Canons High School Case Study

How Axess Systems implemented a Thin Client solution for Canons High School, which enabled them to do even more with less.

Canons High School

Background

With the ever growing demand for ICT in education, combined with its increasing complexity, but faced with tightening budgets, the pressures encountered by ICT staff have never been greater.

In response many have looked at the alternative options of how they could manage their network… one which is more reliable, easier to support, has less impact on the environment and is more cost effective.

The Situation

Iqbal Rehman, ICT Manager of Canons High School in Harrow, found himself in this common situation. With a team of just two, he supported of over 500 desktop computers, together with servers, phones, fax machines, copiers, projectors, and interactive white-boards. "To carry out both the day to day maintenance and implement new technology was putting an incredible strain on resources" commented Iqbal, "We were spending so much time on fire fighting problems it was near impossible to develop our ICT strategy."

Already an advocate of Server Based Computing, Iqbal was very aware of the numerous benefits, but he also thought that it had limitations for educational use. This was on such aspects as using graphical Education applications, and integrating interactive white boards.

Results Achieved

- Reduced cost of ownership
- Energy savings = Less environmental impact
- Increased efficiency of ICT staff
- Increased reliability
- Increased control and security

See in depth report on page 3

The Solution

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Iqbal Rehman
ICT Manager

After speaking with a colleague in a neighbouring school, Iqbal approached Axess Systems for independent advice and guidance. With a strong track record of working within education, and their specialism in Server Based Computing, Axess were ideally placed to answer some questions about how Canons High School could go about implementing a centralised solution.

To resolve the issues of integrating the media rich education applications, along with the interactive white boards, Axess Systems recommended a WYSE solution.

The proposed solution consisted of thin client desktop devices combined with Wyse Streaming Manager (WSM) thereby enabling the delivery of both the operating system and the applications to the desktop, where they run locally.

By "streaming" the operating system and the software applications independently of each other, WSM makes it possible for Thin Client desktop devices to operate just like PCs, but without the local storage.

To test the capabilities of the solution, Iqbal initiated a small pilot exercise, and spotted the benefits, instantly. "We immediately saw that this was the way to go! It was easy to deploy, performed well, and saved us countless hours on administration. I could make a change to Windows XP, put it on the server, and I was done in minutes."

The success of the pilot exercise led to Canons High School completing an initial roll out programme, which is now complete. Additional IT suites can now be deployed quickly, with minimum disruption and with predicable results.

"To resolve the issues of intergrating the media rich education applications, including the interactive whiteboards, Axess Systems recommended a Wyse Solution."

The Benefits

"Thin clients solutions have fundamentally changed the way we think about and invest in computers. We won't be deploying traditional computers in the school any more..."

Reduced cost of ownership
The move to using Wyse Thin Client and Wyse Streaming Manager has already paid huge dividends. It has helped Canons High School greatly reduce the amount of management time associated with their ICT, and as a result has increased the school's return on investment (ROI) with a more productive and reliable solution.

Energy savings equals less impact on the environment
As the Wyse Thin Client desktop devices consume about 75 watts, compared with about 300 watts for a traditional desktop PC, the amount of power saving for the school is clear. This has obvious environmental as well as financial benefits.

Education specific applications through Thin Client
By utilising WSM this enabled the networking of specific graphical Education applications, and the interactive white boards.

Increased efficiency of ICT staff
Centralised Server Based Computing enables Iqbal's small ICT team to be even more efficient and able to maintain a low IT staff to student ratio, without compromising the quality of their service.

Iqbal reports that the number of calls logged by staff and students has decreased considerably. "Most of the problems raised can be rectified quickly and usually without a desk side visit. With our previous PC network we had to "touch" every station to fix it. The time saving by using the Thin Client solution is clear. Even if the terminals are located in remote sites, we still don't have to travel to other buildings!"

Increased Reliability
As the Thin Client solution is exceptionally reliable, repairs have been virtually nil, a very welcome change for both pupils, teachers and ICT staff alike.

Increased Control and Security
With so many people having access to each desktop PC in the school, the ICT staff faced a great challenge in keeping the PC's consistent. Pupils and staff contributed to the problem by bringing in software and loading it onto the PC's without checking licensing, virus or compatibility.

The Thin Client solution eliminated these issues immediately, as the desktop device has no local storage. And as preferences are stored centrally, it makes it easy for Iqbal to control preferences and eliminate viruses or spy-ware from downloads.

With improved consistency and reliability, the ICT team at the school can deliver a better service to both staff and students. Every time a thin client is rebooted the Wyse solution provides a clean Microsoft Windows XP operating system, unaffected by system crashes or other issues, making every thin client trouble-free and ready to use.

Conclusion: doing even more with less

For Canons High School the need to deliver more advanced technology whilst cutting costs and keeping staff at a minimum is key. The solution developed by Axess Systems enabled them to achieve their goals. "The solution that Axess Systems recommended and supplied is a great fit for our particular environment. It's simple, consistent, reliable, and easy to manage," Iqbal said. "Most of my colleagues are amazed when they hear how small our ICT team is and realise how large a network we support. We view the Thin Client solution as a survival tactic for the 21st Century."

In the future, Canons High School plans to implement even more Thin Clients with WSM. "Thin clients solutions have fundamentally changed the way we think about and invest in computers. We won't be deploying traditional computers in the school any more, because the Thin Client solution makes so much sense. And the team at Axess Systems are the perfect partner to provide all of our requirements."

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