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Israeli startup [Time To Know](#) is out to revolutionize education by offering schools a new digital teaching platform and interactive curriculum. The company's ambitious goal: to radically change the way teachers and students interact.

Founded in 2004 and located in a cheerfully painted former girls college in Jaffa, [Time To Know](#) has raised \$60 million in funding spearheaded by Shmuel Meitar, a co-founder of customer care and billing software giant Amdocs ([DOX](#)). The company has won contracts with schools in Israel, the state of Texas, and New York City, and counts 350 employees around the world.

The flaws in today's "chalk and talk" educational system, which has remained pretty much unchanged for the last century, are widely recognized. But attempts to fix it by bolting on computers and connectivity have so far had only limited success—partly due to a lack of relevant educational content and software tools, says Dovi Weiss, Time To Know's Chief Pedagogical Officer and a co-founder of the company. "What is needed is a holistic approach," he says.

Enter Time To Know's Web-based software, which forms the basis for a suite of tools ranging from course planning and classroom management to group collaboration and student assessment. At the core is a collection of interactive curriculum in math and language arts (reading, writing and comprehension), as well as English as a second or foreign language. Thanks to its real-time nature, Time To Know gives teachers immediate feedback on which students in the classroom are succeeding or falling behind. "What we are building is a partnership between teachers and technology," says Weiss.

Time To Know's digital platform was developed by a team of some 340 educators, software developers, and graphic and creative designers. It is "one of the major pillars" of a five-year, nationwide plan in Israel to increase the use of computers in schools, says Weiss. The company hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at one of the schools using Time To Know technology on June 3 to demonstrate how the software can not only help make learning more fun and interactive but also increase understanding of complex mathematical concepts and improve language listening and comprehension skills.

Weiss and Time To Know co-founders Molly Globus and Paz Litman were invited to travel with Israeli President Shimon Peres to South Korea the week of June 7 as part of a delegation to advance Israeli interests in that country. "Education is a very high national priority in Korea so it is a very logical match," says Weiss.

The Israeli startup's technology is also being tested as part of [New York City's Innovation Zone](#) (iZone) program. In June, New York City School Chancellor Joel Klein announced that twenty of the 81 schools in the project will implement Time to Know's digital platform and interactive curriculum in the 2010-2011 school year. All told, 63 fourth and fifth grade classes will use Time To Know's technology. The iZone pilot sites are testing ways that content is taught to allow more customization.

Time To Know's digital platform currently covers grades four to six but Weiss says plans are in the works to expand it to grades three to nine. The company is also working on an English as a Foreign Language edition of the core curriculum in Arabic, and is seeking strategic partners in Spanish-speaking countries and other parts of the world. "The same digital platform can be used in primary schools in all countries," says Weiss. "Using our content tools strategic partners will be able to adapt it to the local education system."

Of course, schools adopting the system need to equip each classroom with a projector and provide every teacher and every student with laptop and wireless Internet connectivity. But since the software is Web-based no time or money is lost installing the software on computers.

Time To Know prides itself on the very user-friendly interface it has developed for teachers. Only two days of orientation training is needed, Weiss says. Teachers can plan their lessons by adapting the core curriculum to fit their teaching styles and local requirements, either by selecting pre-defined lesson sequences containing animations, exploration activities, games and videos, or by mixing and matching to create their own.

Teachers control what's happening in the classroom through a digital dashboard that lets them launch, pause, and switch learning activities on each student's computer or on the whiteboard. Teachers also can shift between class wide, group, and individualized instruction.

As the lesson progresses, students are asked to answer questions on their laptops, and their progress is forwarded to the teacher automatically. The platform then lets teachers assign, in real-time, individualized assignments that match each students' grasp of the subject.

Allowing students to learn at their own pace and according to their own proficiency makes the complex task of teaching students with differing needs easier for teachers, says Weiss. It will also help schools save money because classroom sizes can be bigger without negatively affecting students, he says. Weiss says that adding just one student per class will pay for the price of the software. Pricing depends on the number of students using the system and the amount of content they consume.

Of course, integrating technology into the heart of a school's curriculum will require some tech support. Weiss says he figures that every school with 500 students or more will have to start employing at least one IT specialist. "Any organization using tech in a meaningful way cannot do without an IT person," he says.

The involvement of Amdocs' Shmuel Meitar was crucial to Time To Know. He is not only a financial backer but also the co-founder of Ramat Gan-based [Aurec Group](#), which provided resources and expertise to the startup. Aurec is an international investment group with a 40-year track record of building more than a dozen operating companies from inception to maturity in industries such as media, communication, enterprise software, and advertising. Amdocs is itself a spin-out of Aurec.

The next step is for Time To Know to find strategic partners that will help it expand internationally. "Our strategy is to find very strong local partners who will be able to take our

technology and knowhow to create the system and content for the local country," says Weiss. "We are looking for powerful publishers or an IT company with the capability to pedagogically and technically support our system."

There is a strong incentive for schools around the world to move to 21st century teaching methods, says Weiss. Students who use multimedia tools outside the classroom don't learn effectively in classrooms using outdated, dry methods such as "chalk and talk" or "drill and kill." And, teachers have difficulty tracking students' process without the benefit of real-time hard data, meaning many students end up falling behind.

But the real selling point may very well be economic. Time To Know's software will save money because schools can add more students without hiring more teachers. What's more, schools using traditional methods are not churning out students prepared for 21st century careers. If Time To Know can help solve that issue it could positively affect the global economy—making a tough assignment a little easier for governments around the world.