

PC World Education offers laptops for kids

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PC World Education (PCWE) and finance firm Syscap have launched an assault on the education market with a laptop-leasing scheme for schools. However channel players have claimed the duo are late to market with the initiative.

Called HomeWorks, the scheme offers pupils a laptop or PDA from a choice of 20 models for the duration of their school days for 50p per day.

PCWE said most of the take up of HomeWorks will be funded as part of a parent-contributory scheme, but there are also three fulfilment schemes that will enable schools to take advantage of government funding.

Andy Bruen, HomeWorks programme manager at PCWE, told CRN: "The HomeWorks team can advise schools on selecting the most suitable funding programme for them as it can be confusing.

"For example, Computers for Pupils is a government-funded programme for schools to use capital grants to address the digital divide. Two equity schemes are also available that allow schools to apply for

e-Learning Foundation grants that supplement parental donations and can then be used to lease or purchase equipment from us. Schools can also administer the programme through their own registered charity enabling them to benefit fully from the 28p in the pound cash back from Gift Aid."

However, Jamie Russell, group sales director at VAR Stone Computers, said: "This HomeWorks scheme is nothing new – we run a Laptops for Pupils leasing programme and work with Syscap and Wyse Leasing."

Robert May, managing director at VAR Ramsac, said: "Syscap has been offering education finance for some time, as have other finance firms. The problem with providing leasing to schools is that they never know what their budgets will be because it is based on the number of pupils they have."

Bruen defended the PCWE scheme and added: "Syscap do offer a scheme called Learn Anywhere, but with HomeWorks we are offering project management as well." **CRN**

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