Policy goals
The Department of Basic Education (DBE) was one of the first government departments to introduce public policy for integrating ICTs in teaching and learning. The policy goal of the White Paper on e-Education (Education White Paper 7, South Africa, 2004, section 2.23) is: “Every South African manager, administrator, teacher and learner in general and further education and training will be ICT capable by 2013.” The question was whether that goal had been achieved, what the challenges were, and what could be done to take the goal further.

Being ICT capable was described as follows:
• ICT capable people are able to access information in the digital era, manage information effectively, interpret and integrate the results of research.
• They are also able to evaluate the quality of these results, and create new information by adapting, applying, designing, inventing or authoring information.
• ICT capable people use ICT, invent new ICT applications, and demonstrate improvement in attaining learning outcomes and 21st century skills.

It is a matter of concern to the DBE that the goal has not been achieved. The DBE considers that the White Paper is still relevant.

The policy goal of the White Paper on e-Education is supported by the Information Society and Development (ISAD) Plan 2006, which pin-points e-education as one of three priorities (DoC, 2006, section 4.1.1) and states: “The education system of this country therefore, has an obligation to support the development of a citizenry that can actively participate in this new (information) society and deliver on public expectations of delivering quality education for economic growth and social development.”

Two of the main targets for e-education (DoC, 2006, p 58) are:
• All schools connected and using ICT for teaching and learning.
• All provinces have a budget allocated for e-education.

The policy foundation for e-education appears to be relatively comprehensive, located in various components of the government machinery. As the policy anniversary of 2014 is with us now, this foundation will require reviewing and updating where necessary.

Strategic objectives
The White Paper outlines the following strategic objectives for effective integration of ICT into teaching and learning:
• ICT professional development
• Electronic content resources
• Infrastructure
• Connectivity
• Community engagement
• Research and development.

The fundamental issues are teacher development and ensuring that every teacher and learner has access to electronic content. These elements have to be in place when e-learning infrastructure is rolled out through connectivity to each school in the country.
Progress made in the implementation of e-learning

As part of its monitoring and support to provinces, the DBE receives quarterly reports on ICT implementation in provinces. In the 2013/14 financial year, the DBE conducted an internal audit of ICT initiatives in all provinces. There have been a number of initiatives over the past ten years, some driven by government and others by NGOs, but the DBE was not aware of all these initiatives in the various provinces. The aim of the audit was to take stock of ICT implementation in the provinces over the past ten years. The audit did not look at the impact of the ICT initiatives in provinces, however, but it is a build up to that effect.

At least 162 ICT initiatives were implemented in the provinces:
- 64.2% (104 ICT initiatives) of ICT initiatives addressed individual strategic objectives. Of the 64.2%, 30% of the initiatives addressed the ICT infrastructure strategic objective.
- Connectivity was the least targeted strategic objective (14.4%).
- 35.8% (58 ICT initiatives) of ICT initiatives addressed a combination of strategic objective.
- 32.8% (19 ICT initiatives) of ICT initiatives addressed all four main strategic objectives.
- 19% (11 ICT initiatives) of ICT initiatives addressed three strategic objectives.
- 48.3% (28 ICT initiatives) of ICT initiatives addressed two strategic objectives.

As regards the partnership between the public and private sectors, the audit found:
- 42% (68 ICT initiatives) of ICT initiatives were supported by the private sector.
- 58% (94 ICT initiatives) of ICT initiatives were supported by the public sector.

As regards the coverage of the initiatives:
- 111 ICT initiatives (68.5%) were of a provincial nature.
- 51 ICT initiatives (31.5%) were of a national nature.
- 36 (70.6%) of the 51 initiatives of a national nature were funded by the private sector.

With respect to expenditure on ICT initiatives, 87.4% was spent on ICT initiatives that targeted a combination of strategic objectives (integrated initiatives). Of this amount, 98.9% was spent on Gauteng Online and the Khanya project in the Western Cape (with Gauteng Online being the most expensive). A question for consideration is whether there are discernible differences between the two provinces with the highest expenditure on ICT in schools, and the other provinces.

Some of the national ICT initiatives include:
- Content: Interactive workbooks
- Infrastructure: resourcing of 40 ICT Teacher Resource Centres through partnerships with the private sector; Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) schools resourced with ICT infrastructure; resource schools (including multi-grade schools) with ICT infrastructure in partnership with private sector
- ICT professional development: facilitated training through partnerships with the private sector and other government departments
- Connectivity: Facilitating the connectivity of schools through partnerships with the private sector and other government departments. The DBE is in the process of establishing a DBE cloud (www.dbecloud.org.za) through partnerships with other government departments, which will make free content available for every person in South Africa. The DBE appeals to those with content to make it available for the DBE cloud.
The DBE acknowledges that it cannot take responsibility on its own for ICT integration in schools. Expert guidance is required from universities, resources from the private sector and human resources located in NGOs. The private sector supported 42% of the ICT initiatives in schools as identified by the audit, while the public sector supported 58%, including not only the DBE but also the departments of Science and Technology, Communication, and Rural Development and Land Reform.

Conclusion
The DBE considers that the White Paper on e-Education is still relevant and needs to be implemented. Partnerships between the public and private sectors must be strengthened. An integrated approach to implementing ICT initiatives across the strategic objectives is recommended. Monitoring and evaluation of initiatives are critical to the success of ICT implementation.

In closing, Mr Mnisi shared an inspirational quotation: “If you have the will to win, you have achieved half your success. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm”. 