

Taking learning to the next level: Melbourne tech company a global hit



by [Georgina Jerums](#) / 29 Oct 2019

Melbourne company KNeoMedia is using revolutionary technology to help school children get great academic results both here and overseas. Here's how.

Wrestling an electronic device off schoolchildren so they do their homework can be a monumental task. Ask most parents. Yet increasingly, technology and education go hand in hand.

Welcome to the fast-merging world of digital story and game-based learning – or edtech – of which Melbourne-based online education publishing company, [KNeoMedia](#) (it's pronounced 'knee-oh' – the 'k' is silent) is a global leader.

Floated on the Australian Stock Exchange in 2011, KNeoMedia's education portal KneoWorld has content for students aged four to 14 where lessons are created as anime art storybook adventures.

"The innovative stories are populated with practice and test games that track student progression in a non-invasive way," explains KNeoMedia CEO, James Kellett. "They've been a huge hit with teachers and students alike and the games protocol demonstrates a student's mastery of the subject. Categories of learning – including literacy, maths, art, science, critical thinking and life skills – are all mapped to regional standards so educators can measure a student's understanding by the state standard."

Story and game-based learning, predicts James, is the way of the future. "Students of all ages are tech-savvy, and teachers are now embracing this way of engaging students to learn. Our programs help educators meet the challenges of 21st century teaching by providing best practice models all aligned to the relevant curriculum. Research validates our platform's ability to thoroughly engage students, and teachers know that when kids are engaged, they're prepared to learn."

Accessibility is a key distinction of the platform: it's being used in both general and special needs education because content can be curated to suit an individual student's needs, regardless of academic capacity. "It has proven to be highly effective in traditional classroom settings but is also a very effective teaching tool for challenged learners with diagnoses that impact their capacity to learn in traditional instructional settings," says James, adding: "How do you assess children who are non-verbal if you don't have technology? For the first time, by using education entertainment technology, their worlds expand."

This year, Leeds City Council in the UK used KneoWorld as part of their "Read for Leeds" initiative, initially for 1000 students with learning difficulties. It adds to KNeoMedia's success in servicing a number of schools internationally, including across New York City's five boroughs in what's called District 75: the largest special needs education district in the US with over 26,000 students. Since 2017, KNeoMedia has sold more than 14,500 seat licences which are per child, for a period of 12 months.

Making it in the Big Apple was certainly a high point for the company to date. "It's not an easy market to break into but they were keen to be part of the creation of the platform and we've been actively working with many educators in all five boroughs of New York City for some years," says James.

Florida, Pennsylvania, Arizona, California, Ohio, London, Leeds and the Philippines are also using the portal, as is a special needs school in Melbourne's inner north, which is providing powerful insights for future development. "Our approach here in this important but relatively small market (compared to the US and UK) is to have a best practice flagship school where we concentrate our resources," says James. "We're working closely with this school on several projects as part of a statewide roll out strategy. And KNeoWorld has also been implemented in after school programs in Corio for special needs students."

Such popularity isn't surprising given that real time individual assessment of progress is also possible with the program, James notes. "Our program analytics provide real-time feedback to teachers showing just what students can do and where they are in mastering concepts and skills for both special needs and mainstream classes. In many cases in special needs classes, students are of vastly different ages and academic levels. The consequence of that is more often than not, they're left out. But our platform unlocks their world. The customised content allows them to grasp concepts at their own level – for example, a learner may need to work at Grade 2 literacy but be capable of managing Grade 7 maths. Accommodating this student by student is very easy for teachers on our platform."

Success hasn't come easy, though. "It has taken an enormous amount of effort and trial and error to get to where we are today and most importantly, we're only now seeing substantial sales generated from all that work," confesses James, but he believes all the hard work is very much worth it. "We're helping students of all abilities reach their potential and promoting educational equity to close the achievement gap."

How the Victorian Government is helping KNeoWorld take on the world

James explains, "we struggled for many months opening a UK bank account and had no idea how to solve it. Then the Victorian Government connected us with a contact at the UK Department for International Trade who knew the issues involved and were able to assist.

"Our invitation to a Victorian Government business breakfast for the Mayor of the City of London was extremely valuable, too. KNeoWorld's Chairman, Lord Anthony St. John, met with the City of London and had a promising discussion about our products. It now appears we'll shortly commence a trial of our product in the City of London.

"Also, [Global Victoria](#) is very active and supportive and we'll be working with them in all our markets, including the US and UK. Our recent success in the UK has led to a recent hire of a production manager in Melbourne, who'll oversee expansion of our local team as we ramp curriculum content production and system functionality to support growth."

Source: <https://connection.vic.gov.au/taking-learning-to-the-next-level-melbourne-tech-company-a-global-hit>