

BENEFITS OF THE DIGITALEdge PROGRAM

Schools, agencies and other organizations are increasing the use of technology on a daily basis for communication, collaboration, research, presentations and data-driven decision-making. In order to do so, they must have access to a wide variety of technology solutions that meet their needs. Yet, purchasing technology can be financially draining on an institution's budget.

For eight years, the Educational Technology Support Center at Educational Service District 112 (ESD112) in Vancouver, Washington, has been soliciting bids and awarding contracts for instructional technology solutions on behalf of schools and agencies in Washington State. In 2007, we named this purchasing program DigitalEdge, and opened it up to seven neighboring states. In 2009, four additional states were named in the bid.

In 2007-09, over \$22 million in products were sold through DigitalEdge contracts, marking it as the most successful purchasing program for schools and public agencies in the Western United States.

Most Competitive Pricing:

1. Since 2002, **over \$54 million in products** have been sold through the DigitalEdge purchasing program, **saving schools and agencies, on average, 20% in costs**.
2. Savings are realized by schools and public agencies of all sizes as a result of **total volume purchasing**, exceeding discounts realized through individual purchasing efforts.
3. DigitalEdge prices **include the cost of shipping and handling** on all orders (except Alaska and Hawaii), regardless of the total amount of the order.
4. DigitalEdge provides prices on orders that are **as small as only one unit** of a product.
5. Suppliers can offer a **more competitive price adjustment on their product line** at any time, resulting in a more competitive contract price for all eligible purchasers.
6. Eligible purchasers have **access to specials and promotions** by DigitalEdge suppliers.
7. Suppliers can **bundle products** in a way that meets buyers' needs, resulting in even more competitive pricing.
8. DigitalEdge suppliers agree to offer their **most competitive pricing** available under a comparable educational or governmental contract.
9. Pricing adjustments are offered in **four different ways**: (1) equipment; (2) accessories and supplies; (3) warranties and maintenance; and (4) network equipment and components.

Flexibility:

10. The Terms and Conditions of the DigitalEdge contracts with suppliers allow them to offer **even greater discounts on a case by case basis** when volume purchasing is required by the purchaser.
11. DigitalEdge requires that suppliers provide **up-to-date pricing** on a monthly basis to reflect the dynamic changes in technology products and pricing, and assures that the current prices are equal to, or lower than, the prices that were originally bid.
12. Suppliers are allowed to include **new products that are added** to a manufacturer's product line during the term of the DigitalEdge contract. In addition, products are removed from the DigitalEdge product and price list when they are no longer available.
13. Purchasers can request **additional product lines** that they would like to see included in the DigitalEdge purchasing program.
14. The contract's Terms and Conditions provide **flexibility** that often does not exist in other local or state contracts, therefore responding to the changes that occur in technology markets.

Convenience:

15. There are **no DigitalEdge membership fees or administrative add-ons** for purchasers to pay.
16. Purchasers buy their products directly from the suppliers, and the products are shipped **directly to the purchaser's "Ship To" address** on their purchase order within four weeks.
17. DigitalEdge eliminates the need for schools and agencies to bid on the same products, **reducing their total cost of ownership**. Purchasers in the eight states can procure their equipment quickly and efficiently off of the DigitalEdge contract, making it even a better value.
18. Purchasers in other states can **piggyback off of the DigitalEdge contracts** when their own governing laws allow them to do so, and when the supplier has chosen to extend DigitalEdge prices to them.
19. Purchasers buy directly from the suppliers, but submit a copy of their purchase orders to the DigitalEdge office for random **price verification**.
20. Eligible purchasers that wish to utilize the DigitalEdge contract can request an Interlocal agreement from the DigitalEdge office and be assured that it will be sent to them in a **timely manner**. In addition, they only have to enter into the Interlocal agreement once, as it is an ongoing document.

Access to Information:

21. DigitalEdge provides buyers with a **method of shopping** across many manufacturer product lines, with assurance that the pricing is up-to-date and competitive.
22. Purchasers use the **DigitalEdge website** to locate the products and pricing they need.
23. The DigitalEdge website is very easy to use, providing an **online environment** to find the product and price lists, bid documents, affidavits, and other information that is pertinent to their needs.
24. The DigitalEdge **Product and Price List** is kept current and is available as a downloadable PDF document on the DigitalEdge website.
25. While the DigitalEdge awards contracts on entire manufacturer product lines, the Product and Price List includes the **best sellers** and **most popular products**.
26. Suppliers are required to have a **DigitalEdge-specific web site** that includes product, contact, ordering, and tracking information. Purchasers can find a link to each supplier's website by going to the DigitalEdge website at **digitaledge.esd112.org**.

Fidelity, Reliability and Integrity:

27. During the 2006 Performance Audit of ESD 112, the DigitalEdge purchasing program was identified as ***a solid purchasing process for products used to integrate technology in the classrooms!*** It was also named as one of the 13 exemplary ESD programs!
28. DigitalEdge operates **in accordance with state bid laws**, and the contract is made available to K-12 public and private schools, colleges and universities, public libraries, educational service agencies, state departments of education, and government agencies, eliminating the need for them to conduct their own competitive bids on the same equipment.
29. The DigitalEdge office conducts reviews of products and prices that are noted on purchase orders, verifying that the bid prices are **valid** and represent an amount that conforms to the vendor's bid, as well as the contract's Terms and Conditions.
30. DigitalEdge is **not aware of any audit findings** among schools and organizations that have purchased equipment off of the DigitalEdge contract.
31. Purchasers can **provide feedback** to the DigitalEdge administrator regarding their experiences with suppliers, and can share ideas and recommendations regarding how to improve the purchasing program.
32. Suppliers can **provide feedback** to the DigitalEdge administrator regarding their observations and recommendations as a reseller of the instructional technology and audio-visual products.

Direct Customer Service:

33. Suppliers are encouraged to **return phone calls** to purchasers within 24 hours of the original call.
34. Suppliers are required to be available for **onsite assistance** when an eligible purchaser requests product demonstrations and assistance with product evaluation, selection, training and other types of customer support.
35. DigitalEdge purchasers can be guaranteed that the products they purchase through the contract are **brand new with new serial numbers**. They are also guaranteed to be free of liens.
36. Products are shipped **FOB: Destination**, which means that products that are damaged during shipment will be the responsibility of the supplier or manufacturer to replace.
37. Suppliers can arrange for **express shipping** when the need arises.
38. Suppliers are kept **up-to-date** on matters such as how to inform purchasers to prepare to utilize the DigitalEdge purchasing program.
39. Suppliers will correct orders discrepancies and shipping errors.

Value-Added Support and Training:

40. The DigitalEdge Bid Administrator is available to provide **support to purchasers** when administrative, operational and technical problems arise. S/He serves as a liaison between the purchaser and supplier to help with conflict resolution.
41. The DigitalEdge office checks market prices to ensure that DigitalEdge products are **priced as competitively as possible**.
42. A **DigitalEdge Buyer's Guide** is available for download off of the website at digitaledge.esd112.org helping to ensure that all parties have a clear understanding of the program and can take advantage of the benefits to both purchasers and suppliers.
43. DigitalEdge participates in **conferences and other regional and national events** to disseminate information about the program and to answer questions.
44. DigitalEdge works with regional ESD's in some of the states to help ensure that the purchasers in their regions have access to **a nearby contact person** who is familiar with the program.
45. **The DigitalEdge Director is available** to talk to Purchasers about best practices, instructional uses and research on the products. In addition, the Director will make visitations to each state to meet with Purchasers, explain the program, and answer questions.

Informational Webinars:

46. Webinars are scheduled **on a weekly basis** to assist Purchasers in developing a deeper understanding of the educational value of the products that are on the DigitalEdge contract, and to provide information that will assist them in making decisions about the solutions that will best meet their needs.
47. **Webinar topics include:** what the research says about how various products improve student learning, teacher performance, etc.; information on “trends” in product development; general differences among technologies; how various technologies can improve student learning and performance; and possibly a sample deployment at a district or college site.
48. These webinars are presented from **experts in the field** in which they work.
49. The **cost of the webinars is minimal**. At \$15 per webinar, district staff save time and travel by gleaning information from the experts on the various topics.
50. An introduction to the DigitalEdge purchasing program is offered once a month at no charge. These webinars provide **an overview of the DigitalEdge program** and assists Purchasers in the use of the DigitalEdge web site.

Research and Development:

51. White papers are available on how several of the **technologies support research-based instructional strategies**, or how they improve the learning conditions for students.
52. In partnership with the ESD 112 Educational Technology Support Center, DigitalEdge offers **professional development** on the use of many of the interactive technologies to support best practices in the classroom setting.
53. DigitalEdge offers **presentations on research** of much of the equipment, sharing information on the use of various technologies, to help overcome some of the instructional and conditional barriers to learning.

And most importantly...

54. The DigitalEdge program allows eligible purchasers to select products from a **wide range of manufacturer product lines**, allowing them to look for and choose products that meet their standards for quality, features, and price points.

Alaska • California • Colorado • Hawaii • Idaho • Montana
Nevada • New Mexico • Oregon • Utah • Washington • Wyoming