EdTech Audit Checklist and Recommendations

It's estimated that U.S. school districts now spend over

13 BILLION DOLLARS A YEAR

on educational technology.

With such a significant investment being made by schools across the nation, it's imperative that education leaders possess a clear understanding of how their EdTech purchases (e.g. devices, software licenses, apps, etc.) are being used in their classrooms and can articulate in quantitative terms the impact their investments are having in relation to engagement and student outcomes.

Conducting an internal EdTech audit enables administrative leaders to attain a bird's-eye view of their district's technology usage and identify successes, challenges, vulnerabilities, and cost savings opportunities.

At CatchOn, we have the opportunity to work with education technology leaders and administrators across the nation. We've put together many of the insights and recommendations they've shared with us to create this comprehensive educational technology audit checklist. We hope you find it informative and helpful.

If you think we are missing a key step, please let us know! Technology is always growing and evolving, so we want this checklist to accurately reflect the needs of today's school districts and be a valuable resource for the education community. You can email us your suggestions and recommendations at *solutions@catchon.com*.

Let's get started!

First Stage: Pre-Audit

1) It Takes a Village

a. Conducting an audit is a team effort. Sharing the work reduces the chance for audit exhaustion and fatigue. Plus, more educational leaders at the table means more perspectives, which can shed light on some previously unidentified challenges and/or needs.

b. It's critical that your auditing team includes representatives from various departments. Some tough choices may have to be made once the audit is complete. By including everyone in the process at the beginning, rather than the end, you will not only gain helpful insights you may have otherwise missed, you are ensuring alignment with the final outcomes.

c. Organization is key to ensuring your audit is successful. Make sure to spell out the information you are seeking to collect on the front-end to ensure consistency—app name, what schools and/or buildings are using it, the cost, the number of licenses, the expiration date, who the lead contact person is, etc. Make sure this information is collected and stored in a location that is accessible to all team members.

2) Why Are We Doing This?

a. Before you begin, make sure everyone is on the same page about the audit by defining its purpose and the objectives you are seeking to accomplish. This will help ensure your audit stays on track and eliminate discord down the road.

b. Create a timeline for completing the project and delegate roles/assignments to team members at the outset. Schedule regular meetings to assess the progress of the audit and address any concerns or issues.

Second Stage: Audit

3) Intention Versus Reality

a. One critical aspect you should examine during your audit is how your purchased apps and online tools are being used. For example, is the purchased Algebra app being utilized? How is it being integrated across classes? Are your students using the app both at home and at school? Each district is different but strive to look a level or two deeper when auditing app usage.

b. There is no substitute for establishing an open line of communication. Engaging your building administrators and educators in the auditing process enables leaders to vocalize the intention behind deploying the investment and allows teachers to shed light on how the investment is actually being used after deployment.

4) Privacy Is Key

a. What you don't know about your educational software and devices can hurt you. Some apps may be capturing your valuable student data, so awareness is key. Consider devoting one portion of your audit to hunting down these unknowns.

5) Do Your Dollars Make Sense?

a. For most school districts, the budget is a precious and hotly contested matter that can be eased with data from the audit. During your audit, include a benchmark to justify ROI in relation to your application investments. A simple formula could be active users/app cost. How you crunch the numbers should be dictated by your objectives in the Pre-Audit as ROI could be a different measure for each district.

Third Stage: Post-Audit

6) Finding That Diamond in the Rough

a. Often, EdTech audits can lead to the discovery of new apps that have the potential to produce tremendous cost-savings or help boost learning. For example, unbeknownst to you, your teachers may prefer using a low-cost or even free app instead of the district-purchased online tool. Making the switch could free up your budget to invest in other initiatives and resources. Or you might find that one high-performing classroom is using an app you didn't even know existed.

7) Data Analysis to the Rescue

a. You've collected all the data, now it's time to formulate takeaways. Your objectives and diverse perspectives across your team will help you identify what's working, what's not, and what needs improvement.

8) Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!

a. Before eliminating a resource or making the jump to a new app or tool, make sure you bring key members of your instructional team and teaching staff into the conversation. Explore possible reasons for low usage of a tool, e.g. lack of training, access or sign-in issues, etc. before making any decisions. Review renewal dates and determine if any intervention strategies are needed. If so, define those strategies and set benchmarks to gauge the impact your efforts are having on usage.

b. Share your findings and explain why you are making the change. If you are eliminating a tool, determine if there's a need to replace that resource with something else that educators find more effective.

9) Implementing Your Audit Findings

a. Now it's time to put your findings into action. Set 3-5 concrete educational technology improvement goals for your district, along with a reasonable timeline to achieve them. Create a shareable report that communicates your action plan to stakeholders.

That's it! Following these nine steps will help ensure your audit runs smoothly.

To make the process easier and more efficient, consider using a data analytics tool to quickly and accurately measure and assess your data's technology usage, enabling you to skip the manual research and calculations and just see results.

CatchOn, a comprehensive data analytics tool, can do a lot of the heavy lifting and data research required for your technology audit. CatchOn's real-time usage data enables district leaders to quickly identify and track what apps their students are using on their school devices, both inside and outside the classroom. The solution's customizable dashboards enable individual team members to filter out the data that's not relevant to them, simplifying and streamlining the data review process.

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ABOUT CATCHON

CatchOn is an expansive data analytics tool that compiles real-time data on every school device, enabling districts to make data-informed decisions about the apps and online tools their educators and students are using, both at school and at home. In 2018, CatchOn joined forces with ENA, a leading provider of comprehensive technology solutions to education institutions and libraries. Collectively, CatchOn and ENA leverage their respective resources and expertise to deliver critical services and solutions that help school districts produce positive outcomes in the communities they serve.

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