

Educating for Re-use



Company: IT4Kids

Innovative business model type: Re-use

Sector: IT

Company size: Micro

Product or service: Donation of IT equipment to fund projects in schools

Key Facts

- Based in the UK, IT4Kids helps schools to raise funds for additional resources or extra-curricular activities through the re-use of unwanted IT equipment.
- REBus supported IT4Kids in implementing its model and finding the most effective ways of working such as demonstrating the commercial viability.
- Seven schools have taken part in pilots, helping IT4Kids to prove that schools are receptive to the idea and that the logistics work.
- Early results showed that IT4Kids will need to explore how they can increase the engagement of parents, while improving the quality of items they receive for re-use.
- IT4Kids is now exploring ways to expand its offering, to secure new leads and develop teaching resources.

Key facts

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Case Study



Introduction

IT4Kids helps schools to raise funds for additional resources or extra-curricular activities through the re-use of unwanted IT equipment. As part of the REBus project, it set up a website, [IT4kids](#), to enable this.

IT4Kids provides all the materials needed to make the scheme work and contracts a specialist firm to manage collection, refurbishment and re-sale. Parents and local businesses then donate their unwanted equipment through the school.

Running a REBus pilot allowed IT4Kids to assess the potential – and challenges – to setting up IT4Kids.

“IT budgets are tight. I visited a school in North London which had spent its entire IT budget just to upgrade the memory on their desktop PC’s so they could run PowerPoint. This was an ambitious and outstanding academy, yet the chairs had stuffing coming out from them. I don’t want any school to look like this.

“Our model offers a cost effective way to engage with schools which can be ignored, particularly Primary Schools. We are on a mission to give all schools the technology to enable a better future for the children.”

Tristan Wilkinson, Co-Founder, IT4Kids

Why REBus?

The main driver for the idea was a passionate belief that technology has the potential to level the playing field. However, in order to get the project started, IT4Kids needed to prove that schools would be receptive to the idea; that the logistics worked, and that parents and businesses were likely to donate.

REBus support

IT4Kids was introduced to WRAP through its business partner – IT processing company, RDC.

REBus assisted with calculating costs and financial modelling which helped to bring a good perspective to the project.



[Watch IT4Kids video](#)

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Challenges and barriers

- Donated equipment is not valuable enough for re-sale occasionally. In these cases IT4Kids' business partner, RDC, recycles the items responsibly.
- Auditing items before they are passed to the processing firm incurs additional costs.
- Collection costs for small numbers of items may also prove prohibitive.
- Encouraging parents to engage with the scheme can be difficult and schools often do not have time to promote the scheme effectively.
- Schools don't often have the means to communicate the service within the wider community.

"Our aims have changed. We originally led with the recycling and re-use message. Through the pilots it has become apparent that the recycling message can mean that the quality of goods received is generally not the equipment that can be re-used."

"We need to find a way to generate donations of higher quality goods for re-use to be able to generate the funds for the schools which will also ensure the scheme is cost-effective."

Tristan Wilkinson, Co-Founder, IT4Kids

Results

- Logistically, the scheme has worked well.
- Engagement with schools was good, but the execution of the promotion of the service was poor – schools do not have the time or skills to market properly.
- Direct engagement with parents was also poor, despite making the scheme as straightforward as possible.
- Incentives have been considered for future projects, although commercial incentives such as cash or vouchers have been avoided.



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Next steps

- IT4Kids extended the pilots with the initial schools, and is working to expand the scheme into other schools.
- In addition, IT4Kids is building on its offer, to develop learning resources and lesson plans for teachers.
- IT4Kids is developing leads where trade in schemes facilitate discounts for school equipment.
- The new website has enhanced the donations process and helps to highlight the importance of quality. The site provides an automated service that tracks equipment, logs data wiping and emails individuals to thank them for their contribution.
- IT4Kids has been exploring funding options, including the possibility of engaging with 63 youth centres to provide the technology for digital hubs.

Lessons learned

“We went to market without a complete proposition in place – we couldn’t answer the question of ‘what would you do with the money?’. I think we overestimated the mechanism of the school to the parent and the school’s ability to engage. On the plus side the engagement with the business community has been better than expected.”

Tristan Wilkinson, Co-Founder, IT4Kids

In addition, IT4Kids discovered that expectations around data security concerns were largely unfounded.

Future plans

“We are going to explore other ideas – such as offering discounts, or value in other ways – and we are also developing partnerships with other organisations that can come into schools to demonstrate music equipment.”

Tristan Wilkinson, Co-Founder, IT4Kids

- Engage with councils to develop a programme designed to extract value from the community to invest in schools.
- Explore the potential to move the model into the corporate environment.
- Investigate the benefits of leasing for schools.
- Expand model to other Northern European countries.
- Create more engagement through children to find what resource might help put teaching plans together to get schools talking about the broader agenda of recycling and circular economy.
- Focus more on extra-curricular activities. Parents see more value in donating items that raise money for ‘value added’ activities that they would otherwise have to pay for.

“We are committed to developing creative solutions that tackle digital skills and help informal learning. Going forward, IT4Kids will continue to source interesting partners with engaging, original solutions to roll the scheme out to as many schools as possible.”

Tristan Wilkinson, Co-Founder, IT4Kids

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Project supported by LIFE funding

REBus is a project delivered in partnership with:



Rijkswaterstaat
Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat



KTN
the Knowledge Transfer Network



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Case studies were generated as a result of pilots carried out for REBus by WRAP or RWS and the named organisations from 2013 to 2016.

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