



Education for Encounter in a Digital Age:

A Vision for Technology in Jesuit Schools
in the 21st Century

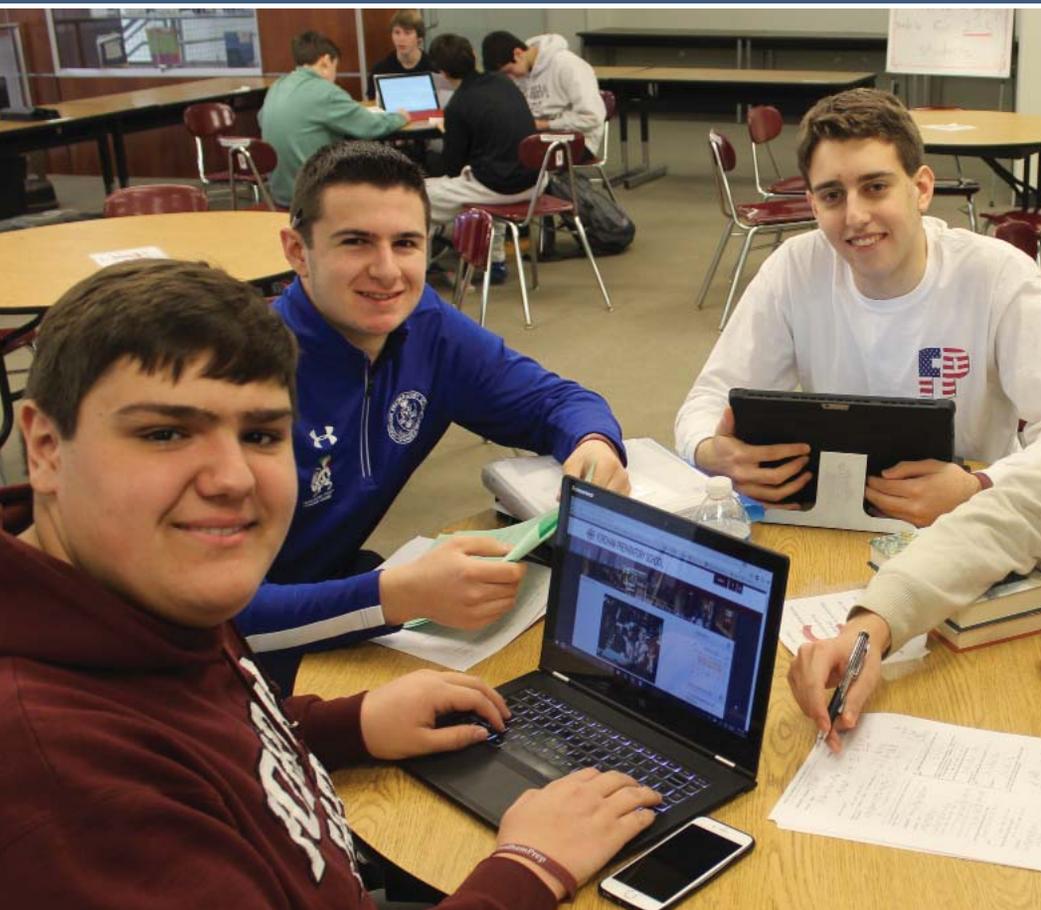
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INTRODUCTION

“Serving Christ’s mission today means paying special attention to its global context. ... Our mission of faith and justice, dialogue of religions and cultures has acquired dimensions that no longer allow us to conceive of the world as composed of separate entities; we must see it as a unified whole in which we depend upon one another. Globalization, technology, and environmental concerns have challenged our traditional boundaries and have enhanced our awareness that we bear a common responsibility for the welfare of the entire world and its development in a sustainable and life-giving way.”

General Congregation 35, Decree 2, no. 20



Rooted in the vision and spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, Jesuit education has consistently sought to dialogue with the culture and society of its times. As Ignatius teaches us in the First Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises, “All the things of this world are gifts of God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.” This too applies to the modern technologies that are reshaping our efforts as Ignatian educators in Jesuit schools in the 21st century. Called to find God in all things, we are now faced with a rapidly changing, globalized context in which technology influences every aspect of our daily lives. Inspired by Ignatius’s spirit of adaptation, we recognize the need to respond to these challenges with thoughtful and intentional engagement. This calls for discernment and indifference, recognizing the promises of growth and connectivity and the perils of attachment and distraction. Therefore, it is essential for us to examine how technology can transform and impact the ways in which we teach and learn in Jesuit schools.

As apostolic works of the Society of Jesus, our schools stand committed to the service of faith and the promotion of justice, with particular focus on the Church’s preferential option for the poor. Our students strive to become leaders in service to others and the world as persons of competence, conscience, compassion, and commitment. During these formative years, they become more open to growth, intellectually competent, religious, loving, and committed to doing justice. This context shapes how we commit ourselves to educating young women and men for and with others. As part of our way of proceeding, we need to reflect critically upon the appropriate uses of technology in supporting and advancing these core principles of Jesuit education.

As young people whose lives are immersed in digital technologies and social media, our students are faced with choices that impact their emerging identities and relationships. Ignatian discernment can provide the structure for students to think, reflect, and act in meaningful and ethical ways as they navigate moral ambiguities and life choices. Technology provides new and creative opportunities in our holistic efforts to educate and care for individual students as lifelong learners. As Ignatian educators, our responsibility is to accompany students in embracing an ethical and effective use of digital tools as participants in the global community. We meet them where they are, and walk with them in a world of constant change and connectivity through mobile devices. We help them construct meaning from the abundance of digital information in order to put their gifts and talents in service of this complex new world.

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IT IS NOT TECHNOLOGY
WHICH **DETERMINES**
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BUT RATHER THE
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AND OUR CAPACITY TO
USE WISELY
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— Pope Francis, “Communication and Mercy:
A Fruitful Encounter”

VISION: SENT FORTH TO NEW HORIZONS

“Globalization and new communication technologies have opened up our world and offer us new opportunities to announce with enthusiasm the Good News of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom he proclaimed. ... Globalization has hastened the spread of a dominant culture which has brought to many people wide access to information and knowledge, an enhanced sense of the individual and freedom to choose, and openness to new ideas and values across the world. ... This has become a new apostolic challenge and opportunity for us. In all our ministries, we are called to a more serious engagement with this reality and to broaden the spaces of a continuing dialogue and reflection on the relationship between faith and reason, culture and morality, and faith and society.”

General Congregation 35, Decree 3, no. 19-20



As Jesuit schools, we have an opportunity and an obligation to leverage the power of technology in our time. Today's world is radically different and technology has changed our lives in substantial ways. As Jesuit schools, we embrace the world; we do not run away from it. Our educational efforts need to reflect this openness in accompanying students to navigate and shape this new world. Journeying with our students in a spirit of *cura personalis*, we flourish in our personal relationships and care for all within the school community. Technology can serve us best as educators and students when used as a means to further human connection and personal encounter. This vision of advancing our mission through educational technology needs to be shared and supported by all, who are called to engage in ongoing reflection, dialogue, and discernment.

Technology can inspire a love of lifelong learning in students and educators. The internet and social media provide instant access to global information and enhances the learning experience in ways not possible before. This growing impact can be leveraged by Ignatian educators through constructive means of connecting students to the world at large, including our global network of Jesuit schools. Teachers can positively model for students how social media can be a valued aspect of Jesuit education through proper and responsible use. Integrated into the lives of students and adults, social media presents opportunities and challenges for how we authentically communicate with one another in light of true human encounter. As much as it is a place for sharing and networking, social media can provide outlets for building relationships and finding God through dialogue, reflecting, and learning.

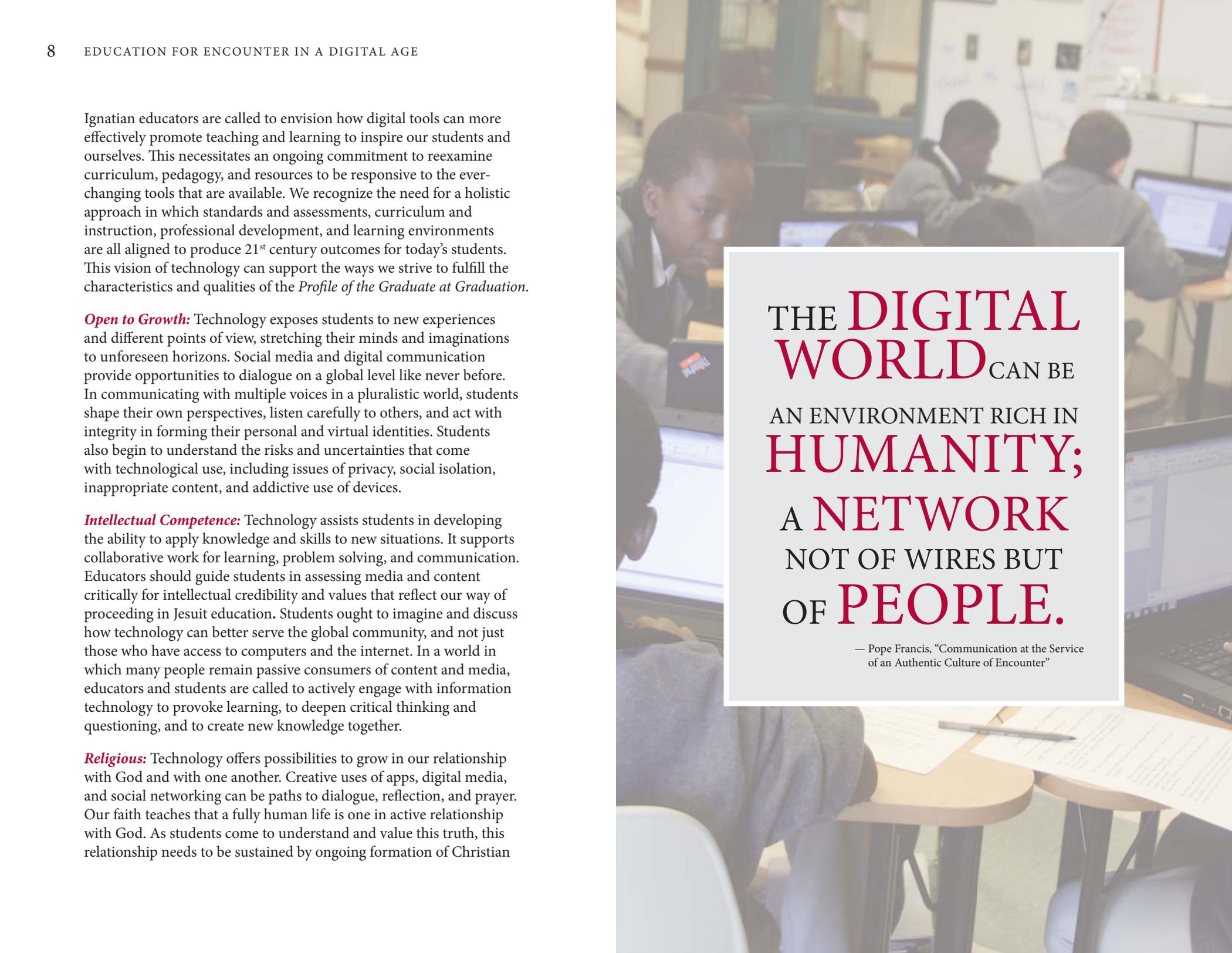


Ignatian educators are called to envision how digital tools can more effectively promote teaching and learning to inspire our students and ourselves. This necessitates an ongoing commitment to reexamine curriculum, pedagogy, and resources to be responsive to the ever-changing tools that are available. We recognize the need for a holistic approach in which standards and assessments, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and learning environments are all aligned to produce 21st century outcomes for today's students. This vision of technology can support the ways we strive to fulfill the characteristics and qualities of the *Profile of the Graduate at Graduation*.

Open to Growth: Technology exposes students to new experiences and different points of view, stretching their minds and imaginations to unforeseen horizons. Social media and digital communication provide opportunities to dialogue on a global level like never before. In communicating with multiple voices in a pluralistic world, students shape their own perspectives, listen carefully to others, and act with integrity in forming their personal and virtual identities. Students also begin to understand the risks and uncertainties that come with technological use, including issues of privacy, social isolation, inappropriate content, and addictive use of devices.

Intellectual Competence: Technology assists students in developing the ability to apply knowledge and skills to new situations. It supports collaborative work for learning, problem solving, and communication. Educators should guide students in assessing media and content critically for intellectual credibility and values that reflect our way of proceeding in Jesuit education. Students ought to imagine and discuss how technology can better serve the global community, and not just those who have access to computers and the internet. In a world in which many people remain passive consumers of content and media, educators and students are called to actively engage with information technology to provoke learning, to deepen critical thinking and questioning, and to create new knowledge together.

Religious: Technology offers possibilities to grow in our relationship with God and with one another. Creative uses of apps, digital media, and social networking can be paths to dialogue, reflection, and prayer. Our faith teaches that a fully human life is one in active relationship with God. As students come to understand and value this truth, this relationship needs to be sustained by ongoing formation of Christian



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conscience. Central to this effort is evaluating moral choices and reasoning through ethical issues with increasing clarity. Ethical issues related to technology must be a part of the conversation, particularly in a religiously diverse world of both sinful and graced social structures.

Loving: Technology provides new ways of connecting with one another throughout the global human community. Dialogue facilitated by social media can allow students to encounter diverse perspectives and values from persons of difference across race, gender, religion, nationality, socio-economic background, or sexual orientation. Such connections can break down personal prejudices and stereotypes among our students. If Ignatian pedagogy calls us to teach by human encounter, then our use of educational technology should reflect the core values of love, care, and compassion at the heart of Jesuit education. Constant connectivity can be a positive contribution to teaching and learning, but the dangers of isolation and stress remain. The school community

should apply healthy strategies to maintain balance and direction against excessive use of technology and social media. There are also possibilities for technology to benefit the health and wellness of students through devices and apps that help change the way one lives by incorporating positive habits of nutrition and fitness.

Committed to Doing Justice: Technology opens up multiple paths of information for students to better understand the complexity of social and environmental issues. The global perspectives of our digital age provide a forum for debate and dialogue on crucial issues facing humanity today. Critical reading of diverse sources of information can lead to public dialogue and action for peace, social justice, and care for creation. Since Christian faith implies a commitment to a just society, our students are not only called to compassionate service and encounter with the poor and marginalized, but also to wrestle with the work of justice and advocacy leading to social change.

As educators facilitate understanding among students, the possibilities of technology ought to influence our choices of what we teach and how we teach. Throughout all of this, we stand committed to our shared Jesuit and Catholic mission and identity lived out in the particular contexts of our secondary and pre-secondary schools. We also recognize the diverse backgrounds and means of the students in our care. In light of the challenges of distance and disconnection, our vision calls for equity and inclusion in seeking to bridge the digital divide. Our communities should advocate for access for all students, and our technology plans should reflect this commitment within the particular context of each school.

We believe that the ideal learning environment in Jesuit schools is guided by the *magis*, to strive for the more in all that we do. Each person in our community is called to discern how to best use his or her gifts and talents in service of directing our efforts toward the greater glory of God. The horizons of possibility brought about through advances in technology call our schools to renewal and creativity in service of our Jesuit and Catholic mission and identity. As we envision the future of Jesuit education, our efforts flow from our Ignatian worldview, a spirituality of interiority, and a desire to serve others in justice and love. Educational technology offers tremendous potential in being a force for transformational change in working towards a society of equality, peace, and justice that more deeply reflects the reign of God.

BOLD INITIATIVES: THE VALUE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR IGNATIAN EDUCATORS

“The new context in which we live our mission today is marked by profound changes, acute conflicts, and new possibilities. ... We live in a global world.

In this new world of instant communication and digital technology, of worldwide markets, and of a universal aspiration for peace and well-being, we are faced with growing tensions and paradoxes. ... In this global world marked by such profound changes, we now want to deepen our understanding of the call to serve faith, promote justice, and dialogue with culture and other religions in the light of the apostolic mandate to establish right relationship with God, with one another, and with creation.”

General Congregation 35, Decree 3, no. 8-9, 11-12

- To be effective, technology should be used as a tool for critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication. It is a means to an end in the service of Jesuit education and Ignatian pedagogy.
- Technology should prepare our students for an ever-changing world, empowering them to be adaptable, strategic leaders who will face challenges and situations not yet envisioned.
- Our varied uses of technology in and beyond the classroom should enhance student-centered learning, with a particular focus on skills needed for high school, college, and career readiness.
- Technology should provide students with an opportunity for reflection upon experience in new and creative ways.
- Technology should promote collaboration and communication within the school community and beyond, allowing dialogue with the world through social media and other channels.
- The ways we use technology must be ethical and just to ensure that our students become responsible digital citizens of a global community.
- We should assist all students in our care to benefit from the impact of technology on their learning, with particular concern for those who have limited or no access to technology at home.
- Technology should provide us with opportunities to contribute creatively to solutions to the social and environmental problems of our times as we seek to build God’s reign of peace and justice.
- Our responsible use of technology must be balanced with attention to our spiritual formation in times of silence, prayer, liturgy, and reflection.
- Technology is helpful insofar as it should lead to authentic human encounter and builds relationships between persons.



TO NEW FRONTIERS: AN INVITATION TO COLLABORATE

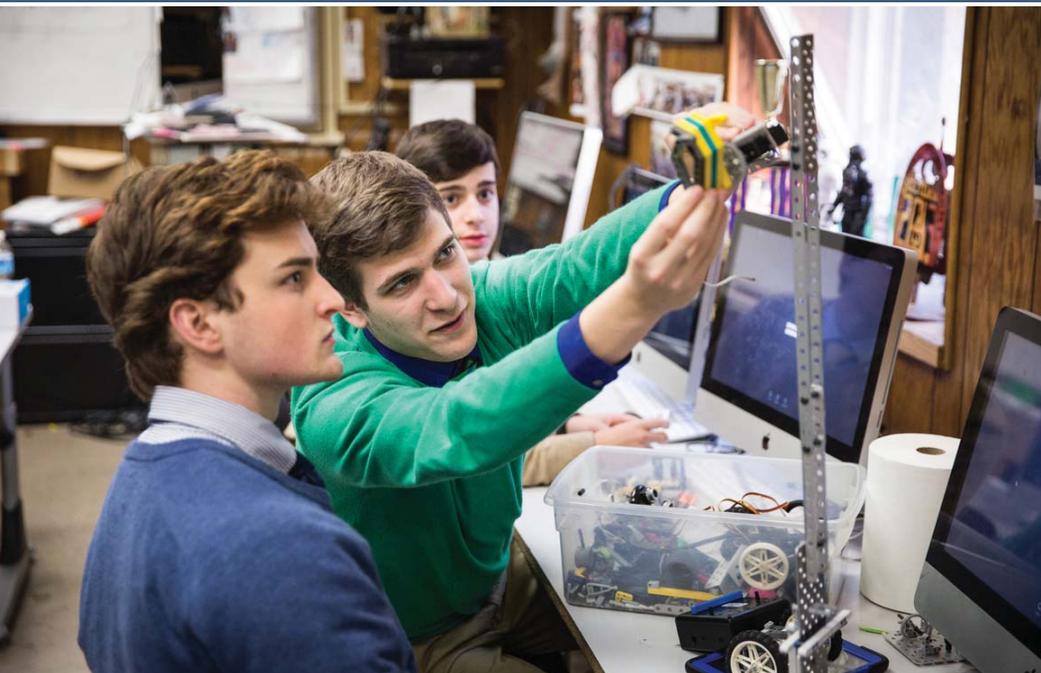
“We need to discern carefully how we carry out educational and pastoral ministries, especially among youth, in this fast-changing postmodern culture. We need to walk with young people, learning from their generosity and compassion so as to help each other to grow through fragility and fragmentation to joyful integration of our lives with God and with others. Among the defining characteristics of our globalized world are new communications technologies. They have a tremendous impact on all of us, especially the young. They can be powerful instruments for building and supporting international networks, in our advocacy, in our work of education, and in our sharing of our spirituality and our faith. This Congregation urges Jesuit institutions to put these new technologies at the service of those at the margins.”

General Congregation 35, Decree 3, no. 23, 29

This vision statement is the beginning of a conversation that ought to be continued in our individual schools. It is an invitation for colleagues to learn more from one another by fostering an ongoing dialogue within and among our Province schools. As Ignatian educators, we can examine existing technology plans already in place or stir conversation for beginning a process of strategic planning, adoption, and use of technology in our schools. We should be a resource for each other in our collaborative efforts to implement or renew technology plans for individual schools. As our dialogue continues, we can consider how to share best practices, align our professional development activities, and pool our resources to reduce cost and eliminate repetition.

As affirmed by *Our Way of Proceeding: Standards and Benchmarks for Jesuit Schools in the 21st Century*, a Jesuit “school articulates a robust vision for how digital technologies will enhance student learning and provides faculty with appropriate professional learning opportunities to implement this vision” (10.4). From this vision, schools should “develop and maintain a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan designed to support implementation of the school’s mission” (6.7) and “curriculum and instruction [should] equip students to become proficient and socially responsible users of technology” (9.6). This document serves as a foundation to further explore technology plans particularly adapted to each school. A Jesuit school technology plan should be grounded in the school’s mission statement and articulate a vision for educational technology that reflects the broader context expressed here. Each school should establish its own general technology goals, with respect to the varied contexts of administrative use, educational use, and professional development. In light of the goals and objectives of a school’s plan, the entire community should reflect upon and articulate foreseeable challenges and limitations as well. A strategy to monitor and evaluate the technology plans is essential, including consideration of both short-term and long-term funding. Lastly, each school should establish supporting documentation for the technology plan, including a school-wide acceptable use policy.

Among our Jesuit schools, there are different levels of resources available regarding technology. These range from schools with long-standing one-to-one computing programs to those in the early stages of implementing such efforts. Other schools have bring your own device policies, traditional computer labs, or limited access to the most current devices and resources for students in school and at home. In light of



these differences, our shared commitment to educational excellence in the service of our students joins our efforts to creatively engage with our changing times. Faced with the exponential growth of technology, our schools are challenged with the physical and economic costs of upgrading devices and infrastructure while seeking to meet students where they are.

In a spirit of collaboration and openness to change, Ignatian educators should always carefully and critically examine the tools for educational technology currently available and how they can best serve active, student-centered learning for those in our care. We are aware of the specific and unique challenges widespread information and technologies offer us today. It is imperative that, as we progress in our integration of technology in our schools, administration, faculty, and staff work together and in support of one another. The ongoing dialogue and efforts of all in our Jesuit school communities should also extend to students, alumni, parents, trustees, and benefactors. We acknowledge the resources and support of our network of Jesuit schools within each Province, the Jesuit Schools Network, and our wider global network of Jesuit schools, now connected through the initiative of Educate Magis. During this time of great change and possibility, we seek to remain open to the call of new frontiers in the service of our shared mission as Jesuit schools, for the greater glory of God.



COMMUNICATION,
WHEREVER OR HOWEVER
IT TAKES PLACE,
HAS **OPENED UP**
BROADER HORIZONS
FOR MANY PEOPLE.
THIS IS **A GIFT**
OF GOD WHICH
INVOLVES A **GREAT**
RESPONSIBILITY.

— Pope Francis, “Communication and Mercy:
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APPENDIX

SUGGESTED ELEMENTS OF A TECHNOLOGY PLAN

Introduction

- School Mission Statement
 - » A Jesuit school's technology plan should be grounded in the school mission.
- Overview/Context
 - » In light of your mission, where does your school currently stand with regards to a plan for educational technology? What has worked so far?

Vision and Goals

- Technology Vision Statement
 - » Where is your school going? What would you like to achieve through your plan?
- Connection to Strategic Plan
 - » How would your technology plan align with the goals and progress of your school's strategic plan? How does it align with accreditation or sponsorship recommendations?
- Major Goals
 - » What are the major goals of the technology plan that will improve the school over time?

Professional Development

- Current Status of Faculty
 - » How will you survey the faculty to assess the current needs for professional development?
- Faculty Training Needs
 - » Who is responsible for faculty professional development? What

resources are needed at this point? What is your method or approach to professional development? Will opportunities be provided in school or at outside conferences? How will you evaluate the effectiveness of professional development?

- Timeline for Implementation
 - » Does your school have a short-term and long-term timeline for implementing professional development for faculty?

Curriculum

- Curriculum Integration
 - » How will technology be used in courses? How will it impact teaching? How is your technology plan aligned to broader curriculum standards and benchmarks?
- Student Outcomes
 - » How will students utilize technology? What resources will be dedicated to training students in the effective and appropriate use of technology? Does this need to be achieved with regular class time, orientation, online tutorials, or other?
- Student Achievement
 - » What will students be able to achieve? How will you assess the impact of technology on student learning? How will you measure and track student growth and achievement over time? What instruments will you use?
- Technology Delivery
 - » Will courses use blended learning? Will you offer opportunities for online/distance learning? What resources beyond the classroom can be helpful?
- Collaboration
 - » Have you connected with other Jesuit schools to share best practices for integrating technology into your curriculum? How can you partner with other schools (Jesuit, diocesan, independent, or public) to learn from one another?

Communication

- Parental Communications
 - » Does your school use technology to communicate with parents/guardians? Is student information communicated through online platforms? Does technology assist in emergency contact if need be? What do you need to more effectively communicate with parents/guardians?
- Alumni/Community Relations
 - » Does your school use technology to communicate with the wider community? How do you reach out to alumni, friends, and benefactors? Is social media a part of your approach? What do you need to implement new strategies for reaching broader constituents through digital communications and social media?

Infrastructure and Hardware

- Current Status of Technology Infrastructure
 - » What is the current status of your school's technology infrastructure? What equipment is in place on all levels of school operations?
- Hardware and Infrastructure Needs
 - » What needs does your school have for infrastructure and hardware? Is there a timeline in place for adding new equipment and/or replacing old or soon to be outdated equipment?

Supporting Resources and Software

- Increase Access
 - » Who in your school community has access to technology? How can your school increase general student access to technology? How will your school support students whose financial resources to purchase required technology are limited?
- Software and Other Resources
 - » What basic resources and software packages will your school provide to faculty and students to support your educational technology curriculum? Are there needs for assistive technology?

Technical Support

- Support Within School
 - » What staffing will be needed to move your technology plan forward? What support procedures are in place for technology in your school? Who is the primary point person for technical support, repairs, and/or maintenance? To what extent are these services available for student owned computers?
- Outside Services
 - » Does your school use or need any outside contracted services?

Funding and Budget

- Budget and Timeline
 - » What is the current budget in place for technology in your school? What is the amount of funding needed to achieve the short-term and long-term vision of your school's technology plan? Is there a timeline of budget needs? Who is involved in the planning?
- Coordination of Resources
 - » Are there any opportunities for local, state, or federal funding for technology grants? What ways could your school coordinate resources with other Jesuit schools in the Province?

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Evaluation
 - » How often will your technology plan be evaluated on a regular basis? How often do you plan to update your short term plan? How often do you plan to update your long term plan?
- Acceptable Use Policy
 - » Does your school have an acceptable use policy to be signed by students and parents/guardians each year? Who is responsible for monitoring compliance with the policy? How often is the policy evaluated?

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