

Softech helps Terenure College update its struggling IT infrastructure

Faced with unreliable technology and ageing desktop machines, Softech revamped Terenure College's network to offer a more flexible approach to learning while dramatically reducing IT support costs.

Terenure College is a Carmelite-run Junior and Secondary school located in Terenure, Dublin. The College was founded in 1860 with only 21 students. Now there are almost 1,000 pupils enrolled in both the junior and senior schools.

Recently, the College carried out a total overhaul of its IT infrastructure.

↙ **TOO MUCH IN THE MIX**

Before the upgrade, Terenure College was running a four-server Windows-based network. Client machines were a mix of desktop PCs running Microsoft Windows 95, 98, Windows 2000, with a small number on Windows XP.

The Microsoft Exchange email system was unreliable, driving some people to use their own personal addresses. In addition, the workstations themselves required ongoing maintenance, while backing up was ad hoc and difficult to track, forcing people to save locally and compounding the issue of lost data.

IT was becoming a much larger part of the curriculum. This fact, coupled with the delays experienced by teachers and administration staff caused by server down time, meant a new IT solution had to be considered.

"One of the main problems was the outdated hardware," said Shauna Pearse, General Manager Services at Terenure College. "Constant issues generated a huge number of support calls."



↓ A LESSON IN EFFICIENCY

Softech worked with Terenure and selected Citrix XenApp to underpin the College's new IT infrastructure. One of the first changes was the introduction of a two-server solution running Citrix XenApp. The college replaced the outdated PCs and laptops with Wyse thin client terminals. Wireless Internet access was also introduced in some areas of the building to complement the cabling. Wi-Fi technology ensured applications and data could be delivered everywhere.

Applications delivered included Microsoft Office 2003, Adobe Reader and the facilities management database. Delivery to those applications and college data is now more straightforward – by linking all servers, data and applications through XenApp, it has simplified how the administration access resources. It also helps manage access to data, so that confidential information remains secure.

↓ BRINGING IN THE BENEFITS

For teachers this means faster and simpler access to student files, as they can simply submit work to a central location for marking. Also, the new infrastructure means a far clearer way for teachers to prepare class information and communicate it with the students.

"Teachers had to queue to use one of the PCs in the staff room – now they can log in via Citrix and centrally-stored information is delivered to wherever they are working, even when at home. They do not need to bring back ups of their files to and from home, as all their work is now filed and updated in their folders on the school's system," added Pearse. **"Staff have access to their files from any classroom in the school."**

Aside from the positive effect on teaching and communication, there have been very tangible savings made, thanks to the switch to XenApp. Further security and environmental benefits arose from the use of Citrix's universal printer driver, which controls printing on a user-by-user basis. As a result, data protection has improved while paper wastage has dropped. But the most telling benefit is in the cost of IT support – which has reduced considerably.

"Implementing Citrix at the College addresses all the issues we were facing due to our old IT system," concluded Pearse. **"Now, we have a stable system which will adapt to our future needs, while dramatically improving the work environment for pupils and teachers."**