

# Indiana Chief Technology Officers Council

## *Reimagine Learning*



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### Our Mission:

Dedicated to supporting and enhancing the professional growth of Technology Administrators, the Indiana CTO Council, is a collaborative group of Technology Directors, and Chief Information Officers in Indiana educational technology.

## Promoting technology adoption through learning centers

**Ryan Cameron**  
**Avon Community School Corporation**

Educators typically acquire information technology skills and instructional strategies by attending various in-service meetings and conferences. This methodology is often impractical and yields little results in that professional developed very rarely is applied into a classroom or lab context. Sure your faculty and staff may return from a conference with a new application or gadget however, how will they be applied to instructional practice?

A more practical approach to technology adoption and integration can be found through practical or “live” processes rather than a theoretical presentation. When faculty has the opportunity to experiment with new technologies it provides a model on which instructors and assess the value of technology and modify lessons to meet the needs of their students. How do you build these ideal opportunities? Working in an open and experiential teaching community is a major

commitment. However, through creating and building education technology communities social interaction drives collaboration and in some instances a healthy spirit of competition among educational peers.

In short, building a center for instructional best practices or a “learning center” for faculty provides tremendous opportunities for faculty to build relationships where ideas and practices can not only be shared but all applied to the classroom. Educators who have a high level of experience with academic technologies can mentor other educators from an “on-ground” perspective. This environment allows educators to work from a “problem up” approach.

Having difficulty helping students understand a formula is statics and strengths? Perhaps another engineering professor has used an interactive white board to demonstrate the practical applications of the formula. This question may have gone



unanswered if the right environment or learning center resource was not available.

Some intuitions have gone so far as to invest in building space dedicated to education technology and training. These are of course very nice however, with the advent of virtual workspaces, a learning center does not require a brick and mortar. There are literally a thousand options to build a learning center, in fact you may already have the resources you need! Already have a website? A shared drive? A virtual meeting program or system? If so, you are already halfway to getting started. Technology grows by collaboration and use.

Ownership and acquisition seldom delivers real classroom and lab practices that can be applied. By providing a space when faculty can meet and share ideas, technology naturally evolves and integrates into teaching and learning.

# Digital Devices for School

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## Jason Jantz Brownsburg CSD, CMS/MIS

My oldest is on her way to middle school and she is going to need a laptop - not to bring to school everyday, but to work on her homework here at home. Since I was setting out to figure out the best laptop for our needs, I thought I would write down the process for those folks who do not understand the differences between different devices and would like some help in figuring it out. I'm not endorsing any of the retailers below, and there are many others that you might want to consider.

Our requirements were a middle of the road computer is going to be fine. I definitely want something with a keyboard, even if it is a smaller keyboard. My plan is to get a convertible tablet or ultralight laptop and connect it to the family desktop. We'll want some type of usb key and/or cloud storage space for files, but I'll figure that out later on. Her favorite color is blue, so that may be a factor. If you are new to computer stuff, you might want to check out my overview of some basic terminology.

I'm a big privacy advocate, but anything the kid is doing on the

computer they should be willing to do in front of their parents. I'll have to write more of this later, but the biggest mistake a parent can make is allow the gadgets to leave a public space. Check the laptop and cell phone at the door when they come home. Create a family charging and content review station, where all of the gadgets are charged, and all gadgets may be subject to a content review and discussion.

### Tablets

Apple Ipad is awesome. The problem with tablets – no keyboard. You can get an external keyboard, but now you are carrying around a keyboard. Trying to edit documents, especially keynote or power point docs on a tablet will drive you to drink. Best solitaire toy ever and great for checking email on the couch.

### Convertible tablet

Usually small and light, these have a built in keyboard and a touch screen. I had a Lenovo version of one of these and loved it. I would buy another one in a second. I'm considering the Lenovo convertible netbook.

### Netbook

I haven't owned one of these, but I will include them in the comparison just for fun. I have heard the keyboard is cramped, but it is better than typing on the imaginary keyboard of a tablet. The performance will be worse than a regular laptop if you are doing more than just surfing the web, and keep in mind these computers don't come with a cd or dvd drive, so installing software is a web-based process.

### Laptop

A best bet if you need to get work done and do research. A MacBook Pro has consistently been my favorite, but I have also had good luck with Dell and Lenovo and heard great things about HP.

Whatever device you choose be sure it fits your budget and your needs!