

Goodbye to books. The digital revolution in school starts now

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Is it time to say goodbye to paper books? From next September it could be a reality for the first and third year students in the high schools of Lombardy. Last week, indeed, the Italian Ministry of Education and Regione Lombardia signed an agreement. In all, **one thousand classes** should carry in their rucksack an electronic reading device (a netbook or a tablet) where they can load e-books.

Regione Lombardia has accepted to partially pay for the provision of devices to students and teachers to allow a renovation of teaching methods. The **involved pupils are about 25,000**: it will arrive a funding of **about 8,000/8,500 euro for each class** to buy the individual electronic devices and an interactive multimedia board. The tablet or the pc will be purchased by the institute which will then be used by the pupil. **The saving will come from the purchase of e-books** which will apparently lead to a contraction of the spending by about **30%**.

Among the leading schools where the trial has already started there are the “istituto superiore ‘Fermi’” in Mantova, the “Itg ‘Tartaglia’” and the “liceo ‘Copernico’” in Brescia, the “liceo ‘Golgi’” in Breno (Bs), the “istituto tecnico ‘Falcone’” in Corsico (Mi) and the **“liceo ‘Daniele Crespi’” in Busto Arsizio**. The **headmistress** of this last one, **Cristina Boracchi**, explains: “ The “Scuola Digitale” project is something we have been looking forward to for a long time: **first of all we’ve wired the institute**, two sets of wi-fi networkss, one for teaching and one for administration purpose, we’ve also provided all the teachers with electronic devices which replace the paper class roll. **The communication between school and families is totally online**, including progress reports, that can be seen immediately from home after the end-of-term assessments, as well as absences, marks and explained topics, all in real time. Our choice has been **the notebook instead of the tablet because it has more functions**, whereas now the tablet with the same functions is too expensive. After doing this and making it effective, **we’ve started last year to provide the first classes** with notebooks with which we’ve started to work on the modules and in-depth examinations, according to the choice of the families but working for a reduction of the cost of manuals and adoptions. And we want to make all this effective for all the next first year classes. **There were few contrary opinions, even though it’s difficult for the students to work on laptops because they tend to print everything anyway**. We still believe in **blended solutions**, knowing that **every language**, also computer languages, **leads to changes in the way of thinking, expressing and learning**. So we’re walking confidently step by step and without clamour, year by year. The footprints we’re leaving can’t be changed, naturally, and also the education of the teachers is taking the direction to put everyone in the condition of using the **wi-fi study**

aid for virtual classes, many of them already exist, and of using/producing new learning objects of different kinds.”

The aim of “Generazione web Lombardia 2012/13” is to digitise 15% of the total of the classes. The use of the web, with its great potentiality, has to be increased and at the same time to be controlled by politics of control and administration.

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