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ASSET TRACKING SOFTWARE

FOR THE

EDUCATION SECTOR

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Universities and K12s across America are facing increased overheads relating to equipment management and maintenance.

Picking the right asset tracking software is crucial to lower costs and streamline educational processes.

"Build a technology plan around teachers' needs, and they will come."

- Ken Eastwood
Computerworld Smithsonian laureate.

Abstract
Primary and secondary education in North America has undergone huge changes over the last few decades. The role of teachers has come to be seen as central in defining success, testing is becoming more rigorous, and enrollment has steadily been going up. In 2015, around 50.1 million students in America were part of a K-12 (shorthand for Kindergarten through to the twelfth grade). However, school districts are now facing increasing costs from many different avenues. One of these is managing the sheer amount and variety of educational and recreational assets schools have to keep track of today.
So, how do you decide which asset tracking software is the best fit for your educational institution? A well-informed decision will naturally follow the general trends defining the education sector today. Below, we'll examine some of the biggest changes that have revolutionized education in recent years, and see the part that has to play in picking the right education-specific asset tracking software

Technology has changed the way we teach. With this, the sheer amount and cost of technological equipment that must be tracked fastidiously by schools is rising each year.
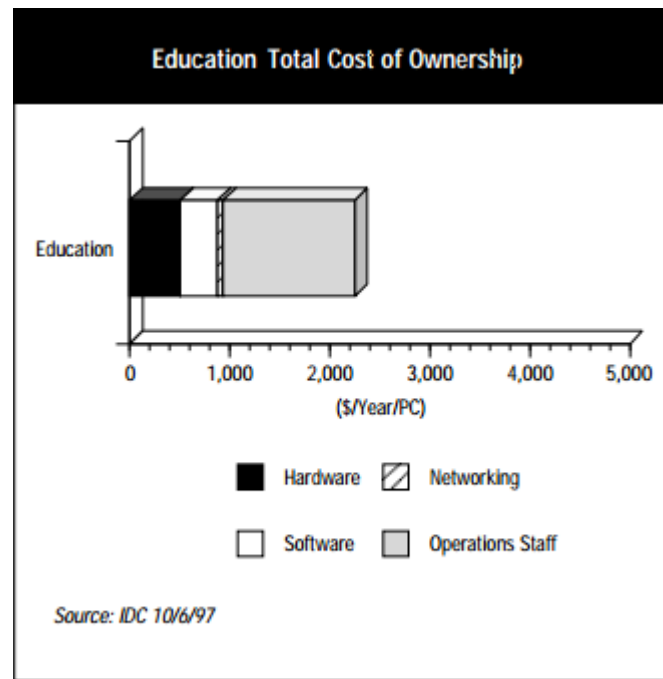
The tech revolution has made school equipment increasingly expensive

Technology has revolutionized the way we teach our students. We've gone from a handful of clunky technology in isolated computer labs to gadgets now dominating every stage of the education process. Dusty chalkboards have been replaced with interactive whiteboards in many an American school, and the presence of computers in regular classes has come to be expected.

It was only in the mid-70s that computers began to be used in schools for the first time. The student-to-technology ratio steadily increased over the next few decades. Today, it is virtually impossible to find schools in America that don't have decent provisions for technology. One of the biggest changes this has brought about is that schools have increasingly valuable equipment that they need to have a robust asset tracking system to look after. Last year, around $12,605 was spent on the average K-12 student. A large part of this was because of all the new interactive teaching tools, sophisticated laboratory items and even tech-informed sports equipment. Special educational discounts aside, recent educational initiatives across some schools such as 1:1 computing (meaning, a laptop for every student) has further inflated expected costs. It's not just hardware costs that schools have to bear, but software and technical staff costs too .

Read more: [How to pick the right asset tracking software for your K12](#)

Equipment management software can help educational institutions manage all their tech efficiently.

Education Total Cost of Ownership

Education

0   1,000   2,000   3,000   4,000   5,000
($/Year/PC)

■ Hardware   ▨ Networking
□ Software   ▨ Operations Staff

Source: IDC 10/6/97

The Total Cost of Ownership of Technical Operations in Schools
Source

Managing these massive overheads is easy with an agile *asset tracking software*. For example, not only can you manage individual assets such as microscopes for your science department, but you can also efficiently keep track of chemicals and other inventory needed for a generously-stocked lab. QR Code and Barcode tracking will ensure nothing gets lost along the way, and up-to-date check-ins and check-outs will improve the accuracy of asset utilization data. All of this can help control expenses, and deter theft and loss of productivity.

The fact that schools combine different disciplines, departments and extra-curriculars means that asset tracking software has to be that much more impressive if it is to meet the needs of a K12 - both as a whole and as a collection of separate spheres.

Schools are becoming increasingly multi-functional. Centralized asset tracking is a must for managing equipment across departments, disciplines, and extra-curricular spheres.

K12s aren't just collections of classrooms, but an expansive networks of labs, libraries, sports halls, and arts facilities. Not just this, but schools are increasingly branching out into new areas that weren't being explored before. Design, coding, and robotics are beginning to play a part in schools in a big way, and with the increased diversity in subject matter comes a great many more assets that need to be tracked, managed, and logged for good measure.

What's needed in education-based asset tracking is a system that both delineates these spheres, but at the same time is sophisticated enough to plan for them as a whole. Equipment management software can help demarcate these departments with ease. Insightful reports enable better planning and procurement of devices across departments. Not just this, but you can also boost transparency and accountability, something that is particularly important for an educational institution. Keeping track of assets gifted by donors or charities is now extremely easy, ensuring increased grants and non-profit funds in the future.

Repairs on school equipment and asset downtimes as a result of this can result in uneven educational flows. Fixing this will empower teachers to help students learn a lot more effectively.

Maintenance and equipment downtimes interrupt educational flows

Educational equipment that isn't serviced regularly can become less productive as time goes on. Over-maintenance is also problematic; it is expensive, time-consuming, and can actually contribute to asset wear-and-tear in some cases. This is why schools need to have an efficient system of managing maintenance schedules.

A study found that schools using Macs went through an average of 12.2 downtime incidents each year, with PC platforms performing even worse. Maintenance is therefore crucial for the smooth running of a business. This is particularly important in an educational context because failing computers or malfunctioning lab equipment can create costly blockages in the teaching process.

Students just don't have the luxury of taking some downtime along with their learning aides. Lost instructional time such as this has not been valued properly as of yet, and yet it is understood how difficult and disruptive it is for teachers to have to improvise in the face of a computer or projector malfunctioning.

Simple things like maintenance alerts and clean starts each semester can enable K12s to manage assets in ways that prioritize student learning above all.

A good way to ensure smooth transitions between asset uptimes and downtimes is to have a system that alerts you to when, say, all the computers in a lab are scheduled to be serviced. The crew can ensure this is done off school timings, so no students are inconvenienced and their education can go on as planned.

Rundown equipment can also be marked with appropriate flags to ensure a clean start every semester. Schools normally retain their computers for around [five years](#), but a regular maintenance schedule can help prolong this, meaning less long-term overheads for the institution.

Teachers are the greatest educational resource available. To help them streamline their workflows and focus on teaching rather than managerial tasks will make for much more well-rounded students.

"At least 20 percent of teachers' work time should be given to professional study and collaborative work....The National Education Association...recommends that 50 percent of teachers' time be given to professional development."

- North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, from "Critical Issue: Finding Time for Professional Development," Pathways to School Improvement, 1997.

With teachers' administrative and managerial tasks increasing each year, what is needed is an asset management software that takes all the work out of equipment tracking and analytics.

Teachers are often assigned support roles with reference to managing school assets. This time can be better spent elsewhere.

Teachers are the central pillar around which the entire educational establishment organizes itself. Their roles are steadily changing, with more and more responsibilities assigned to them as schools themselves morph into something entirely different. Schools are no longer a place students go to just to learn academic things; they will also try to nourish other skills, such as sports, debates, charitable activity, tech literacy and more. In fact, when technology is first introduced into a school, it is often teachers who are assigned support roles with reference to managing and maintaining it. This can be exceedingly difficult to sustain, and puts undue pressure on a group of individuals who are already fighting a tough battle with reference to their workload. Therefore, a more formal system needs to be internalized by schools, so that the teachers get the break they so desperately need.

Software designed to do exactly this can therefore be a great resource for teachers and students alike. Different groups of people can collaborate on the same system, instantaneously updating others to scheduling conflicts, the need for repairs, and more. This immediacy of accurate data improves workflows across the institution. For example, you can easily pull up utilization data on all sports equipment to give to a supervisor without any effort on your part, and ensure that the equipment stands up to the needs of the students.

Conclusion

The best schools require well-equipped labs, arts programs, and sports facilities. K12s can spend a lot of money replacing stolen technology or poorly-maintained equipment. Administrative costs such as these can be quite high, with the reduction of overheads seen as a priority for all school districts across North America. A great way to reduce these expenses is to invest in cost-cutting asset management software. This ensures fewer lost or stolen assets, a regularly-stocked inventory, and routine maintenance that enhances equipment longevity. Not just this, but a great asset tracking software for schools can improve the quality of education by removing blockages and lowering disruptions in the educational process.

[EZOfficeInventory](#) is being used by a host of K12s all over America. We appreciate the part schools play in creating a better future for all of us, and hope that our educational discount goes some way to demonstrating our belief in the hard work of educators across the country.

You can sign up for a free 14-day trial [here](#).

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