It’s interesting to look at the history of computers being used in education in the last 15 years and the speed with which schools, teachers and students have adapted and incorporated new technology into the classrooms!

It wasn’t that many years ago we had a very large, clunky, slow machine in the corner of a classroom that had a few cd games, were being taught how to use a base code to program a machine, used limited word processing programs in our classrooms AND if you had 2 computers in every classroom you were really progressive! The main job of the teacher was to make sure that each student knew the parts of the machine.

Across the globe computers and new technology were impacting every workplace, home and filtering into classrooms. Children were intrigued and being taught about this thing called a mouse, a keyboard and a hard drive. The teachers put the game disc in the CD drive because they were easy to scratch.

In 2001 – only 10 years ago at Hartwell Primary School we had very few computers (Apple IIE’s) with limited functions and software. In fact in 2001 at this school, teachers were still using blackboards and chalk – we didn’t have whiteboards! In schools now, we would be surprised NOT to see laptops, interactive whiteboards, digital cameras, video cameras, and desktop computers, flip cameras, iPods, microphones, and projectors to name but a few gadgets! In fact if you toured a school that didn’t have any technology wouldn’t you ask the question of where is it?

As technology has become more and more integrated into everyday life (with laptops, digital cameras, mobile phones etc) we now expect our children to have access to current information technology devices and equipment in the classroom.

We realize the potential of communicating via a website, email, text, blog or wiki and being able to access current information on the Internet rather than in a dusty encyclopedia which may have been published a few years ago.

INTERESTING STATISTICS…

- In 1982 there were only 1,000 Internet devices globally. In 2008 there were 1,000,000,000. Did you know there are 31 billion searches on Google each month? In 2006 there were 2.7 billion!

- There are over 200 million registered users on MySpace. If MySpace were a country it would be the 5th largest in the world! (That’s somewhere between Indonesia and Brazil!)

- The first commercial text message was sent in December 1992 – today the number of text messages sent and received everyday exceeds the total population of the planet.

Take a look at ‘Did you know 4.0’ to see some more really interesting facts:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECDZbrzkTzk&feature=fvsr
The challenge for schools now is not to label and identify parts of a machine but to acknowledge students as digital learners, provide technologies that enrich learning, are creative, have a high capacity to communicate effectively not just locally but globally. This is a remarkable challenge when you consider that new technological information is doubling every two years. Our students are known as digital natives where as the rest of us born before them, their teachers and parents are known as digital immigrants!

Digital natives require information to be relevant, up to date, non-linear and visual. As digital immigrants our role is to educate our students to analyze, reason, investigate and review; remembering that in order to do this our children need to be highly literate and numerate.

**WHERE TO NEXT?**

As educators we continue to look for the most appropriate, innovative and engaging technology to integrate with and enhance our curriculum.

**Students:** Our aim is to provide the students with a variety of equipment to help them be multi-skilled, from PCs to Macs, cameras to moviemaking equipment, PowerPoint to prezi, wikis and emails to blogs and beyond.

**Teachers and Parents:** Our challenge as parents and teachers is to keep up! We ensure that we seek current and relevant professional learning for teachers and use our curriculum as a means to use the technology purposefully. We will provide a variety of information sessions and eLearning updates for parents and the HPS community throughout the school year – beginning with Susan McLean, a noted expert in Cyber Safety in February 2012.

**Safety:** We have developed a cyber safety program to support students, parents and teachers to be ‘safe and secure’ whilst using the Internet and appropriate networking tools such as blogs and wikis. By using some of the best educators such as Susan McLean we are striving to keep up to date and relevant with knowledge and safe practice in a Web 2.0 environment. We ensure that DEECD guidelines for Student Safety on the HPS school followed. Hartwell families are expected to sign and follow the Computer Code of Conduct Agreement each year.

**Equipment:** We continue to update our equipment, infrastructure (internet and in-school organization), Web 2.0 capabilities, professional learning for teachers and our curriculum. Currently at Hartwell we have desktops, laptops, digital cameras, easi-speak microphones, interactive whiteboards, flip cameras, digital microscopes, digital moviemaking equipment, projectors and a variety of headphones and listening posts.

Now the next exciting phase of our journey begins with the introduction of iPads in the Level 4 (Grade 5/6) learning community and Netbooks in the Prep community in 2012. We will also have a touch screen monitor sited in the downstairs library to show the Solar Panel information.

We believe our students need more 1-1 access to equipment. By seeking smaller and lighter equipment our students have the flexibility of access and iPads allow the students to use inbuilt cameras, video, Internet access in a portable device. The netbooks are a perfect size and weight for little hands; allowing them to sit anywhere in their environment and learn new skills and knowledge.

It certainly is an exciting time in education!