

## CASE STUDY

# Fujitsu delivers a future-proof, dynamic IT solution for Monmouth School

“The biggest benefit is the ease of management of the servers and the ability to be able to test patches before they go live.”

Eddie Maher, head of the IT team at Monmouth School



**Monmouth School** is a public boys' school situated in beautiful countryside close to the River Wye, which educates some 700 boys in its prep and senior school. The school has invested in technology and all pupils have full access to email and can have personalised access to the network remotely from home or through PCs in the boarding houses  
[www.habs-monmouth.org/](http://www.habs-monmouth.org/)

### The challenge

Monmouth School relies heavily on its IT network to support its academic curriculum. All pupils have full access to email and can have personalised access to the network remotely from home or through PCs in the boarding houses. As the school's IT demands increased, there was an urgent need for a more resilient, energy efficient network. Consequently, Monmouth School looked to consolidate the number of servers and migrate from a traditional Network Attached Server (NAS) model to a more flexible network that enabled the IT team to test software patches in isolation before roll-out.

### Solution

Monmouth School has over 250 PCs located across the senior, prep and pre-prep schools, plus approximately 30 “Jack PCs” – thin client computers for evening use within the schools' five boarding houses. All classrooms have at least one PC and there are eight dedicated ICT suites. The school had therefore accumulated a lot of data, stored on separate servers. Eddie Maher, who heads up the IT department at Monmouth School, recognised there was a need to reduce the number of servers to cut spend on energy. The solution was to create a virtual server environment, which would centralise storage and provide a more resilient and flexible solution. Working with Project Network, a professional services IT company, Fujitsu created a virtualised environment, using VMWare software in conjunction with two PRIMERGY blade servers. This consolidated existing physical servers and provided an ideal testing platform for the IT teams to test any patches before rolling them out across the entire network.

## Solution components

- 2x Fujitsu PRIMERGY blade chassis
- 2x Fujitsu PRIMERGY blade servers
- 3x Fujitsu PRIMERGY BX620 blade
- VMWare virtualisation software
- 2x Fujitsu FibreCAT SX80 iSCSI unit with 12x 1TB SATA hard drives
- 12TB expansion shelf

## Customer benefits

- Dramatically reduced energy costs of between 60-70%
- Improved management of server estate including secure, reliable testing of patches
- Consolidation cost savings from fewer servers
- Disaster recovery facilitated through future connection with girls' school

### The project

The project to roll out the new system, comprising the Fujitsu PRIMERGY BX blade servers, was undertaken during a 12-day period to coincide with the October half-term, in order to minimise any disruption to the school. The purchase of the blade chassis and the two blade servers delivers seven terabytes of flexible data storage space. Instead of dedicating servers to a particular application, the IT team can move applications easily from one server to another by creating a virtual image.

In the first phase the IT team was able to move a lot of the data from the existing standalone servers on to the blade server, enabling two servers to be switched off and resulting in an immediate energy saving. The "virtual machines" on the new network can be managed more easily, allowing testing of patches and seeing how a patch will affect the network in practice before running it for real. The first application to benefit from the new blade environment will be a portal for parents that enables access to their sons' grades and reports.

The second phase will see the creation of a library database so that pupils can see if a book or piece of music is available, and if it isn't then they can see who currently has that item out on loan. In time, the increased storage will also enable the IT department to support a "virtual learning environment" where staff can produce 'worksheets' comprising data-rich content such as videos. This will enable teachers to structure their lessons and publish homework on the site, and provide parents with access to their sons' timetables.

### Project Partner



### A record of success

The creation of a more dynamic IT infrastructure has brought about some immediate benefits to Monmouth School. Eddie Maher commented: "The biggest benefit is the ease of management of the servers and the ability to test patches in a control environment before they go live. We also expect to see a dramatic decrease of somewhere between 60 – 70% in the amount of energy we use because the new virtual environment means we've been able to switch off quite a few of our old servers."

Disaster recovery was another important consideration and in the future it is hoped that Monmouth School can team up with its sister girls' school so that each has a blade server that mirrors the other, thereby acting as a disaster recovery system. Monmouth is a progressive school and the staff value the use of technology in their teaching – the new IT network means that they now have a resilient infrastructure in place to support more data and new exciting technology developments that will benefit teachers, pupils and their parents alike

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