

Trinity East uses new technology to teach



INNOVATIVE: Keith Laban with pupils as they scan the Trinity College East monogram.

IMAGINE a school where physical books and posters contain moving pictures just as the newspapers in the classic Harry Potter movies! Currently, this is a reality at one of our local schools, not done by using magic but by using technology!

As we know, schools are constantly looking for new and exciting ways to engage and captivate our 21st century pupils. Notably, Trinity College East is blazing the trail with educational technology, as it recently launched the use of Augmented Reality, or AR, at the school.

This launch took place last week, in the packed hall of enthusiastic pupils and parents, at the school's form one orientation.

Pupils and parents were astounded, as Keith Laban, ICT teacher and the main developer of the Startl Augmented Reality platform, gave a riveting presentation on current opportunities and future possibilities for the school, in terms of technology.

Pioneering

However, a ground-breaking announcement was made during the orientation, that Trinity College East is now a pioneer of Augmented Reality, as its schools' monogram is Augmented Reality activated.

It means that anyone can now scan the pupils' shirt monogram using a smartphone, to magically see video messages sent out by the school.

Augmented Reality is a technology that allows digital content to be overlaid on real world objects, images and geographical locations.

Usually specific image or object triggers are scanned by an AR app and the digital content such as videos and 3D animations are displayed.

This is different from Virtual Reality where the user usually wears a VR headset to see the content.

In 2016, AR became overwhelmingly popular with the release of the game, Pokémon Go. The technology is now being used by large tech companies such as Facebook, SnapChat, Google, Apple and Microsoft. AR and VR are all categorized as MR or Mixed Reality.

Remarkably, Trinity College East will be the very first school in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean, to use Mixed Reality experiences at school.

Simple

In fact, according to Laban, 'Our school may be even the first in the world, to have an Augmented Reality activated schools' monogram! I have done my research and cannot find a single school who attempted this concept.'

This experience is simple, as parents and pupils are required to download the Startl app and use it to scan the Trinity College East's monogram on the pupils' shirt.

To further demonstrate 21st century pupils and technology use, pupils at the school have created the school's promotional video that appears on the pupils' shirt pocket using the AR technology.

Besides the promotional video, the school's administration and teachers can share a range of content with pupils and parents.

These video based messages will be changed frequently, not only to have a variety of content, but also to have parents informed of the school's activities on a regular basis.

Support

This initiative was supported by the school's administration as Laban recalls "Since I introduced the principal of Trinity College East, Mr Derek West, to the technology a few years ago, he has been a huge advocate for the use of AR at the school for teaching and learning."

As a matter of fact, teachers at the school are already on board, creating 3D and video based content, to display on a variety of Augmented Reality activated posters, charts, books and handouts.

It shows grand progress with technology in schools as Laban states, "The Startl Augmented Reality platform will help revolutionise education

in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean in a positive way, by bridging the gap between the physical books and objects at school and the digital world."

Team work

Keith Laban, ICT teacher and Educational Technology Specialist, has been developing Augmented Reality experiences for more than five years.

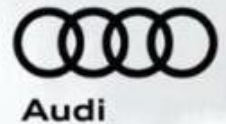
He established a team of developers and launched Startl, the very first Augmented Reality platform to be developed in this region, back in 2016. Laban is also a Microsoft Innovative Educator and he has represented Trinidad and Tobago on several occasions at various Microsoft

Global Education Forums around the world.

The Startl app can be downloaded for free on Google Play or on the App store, along with Startl PE and Startl Colour. Startl PE was created for the new Secondary Schools' Physical Education Workbook while Startl Colour was developed exclusively for the new, innovative, reading and colouring book for children, with local tales being the first in the series.

Free content is available via the **StartlReality** Facebook page and Instagram account and Laban can be contacted at the StartlReality@gmail.com e-mail address.

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