#TechLiteracy

The Tech Literacy Challenge
Building a culture of tech literacy for the nation
The tech literacy paradox

Technology evolves and we continue to be dazzled by its pace and possibility. Everything connects. Communications underpin every aspect of modern life. But even though young people grow up surrounded by technology, many of them don’t understand the basic concepts of how it works – which will leave them unable to fully participate in society. This is the tech literacy paradox.

71% of children aged 5-15 now have access to a tablet computer at home (Ofcom, 2014)

but only 4% of 15 year-olds want careers in engineering and computing (OECD, 2012)

“We need our young people to see technology and related applied sciences as a future that they can help create. If you have the right skills, this is a time of opportunity. We have to make sure we equip everyone in the UK for the digital revolution. Not just a fortunate few.”

Maggie Philbin
Co-founder and CEO of TeenTech
A culture of tech literacy

We want to build a culture of tech literacy for the nation.

We want to inspire young people to move from consuming technology to embracing the role it can play in their lives; to be confident with ‘computational thinking’, and aware of how technology and data are the foundations of today’s society. If we can achieve this it will benefit both young people and our economy.

WHY BT?

BT is the nation’s biggest tech company. BT networks and technology are at the heart of the UK’s infrastructure and our purpose is to use the power of our communications to make a better world.

We believe in creating possibilities, but that potential can’t be fulfilled unless young people can understand, embrace and get the best from technology.
WHY NOW?

This is a breakthrough year for our education system. For the first time, computing is on the curriculum in primary schools in England.

That means that primary school teachers are expected to teach basic coding and computational thinking. But research shows that the majority of teachers don’t feel confident in this. We think we can play a role supporting them.

Our role in building the new culture

We’ve been making the case to put computing onto the curriculum for some years. With the Chartered Institute for IT, we’ve supported the design and delivery of Barefoot Computing – the government’s programme to train primary school teachers. We’ve also played a central part in developing the teaching resources now being used nationwide. And our people have volunteered their time to deliver many of the training sessions for teachers.

Through our innovation programme – Ingenious – we run initiatives like the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition in Ireland and our IT ambassadors programme. So we’re already supporting young people, and we are confident we can make a big contribution to promoting tech literacy.
The tech literacy programme

We have a nationwide footprint, with people working across the country, and a connection into millions of homes. These unique qualities will help deliver the tech literacy programme over the coming years. It will have three pillars:

**Inspiring kids**
Children and young people need to get excited by tech concepts – so we’ll create a schools outreach programme to help that happen.

“Digital skills are now necessary life skills”
(UK Select Committee on Digital Skills, 2015)

**Enabling teachers**
Teachers play a fundamental role in inspiring children to get involved – so we’ll help them be confident in doing that.

At its launch, 60% of teachers were not confident in delivering the new computing curriculum (YouGov, 2014)

**Equipping schools**
UK schools which don’t have the right access to tech can’t get started – so we’ll work with them to understand and remove any barriers.

2/3 state primary schools say WiFi provision is a major problem (BESA, 2014)
First steps

Our aim is nothing less than a step change in attitudes to technology. This is the start of a journey so we don’t know all the answers, but we do know the first steps. We need to:

• Inspire kids. We want to understand how young people, parents and teachers really think, feel and act about tech concepts today. So we’re commissioning nationwide research which will help design a programme that meets real needs.

• Support teachers better. The government-funded programme to train teachers is planned to finish at the end of March. So we’re picking up the baton to take workshops into another 1,000 schools and reach another 6,000 primary school teachers this academic year.

• Equip UK schools to champion tech literacy. We’re mapping their current levels of connectivity to understand the barriers and challenges they face.
BT support to continue Barefoot Computing into the summer term will reach

Another 1,000 Schools | Another 6,000 Teachers

Long-term ambition

This is a long-term commitment. We expect that it will take a whole school generation. As our first goal, we want to reach five million children by 2020.

One organisation, however committed, can’t do this alone. Lots of other groups are working on different aspects of this challenge – including schools, colleges, the government, not-for-profit organisations, campaigning groups and social networks. We already work with many of them, and we look forward to others joining us.

“Building a culture of tech literacy means helping children grow up confident with the fundamentals of technology and its impact in shaping society.

Just as young people have to be able to read and write to be prepared for life, they need to be literate in technology too. It’s an opportunity for the UK: empowering young people, developing our future workforce and safeguarding the nation’s economic success.”

Gavin Patterson
CEO, BT Group Plc