

# Ideas for Bringing Your Own Device (BYOD) Even If You Are Poor

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PM

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When the topic of bring your own device comes up, one of the first complaints we often hear, is "What about the have nots." Yes, there are have nots.

However, students should not only be given the freedom to do what those who have the least can do. Students are not prisoners and they are not widgets. They are people with minds, choices, and parents or guardians who can make decisions and should be empowered to use the learning devices they choose.

While I believe schools should be wired places where community members can access the internet, I do not believe all students need the same tool nor do I believe all students need the

government to provide them with the learning tools they deem best. When we shift our thinking **from** demanding the government provides one-size-fits-some solutions and **move it to** let's empower families to take ownership of securing tools for their learning, change can happen.

Here are some ways even low socio economic status (ses) students can acquire their own technology.

1. **Business Refresh** - Reach out to companies to see when they refresh equipment. Ask if they would consider giving old devices to students.
2. **Craigslist** - Students can use tools like Craigslist to announce that they are in need of a device that someone might be throwing away. Also, look at who is getting rid of devices. Some will give away technology if it is helping a student.
3. **Facebook for Tech** - A teenager I know needed a computer. She put her request on Facebook for anyone who might have an old computer. She had several responses. Students, parents, and teachers can use social media to share requests.
4. **Mentors as resources** - Establish a mentoring program. When I did this students developed relationships with their mentors, many of whom advocated on their behalf which included helping them secure resources for learning.
5. **Entrepreneurs raise money for tech** - The cost of tech has gone down tremendously. It doesn't take a lot for the entrepreneurial student to raise enough money for his or her own tech.
6. **Tweet for Tech** - When I noticed a young girl with autism in a rural neighborhood could

benefit from an iPad I tweeted out a request for anyone updating their iPad 1 with an iPad 2 to donate a device. The young girl had a new iPad that week.

7. **Recycle School Tech** - I've seen schools dump tons of tech because they couldn't sort through the bureaucratic red tape required to give devices to kids. Ummm...gimme a break! Let's reduce the red tape and help schools figure it out.
8. **Payment / Layaway plans** - There are schools that have figured out layaway, leasing, or school discount programs. Schools should be doing their best to provide these options for families for hardware as well as internet access in the home.
9. **Community Tech Day** - Invite the community to come to your school and donate technology for children in need.
10. **Hold a fundraiser** - There are fundraisers for all sorts of things. Let kids work to raise funds for technology. Be creative. Hold a race, a car wash, a tournament.

Yes, there are naysayers who can shoot down every single way I've shared to empower students to secure devices, but when we stop thinking about why we can't and start thinking about how we can, the digital divide narrows before our eyes.

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