

# *Innovation & Technology*

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*Seventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning  
Keynote Address: Plenary - Innovation & Technology*

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## **Summary of Keynote for COL's PCF7 in Abuja**

Taken from Professor Tim Unwin's Blog: <https://unwin.wordpress.com/2013/12/05/summary-of-keynote-for-cols-pcf7-in-abuja/>

Despite limited digital connectivity, I just thought I would upload a short summary of my upcoming keynote at the Commonwealth of Learning's Seventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum this afternoon to encourage productive debate! Its central argument is that we are not delivering as effectively as we could in using ICTs for education at all levels, because of very explicit interests that are serving to limit this effectiveness.

### **Good practices**

I begin with a short overview of ten good practices that need to be in place to ensure effective use of ICTs in education:

1. It's the learning that matters, not the technology
2. Teachers must be involved from the beginning
3. Sustainability built in from the start
4. Supporting infrastructure must be in place
5. Appropriate content must be developed
6. Equality of access for all learners

7. Continual monitoring and evaluation
8. Appropriate maintenance contracts
9. Using the technology 24/7
10. Good practices, rather than best

## **So, why are these not done?**

I focus here first on the observation that ICTs generally increase inequalities unless very specific actions are taken to ensure that the poorest and most marginalised are able to benefit.

I then explore the various interests that tend to limit delivery of the above ten practices, focusing especially on the activities of the private sector, and especially hardware and software companies, connectivity companies and content developers.

In so doing, I also draw on some of the increasing amount of empirical evidence that the use of computers in education is actually damaging learning.

## **Implications for innovation**

In the final section, I explore some of the implications of these trends for innovation and creativity, paying specific attention to five themes:

1. Content replication
2. Memory
3. Language and literacy
4. Personalised searching
5. Privacy and failure

## **In conclusion**

In drawing these reflections to an end, I argue that one way forward is to work towards new and effective models of multi-stakeholder partnerships for education, that address education as something much more important, much more complex, and much more exciting than merely as a vehicle for economic transformation.