

CASE STUDY

Education

Fujitsu and Smithills Comprehensive School: Driving educational excellence

“Fujitsu has provided us with a system that is both far greater in storage capacity and quicker in processing data. This has provided Smithills School with the tools to deliver educational excellence into the next decade.”

Dale Jones, Systems Manager, Smithills Comprehensive School



The challenges

In need of more data space – It became apparent that the existing IT server and data storage systems at Smithills would soon reach their limits.

Changing times for education – The reduction in the amount of paper used in favour of online applications caused an information overload that the existing servers weren't capable of supporting.

The Solution

Smithills School, a successful comprehensive secondary school, had seen a huge increase in server storage capacity in recent years with the emergence of online applications.

To avert a storage crisis, Smithills tasked Fujitsu with upgrading its storage capabilities and increasing efficiency. To enhance storage and improve speed, Fujitsu installed the latest 4 Gbit/s fibre channel and FibreCAT SX80 enterprise class storage system. The two FibreCAT SX80 units that have been installed mirror each other's data in different locations to give extra security and peace of mind, and provide continuity and back-up. The solution offers greater storage capacity, is quicker in processing data and provides Smithills with the tools to deliver educational excellence well into the next decade.

Smithills School is a co-educational comprehensive school for ages 11 – 16 in the suburbs of Bolton. With nearly 1,450 pupils, the school plays a considerable role in providing education to pupils in the North West. This is underlined, for example, by its achievement of Specialist Arts College status for excellence in the performing arts.

More at: www.smithillsschool.net

Solution components

- PRIMERGY RX300 server
- 2x FibreCAT SX80 storage systems
- 2x Legacy AX100s
- 2x SAN Fibreswitches
- 2 N40 NAS Headers
- Microsoft® Exchange Server
- Microsoft® SharePoint® Server

Customer benefits

- Business continuity due to enterprise class storage systems in an SAN with redundancy
- Greater storage capacity-easy to expand
- Improved performance
- Future-data storage provides the foundation to deliver educational excellence.

The project

In early 2007 it became apparent that the existing IT server and data storage systems at Smithills would soon reach their limits. Having registered the necessity to have robust business continuity plans in place following a flood and fire at the school, an IT upgrade program was decided upon. The amount of available data storage space has become an increasingly important issue that needed to be addressed. This was as a direct result of the relentless advancements in information technology over the past five to 10 years and how this has changed many of the school processes.

Smithills, like all schools, has seen a huge increase in the use of IT storage due to a reduction in the amount of paper used in favour of online applications. A two-minute video or audio presentation may seem insignificant in terms of storage space, yet it takes on a different significance when multiplied by 1,450 pupils. Schools also have numerous online initiatives in place, including the option for pupils to submit their homework online and to even sit examinations in digital format. When you add social networking activity and email correspondence into the mix it is clear why many schools are beginning to see information overload that their existing servers aren't capable of supporting.

The project to increase capacity at Smithills has been an upgrade to existing Fujitsu hardware. Prior to the upgrade, Smithills had a network-attached system (NAS) that was reaching the limits of its performance. To increase storage and improve speed, Fujitsu installed the latest 4 Gbit/s fibre channel and FibreCAT SX80 enterprise class storage system.

The two FibreCAT SX80 units that have been installed mirror each other's data in different locations to give extra security and peace of mind, and provide continuity and back-up. The new system is now set up as a storage area network (SAN) with redundancy to ensure the system is as reliable as possible.

A record of success

Dale Jones, IT Manager at Smithills School, who is in charge of the school's IT systems, comments: "Online applications are having a far greater role in the education process." Updating the existing server and storage hardware capabilities was viewed as key to driving Smithills forward. Dale Jones summarised: "Having witnessed near devastation with fire and flooding in recent years, we were determined to have contingency plans in place for our server and storage capabilities. We have enjoyed a successful relationship with Fujitsu for the past few years and they were an obvious choice when it came to updating our hardware. Fujitsu has provided us with a solution that gives us greater storage capacity and is quicker in processing data. We believe this has provided Smithills School with the tools to deliver educational excellence well into the next decade."

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