

Launch of Setanta Project
19 May 2000 – St Aidans CBS Dublin

Presentation by Ray O'Neill – Project Co-ordinator

Taoiseach, guests, colleagues, students.

Two and a half years ago in this school you launched Schools IT2000.

At that launch, you said

"We want every school in the country to achieve computer literacy..."

The Minister said:

"Ireland lags significantly behind its European Partners in the integration of information technologies in our schools."

and

"Helping teachers to develop the skills necessary to use information technologies has been shown throughout the world as being the key to successfully introducing them in the classroom"

In attempting to meet your challenges we face some realities.

- the primary occupation of schools is teaching subjects and ICT is not one of these subjects. It appears that ICTs are peripheral to most teachers.
- Commercially available software for subjects is generally not adapted to the Irish market and as a result is not particularly useful.

The Internet provides a useful metaphor for teaching subject areas but it has its own problems.

- Appropriate content is often difficult to find, so we are dependent on what others make available on the Internet.
- Access speed is a problem, and this will continue to be the case until broadband technologies are rolled out.

The Setanta project was formed to address these challenges.

The plan was to do this by developing a school based Intranet for the support of teaching and learning materials.

The Setanta project will draw together

- the multimedia skills and technologies available in the School of Computer Applications.

- the programming and development skills of the undergraduate students in the School of Computer Applications.
 - the pedagogic and curriculum knowledge of St Aidans teachers
- to meet the needs of St Aidans School for real, usable applications of ICT using the internet in its teaching and the needs of Computer Applications for real world projects for its undergraduate students.

This project uses the strengths of both institutions to meet their various needs.

What have we achieved to date:

We have set up the infrastructure within the school to form that intranet.

We have developed content on that intranet. This includes the materials to support the teaching and learning of Art and Science. A lot of work have gone into these by the student and staff of St Aidans and the students and staff of the school of computer applications.

As we come to the close of the school year we need to look at the way forward. To develop this project further we need to do a number of things.

- We need to develop additional content, that is more subjects, more topics.
- In order to do this we need to provide more training to staff and students.
- We need to allocate time to do this work.
- We need to further develop the infrastructure within the school.

But that is all another day's work.

Our principal purpose today is to celebrate the work of our students in St Aidans and the School of Computer Applications.

Two students will now demonstrate the results of their work over this past year.

These guys work as a team Niall is on vocals and David in on keyboards.