

Pinnacle, HP partner to provide accessible technology, education

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HP's culture has long been built on the belief that how it does things is just as important as what it does. Long-time partner Pinnacle shares this belief, and the two iconic brands are working towards the vital access to education needed in South Africa.



As long-term partner of HP Inc (HPI), leading ICT distribution company Pinnacle plays a vital role in the roll out of the HPI Education offering to the South African education sector.

Since the beginning of 2015, HP's goal has been to enable better learning outcomes for 100 million people by 2025. By 2019, 28+ million teachers, students and lifelong learners had benefited from the company's education programmes and solutions.

Pinnacle's education portfolio manager Natasha Davies says HP's global education goal is novel, in that the solutions provided are not built around specific devices.

"Instead, initiatives are aligned to the learning experiences of students and educators," says Davies. "There's a strong focus on the education value chain and the segmentation chain needed to deliver the right solution and devices so institutions can achieve their learning objectives and outcomes."



Education sector catapulted into digital transformation

HP Pinnacle 8 Jul 2020



Education as the most essential basic right

Along with HP, Pinnacle's aim is to make education one of the most basic human rights by providing accessibility to all, through infrastructure that enables end-to-end solutions suitable for all budgets.

While there are many challenges facing classroom digitisation, Davies notes that the primary issue is lack of access to technology and/or connectivity, resulting in large-scale computer illiteracy.

"In addition," she says, "the education sector itself is not always ready for adoption and deployment of technology within the classroom." With the sudden onset of Covid-19 forcing change in both work and learning institutions, the need has become even greater.

"To counteract this, we have digital solutions designed to address the shortcoming of technology in the classroom and home environment, enabling students to build the confidence to engage on a different level through technology," she says.

"We are also aware that a critical part of any digital education initiative is that of educating the educator. It is vital to ensure teachers are familiar with any technology implemented before they begin using it in the classroom."

If educators are comfortable with a solution, children see it conveyed in their actions and it instils greater confidence in technology among learners. With an acute understanding of this, the HP Foundation works to empower people – including teachers – through technology, connecting communities around the world to greater opportunity. All initiatives must drive positive changes in the education environment to be effective.

"Because the demographics and budgets involved in the South African education sector are broad, Pinnacle works on a scalable approach to education solutions," Davies asserts. "This can help bridge the gaps and get all learners, teachers and schools on the same level."

Exciting times in education

"Following the president's Sona (State of the Nation Address) announcement, earlier this year, regarding a greater focus on the digital economy and the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), these are exciting times for the education environment," she said.

In announcing HP Turn to Learn, a new programme that will deliver educational content curated from leading scientific, publishing and media companies in April 2020, HP President and CEO Enrique Lores said: "A student's right to education should not be contingent on where they live or their family's income."

"We must find creative new ways for teachers and students to connect from a distance – because while this pandemic is creating hardship for so many around the world right now, we cannot afford to let it hold back the generation that will shape our future."

Davies responds: "Pinnacle is excited too, as our partnership with HP means that we have access to a range of already-proven global solutions that can be tweaked to suit South Africa's specific education requirements."

The outcome is to make education accessible to everyone, and the strategy is for Pinnacle to employ HP offerings to create end-to-end, best practice solutions that encourage greater classroom activity and engagement to excite learners.

Innovation in education technology is growing rapidly, especially due to mobile devices, cloud technologies and virtual reality, says Davies.

"The time is right to adopt a holistic approach to leveraging technology as an enabler to learning. Thanks to HP and other carefully selected partners, Pinnacle is working to continue being a leader in creating and implementing this change that

can truly set young minds on the path to sustainable success.”

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