

The e-Learning Foundation Welcomes Government Injection Of £300 million Into Home Access Initiative To Eliminate Digital Divide

September 23 2008: At the Annual Labour Party Conference in Manchester today, the Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced a £300 million programme to ensure that all schoolchildren in England have access to a computer and the Internet at home.

This announcement is welcomed by the e-Learning Foundation, a registered charity that has been actively involved since 2001 in ensuring that socially deprived children have access to computers and the Internet at home as well as school for their studies.

Under the Government scheme, eligible families will be able to apply for an allowance that can be exchanged for a suitable computer and access to the Internet.

The Home Access programme will encourage teachers, parents and Governors to play their part in ensuring that **all** schoolchildren have online access to the learning technologies that are now so much a central part of a 21st century education.

The e-Learning Foundation's model is central to the Government's initiative. It encourages schools to supply the computers to families by running a programme that ensures that **every** child has the same opportunity to take part, not just those that qualify for the allowance.

This equity model has the advantage of being fully inclusive, particularly important for those families who fall just outside the eligibility category. It also delivers more powerful educational benefits as the technology will become fully embedded in the pupil's curriculum, as it can be used in the classroom as well as at home

Lord Mitchell, Chairman of the e-Learning Foundation and one of the founding trustees said: "We are absolutely delighted that after seven years of actively campaigning for the ability of children to have the same access to learning

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technologies as their better-off friends, the Government has acknowledged that the digital divide has to be addressed on a major scale.”

“In a 21st century global economy our children will need state-of-the-art information technology abilities. Too many of our socially disadvantaged school children are denied access to Internet learning and have limited IT skills. At the e-Learning Foundation our role has been to ensure that all our children have these skills and we are delighted that the Government is going to address this issue with such a major commitment,” commented Valerie Thompson, Chief Executive of the e-Learning Foundation.

“Our work with over 300 schools has addressed the digital divide for over 50,000 schoolchildren, but this announcement will allow us to significantly increase the number of schools and families who will work together to ensure that this growing source of educational disadvantage is finally nailed,” added Thompson.

About the e-Learning Foundation

The e-Learning Foundation was launched in 2001, to ensure that every schoolchild in the UK should have home access to learning technologies when and where they want to learn.

The Foundation, a registered charity, aims to bridge the digital divide and ensure that all children, irrespective of their background, can have the same access to technology for learning at home as their better off peers.

The Foundation is funded through the public, private and third sector in the form of Government grants, commercial sponsorship, grants and donations.

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