

Education & Family

# School wi-fi 'not fit for 21st Century learning'

By Judith Burns  
BBC News education reporter

🕒 19 February 2013

f 📧 🐦 ✉️ Share

**Pupils in England are at risk of missing out because their schools do not have good enough wi-fi, figures suggest.**

Schools need fully accessible wi-fi if they are to embrace digital learning in all subjects, argues Valerie Thompson of the E-Learning Foundation.

But only a quarter of schools achieve this, suggests the British Educational Suppliers Association (Besa).

(...)

The government has already taken steps to update the teaching of computing in English schools, scrapping the old IT curriculum and including computer science as a core subject at secondary level.

Education Secretary Michael Gove has said he wants children to learn basic computer code in primary school and to be able to create basic animations and simple websites by the age of 11.

But Sean Lerner, of wi-fi provider Xirrus, says that coding is only part of what could be done once "robust wi-fi networks" allow schools to detach digital technology from the IT suite.

(...)

"Wireless should be a given," he says, and schools and universities should provide the same access to it as they would water or electricity, using online filtering to block pornographic and other undesirable sites.

(...)

It's expensive, at about £15,000 to connect a primary school with 500 pupils and up to £50,000 for a large comprehensive.

But Mr Lerner argues that it is vital that schools provide their pupils with good wireless internet: "If we don't take a long-term view and provide our kids with the right sort of online access there will be problems. There is a government responsibility here."

(...)



“

**If we don't take a long-term view and provide our kids with the right sort of online access there will be problems**

Sean Lerner, Xirrus