

# Securing the CONNECTED CLASSROOM

Technology Planning to Keep Students Safe

Abbie H. Brown | Tim D. Green



# Contents

Introduction.....	1
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## 1

<b>Creating Safe and Accessible Schools: The Spectrum Approach.....</b>	<b>5</b>
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An approach to developing solutions to technology security problems that includes input from administrators, teachers, parents, students and IT staff

One Solution Does Not Fit All.....	8
The Spectrum Approach.....	9
Start Here.....	10

## 2

<b>A New Philosophy for Technology-Related Decision Making.....</b>	<b>13</b>
---	-----------

Examining the realities of a security threat; historic patterns in technology adoption; and construction of balanced policies to reduce threats

Investigating Claims: A Willing Suspension of Belief.....	15
Understanding Historical Patterns: Riding the Hype Cycle.....	17
Building Policy: Walls, Windows, and Doors.....	19
Summary.....	21

## 3

<b>Developing Appropriate Responses to Problems.....</b>	<b>23</b>
--	-----------

Effectively addressing technology-related threats by developing consensus-driven plans

The Solution Blueprint.....	24
Identifying the Problem.....	25
Creating a Working Committee.....	26

Determining the Nature of the Problem: Real versus Perceived Threats.....	27
Conducting Appropriate Research on the Problem .....	29
Developing Responses to Threats: Building Walls, Windows, or Doors.....	31
Setting Goals.....	32
Drafting a Response to a Threat and Taking Action.....	33
Building Consensus .....	34
Evaluating the Results.....	35
Summary .....	36

## 4

### Using the Spectrum Process to Create a Solution..... 37

Activities that help in responding to a technology-related threat

A Few Words Before We Begin .....	38
Introducing the Greenville/Brownsville Unified School District .....	39
Step One: Identifying the Problem .....	40
Step Two: Creating a Committee .....	44
Step Three: Determining the Nature of the Problem: Real versus Perceived Threats.....	48
Step Four: Conducting Appropriate Research on the Problem .....	51
Step Five: Developing a Response to the Threat: Wall, Window, or Door ..	57
Step Six: Building Consensus.....	69
Step Seven: Evaluating the Results .....	74
Summary of the Process .....	78

**5**  
**Building Solutions with  
 and without a Systematic Process**..... 81

Examples of problematic and effective solutions to technology-related security threats

Building Walls, Windows, and Doors without a Systematic Process ..... 82  
 The Process in Action..... 87  
 Summary ..... 90

**6**  
**Review, Revise, and Revisit**..... 91

Parting advice on creating and implementing the best possible solution to a technology-related threat

Review ..... 92  
 Revise ..... 93  
 Revisit ..... 95  
 Summary ..... 96

**References**..... 97

**ISTE Standards**..... 99

ISTE Standards for Students ..... 99  
 ISTE Standards for Teachers..... 102  
 ISTE Standards for Administrators ..... 106

# Introduction

Reducing the potential dangers associated with any technology-based threat begins with having a well-conceived plan. This plan needs to be developed through a collaborative process involving a number of stakeholders who have a vested interest in having the threat neutralized. Developing this plan will take time, energy, and resources—all of which, we realize, may be in short supply. But we can help.

The goal of this book is to provide you with an approach, which we have dubbed the “spectrum approach,” that will allow you to deal effectively with technology-related challenges and potential threats facing your school or district. We have put this process together based on our years of experience as classroom teachers and educational technology experts who have worked with a number of schools and districts on innovation adoption. We can tell you that the spectrum approach works—it is time-tested.

The most definitive statement we can make about our process is that it is uniquely suited to providing the best possible response to a technology-based threat. Although there are no guarantees that using the process will completely mitigate the threats associated with technology use in schools, we can state that using this systematic process will result in a response that is data-driven and rational. The response will also take into consideration the needs of all stakeholders; it may not please everyone, but it will be one that stakeholders can support. If you follow the process we outline and the guidance we provide, you will develop an effective response to a problem associated with using technology in schools—a response that maintains security while allowing optimal access to technology for

teaching and learning. This is the ideal situation for all stakeholders who have students' best interests at heart.

## How to Use the Book

This book introduces you to our spectrum approach to making technology-related decisions, explores the philosophy behind it, and takes you through the process step by step, with plenty of hints and examples of how this process has worked for many other schools.

- Chapter 1 introduces the spectrum approach and explains the need for collaboration.
- Chapter 2 describes our philosophy for making technology-related decisions.
- Chapter 3 describes each step of the spectrum process, showing how it can help you effectively address technology-based threats and end up with a consensus-driven plan to effectively deal with them.
- Chapter 4 takes you further into the process by detailing the activities involved with each step. To help you work through the activities, templates are provided (digital templates are available online). This chapter also provides a real-life example of how a district worked through the process, using the templates to solve a student privacy problem.
- Chapter 5 gives you real-life examples of how schools and districts have handled their own security issues, both effectively and ineffectively.
- Chapter 6 features some parting advice to help you create and implement the best possible solution for your school or district.

We recommend reading all of the chapters first to acquaint yourself with the entire approach. When you are faced with a specific technology-based threat, review Chapter 3 and use the activities and templates provided in Chapter 4 to develop a plan that addresses the problem.

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## Creating Safe and Accessible Schools: The Spectrum Approach

The safety of young people and the security of the resources available through schools both require careful attention. Thomas Jefferson wrote, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” We could easily modify this for our more specific purposes: eternal vigilance is the price of safety for our students. As technology continually changes, so do the safety issues confronting schools. Here are a few examples of educational technology and security issues that schools have faced.



- *At a National Technology Leadership Summit held in Washington, DC, in 2011, educational technology leaders gathered to discuss (among other things) the use of mobile devices in the classroom.*

In school districts around the country, administrators and parents are expressing concern over allowing the use of smartphones and personal tablet devices. Teachers and technology facilitators struggle with how to engage in a meaningful discussion about the benefits and challenges of using these devices. School administrators, teachers, and technology facilitators must develop plans to make effective use of smartphones and personal tablet devices, at the same time minimizing the potential problems or dangers that might arise from their use.

- *In November 2012, the Polytechnic Institute of New York published a report (Dey, Ding, & Ross, 2012) indicating that online privacy laws, such as the federal Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), may cause situations in which minors are put at greater risk of data mining for “nefarious purposes.”*

School administrators, teachers, and technology facilitators must decide how best to approach the challenge of keeping students safe while making best use of the social networking tools that have become almost ubiquitous.

- *In December 2012, the New York Times reported an incident in which the Center for Digital Democracy filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission over an app sold in the Apple App and Google Play stores because it collected personal information, including location data, that violated COPPA.*