

Parents had Wifi switches installed in a Finnish school

In the Fiskars primary school located in Raasepori in Southern Finland parents have long struggled against Ipad and Wifi based learning. They couldn't prevent the installation of Wifi hot spots, but their struggle had results: now in every class room there is a switch by which the radiation emitting hot spot can be turned off.

Most parents and teacher of the Fiskars school opposed the plan of Raasepori city administration to use tablets and microwave based wireless network in the school. Their critical stand was based on the recommendations of the Council of Europe*, health risks**, pedagogy, the limitations of tablets as computers, and the desire to keep children's screen time reasonable. In spring 2016 names were collected to a petition demanding postponement of the Wifi and tablet school project. The petition was signed by 90 parents whose children are in Fiskars school now or will be in the near future. In the school there are only 60 pupils.

As the city was not forthcoming to the demand of parents and teachers, they suggested a compromise: let us install switches to the Wifi hot spots so that there wouldn't be radiation when tablets were not in use. However, the city officials maintained that installing the switches is technically impossible.

Somehow this impossibility was overcome in December 2016 when the switches were indeed installed to every classroom. Earlier the microwave radiators were on 24/7 as in numerous other schools in many countries. Now the Wifi hot spot is normally turned off. The teacher puts it on only when tablets are used and the Internet connection is needed. The timer in the switch turns it automatically off after 30 or 60 minutes so that you cannot accidentally leave the hot spot radiating for a long time.

The teachers have been satisfied with the new switches. They find the installation of the switches sensible also therefore that in the first grades tablets are only rarely used.

The installation work was done by a professional electrician. It was financed by a local child welfare association. The city administration did not support the project financially or otherwise but after long negotiations it gave a permission to install the switches.

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*) The resolution 815 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council adopted in 2011 "The potential dangers of electromagnetic fields and their effect on the environment" (<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-EN.asp?FileID=17994&lang=EN>) states: "The Assembly recommends that the member states of the Council of Europe ... for children in general, and particularly in schools and classrooms, give preference to wired Internet connections, and strictly regulate the use of mobile phones by schoolchildren on school premises;"

**) About the health risks see for example the International EMF Scientist Appeal signed by 224 scientist from 41 nations. All of these researchers have published peer-reviewed papers on the biological or health effects of non-ionizing radiation. According to the appeal these effects include "increased cancer risk, cellular stress, increase in harmful free radicals, genetic damages, structural and functional changes of the reproductive system, learning and memory deficits, neurological disorders, and negative impacts on general well-being in human": <https://www.emfscientist.org/index.php/emf-scientist-appeal>