



DTP Deliver 'Virtual Perfection' For Stockport College.

The Result

Enabled IT team to deliver more services within budget

Improved server utilisation

Contained server sprawl

Enabled IT team to deliver Business continuity

Improved speed of provisioning new applications

About Stockport College

Stockport College has its origins dating back to the latter years of the 19th century and is now one of the leading further education institutes in the Manchester area. The College merged with North Area College, in January 2006.

Based over two campus sites at Heaton Moor and in the town centre, the College has an impressive 11,500 students and around 1,000 staff. The College has students of all ages, ranging from school leaving age to well beyond retirement age, studying courses in numerous disciplines. Courses are both academic and vocational offering qualifications up to degree level. The higher education provision is divided into three faculties; Creative Arts, Professional Studies and Science & Technology.

Size matters

Stockport College had been evaluating options to update its IT infrastructure. With a user community of around 12,500 people the IT infrastructure has grown to around 2,000 desktops and 85 servers. The existing IT infrastructure had become complex and disparate, thus was difficult to manage and support.

The old IT infrastructure ran on multiple network operating systems such as Microsoft® Windows® NT, 2000 and 2003 as well as Novell® Netware. The operating system split reflected the technology preferences of each of College.

The priority for Stockport's IT department is to provide optimum performance and resilience from their applications, enabling faculty staff to best serve its large student population, and helping students receive the best education possible.

The Challenge

With around 85 servers of varying ages, the College recognised that based on the current approach of buying a server per application they would only add to the existing issues without addressing imperatives such as:

- Providing Business Continuity.
- Enhancing the speed of provisioning applications.
- Improving overall systems management.
- Merging two disparate IT Infrastructures.

All of which had to be achieved within a budget and within very tight timescales.

" The previous Infrastructure hadn't any monitoring tools, we now have the capability to identify and resolve issues before fatal errors occur".

David Gay, IT Configuration Manager, Stockport College



Hardware And Software Implemented at Stockport College by DTP.

- Four HP Quad processor ProLiant DL585's
- One HP EVA 6000
- iSCSI Connectivity
- HP EVA Business Copy software
- Systems Insight Manager
- VMware Infrastructure 3 Enterprise
- VMware VirtualCenter Management Server 2 for VMware Infrastructure
- P2V Assistant 2, Enterprise edition

DTP the right choice

Given the constraints of having to implement major changes to the IT Infrastructure outside of term time, the College was faced with the prospect of requiring a technology that would facilitate a change of physical infrastructure without forcing updates in the operating systems and applications, delivered by an organisation that had the skills to implement the solution in what was an extremely tight timeframe.

After reviewing the marketplace, Stockport College selected The DTP Group to provide a fully integrated hardware and software solution, based on the following criterion

- The Technology fit proposed by the reseller.
- The initial capital outlay and ongoing costs of the Solution.
- The confidence that Stockport College could work with the reseller.
- The confidence and belief that the reseller would meet the tight timescales of the project.

"The final decision on who to go with was made collectively, and was unanimous , in fact the decision made itself"
David Gay, IT Configuration Manager, Stockport College

Solution on time and within budget

DTP used its experience and technical expertise to design an infrastructure that met Stockport's requirements, working closely with the manufacturers to provide price support to match the specified budget and then subsequently managed the supply chain to ensure that the implementation was completed on time.

The solution implemented by DTP was based on; four Hewlett Packard (HP) quad processor ProLiant DL585's acting as the hosts for a virtual server infrastructure; one HP EVA 6000 providing a resilient platform for consolidated storage, iSCSI connectivity to simplify storage provisioning and management and Hewlett Packard's EVA Business copy software which facilitated replication for testing, development and backup. HP's Insight Manager was configured to provide pre failure notification of hardware issues.

The Virtual infrastructure based on VMware Infrastructure 3 Enterprise edition facilitated the easy migration of legacy servers into the new environment. To assist in the migration of the physical servers, DTP used P2V Assistant 2, Enterprise Edition which non-intrusively copies and transform physical systems into VMware virtual machines. This allowed Stockport College to migrate legacy servers to the new hardware, with no need to reinstall operating systems or application software.

VMware was configured in conjunction with Insight Manager to provide business continuity, and improve up-time by facilitating non-disruptive maintenance of their IT environment. VMware has also enhanced the responsiveness of IT to changes in the institutions needs by accelerating application development and deployment lifecycles.

After a smooth and successful hardware installation, followed a nine day software implementation and skills transfer. DTP ensured that both theoretical and hands on training was provided for Storage and VMware ensuring that Stockport College were well positioned to maintain and support the environment going forward.



Full Marks for DTP Solution

The solution has provided Stockport College with a number of important benefits including; long term cost savings, reduced power consumption, contained server sprawl, improved server utilisation, reduced application provisioning time and improved manageability, explained David Gay. In summary DTP has provided Stockport College with an effective server management solution that enables them to save money and manage their resources more effectively.

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