The Demonstration Round[1]

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Resolved: Schools should adopt a "bring your own device" (BYOD) policy to technology.

A Note about the Notes

I've reproduced my flow chart for the demonstration round at St. Luke's School augmented by what I remember from the debate. The notes are limited by how quickly I could write and how well I heard what was said. I'm sure the debaters will read them and exclaim, "That's not what I said!" I apologize for any errors, but I hope debaters will appreciate this insight: what a judge hears may not be what they said or wish they had said.

There are two versions of the notes. The one below is chronological, reproducing each speech in the order in which the arguments were made. It shows how the debate was actually presented. The second is formatted to look more like my written flow chart, with each contention "flowed" across the page as the teams argued back and forth. It's close to the way I actually take notes during the debate.

The Demonstration Round

The demonstration round at St. Luke's was between the Joel Barlow team of Ben Lewsom and Cooper D'Agostino on the Affirmative and the New Canaan team of Steven Singer and Gita Abhirahman on the Negative.

1) **First Affirmative Constructive**
    a) We have technology, the question is, can we have education too?
        i) Technology connects us to the internet and education.
    b) Statement of the Resolution
    c) Definitions
        i) "Technology" is any portable and internet connected device
    d) Our plan is to
        i) permit students to bring any internet-connected device to school,
        ii) provide WiFi to permit connection,

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  iii) and use those devices to supplement classes.

  iv) Students, parents and educators would be expected to sign a contract agreeing to proper use.

 e) A1[2]: BYOD benefits education

  i) RW Emerson states the purpose of education is "students as scholars"

  ii) The internet provides educational resources

   (1) Internet is dynamic and updated

   (2) It's like Tony Blair compared to David Cameron as Prime Minister

   (3) E.g., Wikipedia and Google search

  iii) The internet saves time

   (1) Compare Google to a textbook

   (2) Background work is done quickly, students spend time problem solving

   (3) Teacher can spend time teaching

  iv) The internet is the largest knowledge base in human history

 f) A2: BYOD legitimizes technology that already exists in schools

  i) The technology is already in the classroom

  ii) Now it is used for entertainment

  iii) BYOD allows for productive use

  iv) Distractions have always existed. The benefits exceed the risks.

2) Cross-Ex of First Affirmative

 a) What about students who don't have devices? One student can benefit many. One student with a laptop can look up answers for the others.

 b) Doesn't that give the one student an advantage? All will benefit. Some may benefit more, but it won't impair anyone.

 c) You defined technology as "any portable device"? Yes

 d) Even if it improves education, won't it enable bullying and stigmatize those without devices? Non cyber-bullying is harder to stop. You can block Facebook or Tumblr. Pain leaves a trail.

 e) You said one would benefit all? Yes

 f) Won't they feel more authority, rights? There are already differences, even pens.

 g) Schools will block sites? This is already mandated in CT.

 h) Won't there be an implementation cost? Yes

3) First Negative Constructive

 a) Intro

 b) Resolution

 c) Definitions

  i) "Schools" include all primary, elementary and secondary

  ii) "Adopt" means to make mandatory

 d) N1: BYOD creates a social hazard

  i) Page 3 lists problems: cyberbullying, distraction, inappropriate use

  ii) Students will be choosing between games and the Encyclopedia Brittania

  iii) Mistakes using social media are saved on the internet forever

  iv) Page2 notes the stigma of having to borrow a device

 e) N2: BYOD burdens families and students

  i) Expectations mean "voluntary" will become required

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[2] "A1" indicates the Affirmative first contention, "N2" the Negative second contention and so forth.

     (1) Families will need phones, laptops and data plans
     (2) Aff has ignored the economics
    ii) Schools would have to fund wifi and teacher training
    iii) Many students have no laptop or wifi at home
     (1) Costs could be $1000 up front and $50 per month
  f) N3: BYOD creates an educational divide
    i) The divide is due to money
    ii) Within schools and among schools and regions incomes differ
    iii) Policy won't level the playing field but make it more uneven
    iv) How would schools match the curriculum to all the different types of devices?

4) Cross-Ex of First Negative
  a) Do you need social pressure for a paper airplane? No
  b) Is it a distraction? Yes
  c) So you don't need technology? Not to be a jerk
  d) Isn't boosting some students worthwhile? Likely boost the rich not the poor.
  e) Why can't we give technology help? Who would receive help
  f) The students we give it to? It's not feasible
  g) Why not give the technology help to everyone? We can't it
  h) So it would be a burden on the schools? Yes
  i) How? Schools have to supply wifi, technology for the teachers, training
  j) Isn't it worth it for better education? It's not feasible
  k) You say there will be a stigma? Yes
  l) Do we panic over pencils versus pens? That's not comparable to a laptop versus a textbook

5) Second Affirmative Constructive
  a) Intro
  b) Definitions
    i) "Adopt"—remember BYOD is not "go buy it" but "bring what you have"
    ii) Supreme Court has held you can't force someone to buy something
  c) N1: Consider Distractions, Bullying and Stigma
    i) Distractions already exist, even without any technology
     (1) Students get distracted just staring into space
     (2) The internet is an advantage
     (3) The "contract" in our plan will require responsible use and hold students accountable
    ii) Cyberbullying is easier to stop if the devices are in school
     (1) Students can be taught to unfriend, unfollow, not read or block
    iii) Stigma already exists today with other things, e.g. calculators
  d) N2: There is no compulsion in BYOD so no burden
    i) Training teachers is an investment, and worthwhile
    ii) BYOD will costs thousands rather than million if schools bought all the equipment
  e) N3: There is already an educational divide
    i) But consider BYOD and you're "A" student with a laptop and "C" student without
    ii) Maybe the "A" becomes an "A+"

       iii) Even if the "C" remains a "C" education has improved

       iv) And the "C" may benefit from working with the "A" student

   f) We note the Negative has not replied to the Aff contentions

   g) Secure wifi will provide protection to students

   h) A1: the internet is the most dynamic, up-to-date, easy to access informational tool ever developed

       i) The time and quantity benefit education

6) Cross-Ex of Second Affirmative

   a) Is a #2 pencil the same as a laptop? No

   b) So how can you compare pen and pencil to a laptop? We don't think stigma is an issue. There won't be a huge social effect.

   c) You say cyberbullying is easier to stop? Yes

   d) You can prevent anonymity? Yes

   e) How would you stop it? Technology can block it. Teach students to ignore posts.

   f) Won't it help cheating, answers posted online? Teachers already have to deal with this, e.g. use multiple tests

   g) Doesn't BYOD require more steps to prevent it? Cheating occurs now.

   h) Won't smartphones make it easier? Students do it now, it would be no different.

   i) But won't it be easier? We have them and we do it now.

   j) Don't computers help? It's done now without BYOD

7) Second Negative Constructive

   a) Intro

   b) I will cover the Aff case, then the Neg

   c) A1 vs N1

       i) Cyberbullying occurs when technology is introduced too soon

       ii) BYOD covers all schools, and some children are too young

       iii) Parents may not approve the technology they get accesss to

       iv) These devices permit pictures and video as well as text

       v) It can exacerbate existing problems, as the Aff admitted in C-X

       vi) It's invisible, silent, impossible to stop and costly to try

       vii) Aff agrees the education divide will remain, so how much benefit does BYOD really provide?

   d) A2: Neg is not demonizing BYOD

       i) Social bullying and the stigma will put pressure on families to get devices

          (1) Alternatively, schools could provide a limited supply of controlled devices using a common platform

          (2) Definitions: BYOD doesn't "force" but creates inherent pressure

       ii) The cross-benefits argument is illogical

          (1) If technology is essential, all must have it

   e) N1: Aff ignores the "cyber" aspect of the bullying

       i) Many more apps and social networks increase possibilities

       ii) Can't prevent student mis-use

       iii) Monitoring and searching devices is a slippery slope to dangerous intrusions

   f) N2: BYOD shifts the burden to the families

       i) It also ignores the quality of technology, and the rapid change

8) Cross-Ex of Second Negative

a) How do we stop social pressure now? We can't
b) So the Negative doesn't solve the problem? BYOD means constant access and more pressure.
c) But the Negative doesn't limit it? Today there is either no technology, or controlled access.
d) How can we stop it? Build a curriculum around other devices
e) Could you bring your own? Yes, but it wouldn't be mandated
f) Why not mandate? We want to encourage students to act in their best interests
g) Can't a teacher stop cyber-bashing, for example when they see a student filming? They would stop it.
h) Doesn't the Aff stop it with the contract? Increased access means it will take increased effort
i) Do you have any proof BYOD will increase cyber-bullying? Increased access will lead to increased cyber-bullying
j) Are there any studies? Don't know

9) **First Negative Rebuttal**
   a) Intro
   b) Resolution
   c) The definition "schools" includes all schools
      i) So 6 year olds will be using smartphones
      ii) Angry Birds will compete with the Roman Empire
      iii) Middle schoolers will be posting forever
   d) It's infeasible to block the increase in cyber-bullying
   e) Aff compares pen and pencil to laptops and says there will be no stigma
      i) Can't say that with an old phone versus a new laptop
      ii) The contrast will result in a stigma
      iii) 25% have no cellphone, many more no smartphone
   f) Aff says there will be a cross-benefit among students
      i) People are greedy; this won't happen

10) **First Affirmative Rebuttal**
    a) What does the resolution say?
       i) It's not "buy your own device"
       ii) It's not, "you have to bring your own device"
       iii) It's, if you have a device you can bring it
    b) What is technology?
       i) It is a tool that can be used or abused, e.g. paper
       ii) Shouldn't ban just because it can be misused
          (1) Risks exists in talk and writing, but we don't ban them
       iii) Neg basically says, "do nothing"
       iv) Aff notes technology now treated as contraband
          (1) Let's realize the potential
       v) Aff makes smarter students
       vi) Neg doesn't stop bullying
    c) Which side educates better?
       i) Aff uses tools to benefit all
          (1) Aff realizes we can't stop all cyber bullying, cheating

        (2) But we can improve education

        (3) If one person gets smarter, Aff should win

    ii) Cyber abuse occurs in the status quo

        (1) Shouldn't ignore benefits just because of the risk

11) Second Negative Rebuttal

  a) I want to summarize the debate on three themes: education, economics and social impact

  b) But first on cyber abuse

    i) Aff says all abuse is the same

    ii) But it's like comparing uranium to paper

    iii) Technology makes for a much greater threat.

  c) Education—both sides agree the object is to improve education

    i) Aff doesn't improve education

    ii) Given the risks of distraction, inappropriate use, misuse, cyber bullying, negatives outweigh the positives

    iii) This is an untried path

    iv) BYOD overrides parental consent

  d) Economics

    i) Aff says students with no device just won't bring one

    ii) Neg notes the pressure to make up for differences, on families and schools

    iii) Schools and families also need wifi to provide access

  e) Social Impact is not just cyber bullying

    i) BYOD creates an educational divide

    ii) Poverty gap means there will be have nots

    iii) If technology is key, BYOD creates greater disadvantages

    iv) BYOD doesn't level the playing field

12) Second Affirmative Rebuttal

  a) Intro

  b) "Oh my gosh, a disco ball" (Shouted)

    i) See, I created a distraction, not technology at all

  c) Let's consider the three Negative issues

  d) Education

    i) Aff has shown distractions will always occur, but can be controlled

    ii) Neg about education in metaphors

    iii) Aff shows how technology provides speed, leverage and quantity cheaply

  e) Economics

    i) There is no obligation to bring a device

    ii) Wifi is relatively cheat

    iii) Having the school buy all the technology is even more expensive

  f) Social Impact

    i) Negative says it just helps the students who have it

    ii) But it also benefits those who do not

    iii) Technology is a tool

        (1) It can be abused

        (2) Aff requires student and parent consent to limit abuse

    iv) Students will learn faster

g) The Aff saves money, and there is nothing to fear from using technology in positive ways
h) Negative approach limits education and costs more