

Should the british
school invest
computer lab?



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Introduction:

One of the reasons attached to the selection of the question is to evaluate whether or not the British School can offer Mac computers in the computer lab by complementing the needs of the staff & the students.

In the recent years Brand value for Apples products has risen significantly and this has led to a number of educational institutions implementing the use of Mac computers. While Mac systems may not be as user friendly and cheaper compared to Windows they tend to serve many of the educational purposes better than Windows systems.

However, There are likely to be Advantages & Disadvantages of using both systems in The British School, however through Primary & Secondary Research & implementation of a number of business tools we will be able to successfully make a decision by taking into account the students & members of the staff on whether or not investment should be made in the Mac computers or whether The British school should remain with Windows computers in the computer lab.

Methodology:

Primary Research:

Questionnaires:

A questionnaire is a research document consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. A number of questionnaires will be designed and prepared with

numerous short questions. The questionnaire will be undertaken amongst a number of teachers and students. Short questions will be primarily designed to gain insights into the teacher and the student's opinions on either system. For instance some of these sample questions may be included in the questionnaire:

Which system are you comfortable using?

Which system do you think the school should invest in? State your reasons below for the choice

There are likely to be many advantages of using a questionnaire such as:

Since many open ended questions are being asked it may lead to accumulation of large data

Quicker to collect information and wont take up too much time of staff members and the students

However some problems may occur through the collection of data by such a method:

Large data accumulation through open ended questions also means it would take longer to process and analyse the data.

Respondents may answer superficially especially if the questionnaire takes a long time to complete.

Telephone interview:

This method would allow the interview to be held over the phone. A telephone interview will be conducted with the manger of an Apple store in New Delhi. One of the purposes of such a method of data collection is to obtain the costs of Mac computers and the final costs borne to The British School depending on the number of Mac computer's it wishes to setup. Rate of discounts will also be inquired since a bulk order is being placed.

Examples of certain questions that maybe asked while conducting this interview:

Why should the British school invest in Mac computers?

How are Mac computers used for educational purposes?

Telephone interviews are a cheap method of data collection and can accumulate detailed and important data at time. However one of the disadvantages of such a method of data collection is that since public disruption are likely to take place it may only allow us to ask short answered questions. Therefore through Telephone interviews we will able to gain insights into the costs towards such an invest and will be a critical factor in the decision making.

Secondary Research:

External Data: Secondary data will be available and collected in the form of articles and a number of information from different sources on the internet.

During research on the internet, articles may be looked for comparing both the systems features and stating where the each systems strength lies.

Apple's Website will be looked at closely to gain an insight into its computers

and how a number of its products are used for several educational purposes. Besides articles, many documents may also be looked at closely from apple's website about the uses of its desktops and the number of purposes it serves for educational institutions.

Findings:

Primary Research:

After the designing and preparation of the Questionnaire, we conducted it on 10 students to gain knowledge on the system they prefer and would like to see being implemented in the British school. The results have been shown in the form of Bar charts.

We had interviewed 2 teachers that are involved in the teaching of computer studies Mrs Moaga and Mrs Geetanjali Dewan. As thought, we achieved a more detailed response from them and their responses are summarised here:

Mrs Moaga's Response:

She was comfortable with using Windows and believed that the school should stay with Windows as a system. One of the reasons she stated for her response was that windows allowed compatibility with the most available software. She also thought the school could implement frequent It updates and inclusion of new technological products to improve the quality/performance in the school.

Mrs Dewan's Response:

She also was comfortable with using Windows and believed that the school should stay with Windows as a system. The reason she stated for her response was that Mac does not offer adaptive maintenance for networks and great for stand alone purposes but maintenance is online for networks and may cause problems. Also some of her suggestions to improve the performance in the school:

Better content management system instead of cyberoam so as to have improved firewalls.

Asset management- Bar codes for all laptops to detect assets.

Frequent anti-viruses should be installed. Mac doesn't get viruses; Windows does but better anti-viruses to be installed.

We even conducted a Telephone interview with one of the Mac representatives and inquired them about their products cost and why they Mac should be used in an IT Lab and its educational purposes.

Why should an IT lab have Mac?

Mac is highly secure from the ground up. Features like sandboxed applications and home directory encryption are accessible and easy to use.

All mac desktop computers have the Energy-star rating for energy efficiency. And built in power-management features like Energy Saver can save British school even more money.

Mac can run both Windows and Mac OSX; you can have two operating systems on a single computer. Mac also comes with many innovative

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learning services built in to help students chat, blog and podcast. This will allow British school to manage costs and spend less on Add-ons.

Virtually Immune to Pc viruses and malware.

Will work with any network or directory Service

Mac will fit right in with your existing infrastructure. Integrating Any Mac platform with IP based networks and assets are relatively simple.

It will simplify everyday management's tasks for the British school. You'll spend less time helping students deal with crashes and Mac OS X can even automate daily tasks like backup and software updates.

Educational purposes for Apple:

If some of these applications can be installed not only would it help with enhancing students projects but also encourage creativity from many of The British school students.

iLIFE brings students projects to life

Every Mac comes with iLIFE, a suite of software that lets you do amazing things with photos, movies, music, and more. With iPHOTO, you can create multimedia slideshows or put together a field trip photobook, complete with text and Maps. GarageBand turns the MAC into a full-fledged studio for recording podcasts, songs and other audio. And with iMOVIE students can make their own documentaries and short films and edit them like a pro.

Whatever students can imagine, iLife can help them express it.

iWork makes productivity more fun.

Keynote lets you transform reports and essays into dynamic, animated presentations featuring photos, movies, even music. Use the stunning graphics in Numbers to take charts and spreadsheets to a new level. With Pages, you can start with a beautiful Apple-designed template, add your own text, then add photos from iPhoto to create professional-looking term papers and newsletters. It's all part of iWork, a suite of productivity applications designed for the Mac.

Secondary Research:

A lot of our secondary research was Internet-Based. We looked deeply into Apple's website and tried to extract to certain information/documents which highlighted their rationale into choosing Apple for educational purposes.

From Apples Website:

Even People with Disabilities can exploit Mac to its Best uses. Some of the features on the Mac which help people with certain disabilities:

Vision

People with vision disabilities will benefit from VoiceOver - the world's first gesture-based screen reader, built into every Mac.

Hearing

The Mac makes it easier for the deaf and hard-of-hearing by including support for playing back open- and closed-captioned content.

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Physical and Motor Skills

The Mac has built-in technologies to help people with difficulties using the keyboard, mouse, and trackpad.

Literacy and Learning

People with cognitive and learning disabilities can benefit from a simplified Finder, integrated information reference tools, spelling and grammar checking, and more.

It stated 10 reasons for choosing Mac as an operating system in educational institutions. Some of them were:

A strong, enduring commitment to education.

Technology that advances learning for a new generation

Reliable Products that are easy to support

A consistent focus on innovation

The most compatible and interoperable technology platform

A platform that provides high value.

To summarise the research we have implemented, we give a brief note on the Advantages and Disadvantages of both the systems:

Advantages of a Mac computer:

No virus , malware or spyware can be encountered

Good for Designing , Animation and Media

Good for highly skilled work such as editing

Latest software and features

Inbuilt key features such as the networking , wireless connection

Inbuilt voice recorder and camera

Disadvantages to a Mac computer:

Maintenance costs incurred can be quite high

Too expensive and hence not used in schools

Online support available is not good

Cannot be upgraded/customized

Advantages to a windows computer:

All genuine Windows software are automatically updated as new additions, features and programs are launched into the market

The windows team provides regular support for all users

they have three different types of maintenance: perfective , preventive and adaptive .

Disadvantages to a Windows computer:

Windows does not have the latest applications as it is an old operating systems comparatively to the Macintosh Operating Systems

Vulnerable to malicious adware , software , viruses as the majority of the people use the windows

There are counterfeit and copied software that you can get instead of the genuine windows operating systems which could lead to loss of data , hacking of personal information , identity theft

Appendix 1: Swot analysis

Macintosh Computers

Strengths

Weaknesses

New applications that are easy to use and very creative for students

People are nowadays concerned about the energy usage of a device; the Mac has a energy star rating for energy efficiency which can also help save energy.

It can operate both the Macintosh Operating Systems as well as the Windows Operating Systems through it s parallel s desktop system

Innovative learning services built in to help students blog, chat and podcast

Good for Personal Use

Good for people with certain disabilities such as hearing or learning or even impaired vision

The maintenance costs incurred can be quite high

Not used in schools because they are too expensive

It is relatively new in comparison to the Windows Operating Systems and hence people are not comfortable using it

It has still to gain the reputation brand image and recognition from both potential customers and users

Not so user friendly as the Windows Operating Systems

People are hesitant to buy a new product in the market and it has yet to offer more promotional activities that not only make consumers persuaded to buy but also make them aware that the product exists in the market and its key features and USP.

Opportunities

Threats

They offer many schemes, promotional offers and incentives for students in Schools.

A platform that provides high value for its users

A strong enduring commitment to education

They should promote it via schools and educational purposes and that should be there new approach

It is very expensive to purchase and hence most people cannot afford to buy it

It has high competition from the Windows Operating Systems that is well known in the market

Niche market

People are buying it through experimentation , reference or word of mouth

Windows Operating Systems

Strengths

Weaknesses

All Genuine Windows Software are automatically updated after certain intervals of time, such as new features , applications, programs

They provide three different types of maintenance to all there subscribed users. Preventive Perfective and adaptive which makes it easier to locate and fix a particular problem

Microsoft is efficient in all it s services including maintenance , repair and replacement of damaged parts or addition of new parts (software and hardware)

User friendly and most users including school children are comfortable using it due to the fact that it is an old operating system and there have been ongoing developments and improvements by the brand itself on various fields and factors

Easy to use , cheap and easy access and easily available

Trusted brand name that has gained recognition over the years and has gained a brand image and reputation that sets it as unique from the rest of the operating systems

It is an old operating system and hence does not have the latest technology and provisions that the Mac Operating System provides

Due to the number of users and the system itself it is highly vulnerable and prone to malicious viruses , spyware and adware which could result in loss of data , important information , personal information , There are counterfeit and copied versions available for users to download and gain access illegally.

Opportunities

Threats

They have room for improvement as well as expansion both internally and externally

It s a well known brand that is advertised both above the line and below the line promotion

If you do not have the original software and systems that are copyright as well as trademarked you are under threat from data loss , computer shut down and system malfunction.

Illegal software that is sold over the internet or through other sources can impact the sales of Microsoft.

Analysis

This presentation might seem biased and clinging towards the Mac operating system as a better system but all our evaluations derive from the data we collected. Luckily, all three members of our group were familiar with both the operating systems and therefore there was no chance of any personal bias. Out of the 10 people questioned, the majority 8 wanted the British School to invest in Apple computers for the computer labs. 50% of the interviewees were comfortable using the Windows system while the other 50% were better on a Mac. Reasons for this varied from “ windows being extremely user friendly” to simply “ Macs are just way more ‘ funner’ compared to windows”. Therefore, a tie in this particular question, 7 out of 10 thought the school computers are not up to the mark. This means no matter if the school decided to go with Apple or continue with Windows, they have to make a change in order to live up to its students expectations. There was unlimited secondary research to go through, with a lot of Windows-haters and a lot more Mac-haters. Majority of the Mac haters were turned off by the high prices charged by apple. Out of all the reasons, it was extremely hard to choose the ones that could be used appropriately to help the school decide. And what the British School is written in the “ Recommendation” below.

Conclusion:

While Mac's may not be cost friendly they tend to provide a number of features which are likely to enhance the school's image and the students work. Windows on the other hand is a much more comfortable system to use and has is cost-effective. Choosing 1 particular system is a very tough choice. Both have Equal amounts of advantages and disadvantages to the school and the student body. However we picked an alternate solution towards such a problem in the recommendation below

Recommendation

Looking at all the data available and brainstorming within the group, we have concluded that the school does not need to replace all its computers as they have recently been upgraded with better hp monitors and CPUs. However, the school could invest in 4-5 iMac's which could be set up on one side of either of the 2 labs or could have 2 in each lab. By this, the school won't have to buy all new computers or get rid of all the existing ones. The ones being replaced could be used elsewhere in the school, sold or recycled. By buying Macs, the school will make it easy for Mac users who might even be able to work up to their whole potential as they would be more comfortable on their preferred system. By keeping the existing computers, current window users will not have to fear on working on a completely different system which they are not knowledgeable about. By doing the above, the British School will have the two most popular and used software's running simultaneously together, making life much easier for its students

plus also giving the school one of the best computer labs compared to any school in Delhi.