



## East Lothian Schools leading the way

The Local Education Authority has made Google Apps Education Edition available to 60 secondary and 34 primary schools in the region, with 15,733 accounts created so far. This comes as Google has announced that 10 million students and staff are now actively using Apps for Education.

To provide some background, Google Apps Education Edition is a free online service for schools that allows you to access documents and email from any location and lets multiple children and teachers input into the same document at any time. It also lets them create Sites and post Videos in a secure domain for others to view. It is quite unusual to see such a large concentration of Google Apps usage in one area so East Lothian is ahead of its time here.

The East Lothian schools and pupils have really taken to the service, with one design technology teacher using Google Apps with secondary students to allow them to have their own Google Site and build up an online portfolio of their projects, sketches and drawings. Traditionally this would all have been done on paper but the introduction of Google Apps into the school has allowed the pupils to store their work conveniently and build a portfolio over time. Many teachers are finding that the technology makes their life easier too, by creating an on-going portfolio of a child's learning progress over time, allowing them to monitor progress.

Robert Virtue, Head of Craft, Design & Technology Dept, Musselburgh Grammar School commented:

"Google products are increasingly becoming more important and valuable in the delivery of the Craft Design Technology curriculum. At present we are taking advantage of the free download of Google Sketchup to use this package, as early as S1, as an introduction to 3D Modelling.

"The staff and pupils have also been very impressed with Google Docs and as a consequence we are now pushing forward with on-line testing, evaluation and collaborative working within this package. Teachers are now also posting presentations and course notes into Google Docs for revision as well as setting homework online.

"Pupils' coursework from all three disciplines within CDT is stored digitally within their own Google Site web space, this offers them the chance to invite viewers and receive comment from their friends and family as well as their teacher. This process encourages independent learning and allows our pupils to build up a digital portfolio which hopefully can be used to enhance their career opportunities in the future."

East Lothian Education Department's web officer, David Gilmour added: "We took a very cautious approach to start with, letting teachers discover the advantages and find ways to use the different features of Google Apps in lessons for themselves. Because it is so easy to use, this has been extremely successful, and resulted in its use spreading across schools through word of mouth as teachers tell their colleagues about the different ways they are using it to help provide a richer variety of effective, engaging learning experiences."

Commenting on the impact of the project, he said: "We wanted students to learn and explore how technology can help make working in a team on group activities easier, more enjoyable and improve the quality of learning. This has turned out to be a great success and we've seen teachers come up with ways to use Google Sites, Video and Docs that we hadn't even imagined, bringing a whole range of full collaborative benefits to their lessons. The students have really taken to the technology too with some becoming so engaged that they have voluntarily added to their work from home. It's really great to see."

