

## Teachers as innovators

Investigating the capacity of teachers as innovators in teaching and learning with digital resources.



### Summary

Futurelab is embarking on a research programme to identify what can be done to encourage teachers to apply more innovative and creative uses of digital learning resources in UK schools. Through reviews of existing evidence, and evidence gathered from key stakeholders, the research programme will identify:

- where innovation with digital learning resources is occurring in UK schools
- the factors contributing to such innovation
- the methods for sharing and disseminating innovative practice.

As a core element of this work, Futurelab is creating a map of innovation in teaching and learning with digital resources. This map will highlight where innovation is taking place throughout the UK, and will provide examples of practice that are used to investigate the factors that both support and hinder innovation within education. To help us develop this resource, please contact us using the e-mail address overleaf.



### Context

Since 1997, UK schools have seen significant investment in ICT infrastructure, software and ICT training for teachers. During this time there have also been significant changes in the types of digital resources young people have access to outside school. However, to date we are yet to witness the widespread development of creative and innovative uses of digital technologies, which can offer new and dynamic opportunities and transform teaching and learning.

If we are to ensure that the UK education system can constantly adapt to and exploit developments in digital technologies, a significant shift in current teaching and learning practices with ICTs may be required. In order to achieve this, we need to understand how best to support teachers to innovate, explore and experiment with these technologies at a local level. We need to understand how we can create a 'culture of innovation' in and across UK schools which taps into the creativity and imagination of teachers. We need to understand, map and document the conditions which enable or constrain such innovative practice.

## Project Outline

The research programme will seek to:

- map innovative practice with digital technologies in the UK
- investigate the levers and barriers to teachers developing innovative practice with digital technologies
- investigate teachers' perspectives of their roles as innovators within a wider framework of educational change
- develop recommendations to foster greater innovation.

To achieve these goals we will work with a wide range of stakeholders in the education and technology field, including media partners, teachers, researchers and policy makers, in order to generate a broad map of outstanding innovative practice with digital technologies.



We will then work further with a wider sample of innovative practitioners, to identify the conditions which act to constrain or enable such innovative practice – from access to resources, to school cultures, approaches to assessment, relationships between teachers and students, as well as other key factors that will emerge.

An investigation will also be undertaken into how teachers' innovative practice fits in with or challenges conceptions of their role as 'teachers'. This will help us to better understand the extent which rethinking pedagogy, exploring new curriculum approaches using digital technologies, experimentation and risk are central or marginal to teachers' current working practices.

Finally, we aim to develop a set of strategic recommendations aimed at promoting, nurturing and sustaining innovative practice with digital technologies in UK schools.



## Contact

For more information about this research programme, please contact Dan Sutch:  
[innovations@futurelab.org.uk](mailto:innovations@futurelab.org.uk)

Futurelab  
1 Canons Road  
Harbourside  
Bristol BS1 5UH  
United Kingdom

tel +44 (0)117 915 8200  
fax +44 (0)117 915 8201  
[info@futurelab.org.uk](mailto:info@futurelab.org.uk)  
[www.futurelab.org.uk](http://www.futurelab.org.uk)