



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

Ministry of Education Computer Census 2001

Final Report

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PREPARED BY:

Jacquie Kerlake

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Kevin Wilson
Senior Manager
Resourcing Division

INTRODUCTION

All around the world e-government is revolutionising how governments work and the quality of what they can deliver to people. The Internet has changed the way organisations, communities and individuals operate.

Paul Swain, Minister of Information Technology, in an address at an e-commerce summit stated:

At a third of Gross Domestic Product, government activity is a huge part of the economy. It is therefore essential that government walk the talk. Government will lead by example through e-government... In this context the government is committed to using on-line technologies to deliver better quality, cheaper and faster services to its citizens...

Hon Paul Swain, Minister of Information Technology,
Keynote address at e-commerce summit,
Auckland, November 2000.

To provide a strategy for government agencies Trevor Mallard, as the Minister of State Services (April, 2000), launched New Zealand's e-government Programme. The project's vision is that:

By 2004, the Internet will be the dominant means of enabling ready access to government information, services and processes.

New Zealand e-government Programme – Strategy 26 April 2001, page 1

Under the e-government strategy, the New Zealand Government aims to create a public sector that is:

Structured, resourced and managed to perform in a manner which meets the needs of New Zealanders in the information age and which increasingly delivers information and services using online capabilities.

New Zealand e-government Programme – Strategy 26 April 2001, page 6

In line with the e-government strategy, the Ministry of Education is moving towards using the Internet more, thus becoming more responsive in the way it communicates with the education sector. It is predicted that this will reduce the compliance burden currently placed on schools. It will, also, improve the Ministry's responsiveness to the changing rolls and profiles of schools to deliver funding more accurately and efficiently.

Schools' ability to access and competently use the Internet for data transactions is essential to the e-government strategy. ICT in teaching and learning, and the Monitoring Information and Resourcing (MIR) systems initiative are two initiatives that are part of the Ministry of Education's response to the e-government strategy.

THE CENSUS

Before increasing communication via the Internet, the Ministry of Education needs to find out how prepared the school sector is for such means of communication, and what computer technology schools currently have. For this reason the Ministry of Education has undertaken a census of schools to establish details and specifications of the computers used for administrative purposes.

The Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this census is to ascertain how well prepared the school sector is for communication with the Ministry of Education via the Internet, and to determine the specifications of the 'best'¹ computer that schools use for administrative purposes.

The objectives are:-

- 1) To establish the accessibility and capability of computers schools use for administrative purposes;
- 2) To obtain information on the Internet capabilities of the computers used for administrative purposes within schools;
- 3) To establish the Student Management System used by schools; and,
- 4) To determine whether schools have an e-mail address that administrative information can be sent and who can access e-mails sent to this address.

Methodology

Schools were sent a Computer Census form with the July 1 Annual Return² of Students on the School Roll (both state and private). A reminder letter was sent out later in July to schools which had not returned forms.

Response Rates

Of the 2,722 forms sent to schools with the July 1 Annual Return, 2,619 were returned completed yielding a response rate of 96 percent.

RESULTS

The results of this census are presented in four sections. Section 1 details the responses relating to the number and types of computers schools used for administrative purposes, and where they are located. Respondents were asked to answer the questions in relation to computers that are used by staff for administrative purposes (such as budgeting, providing student roll data for 1 March and 1 July roll returns). This computer could be located in the school office or in a classroom. Section 2 then presents data on the Internet capabilities of school administrative computers. Section 3 details information relating to the Student Management System used by schools. Section 4 presents information on whether schools have an e-mail address to which administrative information can be sent and who can access that e-mail address.

Number and Types of Computers Schools Use for Administrative Purposes

The majority of secondary (98%) and composite (78%) schools and over half of primary schools (58%) indicated they have more than one computer that is used for administrative purposes. The proportion of primary schools using one computer for administrative purposes was quite high (38%). However this is not surprising as there is a large number of small primary schools. Table 1 has further details.

¹ When asked a series of questions on the computer used for administrative purposes, schools who had more than one such computer were asked to consider their 'best' computer when responding to the questions.

² The July 1 Annual Return of Students on the School Roll is a census of educational institutions carried out by the Data Management Unit of the Ministry of Education during July each year. The census provides a snapshot of education in New Zealand.

Table 1: *The number of computers schools use for administrative purposes, by school sector*

Number of computers used for administrative purposes	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
None	32	1.5	4	3.4	2	0.6
One	828	38.0	19	16.1	3	0.9
More than one	1,263	57.9	92	78.0	313	97.8
At least one*	58	2.7	3	2.5	2	0.6
Total	2,181	100.0	118	100.0	320	100.0

* These respondents did not indicate how many computers they had, however it was clear from their subsequent responses that they had at least one.

Schools that did not have a computer for administrative purposes (N = 38) were asked if there were any plans to get a computer for administrative purposes in the next six months. Few were planning to do so. Table 2 provides details.

Table 2: *Whether schools that do not have a computer for administrative purposes plan to get a one in the next six months, by school sector*

Does your school plan to get a computer for administrative purposes in the next six months?	School sector		
	Primary	Composite	Secondary
	Number	Number	Number
Yes	8	1	-
No	23	3	2
Missing data	1	-	-
Total	32	4	2

Respondents who indicated the school had a computer used for administrative purposes (N = 2,581) were then asked a series of questions about this computer or, in the case of schools having more than one, the computer they considered to be the best.

When asked where this computer was located, the majority of schools replied that it was located in the school's office, administration office, bursar's office or principal's secretary's office. See Table 3 for further details.

Table 3: Location of only or 'best' computer used for administrative purposes, by school sector

Location of computer	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
In the school/ administration/bursar's/ principal's secretary's office	1,892	88.0	100	87.7	263	82.7
In the principal's/DP's/AP's office	165	7.7	8	7.0	25	7.9
In the classroom or computer laboratory	46	2.1	4	3.5	3	0.9
Data management or records area	-	-	-	-	5	1.6
Laptop	8	0.4	-	-	1	0.3
Staffroom	4	0.2	-	-	2	0.6
Other*	20	0.9	2	1.8	18	5.7
Missing data	14	0.7	-	-	1	0.3
Total	2,149	100.0	114	100.0	318	100.0

* The 'other' category included the Library and the Server Room.

When respondents were asked what type of computer it was, the large majority of respondents indicated that it was a PC/IBM compatible computer. Primary schools were more likely than composite or secondary schools to indicate they had an Apple Macintosh computer. See Table 4 for further details.

Table 4: Type of computer, by school sector

Type of computer	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Apple Macintosh (including laptops)	270	12.6	8	7.0	20	6.3
PC or IBM compatible (including laptops)	1,777	82.7	105	92.1	296	93.1
Other*	1	0.1	-	-	-	-
Missing data	101	4.7	1	0.9	2	0.6
Total	2,149	100.0	114	100.0	318	100.0

* The 'other' category was an Acorn 3020 computer.

Respondents were asked the age of this computer. This is presented in Table 5. Over half of these computers in each sector were less than two years old. However, there is a difference across the sectors with secondary schools more likely than composite or primary schools to report that their computers were less than two years old (71% of secondary schools, 60% of composite and 52% of primary schools).

Table 5: *Age of computer, by school sector*

Age of computer	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Less than one year old	503	23.4	37	32.5	116	36.5
1 but less than 2 years old	621	28.9	31	27.2	109	34.3
2 but less than 5 years old	846	39.4	42	36.8	85	26.7
5 or more years	145	6.8	4	3.5	4	1.3
Missing data	34	1.6	-	-	4	1.3
Total	2,149	100.0	114	100.0	318	100.0

Almost all respondents indicated that the computer in question had a CD-ROM drive. See Table 6 for further details.

Table 6: *Whether the computer has a CD-ROM drive, by school sector*

Does the computer has a CD-ROM drive?	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	1,954	90.9	106	93.0	282	88.7
No	69	3.2	2	1.8	25	7.9
Missing data	126	5.9	6	5.3	11	3.5
Total	2,149	100.0	114	100.0	318	100.0

The final question in the series of questions around the only or 'best' administrative computer schools had was about its operating system. An operating system is the program that controls the computer. It manages the computer's functions, such as allocating memory, accessing disk drives, and enabling other software to be used. The two main types are Mac OS for Apple Macintosh computers and Windows for PC/IBM compatible machines. As can be seen from Table 7, the administrative computers use a wide variety of operating systems. Approximately half of primary and secondary schools, but slightly fewer (44%) composite schools, indicated that their only or 'best' computer used Windows 98. Windows 95 and Windows 2000 were used by a number of schools.

Table 7: What Operating System the computer has, by school sector

Operating System used	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Mac OS	194	9.0	5	4.4	17	5.3
Windows 3, 3.1, 3.11 (before Windows95)	11	0.5	-	-	-	-
Windows 95	397	18.5	25	21.9	43	13.5
Windows 98	1,127	52.4	50	43.9	162	50.9
Windows 2000	302	14.1	26	22.8	59	18.6
Windows NT	24	1.1	6	5.3	28	8.8
Windows ME	15	0.7	2	1.8	4	1.3
Other*	9	0.4	-	-	-	-
Missing data	70	3.3	-	-	5	1.6
Total	2,149	100.0	114	100.0	318	100.0

* The 'other' category included mainly Risc OS, and combinations of Windows operating systems.

Internet Capabilities of the Computers

This section presents information obtained from a series of questions which looks at Internet capabilities of any of the computers used for administrative purposes. In the case of schools having more than one such computer that could access the Internet, they were asked to respond on the basis of the one considered to be the best for accessing the Internet.

The first question simply asked respondents whether they can access the Internet through this computer. As can be seen from Table 8 almost all respondents indicated they could. It is interesting to note that nine percent of primary school respondents indicated that they could not access the Internet through any of their administrative computers.

Table 8: Whether any of the computers used for administrative purposes can access the Internet, by school sector

Can you access the Internet?	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	1,952	90.8	106	93.0	309	97.2
No	191	8.9	7	6.1	9	2.8
Missing data	6	0.3	1	0.9	-	-
Total	2,149	100.0	114	100.0	318	100.0

Those who could not access the Internet through these computers (N = 207) were asked if there were any plans to get access to the Internet on any of them in the next six months. Most composite and secondary schools and over half of primary schools were planning to do so. Table 9 provides details.

Table 9: *Whether schools that cannot access the Internet through the computer(s) used for administrative purposes plan to get access in the next six months, by school sector*

Does your school have plans to get Internet access?	School sector			
	Primary		Composite*	Secondary*
	Number	%	Number	Number
Yes	108	56.5	6	7
No	75	39.3	1	1
Missing data	8	4.2	-	1
Total	191	100.0	7	9

* Because of the small numbers involved in this sector, percentages have not been included.

Respondents who indicated they can access the Internet through a computer used for administrative purposes (N = 2,367) were then asked a series of questions about Internet access and were asked to respond to these questions in relation to the administrative computer they considered best for accessing the Internet³.

The first of these questions asked schools how they access the Internet. As can be seen from Table 10 schools access the Internet in a number of ways. This varies according to the school sector. For primary schools approximately half of the schools had a dial-up system using a separate phone line that is for Internet access only. Composite schools equally used a variety of methods to access the Internet. Secondary schools were more likely to report using more efficient forms of access with just under half reporting use of a high speed dedicated data connection such as ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network). Approximately one in five secondary schools access the Internet via a ‘satellite connection’.

³ Some questions asked respondents to limit their response to one option when they could have responded correctly to more than one option. Where respondents indicated more than one option this has been incorporated into their answer. Thus the information provided by respondents may not be complete if they followed the instructions and selected one option only.

Table 10: How schools access the Internet from their 'best' computer used for administrative purposes, by school sector

How schools computers access the Internet	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Dial-up using the school's main phone line	408	20.9	22	20.8	25	8.1
Dial-up using a separate phone line, shares with fax	297	15.2	21	19.8	10	3.2
Dial-up using a separate phone line for Internet access only	962	49.3	29	27.4	64	20.7
A high speed dedicated data connection eg ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network)	244	12.5	29	27.4	140	45.3
Satellite connection	31	1.6	5	4.7	57	18.4
Radio Link/ Wireless Link	2	0.1	-	-	12	3.9
ADSL	4	0.2	-	-	1	0.3
Other	-	-	-	-	1	0.3
Total	N = 1,952		N = 106		N = 309	

The next question asked respondents to indicate the Internet Service Provider their school used for this computer. An Internet Service Provider or ISP is the company that provides the user with access to the Internet. Schools indicated a wide variety of Internet providers. These are presented in Table 11.

While the patterns of usage across the sectors were similar in that XTRA followed by Ihug were the most common providers, there were some differences in the proportion of the sector using these providers. The majority (62%) of primary schools used XTRA as their Internet provider. This high usage may in part be due to the School Connection Plan that Telecom promotes. Just over half of composite schools (52%) used XTRA and a further 14 percent used Ihug, while 39 percent of secondary schools used XTRA and a quarter (26%) used Ihug.

Table 11: The Internet Service Providers schools use, by school sector

Internet Service Provider	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Actrix	94	4.8	6	5.7	6	1.9
ClearNet	92	4.7	4	3.8	13	4.2
ICONZ	20	1.0	2	1.9	1	0.3
lhug	146	7.5	15	14.2	80	25.9
NetLink	3	0.2	2	1.9	4	1.3
Paradise	78	4.0	2	1.9	17	5.5
XTRA	1,210	62.0	55	51.9	121	39.2
A free Internet service provider	13	0.7	1	0.9	1	0.3
Inspire Net	16	0.8	-	-	2	0.6
NetAccess	10	0.5	1	0.9	3	1.0
PlaNet	13	0.7	-	-	1	0.3
The Packing Shed	11	0.6	-	-	2	0.6
Voyager	12	0.6	1	0.9	1	0.3
Watchdog	44	2.3	4	3.8	11	3.6
Wave Internet Services	31	1.6	2	1.9	6	1.9
iGRIN	23	1.2	4	3.8	2	0.6
Other	161	8.2	8	7.5	40	12.9
Total	N = 1,952		N = 106		N = 309	

NOTE: Percentages in this table add to more than 100 percent as respondents could select more than one option.

A further question on the Internet capabilities of the computer in question concerned the browser. A browser is a computer program users open to gain access to the Internet. There are two main browsers – Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator – of which there are a number of versions. As can be seen from Table 12 the majority of schools in each sector indicated they used Internet Explorer 5.x (63% of primary, 73% of composite and 79% of secondary schools).

Table 12: *The browser schools use to access the Internet, by school sector*

Browser used	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Internet Explorer 3.x	73	3.7	5	4.7	-	-
Internet Explorer 4.x	274	14.0	7	6.6	26	8.4
Internet Explorer 5.x	1,234	63.2	77	72.6	245	79.3
Internet Explorer 6.x	65	3.3	6	5.7	15	4.9
Netscape Navigator 3.x	56	2.9	3	2.8	2	0.6
Netscape Navigator 4.x	145	7.4	3	2.8	21	6.8
Netscape Navigator 6.x	17	0.9	1	0.9	8	2.6
Other	28	1.4	3	2.8	3	1.0
Missing data	35	1.8	-	-	4	1.3
Total	N = 1,952		N = 106		N = 309	

NOTE: Percentages in this table add to more than 100 percent for the secondary schools sector as respondents could select more than one option.

Internet Speed Test

To establish the connection speed of the computer in question respondents were asked to undertake an Internet Speed Test by following a set of instructions. Some respondents had difficulty in completing this task. Because the ‘speed test’ site chosen was removed approximately two weeks after the census forms were received by schools, it is likely that some respondents tried to access the site after it had been removed.

An added complication was that the information provided by the Internet Speed Test site was not always clear to those completing the test. This is apparent from the answers to the question respondents provided following the speed test particularly the responses to the connection time in excess of 100 Kbps. Consequently, caution needs to be taken when interpreting the information provided in this section.

As an initial question respondents were asked if they could open the page <http://es54074.easystreet.com/speedtest/> and if so, the connection speed displayed. The majority of respondents were able to open the page (see Table 13 for further details).

Table 13: Accessing the Internet Speed Test page, by school sector

Accessing the Internet Speed Test	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Able to open the page and speed specified	1,471	75.4	75	70.8	256	82.8
Able to open the page but it was blank where the speed value should have been	36	1.8	2	1.9	3	1.0
Unable to open the page	360	18.4	24	22.6	44	14.2
Missing data	85	4.4	5	4.7	6	1.9
Total	1,952	100.0	106	100.0	309	100.0

NOTE: Caution needs to be taken when interpreting information provided in this table as some respondents had difficulty in completing this task. Because the 'speed test' site chosen was removed approximately two weeks after the census forms were received by schools, it is likely that some respondents tried to access the site after it had been removed.

Those who could open the page (N = 1,802) were asked to record the connection speed as displayed in Kbps (Kilo bits per second). The results are presented in Table 14. In general, primary schools recorded slower speeds than composite schools who, in turn, recorded slower speeds than secondary schools.

Table 14: The connection speed recorded on the Internet Speed Test, by school sector

Connection speed recorded on the Internet Speed Test	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 – 14.4 Kbps	118	8.0	3	4.0	16	6.3
14.41 – 33.6 Kbps	667	45.3	27	36.0	48	18.8
33.61 – 56.0 Kbps	436	29.6	23	30.7	29	11.3
56.01 – 100.0 Kbps	37	2.5	3	4.0	35	13.7
Greater than 100 Kbps	213	14.5	19	25.3	128	50.0
Total	1,471	100.0	75	100.0	256	100.0

NOTE: Caution needs to be taken when interpreting information provided in this table as the information provided by the Internet Speed Test was not always clear to those completing the test.

Key information in interpreting the results of the connection speed test is the time of the day they undertook the Internet Speed Test and whether it was carried out during the week or over the weekend. As can be seen from Tables 15 and 16 the large majority of tests were undertaken between 8am and 3.59pm, and were on a week day (Monday to Friday). These are times when most communications would be expected from schools.

Table 15: *The time of day the Internet Speed Test was undertaken, by school sector*

Time of day the Internet Speed Test was undertaken	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
8.00am – 11.59am	623	42.4	30	40.0	112	43.8
12.00pm – 3.59pm	651	44.3	35	46.7	100	39.1
4.00pm – 5.59pm	145	9.9	9	12.0	36	14.1
6.00pm – 7.59am	44	3.0	1	1.3	6	2.3
Missing data	8	0.5	-	-	2	0.8
Total	1,471	100.0	75	100.0	256	100.0

Table 16: *Whether the Internet Speed Test was performed on a week day or at the weekend, by school sector*

Internet Speed Test was undertaken on ...	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
...a week day (Monday to Friday)	1,444	98.2	70	93.3	249	97.3
...the weekend	23	1.6	4	5.3	5	2.0
Missing data	4	0.3	1	1.3	2	0.8
Total	1,471	100.0	75	100.0	256	100.0

Student Management Systems Used in Schools

Schools were asked if they had a Student Management System that was used for student roll data returns installed on any of the computers used for administrative purposes – the majority of respondents indicated that this was the case. However, it is of note that approximately a third of primary schools and a quarter of composite schools do not have a Student Management System that they use for student roll data returns installed on any computers used for administrative purposes. See Table 17 for further details.

Table 17: *Whether schools have a Student Management System that is used for student roll data returns installed on any computers used for administrative purposes, by school sector*

Do you have a Student Management System that you use for student roll data returns?	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	1,477	68.7	82	71.9	311	97.8
No	654	30.4	29	25.4	7	2.2
Missing data	18	0.8	3	2.6	-	-
Total	2,149	100.0	114	100.0	318	100.0

The respondents who indicated they had a Student Management System installed (N = 1,870) were asked to indicate the name of that system. Results are presented in Table 18. The majority of schools in each sector reported that they are using Musac for student roll data returns.

Table 18: *The Student Management System used for student roll data returns, by school sector*

Student Management System used for student roll data returns	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Flexi-School	1	0.1	-	-	4	1.3
IES	7	0.5	3	3.7	30	9.6
Kidbase	83	5.6	2	2.4	2	0.6
Kowhai Schoolmaster Series	76	5.1	4	4.9	-	-
Musac	1,117	75.6	64	78.0	245	78.8
QuickFlex	-	-	-	-	1	0.3
School Database (Karant)	40	2.7	1	1.2	-	-
3D Achieve	89	6.0	4	4.9	-	-
School's own system	23	1.6	1	1.2	9	2.9
Other	21	1.4	2	2.4	19	6.1
Total	1,477	100.0	82	100.0	311	100.0

Administrative E-mail Addresses

Almost all schools in each sector indicated that they have an e-mail address that administrative information from the Ministry can be sent. See Table 19 for further details.

Table 19: *Whether schools have an e-mail address that administrative information from the Ministry of Education could be sent to, by school sector*

Does your school have an administrative e-mail address?	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	2,099	96.2	110	93.2	318	99.4
No	72	3.3	8	6.8	2	0.6
Missing data	10	0.5	-	-	-	-
Total	2,181	100.0	118	100.0	320	100.0

The few schools that did not have an e-mail address for this purpose (N = 82) were asked if there were any plans to get one in the next six months. The majority of the schools were planning to do so. Table 20 provides details.

Table 20: *Whether schools who do not have an e-mail address that administrative information from the Ministry of Education can be sent intend to get one in the next six months, by school sector*

Does your school intend to get an administrative e-mail address?	School sector		
	Primary	Composite	Secondary
	Number	Number	Number
Yes	44	5	1
No	23	2	1
Missing data	5	1	-
Total	72	8	2

Respondents were asked who could access the e-mail address that administrative information from the Ministry could be sent. The details are presented in Table 21. In over half of composite and secondary schools and nearly three-quarters of primary schools, the school secretary can open the emails. It is interesting to note that whilst nearly 80 percent of principals in primary schools access e-mails sent to this address, the proportion drops to 64 percent of principals in composite schools, and down to 47 percent of principals in secondary schools. In approximately a quarter of schools in each sector a number of 'other' people can access this address including all (other) staff, the principal's secretary, teachers and students.

Table 21: *Who can open the e-mail address that administrative information from the Ministry of Education can be sent, by school sector*

Who can open e-mails sent to the administrative e-mail address?	School sector					
	Primary		Composite		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Principal	1,666	79.4	70	63.6	149	46.9
Deputy principal	445	21.2	20	18.2	53	16.7
School secretary	1,486	70.8	61	55.5	185	58.2
Executive Officer	346	16.5	30	27.3	84	26.4
Other*	473	22.5	27	24.5	94	29.6
Total	N = 2,099		N = 110		N = 318	

* The 'other' category included mainly all staff, principal's secretary, teachers, and students.

SOME CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Many schools are in a good position to move to communication via the Internet, between themselves and the Ministry of Education, in terms of the capacity and age of their administrative computers. They also use a Student Management System for student roll data returns and have an e-mail address to which administrative information from the Ministry can be sent.

However, while most schools' administrative computers have access to the Internet and some schools are in a good position to communicate with the Ministry because they have the adequate bandwidth to do so, other schools (particularly primary schools) have a way to go before they will be in such a position. In part, this is due to how schools access the Internet and the subsequent bandwidth this enables them to have. It may also be due to general bandwidth constraints in some areas of New Zealand.