



Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2003 Customer Solution Case Study

Country or Region: United Kingdom

Industry: Education

Partner: NCI Technologies

Customer Profile

There are 220 Primary schools in Cornwall, a county in the South West of England with a relatively low population density.

Software and Services

- Products
 - Microsoft Small Business Server 2003
 - Microsoft Office System
 - Microsoft Windows

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Schools in Cornwall Save Money Using Business Server as a Learning Tool

“We chose SBS because we needed a robust and secure system that would allow us to improve teaching, learning, and management of the school.”

Richard Lawrence, Head Teacher at Wendron County Primary School in Cornwall.

Primary schools in the United Kingdom are using the latest small business software to transform teaching and meet targets set by the government’s national education agenda. Six schools in the county of Cornwall have implemented Microsoft Small Business Server 2003. Using cost-effective licensing models, professional standard applications, and easy integration with existing software, they have enhanced learning, reduced the costs of IT maintenance, and provided remote access to critical information.

Business Needs

When it comes to new systems and software, a small business might not seem like the ideal role model for a primary school but administrators in the county of Cornwall in South West England are adapting technology used in the private sector to enhance learning and meet the government’s national education agenda.

In a pilot that has implications for the wider UK education community, these administrators compared technology requirements with those of an organisation with up to 500 employees. The similarities were striking. Andy Trish, Director at NCI Technologies, a Gold Certified Partner based in Cornwall explains: “Both schools and

small organisations have intensive working environments with defined user groups. Any new IT solution has to adapt quickly to the needs of these individuals with minimum disruption to day-to-day tasks.”

The latest small business technology also supports secure, remote access to critical information at a cost that matches primary school budgets. This is particularly important in rural areas such as Cornwall, where school employees and pupils live in large catchment areas. From a work-life balance perspective, teachers need remote access to e-mail, documents, and curriculum software. The students—who were born into an online world—want to be connected to school projects, as well as their classmates and



teachers, when they go home. Parents want easy access to information about their children's progress, and demand a safe online environment for their children.

Additionally, both primary schools and small businesses need to minimise maintenance costs of new equipment and software, while also reducing the time staff take to adapt to new technology in the classroom or on training courses. Furthermore, as well as teaching tools, educators also need administrative tools to monitor and report student progress.

Another important requirement of primary school computing systems is that they integrate with existing software. In Cornwall, this includes national curriculum software, and tools and lessons provided by National Curriculum online.

Solution

In early 2006, Andy Trish invited head teachers and administrators from six Cornish schools to a demonstration of Microsoft Small Business Server (SBS) 2003, at NCI's offices in the town of Penryn.

Richard Lawrence, Head Teacher at Wendron County Primary School in Cornwall, was one of those who attended. "We needed a robust and secure system that would allow us to improve teaching, learning, and management of the school," he says. Lawrence was struck by how well the features of SBS 2003 met the requirements of teachers, pupils, and administrators:

- Little configuration is required to configure SBS into the primary school setting.
- Group policies allow teachers access to all student data, while students get access to only their own data.

- The SBS education licence covers 75 computers. There is no limit to the number of students who use them.
- All student files are saved directly onto the server. Nothing is saved on local computers.
- Applications such as Microsoft Outlook® are professional standard, but easy to use for most pupils.

Richard Lawrence, along with the representatives from the other six schools, compared SBS with alternative technologies and suppliers but it soon became apparent that Microsoft offered the best solution. Says Richard: Support was also an issue, especially when Linux was considered. "We preferred the features in SBS, and in rural areas with low population densities, you need fast access to low-cost support and maintenance. With Microsoft it's much easier to find the skills and resources you need. When it comes to Linux, free is actually quite expensive."

Benefits

Susan Evans, Head Teacher of Sithney Community Primary School in Cornwall also attended the briefing, and commissioned NCI to install the technology at her institution. She says that teaching at Sithney has been completely transformed. "Each classroom now has a computer, and ICT is now an integral part of learning. There is also an interactive whiteboard in every room. The impact of technology is limited only by our imagination," she says.

Clare Tenbeth, ICT Coordinator at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School has also seen greater enthusiasm for learning after adopting SBS. "It is now easier for all staff and pupils to access whatever they want, from any connected computer, at any point in the school. The confidence of many

students has increased in leaps and bounds, as has the quality of individual work. In addition to enabling students and teachers to be creative, the flexibility, security and ability to control the system frees the school from many of the problems associated with young children and computers," says Claire. Other benefits for primary schools include:

- Teachers can publish homework to shared work spaces so that work is accessible from anywhere in the world. Students who are travelling or on extended overseas trips will still be able to keep up with their studies.
- Group policies improve security, allowing administrators to lock down computers and prevent student access to unauthorised areas. Filtered access to the Internet ensures safe, appropriate content for students.
- Easy-to-use e-mail with a familiar interface gives teachers the ability to communicate easily from any location—with each other, administrators, parents and students.
- Compatibility with Windows and the Microsoft Office system enables schools to use programs they already have.
- SBS is quick to set up and customise to educational applications.
- Readily accessible support ensures a reliable, easy-to-maintain system.

SBS is also a great way for Microsoft partners to reach out to more customers and diversify their client base. "SBS is ideal for primary schools," says Andy Trish. "It's also a great way for partners to enter the education industry. Of the six schools that visited our office for the demonstration of SBS, every single one of them ordered it for their schools."