

# Here's How to Help ALL the Teachers Using Blackboards to Teach I.T.

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Brian Baglow

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Over the last few days, images of a teacher in Ghana using a blackboard to teach his class to use Microsoft Word was shared thousands of times across social media and news sites.

According to [Quartz](#): "Richard Appiah Akoto, **33**, is the information and communication technology (ICT) teacher at Betenase M/A Junior High School in the town of Sekyedomase, about two and half hours drive north of Ghana's second city, Kumasi. The school has no computers even though since 2011, **14** and **15**-year-olds are expected to write and pass a national exam (without which students cannot progress to high school) with ICT being one of the subjects."

Mr Akoto is not alone, around the world, many teachers are trying to teach computing, without having any actual computers to use.



While in this case, Microsoft has stepped in and stated it will supply the class with a computer, there remain entire schools which would benefit from access to even basic IT equipment.

## **Meet The Turing Trust**

Thankfully there is a solution. The Edinburgh-based [Turing Trust](#) is a charity which takes old computers and office equipment from companies, formats them to industry standards and recycles them, complete with e-learning software, to schools in Africa – and the chances are high that your company can help them.

DIGIT spoke to [Georgia Strachan](#), the fundraising and communications manager for the Trust.

### **DIGIT: Tell us more about what the Turing Trust does.**

**Georgia Strachan:** “The Turing Trust provides reused IT equipment, loaded with educational resources, and training to schools in sub-Saharan Africa. We support schools in delivering IT-supported learning and help students get the digital skills they need to make the most of the digital age.

“We work with a dedicated team of Edinburgh volunteers who help us prepare our donations for use in schools in Malawi, Ghana, Kenya and beyond!”

### **DIGIT: What areas does the Turing Trust cover?**

**Georgia:** “We have worked in Ghana since 2009, where we’ve supported technical colleges up and down the country, bringing digital skills and e-learning resources to students and teachers. We’ve also supported schools and projects in Kenya and Liberia.

“Our current focus is in Malawi where we’re working in the Northern Region to bring IT to both urban and rural secondary schools.

“We’re also building a solar-powered computer lab, the [SolarBerry](#), which is housed in a re-purposed shipping container. This will enable us to bring the benefits of IT and educational resources to off-grid communities across Africa.”

### **DIGIT: What does the Turing Trust need to continue its good work?**

Georgia: “We want to expand across Malawi, covering **80%** of schools by **2023**. To do this we need donations of IT hardware. Research we did with the University of Edinburgh has shown that enabling us use PCs and laptops in schools across Africa, until the end of their lifespan, is **66** time more carbon efficient than simply recycling them on day one. So not only are we supporting students, we’re also having a positive environmental impact!”

“We take donations of laptops and computers which are less than **six** years old and have *Windows 7* or above. Over the last **nine** years we’ve seen how something as simple as an old PC can have such a huge impact on the learning of a young person”

“We want to support as many students as possible and hope you’ll support us!”

### **DIGIT: How can DIGIT readers – and companies across Scotland help?**

Georgia: “Instead of recycling your IT hardware straight away, you can enable the Turing Trust to bring IT-supported learning to students across Africa.

“We take data protection seriously and so all machines we receive are wiped to industry standard before being loaded with our [e-library](#) and used in

schools.

“If you don’t have IT to donate then please donate your time, skills or resources to us. We are always keen to partner with people who can help us with any of the aspects of running a charity needed to ensure we can achieve our goals.

“As well as the core activities of computer refurbishment and the sourcing and collation of educational resources, this also includes professional services, PR and marketing, fundraising, logistics and governance.”

### **James Turing, the founder of the Trust, told DIGIT:**

“Being in Ghana in 2009 and seeing how hard it was for schools to get reasonable PCs at affordable prices really motivated me. I just couldn’t believe it could be that hard! There was a day when I was asked to re-paint the blackboard so they could teach IT and I just thought ‘I need to do something about this!’”

“Coming back to the UK, it was quite easy to get old PCs as it seemed everyone had the issue of what they could do with their old computers. There’s nothing wrong with the PCs, they’re just not the most up-to-date model. However they’re perfect for use in schools and housing our e-library – so why not make the most of them?!”

### **It’s Not Just Computers**

The Turing Trust accepts a wide range of computers and peripherals (monitors, cables, tablets, monitors, keyboards, mice, network switches, etc.) to install computer labs in schools. The charity guarantees that it will format each device to industry standards and provide certification of data destruction for each device.

If you don't have old equipment, the Trust also accepts online cash donations, including [Bitcoin](#) and [Litecoin](#), so any crypto-investors in your company, wondering what to do with their newly acquired riches, point them towards the Trust website.

Every company in the technology sector has a fairly high turnover of equipment. When you next upgrade, rather than recycle, please consider [getting in touch with the Turing Trust](#).