 'tech savvy'. Our students, on the other hand, embrace new technology almost universally. So this begs the question: how can staff and parents be convinced of its value and how can we encourage each other to see technology as a positive?

To understand why the technology our children use is so important to them school staff should experience it for themselves. Many apps and websites that children use often get a bad press and people make judgements without

using them. But if your students are using Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat, and you don't know what they are or how they're used, give them a go. Talk to your students and ask them why they use these apps. You

If all staff could see the fantastic ways tablets are being used for teaching and learning in some of our schools, I think those who question the value of mobile technology would be surprised at the impact it makes. Tablets are

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## It's clear that mobile devices have a huge part to play in facilitating learning

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may be surprised about the part they play in shaping their social lives as well as school lives. Many young people use instant messaging apps like WhatsApp to create groups to talk about revision and school work.

### SURPASSING EXPECTATIONS

Smartphones and tablets can be seen as a distraction for young people, and when the iPad was first released it was thought to be a disaster by many observers who described it as just a 'big iPhone'. Years on it's seen as a game changer.

much more than just a device to play games on and watch films. Whilst children shouldn't be glued to their screens all the time, mobile devices have a huge part to play in facilitating learning.

Being wary of new technology is understandable; like most things it can be open to abuse. But with a better understanding of how our young people use technology and encouraging an open dialogue with our students about its benefits and risks, we can help reap its rewards in a way that's both safe and extremely productive. ■