Meeting school community expectations at North Sydney

Reducing the cost of managing risk for North Sydney Girls High School's core ICT systems

Founded in 1914, North Sydney Girls High School (NSGHS) has a proud tradition for preparing multi-talented young women to take a leading role in society and in the professions, academia, the media and the arts. As a selected intake public school it is committed to providing a stimulating and challenging environment for successful, high achieving girls. Entry is highly competitive, and the school achieves outstanding academic results.

THE CHALLENGE
Meeting Expectations

The expectations the school community places on its technology systems are high. NSGHS is regarded as a 'lighthouse' for other NSW high schools – not only academically, but in the meaningful use of ICT for curriculum delivery. It has one of the more complex IT environments falling within the NSW Department of Education and Community (DEC). It was also one of the two pilot schools for the DER Aruba wireless standard, although the school runs its own wireless network in addition.

With an IT team of four, plus a Technology Support Officer (TSO) provided under the Federal Government's Digital Education Revolution (DER) program, Deputy Principal and Technology Manager Greg Henshaw says that the cost of maintaining this infrastructure is unsustainable. "There is a limit to the amount of expertise and resources we can retain under our budget. We need to look at innovative solutions for getting the support we need, based on the right areas of expertise."

SOLUTION
24/7 Expert Monitoring & Support

The school had been using Computelec's educational IT services for six years on a project-by-project basis. Talking through his challenges with them in 2012, Greg Henshaw realised there was an alternative to his current arrangement for servicing and supporting the school's complex ICT infrastructure and core servers.

For several years a part-time contractor from an external company had monitored the school's ten servers, some of them virtualised, for performance and to apply patches, identify issues and incidents and fix problems. The trouble was that this one person represented a single skill set –

School: North Sydney Girls High School, a select-entry public high school

Location: North Sydney, NSW

Challenge: Meeting the school community's high expectations of ICT

Solution: NSGHS deployed Computelec EISS to replace a single part-time support contractor with an ongoing server management solution supported by 24/7 monitoring and best practices in IT Services Management

Benefits:
- 60% saving on previous support arrangement
- 24/7 access to a wide range of specialist skills
- Comprehensive monthly reporting

without expertise in all the types of servers the school deploys. Plus, when this second-level support resource was off-site, the rest of the IT team was left to detect and deal with issues as they arose.

While the arrangement had resulted in 100% local infrastructure reliability over three years, justifying investment in external specialist skills, Greg Henshaw saw that Computelec's remote managed 24/7 support service would increase the level of support the school was receiving and cost a lot less.

Computelec's Education IT Support Solution or EISS is a flexible service arrangement so it could be tailored to NSGHS's specific needs, priorities and challenges. Not only did it cover all the server technologies the school's IT team needs to support, it offers guaranteed SLAs across a range of levels of support. This meant that the school could subscribe to the level of ongoing support it needs to maximise the performance and availability of its servers – at a price it can afford.

Greg Henshaw had high confidence in Computelec's ability to deliver. "The company has an outstanding reputation for service to private schools around Australia, and is a specialist in the education IT market. This meant there were no hoops to jump through in contracting them as they are fully-compliant, for example, with the Child Protection and insurance requirements of our sector."

" We can examine the detailed performance of our servers over the network in IT meetings, then engage in informed, meaningful conversations on how we could enhance the service levels we deliver to the school community. **"**

BUSINESS BENEFITS
Pioneering new levels of infrastructure support

Greg Henshaw says a major benefit of Computelec's EISS for his team is the monthly reporting it delivers. "We can examine the detailed performance of our servers over the network in IT meetings, then engage in informed, meaningful conversations on how we could enhance the service levels we deliver to the school community. Our Computer Co-ordinator and IT staff also use them to plan for new developments to meet the school's future needs."

In summary, the benefits NSGHS is now enjoying include:

- Peace of mind that incidents potentially affecting server availability are being monitored and tracked by experts with all the right tools and vendor contacts at their fingertips, day and night
- A 60% annual saving on its previous support arrangement
- 24/7 access to a wide range of specialist skills to counter the diverse technology issues the school encounters
- At the same time, the school retains all control and decision-making on changes to its infrastructure, enabling it to comply with Departmental standards
- Comprehensive monthly reporting is giving the IT team greater insight into their environment, helping them manage risks and capacity plan for timely upgrades

Greg Henshaw says he expects other to follow. "I am sure that remote server management could be of benefit to many NSW State Secondary Schools, save substantial amounts of public money and provide a more sustainable, efficient and comprehensive level of support to school server farms."

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