

# “Public, Private” Sectors Adopt Educational Technology to Enhance Potential of Thai Education System to Welcome New School Term in New Normal Age



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According to the Education Ministry’s announcement that asked public and private educational institutions to defer the opening of the first school term of the 2020 academic year to July 1, the methods for teaching and learning under the circumstances will be in line with the emergency decree to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which caused disruptions to its academic plans and classroom studies, prompting schools, parents, students to adjust themselves to match new learning approach in the new normal age.

“Digital Technology” to Play Leading Role in Thai Education in New Normal Era

Buddhipongse Punnakanta, Minister of Digital Economy and Society (MDES), said the government and the ministry have been continuously urging all relevant agencies in the public and private sectors to adopt the use of digital technologies and innovation, in which they will be used as the key educational tool to drive the development of Thai education in the new normal age to welcome the opening of the new school term on July 1. The classroom studies will be conducted under the strict social distancing guidelines to prevent the virus transmissions in line with the preventative measures of the Ministry of Public Health, aiming to boost confidence for all parties concerned.

Dr. Nuttapon Nimmanphatcharin, President/CEO of Digital Economy Promotion Agency (depa), said that digital technology has come to play a significant role in education. It has led to collaboration between educational institutions and digital startups. BearCON Corporation (BearCON), an IoT platform developer, is one of Thai digital startups to take part in developing the “Smart Education

and E-learning” platform for schools under the supervision of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). BearCON also developed a mobile application to look after the health and safety of students. It is also a digital startup firm that received assistance and support from the depa to start up business development in the digital industry.

“Such development of Smart Education and E-learning platform is not only the new solution for Thai education in the new normal age; it is also a major step forward to leveraging Thailand’s educational technology. The depa considers that providing support to the development of technologies across industries under the public-private partnership and collaboration such as digital technologies and innovation for agriculture, enhancing government services, healthcare, finance, tourism and education is an important mechanism to move Thailand

forward both in terms of social and economic developments. It also provides inspiration to further grow Thailand’s digital industry, similar to what our neighboring countries in the region had already done,” said the President/CEO of depa.

#### Digital Startups Take Part in Transforming Education & Learning Approach

Pollakorn Pimsuwan, Managing Director of BearCON Corporation, said the company collaborated with the BMA’s Department of Education during the COVID-19 crisis to develop an online learning platform under the name “BMA Media” with an aim to serve as the educational solution to welcome the opening of the new school term on July 1. It is the hybrid solution to education and learning in the physical classroom and online learning class, depending on the appropriateness and suitability of each school.

The “BMA Media” learning development project has seen constructive progress as it has been piloted in several schools under the supervision of the BMA. In the first phase, schools are allowed to create educational content in each learning category prior to forwarding to the Department of Education for consideration and selection. The department will subsequently upload the selected learning content onto the online learning platform so that students are able to start learning from the BMA Media on July 1. In the second phase, teachers will be responsible for laying out learning schedules and creating the examination outline for students. There is a timetable created to record the number of students and class attendance data. Meanwhile, the artificial intelligence (AI) technology will be employed in the next phase to help with educational evaluation in each learning category.

“The e-learning platform under “BMA Media” is a vital tool to alter the face of Thailand’s educational and learning landscape after the opening of the new school term in the new normal era. BearCON expects it to be implemented at 437 schools under the supervision of the BMA, which have over 280,000 students,” said Phonlakorn.

Moreover, BearCON piloted a health and safety monitoring system that was practically used at Thai Niyom Songkhro School such as the installation of PM2.5 and PM10 dust particle sensing systems that can provide a real-time report of weather conditions and air quality on a mobile application. There is a dashboard installed to display the volume of dust detected. The company also developed water-spraying devices and a smartwatch to track health-related data of students and record it in a mobile app so that parents can follow up on the progress of their children’s health and physical developments to see if it is in line with the physical health development

standard of the Ministry of Public Health. Digital technology also provides convenience to teachers in collecting and recording health-related data of their students for self-calculation of malnutrition. The company also plans to install CCTV cameras for body temperature monitoring and recording times of students entering and leaving school.

## Educational Institutions Ready for New Normal of Learning Starting July 1

Educational institutions have never hesitated to adjust themselves to be ready for the opening of the upcoming school term. Thai Niyom Songkhro School is one of the biggest schools in Bangkok District under the Department of Education, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. The school has over 2,700 students and it has prepared strict health safety measures to welcome the new school term such as the installation of hand sanitizing gel dispensers, screening checkpoints for visitors to the school, scanning Thai Chana QR code for check-in before entering the school, hand-washing stations, observation of social distancing practices, distribution of face masks and face shields for students. Learning and teaching timetables are rescheduled to make it more appropriate as the number of classrooms is increased to reduce density of students in a classroom. The school also collaborated with BearCON to launch a health and safety measurement project.

Jiraporn Patumtewapibal, Director of Thai Niyom Songkhro School, said students from the elementary level to Prathomsuksa 3 level will attend the school everyday for the new school term, while students from Prathumsuksa 4 level to Matthayomsuksa 3 level will attend the school alternately for three days per week along with attending online classes. This allows students to further get in touch with the digital technology in the educational aspect. Teachers will play a greater role in drawing up learning courses and producing learning content for the online learning platform and might be a part of the BMA Media. This COVID crisis is regarded as an opportunity that prompts everyone to adjust themselves to keep pace with the changing environment.

## Government Stands Ready to Work with All Parties to Move the Country Forward

“The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in daily lives of people across the globe. It is inevitable as the world is more open. If we do not adjust ourselves and find new opportunities, we will not be able to keep pace with other countries. The government will not take the lead in developing or even thinking out about new projects, but the government will provide full support and assistance in order to achieve a collective, participatory collaboration with all parties involved. It is in preparation for changes of the world in the new normal age to steer Thailand to eventually become a stable, wealthy country with sustainability,” said the President/CEO of depa.

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