

SLIA Ed Tech Industry Summit – November 26-27, 2012

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Panel: **It's All About Mobile Now**

Moderator: Nicholas Gaehde, President & Chief Executive Officer, Lexia Learning Systems, Inc.

Panelists: Martin McKay, Chief Technology Officer, Texthelp Systems, Ltd.

Scott Traylor, CEO, Chief KID, 360KID, Inc.

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Summary by Paula Maylahn

It's all about mobile. At least all the buzz is. From the supply side, there is no discrete revenue from mobile. Though models are emerging, at best companies don't lose money and can stave off market share erosion. And despite high profile iPad purchases by some districts and very cool pilot programs, mobile isn't what it's all about in the classroom either.

Challenges for the industry:

- Development decisions: Despite the current dominance of iOS devices in the U.S. market (best selling education apps are for iPad; iPhones hold the number two spot), there are signs it is slipping. Globally it's already all about Android. But HTML5 is a poor substitute for the user experience of native apps and there's a good chance it won't be around in 10 years. And it's too costly to build everything in C++.
- Product integration: One-offs don't serve anyone well. Need to create apps that tie into others. It's all about the ecosystem.
- Revenue: Demands for apps aren't followed up with purchase orders

Challenges for customers:

- Infrastructure: Schools just don't have good wifi networks.
- Interoperability: Apps need to plug into backend SISs.
- Rapid obsolescence: Many new apps won't run on an iPad 1 and schools can't cycle devices every 2-3 years.

Despite the significant issues surrounding development, implementation, and monetization ...mobile is clearly on the move. Vendors are moving away from media lab subscriptions and investing in educational innovations that take advantage of mobile technology, like sensors on phones. The number of developers working in mobile has dramatically increased over time, as has parental support for mobile devices for educational purposes. According to a recent Project Tomorrow Report, parents support the use of mobile in education, even if they have to pay for it themselves. And that includes 57% of the parents of students in Title 1 programs.