



Advanced educational equity at HEA

As the lead voice for home educators in Australia, HEA advocates for and reaches out to suppliers in the education sector to ensure home schooled children have the same opportunities as their traditional school enrolled peers.

CompNow and Microsoft's commitment to HEA is supporting effective integration of digital technologies in home-based teaching and learning.



Home Education Australia is a national, not-for-profit association promoting and supporting the practice of home schooling – a legal option that embraces a wide variety of philosophies and pedagogies. One of HEA's primary aims is to advance educational equity for its 830 member families members.

THE CHALLENGE

As part of HEA's advocating in the interests of home education, its volunteer

committee approached Microsoft with a submission to be acknowledged and treated as the bricks and mortar school sector – for its families to be able to buy hardware and software at discounted Education customer prices.

After gaining access to MS Office 365, the next goal was to create and foster a supportive group of Microsoft Minecraft: Education Edition (M:EE) users. When Microsoft bought Minecraft it added to the value of its acquisition by creating an educational version of this highly popular online game. It took the 'survival' aspects out of Minecraft and strengthened its building and creativity. Children already familiar with the game have been energetic adopters of M:EE when asked to use it to solve historical, mathematical and scientific challenges.

"CompNow was responsive and worked with us as 'a school' – flowing on to associated education services and technology pricing. That acknowledgement of our standing was very important to us. They tailored specific Minecraft: Education Edition training sessions for our families.."

Ruth Easton

Secretary,
Home Education Australia

AT A GLANCE

Customised training in Microsoft Minecraft: Education Edition was vital to creating confidence and delivering skills in using this engaging tool as part of home education curricula.

THE CHALLENGE

To quickly introduce and foster adoption of Microsoft Minecraft: Education Edition.

THE SOLUTION

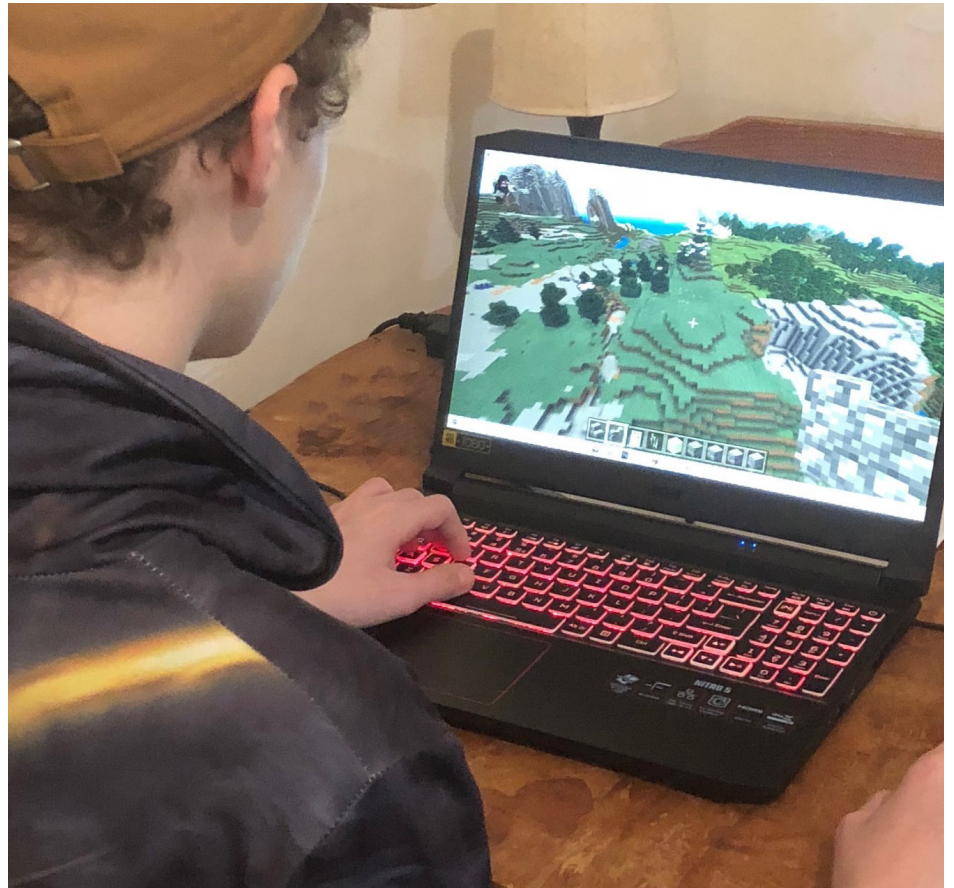
CompNow's tailored training for HEA focussed on the effective integration of digital technologies in teaching and learning. The two Microsoft Minecraft: Education Edition workshops ensured pedagogy, matched with appropriate skills, drives the learning.

THE BENEFITS

- Exclusive portal software offers for home schooling families
- Customised PD/PL courseware for educators

THE PRODUCTS

- PD/PL Tailored Microsoft Minecraft: Education Edition Course
- CompNow's own Microsoft Innovative Educators
- CompNow HEA member procurement portal



As examples, if studying ancient Mesopotamia, the software allows students to faithfully recreate the city, to build a house to scale, using historically accurate and available resources. M:EE also includes real world chemistry and coding projects.

To achieve high rates of adoption, HEA knew M:EE training, designed for member parents, would be vital in lifting the understanding of, and confidence in, using this tool as part of home education curricula.

"For most of us, the idea of Minecraft Education Edition was like learning a new language. Not as intuitive as it is for our kids! The idea of providing online workshops was to take our educator parents from software download through to confident user," Ruth Easton, Secretary of Home Education Australia, says.

THE SOLUTION

CompNow created a customised portal, where HEA parents can purchase hardware and software at the reduced pricing offered to all other educational institutions in Australia.

CompNow has a deep commitment to the education sector and supporting

educators in their vision for student development. Its dedicated PD/PL team members are chosen for their relevant expertise: they hold teaching qualifications, are accredited by Microsoft, and many have multi-media and app development training. With these skillsets they are fully attuned to the needs and focus of those they are training.

The two introductory M:EE sessions were designed for HEA by CompNow to reveal opportunities for links to curriculum and introduce the necessary skillset to home schooling parents. The workshops included the experiences of a building challenge, accessing online resources and links to the Australian Curriculum. Only entry level knowledge of M:EE is required, as educators then have access to hundreds of lesson plans and learning outcomes from the software's online library of resources.

The fully subscribed workshops were offered via MS Teams. "CompNow stepped us through Minecraft – the things our kids know automatically. The session took us into a world which we screen shared with our own log ins. The next level was how to use M:EE in the class setting – giving teacher parents ideas on how the education, project based side of it works" Ruth says.

ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

FROM SESSION 1

"I've gone from struggling to understand what my children were talking about to being competent (need lots of practice to move beyond that!) at the game. I'm looking forward to exploring the Worlds available, using them for education plus developing our own Worlds.

FROM SESSION 2

"I've progressed from barely understanding what my children did in Minecraft to now having a good grasp of the basics of playing but more importantly how I can harness that interest for education. Straight after the workshop I showed my 13 year old the Hanging Gardens of Babylon world. Although he's not a writer, he very quickly created a brief travel log, including captioned photos, showing me his trip through the world. He even built himself more resources, such as a sleeping area and campfire. It only took him 10 minutes! I would never have thought of utilising Minecraft for writing before the training workshops. THANKYOU!!!! He's also 'into' coding in Scratch so we'll be checking out the Coding course and World soon. I'm so thankful for the knowledge I've gained and would strongly recommend other parents undertake the courses.



THE BENEFITS

The affordable access to Microsoft's software has put home schoolers on the same footing as their in-school educated peers.

Ruth says, "CompNow offered the courses for free as part of their software purchasing service. We're a volunteer organisation and home schoolers are often single or no income families – money is always at a premium. That gifting was very helpful. We rarely get quality freebies."

The CompNow courseware creatively opens educators' eyes to the critical, systems, design and computational thinking that promotes self-expression and problem solving in their students.

Ruth says: "The workshops did what they were designed to do. The information was practical and we learnt by doing. The courses were very effective, very interesting and very easy to follow. CompNow took the stress out using M:EE. Our parents are now happy to experiment with using it and exploring its potential."

The COVID-19 lockdowns have prompted many parents to take the home school step, resulting in a rising HEA membership. Access to CompNow's nationwide procurement and PD/PL resources have been of enormous benefit to the organisation.

"We are looking to continue running these introductory courses as new members come on board and to develop further courses with CompNow," Ruth says.

