

Redstor Case Study

Education Bradford Select CentraStage to Improve Services

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Case Study

Education Bradford is a not-for-profit partnership between Bradford Local Education Authority and Serco. The strategic partnership was setup in July 2001 by Bradford Council following a heavily critical Ofsted inspection in 2000. Serco was selected as the education partner due to its reputation for improving public services by managing people, processes, technology and assets more effectively.

Education Bradford works with 180 schools within Bradford Local Education Authority, each one subscribes to its ICT support and training services.

Challenges:

With 180 schools, Education Bradford was struggling to efficiently and effectively support the device infrastructure within schools. Wendell James, CSMG Manager at Education Bradford comments, "We had three main challenges which were to improve our support services to schools in terms of the quality and speed of response, to decrease our overall cost base, and finally, to use efficiencies in IT to offer more services to schools for a lower budget."

Each school was making an average of 74 calls per school per year to Education Bradford. The local authority's IT helpdesk struggled to cope with the demand for IT support and as a result scheduled over 540 site visits by technicians. Each visit resulted in the installation of new applications, managing software upgrades and patches. Each site visit cost over £810 to log, service, and report on.

James explains, "We knew the current situation was unsustainable. Support calls were escalating and although the majority of calls required a low level of technical assistance, the help desk could not cope and site visits were increasing. At the same time the overall quality of service was decreasing. We needed to make an immediate change in the way we offered device support and needed immediate IT efficiency gains."



At A Glance

The Issues:

- Struggling to efficiently & effectively support device infrastructure within schools

The Redstor Solution:

- CentraStage device management

The Benefits:

- Efficiency gain of 20%
- 2,500 hours of school ICT 'downtime' avoided
- Support call times reduced by 4.5 minutes on average
- Annual cost saving of £55,000
- Able to increase service with same headcount
- Power Management functionality to comply with Carbon Reduction Commitment Obligations
- Reduction in costs across the LA and school

Solution:

Education Bradford had an ongoing relationship with Redstor which had provided the successful Redstor Backup Service for Schools (RBUSS), an online backup service which had been adopted by the majority of Bradford schools. As a provider of specialist education services and solutions, Bradford turned to Redstor for help with their schools support and device management issues.

Consequently, Redstor introduced CentraStage to Bradford as a potential solution. The philosophy behind the CentraStage technology is that 'every device counts' as the technology enables IT support teams to monitor and manage multiple remote devices (PCs & servers) over any network.

The CentraStage solution brings visibility and control of every device on a network via a single web-based management system. The system allows the user to audit the existing environment and once installed on each device will report back on the installed hardware and software and allow the user to scan the network for other devices and monitor current and expiring licences.

In addition, CentraStage allows for easy device management and configuration, allowing the user to install and configure software on multiple devices quickly and easily, saving valuable time and money. Repetitive tasks can also be regularly scheduled and executed remotely such as automated software updates and PC shut downs in order to reduce a school's carbon footprint. When there is an issue to be solved, CentraStage enables a one to one remote support session to be initiated from any online PC to any PC or server.

Finally, the solution allows for efficient and effective reporting on assets, allowing any school to have a holistic view of the IT assets they have and their current usage by examining the software on each device, the licenses it has as well as examining the hardware such as memory and running speed, and allowing the IT Technician to pre-empt potential problems before they even arise.

Results:

Bradford adopted CentraStage back in 2007 and over time as they realised its potential, they rolled it out to their schools. James comments, "CentraStage has been simple to install and the results were immediately noticeable. Routine processes such as upgrades and patching were automated, calls to the helpdesk dropped, ICT downtime in schools was immediately reduced and so far an overall efficiency gain of 20% has been realised and proved. The level of speed and quality of support we offered improved immediately."

The deployment of CentraStage also had an immediate impact on the calls that were received by the helpdesk and **support call times were reduced by 4.5 minutes** on average, allowing staff at the schools to use their time more effectively and focus on teaching instead of monitoring and managing school technology.

The overall efficiency of remote device management was recently analysed, explains James, "Having looked at the work we are now able to complete by automating the entire device management process we estimate that to achieve this without CentraStage would mean us having to spend an additional 848 days of technician's time. This is equivalent to Bradford having to recruit an additional 2.5 IT support workers.

James continues, "One of the most time consuming tasks in education IT is the SIMS server upgrades with each new release from Capita. CentraStage removes the need for staff to log on to each SIMS server in turn, running the SIMS Online Update Service (SOLUS) and checking the upgrade has been completed correctly. CentraStage automates this process, saving considerable amounts of time for Education Bradford."

James continues, "CentraStage can work remotely to monitor and ensure all 180 schools are running the latest version of SIMS, as well as regularly patching to protect and secure devices automatically. This ensures that as a local authority we comply with government legislation and policy."

Education Bradford has been fully using CentraStage for over 12 months now and has calculated the **annual cost savings to be over £55,000 per annum**. The LA is now able to offer new services to schools without having to take on additional staff and has calculated that over 2,500 hours of school ICT 'downtime' has been avoided.

"The technology has significantly decreased our cost base and has allowed us to do more, better with less" continued James. "We have been able to take on more schools for our curriculum and platinum SLAs, without having to take on more people. Whilst part of CentraStage is about efficiency savings, it will enable us to offer new services around energy savings in line with reducing our carbon footprint".

The time and efficiency savings for the local authority as a result of CentraStage is a clear indication that automated and remote support is the most cost effective and viable solution for managing such a large IT estate. The benefits to the schools are also significant with less disruption, downtime and risk allowing staff to focus on teaching.

"As well as offering a faster and improved service to our customers, the schools, it is nice to know we are also playing a part in reducing the impact of climate change. Due to the ability to turn off left on PCs and optimise power settings we anticipate the potential to **reduce carbon emissions by up to 223 tonne in CO2** for the first year in line with the requirements of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme which has just come into effect on the 1st April, additionally we will also reduce and eliminate wasted travel time to schools for our technicians in relation to ICT support calls which can be solved remotely".

"The energy saving capabilities of CentraStage equates to a potential monetary **saving of £16,600** which goes to prove that going green can be also be very beneficial economically especially in these new lean times." James concludes.

For more information please contact redstor on +44 (0)118 951 5200 or visit www.redstor.com

More information on CentraStage can be found at www.centrastage.com