



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

YEAR:
2012

STATUS:
Laureate

Organization name:
Skype

Organization URL:
www.skype.com

Project Name:
Skype in the classroom

What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address? What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?

Skype in the classroom (SITC) was designed to resolve the problem of geographic, economic or cultural boundaries within the classroom limiting students' educational enrichment. The goal of SITC, a free online community, is to enable teachers anywhere in the world to connect with one another and with subject experts and other resources to facilitate collaboration and shared learning in their classrooms. Teachers who make connections on the resource use Skype video calling to speak with classrooms in other countries for cultural exchange and language lessons, to take virtual field trips to otherwise unaffordable places and to bring otherwise inaccessible experts and authors into their classrooms. With Skype video calling, learning is no longer limited by geographic, economic or cultural boundaries. Demonstrating Skype in the classroom's success in connecting classrooms worldwide since its launch on March 29, 2011, are the following metrics. In the ten months since launch, despite summer vacation for two of those months, 21,246 teachers spread across six continents have registered for the community; 602 resources for the teacher community have been shared; and over 1,500 classroom projects have been created and shared through this new Skype tool.

Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.

Skype video calling is the primary technology used by teachers within the Skype in the classroom resource. With a free Skype account and low-cost webcam, teachers and their students have been able to connect with other educators, experts, classrooms, and more through free one-on-one Skype video calling. We've seen dozens of innovative stories that have resulted from connections made on the Skype in the classroom resource. Examples of these stories include a geography class in the United Kingdom learning how tourism impacted the lives of the Masai people in Tanzania directly from the tribesmen; a classroom lesson by an authority on earthquakes shared by a fifth-grade class in Pennsylvania and its "sister classroom" in Chile (via Group Video Call); an English language class in Vietnam practicing language skills with students in Australia and Canada; and a once-in-a-lifetime conversation between Nobel Peace Prize winner and renowned human-rights activist Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma and students at Virginia Tech.

Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.

Skype in the classroom has given students in remote or disadvantaged areas the opportunity to have an enriched education by connecting with experts, students, and educators who otherwise may be outside their reach. 21,246 teachers have signed up for Skype in the classroom in order to meet new people, discover new cultures and connect with classes from around the world, all without leaving the classroom. 1,513 projects have been listed on Skype in the classroom, allowing for more classrooms to collaborate on educational lessons. 602 resources have been listed on the resource, allowing educators to explore a large shareable library of links, videos and inspirational teaching ideas.

Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.

Skype in the classroom has affected thousands of students across the globe by providing the resources needed to connect with others in the education space. A great example of Skype in the classroom's impact is demonstrated by Skype and Peace One Day's (a non-profit organization committed to raising awareness of Peace Day) partnership to educate students about conflict resolution, global citizenship, human rights, and the link between sustainability and peace. Through this partnership, Peace One Day founder Jeremy Gilley has connected with schools across the globe on the Skype in the classroom resource to encourage students to reduce violence in the homes, communities and schools. Skype video calling has provided students and classrooms access to enriching classroom discussions and resources that otherwise might not be available, clearly demonstrated by Peace One Day's peace lessons to a variety of schools.