Managing iPads at Home

Using settings to manage the iPad

Introduction
The iPad is transforming our classrooms at an amazing rate and we are seeing our students beginning to engage in their own learning like never before. Whilst the students are becoming very familiar with this new way of learning, parents are being left behind and are struggling to cope with the many challenges that accompany the device, especially in the home.

This booklet aims to provide some advice and strategies to parents so that they can be familiar with the iPad and its safety features. It should allow parents to control the learning environment in the home and continue the notion from school that the iPad is a “learning device” not a games console for their children.

When home computers were introduced, it was easy to manage one computer that was usually set up in the family room or office where it could be monitored and used by all the family. The iPad has changed that somewhat, as it is a personal device and therefore our thinking needs to change as to how we manage the device. The same principle of monitoring its use needs to be adopted but parents need to be more active in the case of the iPad especially when the internet is involved. There are some steps that can be adopted that allow parents and the school to manage aspects of use, such as internet access, and keep parents involved in the way the iPad is used in the home.
Controlling WiFi Access

Controlling the WiFi - Who owns the password?
The single most important step in managing the iPad at home is for parents to be in control of the wireless access.

Many parents report that their children “spend all their time on the internet or FaceBook” and they feel powerless to monitor this all the time. If parents have control of the wireless access at home they can then determine when their children have access to the internet.

Remember that we need to trust our children to develop good habits and practices when using the internet, and we will not be able to hold their hand at every step of the way in this process. This means that at some point they need to fly solo. Parents will need to decide when they can trust their children to work on the internet without supervision and allow full time access.

A matter of trust
To begin this process it may be necessary to reset the wireless access password at home and then log your children in to the internet when you feel it is appropriate. It is a simple matter of asking the iPad to “forget” the home wireless network (Figure 1) when you feel it necessary and then logging them back in with the password when the need arises. By establishing this practice at home you are not only monitoring their access but building a working relationship that establishes guidelines for internet access in your home. This practice also gives you some leverage when that trust is broken and you need to re-emphasise the point. They will then need to work to regain your trust.

The iPad will automatically detect a wireless network (Fig 2) in the vicinity so once the password is inputted, it will automatically connect in future. This method will require you to “forget” the network when you want access to stop.

Many modems now have Parent Settings that allow you to establish times for individual devices to access the Internet. Each device can be set a particular time where access is permitted and then logged off again at a specified time. What that means is that each iPad can be set different time allocations and allows you control for each student and their particular need.
Guided Access - Locking in to ONE app only

Using Guided Access
Guided Access is a facility to lock the iPad into ONE app only and stop the distraction of other apps, games or social media. It requires initial setup with a password and from there, a simple starting step to begin “guided access”. When finished with that session, guided access can be turned off and the password is forgotten and ready for next time where a new password can be used. This is a quick and easy response for a teacher or parent to control the use of the iPad at that time.

Step 1  Open Settings and then select General. Move down and select Accessibility.

Step 2  Select Guided Access and turn it ON. (Fig 3)

Step 3  Select Set Passcode. (Fig 4)

Step 4  Create a 4 digit passcode. Re-enter passcode.

Step 5  Now you need to open the app you want the student to work on.

Step 6  Triple click the Home button.

Step 7  You should see a screen similar to the one at the left. (Fig 5) Note at this point you can draw a box around a button or feature that you don’t want the student to use. In this example the Templates and the Email options have been selected and they will not be available to the student. This is also useful for Back and Forward arrows that allow the student to navigate away from the screen.

Step 8  When finished with guided access it is a good idea to turn it off in Settings. If left on however, a new password can be established and overrides the current one the next time someone wants to use guided access.
More dramatic strategies

Ultimately, there are some more restrictive strategies the school and parents can implement for those students who continue to display poor behaviour when using their iPad. It must be stated at this point, that setting restrictions is not the ideal way of managing iPads at school or at home. Ideally, we should be educating our students in responsible iPad use. We recognise, however, that at times managing iPads at home can be a very stressful affair and we would see the following methods as a way of offering assistance to parents. We recognise that educating parents is vital if the iPad implementation program is to be successful.

These restrictions are only to be used as a last resort but they do restrict the iPad use at school and at home, and should convey to the student that their behaviour is unacceptable. It will not disrupt the learning program for the student at school but will require extra steps when installing new apps etc. More dramatically, it will mean that once apps are deleted from the iPad, the student cannot install them again without permission from the school or from parents. Therefore, once this strategy is implemented, the iPad use can be restricted in access to the internet, to the Apps Store and other features on the iPad.

These more restrictive settings should only be implemented by the school and can be initiated by consulting with the Deputy Principal or eLearning Co-ordinator. Parents can discuss their concerns with the Deputy Principal at school and an appropriate set of conditions can be established on the iPad according to need. In some cases these restrictions may be implemented by the school, as the student behaviour may be interfering with their learning.

The sorts of restrictions that can be implemented are as follows:

- Remove apps and stop them being re-installed or set up passwords for apps install.
- Set up downloaded content restrictions as age appropriate.
- Restrict the use of the camera.

These are just some of the restrictions that can be implemented and are tailored to student needs. They are not meant to be permanent and are used to guide a change in student behaviour.

If you would like to discuss the issues you have at home with the use of the iPad and you think some of these restrictions may assist you, then contact the Deputy Principal to begin discussions. Once the student is involved in the discussion and a new position is established with iPad use, then it may not be necessary to even implement the restrictions. Remember, the aim is to educate about responsible iPad use and if these measures assist in getting the message across then it has been successful.

To discuss this issue or seek further advice then please contact the eLearning Coordinator, Mr Mike Dilger at the College on mdilger@mackillop.tas.edu.au