CATCHON AND DIGITAL PROMISE PARTNER TO IDENTIFY

Best Practices in the Use of Data Analytics

CatchOn and Digital Promise joined forces in 2021 to provide participating Digital Promise League of Innovative School Districts a quick and seamless way to track and monitor digital engagement at the student level, enabling them to analyze the efficacy of their technology investments as well as identify those students who require intervention and/or are at risk of falling through the cracks — all in real time.

The project included seven districts ranging in various sizes and locality. Leadership teams across the districts utilized their data analytics dashboards, trending reports, and data insights to inform and support strategic instructional and administrative decision making within the district.

EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE WAYS PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS UTILIZED THEIR DATA INCLUDE:

- Inform return on investment and instruction
- Foster change management
- Support and identify professional development needs
- Manage and ensure data privacy compliance
- Engage district leadership in understanding and supporting the efficacy of their technology and instructional programs

Coming Summer 2021

CatchOn and **Digital Promise** will be releasing a full report Summer of 2021 highlighting aggregated data and experiences from all participating Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools and the powerful insights gained from them. This report will include a data report, district vignettes, and a summary of innovative best practices that emerged from the pilot that other districts can adopt or integrate into their digital journey.

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Initial Findings

Detailed analysis of the data and usage trends will be provided in the full report, but the initial findings demonstrate the majority of participating school districts began their data analytics journey seeking to answer the same question – **what is the average cost per user of our purchased digital tools and applications based on actual usage?** Once they gained insight into CatchOn's actionable data, new questions, use cases, and strategies quickly emerged and developed around ROI, compliance, professional development, change management, and student engagement.

Included in this resource is a sneak peak of one of the program participants—Morris School District, New Jersey. This profile outlines the Morris team's initial objectives at the beginning of the program and the insights they gleaned after seeing and reviewing their application usage and engagement data.

How Morris School District Leveraged Data Analytics to Track ROI, Engagement, and Opportunity Gaps

USING DATA TO ASSESS THE ROI OF TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS

Like many school districts across the country, determining the cost per user of EdTech investments is critical to inform Morris School District's renewal and purchasing strategies. It has been difficult to calculate this amount without knowing the extent to which their paid apps and digital programs are being used by their students, especially this past year.

At the onset of the project, the Morris team immediately began using CatchOn to track application usage data across the district and identify which applications were being used and how often they were being used. Seeing their district's application usage data has helped validate their professional development investment in the program

"We have a learning management system that costs us a lot of money, but I can see it is being used a lot," said Erica Hartman, Morris's Director of Instructional Technology. **"And I'm also really proud that all the apps within our Trending Apps list are approved, so that means our teachers are using the apps that Brian Young, our Director of Curriculum and Instruction, has approved and introduced."**

The team is also using the actionable data generated to identify professional development best practices and opportunities. For example, this past year the district rolled out a program called Gizmos to its science teachers because they needed a way to conduct online labs for their virtual students. Much to the Morris team's delight, they saw that the program was in their top 20 Trending Apps list within the CatchOn platform. CatchOn helped to validate their technology investments.

"From a curricular lens, we are making decisions based on need and support both for teachers and students," says Brian Young. **"For us, it's not just a monetary investment in the platform itself. With Gizmos, for example, we hosted and paid for several professional development sessions. Looking at the usage data reaffirms that we are making effective decisions, and it shows me how valuable our teachers find that particular program for online science, investigation, and inquiry."**

CatchOn's application usage data also prompted Young and Hartman to closely examine what made the Gizmos deployment so successful and strategize how they can replicate its success. **"It is very reassuring to see that we are getting our return on investment on not only the technology itself, but the trainings we do to enable our teachers,"** says Hartman.
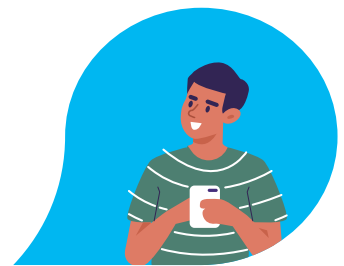
Tracking, measuring, and analyzing student engagement

Tracking and gaining a better understanding of student engagement in a digital learning environment has been another priority for Morris School District. Throughout the project, the Morris team reviewed their student engagement data to identify how often students were engaging with their digital tools, the time of day and days of the week students were engaging with their digital tools, and the duration of each engagement.

HERE ARE THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS AFTER REVIEWING THEIR DATA

- They were surprised by the high volume of engagement with some apps, particularly with one app because not much professional development was built around it, so the team was surprised to see how much it was being used by their students

- They were pleased to see that another tool also had significant engagement, even after the conclusion of the district's assessment and testing window, and that the usage occurred mostly during daytime hours, meaning teachers were actively using the tool as part of their instruction and not just assigning the tool as homework.

- They were astonished by the sheer volume of apps being used by their students. In fact, the number of apps in use greatly surpassed the number of apps the Morris team estimated being used.

Having insight into their application usage and engagement data has also enabled the district team to identify those apps with higher-than-expected engagements and pinpoint professional development needs. **"When we see excitement around a platform in the form of usage data, we should build upon that,"** says district Superintendent Mackey Pendergrast. **"Let's improve the learning process even more by leveraging an asset-driven professional development approach."**

This asset-driven strategy aligns with Superintendent Pendergrast's two-part engagement strategy:

"There are two questions that we need to answer regarding engagement," says Superintendent Pendergrast. **"We need to understand what tools are being used and how they are being used. The data answers that first question for us, which is great. The second question is how are these tools meeting our learning goals and objectives? Some platforms may have really high digital engagement numbers, which is great, but we also purchased these platforms for specific reasons, and we want to make sure they are meeting our objectives."**

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Key Insights and Next Steps

Going forward, Morris School District intends to dive deeper into their application usage and engagement data and see what additional insights they can glean from it. **"We want to look at a specific data points and identify the insight, the approach and the questions we now have around that specific data point,"** says Superintendent Pendergrast. **"From there, we can formulate the actions we need to take."**

"This data certainly tells us a story and it will help guide us in our decision-making."

- Superintendent Mackey Pendergrast, Morris School District, New Jersey

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Visit **www.catchon.com/digitalpromise** to learn more about this project as well as sign up to the receive the full report when it is released.

About Digital Promise and CatchOn

Digital Promise works at the intersection of education leaders, researchers, and technology developers to improve learning opportunities for all and close the Digital Learning Gap. Because when all learners have equitable access to technology, when everyone participates, and when everyone learns, we all benefit from a more engaged, informed and just society.

For more information, visit digitalpromise.org

CatchOn's actionable data gives administrative leaders the holistic view they need to immediately identify critical patterns of digital engagement at the district, school, class, and student levels and gain insight into the efficacy of their technology investments and integrations.

For more information, visit catchon.com